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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 27 September 2012**

**Jeudi 27 septembre 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 27 September 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 27 septembre 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 26, 2012, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion by Mr. Leone arising from the Speaker's ruling of September 13, 2012.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate. The member from Huron–Bruce has the floor.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand this morning to pick up where I left off yesterday. It's with sadness, as everybody has expressed, that we have to carry on with this motion, but there are very, very compelling reasons why the motion must be upheld, and this issue must be passed along to our financial committee, because we have to get back to business in this House.

I feel I have very relevant information to share with you that further supports the whole fact that this has just been absolute nonsense and we need to get to the bottom of it. The only manner in which to do it properly is to pass it along to the committee.

As I said yesterday, we have had folks that have spent day and night poring through the 36,000 pieces of documentation that the Liberal government provided. We recognize that much has been redacted or completely blanked out, and quite frankly, the excuse that, "Oh, the opposite page or the wrong side of the page was scanned," is absolute nonsense. I say to the good people of Ontario: Please, stick to your gut feeling. Recognize what's spin and what's fact.

In that light, I'd like to share with you some more factual information that pertains to this very serious issue. My EA, Ashley Hammill, was one of the team members who worked through all this documentation earlier this week, and she has provided me with some, quite frankly, very damning information that supports the whole fact that the Liberal government is out of control, they've totally mismanaged this situation, and it needs to go to committee.

To pick up where I left off yesterday, I want to share an excerpt from Michael Lyle at OPA and his comments on how to handle media. Quite specifically, he says, "Thinking about this some more it might be better to

fudge who is actually engaged in ongoing negotiations with TransCanada Energy by just starting with 'Discussions are ongoing....'" Again, here's blatant contempt. There's blatant, blatant intent here to fudge the facts with that quote from Michael Lyle from the OPA.

Another quote from a Liberal insider: "If the government or OPA kills the project" in "(Oakville) they will be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars for incurred expenses and lost profits." I'm going to repeat that: "They will be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars for incurred expenses and lost profits"—absolutely disgusting.

Speaker, this is one of my favourite quotes that was taken from emails and information: "Hi Deputy, I hope you got the debrief on Oakville. From my perspective it went as well as it could have. Can't go wrong for TV when politicians make an announcement and a room full of people" stand up "in cheers of joy and applause. Financially" it's going to "be muddy in the papers tomorrow. Province could be on the hook for millions and the minister wouldn't talk about it. How did it go with Hydro One?"

Speaker, as you can see, the case for contempt is very, very clear.

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** It is with sadness that I rise this morning to speak on the motion from Mr. Leone, the member from Cambridge.

I listened attentively for the past two days to the various members from all three parties. The two opposition parties focused on the government's failure to fully disclose all the documents related to the Oakville and Mississauga facilities in a timely manner. The official opposition party continued to misuse the Legislature to argue that the minister continues to hide or conceal documents related to the Mississauga plant.

As a rookie member from Scarborough–Agincourt, I'm concerned over the tone and the language used by some members of the opposition parties to attack a member of the Legislature, who happens to be a minister of the crown. I'm also concerned about how the three parties will move forward after the conclusion of this motion, Mr. Speaker.

The people of Ontario have spoken not just last October, but also more recently at the by-elections in Kitchener–Waterloo and in the city of Vaughan. The people of Ontario have elected 107 of us to serve to our best ability with integrity, transparency and a commit-

ment to Ontario. They also want us to protect public health, public education, our environment, natural resources and ensure safety for all.

Similar to the member from Cambridge, I too came from an academic background before entering provincial politics. For the past two days, I've reviewed numerous documents about the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville facilities.

This is what I've learned from my research on the cancellation and relocation of both facilities, Mr. Speaker: Since 2003, we've rebuilt our electricity system. We added 10,000 megawatts of new clean generation, including six—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** How do you like your hydro bill so far?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** No, let me speak, okay? That's not respectful.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Timmins–James Bay, come to order, please.

**Ms. Soo Wong:**—six new gas facilities and 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines. We have invested almost \$30 billion from the public and private sectors and created thousands of jobs. That's on the record, Mr. Speaker.

We have made a commitment to Ontarians to close coal-fired generation, a North American first—again, showing leadership, showing vision. As a registered nurse, I recognize the health concerns associated with the burning of coal. The US Environmental Protection Agency, better known as the EPA, stated that the burning of coal causes premature deaths in people with heart and lung disease. It also worsens respiratory problems such as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath, triggering thousands of asthma attacks across America. Furthermore, the burning of coal is a leading cause of smog, and it contributes to climate change.

As a government, we made the decision to move away from coal and renew the electricity system, and that is the right thing to do. Our priority is to ensure our homes and businesses have the energy they need, and it is available whenever they require it.

**0910**

Let us not forget the infamous blackout of 2003, where darkness affected thousands of Ontarians from Toronto all the way up to North Bay. How many people have been affected by the 2003—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would just like to remind all members of the House that yesterday went very well, that when the speaker was speaking, everybody was listening. I think it applies to all speakers from both sides of the House that you are being given the opportunity to be heard.

Those who are heckling, I'd ask you to stop, because the next time I stand up, I'll be warning you. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Speaker.

Demand for energy is especially high in the greater Toronto area. Hence, the government decided to build

these two natural gas facilities in Oakville and Mississauga. After lengthy consultation and review, it began to look like the facilities in Oakville and Mississauga may not be required for our energy plans, as previously thought. These kinds of decisions came before I became a member of provincial Parliament, and we have to look at and reflect on what has happened.

At the same time, there was significant opposition to locating the gas facilities in the Mississauga and Oakville areas. The government listened carefully to the community. We also reviewed the security of our energy supply and determined that these facilities could be relocated elsewhere in Ontario, and this is exactly what the government has done.

The Premier, on September 26, spoke at the Oakville Curling Club and acknowledged that “we didn't get it right,” on the Mississauga and the Oakville power facilities.

The decision that the government made is no different than the previous ones. In my research on the previous governments' conduct in decision-making, this is what I learned. In 1991, the then NDP government cancelled—cancelled—the Red Hill Creek Expressway. This proposed expressway is located in the region of Hamilton–Wentworth. For 25 years, the region has been trying to build this expressway. Only three months after the NDP took office, it cancelled the Red Hill Creek Expressway. This construction project was approved by a joint board decision in 1985. This decision was upheld by cabinet on March 12, 1987, and by the Supreme Court of Ontario in 1987.

The NDP government of the day spent \$70 million when they cancelled the Red Hill Creek Expressway. At the time of the cancellation, the former member of Don Valley West, Mr. Turnbull, stated on October 1, 1991, that: “Governments have an obligation to make decisions that are seen to serve the best interests of its citizens.” This statement by Mr. Turnbull clearly illustrates that governments should make decisions in the best interests of their constituents—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** How many days before the election did that happen?

**Ms. Soo Wong:** It doesn't matter. The fact is that Mr. Turnbull stated that we need to make decisions in the best interests of our constituents.

Our government did listen to the people and elected officials in the city of Mississauga and Oakville. Susan Hyatt, a member of Citizens for Clean Air, a group representing Mississauga and Oakville ratepayer associations, recently stated: “You have to look at the \$40 million in the context of the safety and health issues ... and the potential for injury to our families, our homes and our businesses if there was an explosion ... or a train derailment at that site.

“That would have been catastrophic compared to \$40 million....Was it a good decision to cancel the plant? I feel it was a good decision.”

I challenge anyone in this Legislature to say that they do not listen to their constituents, or, as elected officials,

not try to do what Mr. Turnbull said: Governments should serve the best interests of our citizens.

I find the hypocrisy of the official opposition party in the tone and language used in debating the motion—

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, is “hypocrisy” a parliamentary word?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I listened to the member carefully and I will rule that’s not a point of order. Carry on.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find the hypocrisy of the official opposition party in the tone and language used in debating the motion by the member from Cambridge—let me bring some history—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to withdraw the comment.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Okay, I withdraw.

Let me bring some history to the Legislature. On July 11, 1995, in an interview with the *Toronto Star*, the former Chair of Management Board, the Honourable Dave Johnson, indicated the cancellation of the Eglinton and Sheppard lines in the city of Toronto, even though the government of the day had spent approximately \$260 million. About \$123 million was already spent on the subway project, including the design and construction of two huge diggers to be used for boring tunnels beneath the road. About \$136 million was already spent on the Sheppard line before it was cancelled.

The former mayor of Toronto, Mr. Lastman, commented that the building of the two subway lines and two additional lines would create 27,000 jobs. Hence, the former PC government not only failed to create jobs in the city of Toronto at that time; it also failed the people of Toronto. I know my residents in the riding of Scarborough–Agincourt would not be in the current traffic gridlock and transportation problems if the previous PC government had had the leadership and vision in the 1990s to address transportation needs in the city of Toronto. So let’s call it what it is.

These two examples demonstrate how previous governments, led by the other two parties in this Legislature, have cancelled projects that have had significant investment done. These actions are no different than the current decision in the cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville facilities. All of the decisions have been made based on listening to constituents, reviewing new and existing information or evidence, and assessing new alternatives that may prove to be better in the long run. That’s what we are asked to do in this House.

All three parties recognize the concerns—recognize them; it’s not new—raised by the constituents of the city of Mississauga and Oakville, and all made the same commitment in the 2011 election to cancel these facilities.

According to Hansard, I believe the member from Halton said on June 1, 2010, “The people of Oakville ... don’t want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them.”

The leader of the official opposition party spoke to the *Globe and Mail* on September 25, 2011, and said,

“We’ve opposed these” two “projects in Oakville and Mississauga.”

On October 7, 2010, the member from Toronto–Danforth told *Inside Halton*, “I don’t agree with the Oakville power plant. I don’t think it is necessary.”

The leader of the third party, on October 18, 2010, stated, “The New Democrats actually have thought for a long time that that plant should never have been built, and we have said so.”

So the accusations by the opposition parties of buying votes for members in the city of Mississauga and the Halton area are totally inaccurate.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We never would have built it.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Well, it depends on who you say it to. The Ontario Liberal Party made a commitment in response to mounting community concerns that, if re-elected, the government would relocate the Mississauga facility to another location—relocate, not just cancel, okay? We’re not just concerned about cancelling the plants, but making sure we have the electricity system and making sure there are also jobs attached to the cancellation.

**0920**

Both the opposition parties, the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party, had made similar commitments during the course of the 2011 campaign. Let’s tell it as it is, okay? The cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville facilities by the government is not a surprise to anyone in this House. The government clearly stated during the 2011 election that it would relocate this facility if re-elected. To date, our government has fulfilled our commitment to the people of Mississauga and Halton, and that is the right thing to do.

I recall the debates on the cancellation of both the Red Hill Creek Expressway and the Eglinton and Sheppard lines. I was a young registered nurse at that time, Mr. Speaker, and I’m telling you, I was following this House even then. At no time during those debates did I hear vicious, malicious character assassination of a member of the Legislature and a minister of the crown. I don’t recall hearing derogatory language used against a former Chair of Management Board, Mr. Johnson, nor did I hear a character attack on Mr. Pouliot, then the Minister of Transportation under former Premier Bob Rae. These ministers were treated with the respect that they, as individuals in their position, deserved. To date, the choice of words used by the official opposition party against the Minister of Energy cannot be used outside this Legislature, and this is what I’m concerned about.

The opposition parties accused the Minister of Energy of not releasing the requested documents in a timely manner. Let me remind the members in the Legislature what the Auditor General of Ontario said on September 5 in the public accounts committee: “Some of this information could be subject to client-solicitor privilege, or even if we were to get it, in my opinion”—this is the opinion of the Auditor General—“it could be damaging to the province’s negotiating position.”

What does this mean? If the Minister of Energy had released the documents at the time requested by the opposition parties, we would have compromised our position and jeopardized our ability to seek a fair deal for the province. In addition, it may cause further liability for this province and put the province in a much worse position. I am completely puzzled why the opposition parties would want to compromise this province in this manner. We all know the Minister of Energy released the requested documents immediately following the conclusion of the negotiation and complied with the ruling of the Speaker. In my short time at the Legislature and my brief encounters with the Minister of Energy, I find him to be a man of great integrity, commitment and dedication to the people of London West and to this great province. He has served with distinction as a former Attorney General for four years and an honourable member of this Legislature for nine years. He deserves the same respect that was paid to the minister that I've spoken of earlier. The words spoken in this Legislature by the official opposition parties were highly disrespectful and unacceptable to the people of this province.

As a new member of this Legislature, it is a great disappointment for me to witness this type of schoolyard behaviour and bullying and disrespect to the Legislature. One wonders why the official opposition party has come to such a low level of behaviour in comparison to the glory days of the former Premier Bill Davis.

My remarks on the motion by the member from Cambridge—let us all remember the words of Mr. Turnbull, the former MPP from Don Valley West: “Governments have an obligation to make decisions that are seen to serve the best interests of its citizens.”

I also want to share a lesson from my mentor, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who served Ontario with great distinction for 24 years. He said to me, “There will be a time at the Legislature that you will have to make some tough decisions, Soo. And this will require you to do the right thing.” I believe the cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville plant facilities is doing the right thing.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's the beginning of the hockey season, Mr. Speaker. This is a rare fall, of course, and I'm not referring to the NHL strike; I'm referring to the fact that here it is late September, and the Leafs aren't being reported as winning the Stanley Cup already. So it does put a different perspective on hockey this season.

But it reminds me of when I was a kid. We used to head back very early in the winter, far too early, to the creek. We would pick out the shallowest part of the creek, which had some still water in it, and the ice was pretty thin when we started playing hockey. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the government here, using the facts they are, is skating on some pretty thin ice themselves. So it reminds me of the hockey season that's starting.

I would remind the House of the motion that we're debating here today. I'll just go over it; it's not too long: “that this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012....” We're not talking about whether the plants should be cancelled or shouldn't be cancelled or whether they made the right decision; we're asking how that decision was made.

If the government is so proud of the fact that they closed that plant, Mr. Speaker, then why not release the documents and prove that they have made the right decision? Rather than give us 36,000 pages—25,000 or so or at least 25% of them, I understand, are redacted, crossed out, blank. I don't think anyone in their right mind would suggest that these documents have been delivered in a fulfilled state. It certainly doesn't fulfil the spirit of this motion. If the government wanted to act with integrity and prove the fact that they made the right decision, they would release those documents in full.

I understand that the other word I was going to use, Mr. Speaker, you've ruled out of order, so I won't use that word, given your finding.

I should comment a little bit on the coal-fired plants, which the previous speaker was talking about, and the power failure. The power failure in Ontario that she referred to, of course, occurred because of a failure in a plant in Ohio. It had nothing to do with the Ontario circuit. That blackout, which did affect a huge portion of Ontario, had nothing to do with the Ontario power grid. It had to do with the grid in Ohio, which backed up into Ontario and caused that failure.

Finally, I would comment that—she talked about closing the coal-fired plants. Yes, the only coal-fired plant that has been closed in Ontario is the Lakeview plant, and Elizabeth Witmer was Minister of Energy when that plant was closed. So the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario is the only party in this Legislature that has ever closed a coal-fired plant in the province of Ontario.

The Liberals, in the election of 2003, promised to close all coal-fired plants by 2007. In that same election, we promised to close them in 2014. The Liberals then reversed themselves and promised to close them in 2009. They reversed themselves again somewhat later and said they'd close them in 2012. They reversed themselves yet again when it was appropriate for their purposes and came to the same decision that we had come to originally: that the coal-fired plants would be closed in 2014. It took them a long time to get to that position.

In listening to this debate over the past week or so, over the last three or four days in the House, it strikes me that there's a real disconnect, a real failure to communicate. That line, of course, came from a great movie, *Hud*, starring Paul Newman. There was a failure to communicate in that movie, and it seems to me that we're talking about two different things in this House. The Liberal government is trying to defend their actions in the closing of the coal plants and the closing of the Oakville plant

and the Mississauga plant, and we're trying to get to the bottom as to why those plants were closed—not the fact that they were closed, but the fact of why they were closed. We believe they were closed as a seat-saver during an election, when the decision was made.

**0930**

The Liberal debate seems to be around the matter of whether the plants should have been closed or not closed. The Liberal House leader put out a letter on September 24, and he talked about partisan motives for this debate in the House. I've got to say, Mr. Speaker, that when there's \$640 million of taxpayers' money at risk, there's nothing partisan about this debate. This government has always been able to blame someone else for their problems. If there's a hallmark of this government, it's the fact that they can always blame someone else. They blamed the US for unemployment. They blamed the US for the demise of our manufacturing industry. They blame the feds if something goes wrong here. They even blamed Alberta for the high exchange rate that we now enjoy in Ontario. It's sad that somebody doesn't take responsibility for their actions and that there's always someone else to blame; it's never, never their fault. This is very much your fault.

So this isn't about a partisan act; this is about integrity. I think it's about integrity, and the government is expressing itself in a way that would suggest that they fail to understand the issue. I believe you fail to understand the issue that is in front of this House, and that issue revolves around integrity. You took taxpayers' money and used it for political purposes. That in itself is a sad thing to happen in Ontario. But in doing so, you have driven up the cost of electricity. That has had a huge effect on the industry of Ontario.

In the early 1920s, 1922 or 1923, Sir Adam Beck created the hydro projects in Niagara Falls. It's interesting: If you've lived in other parts of North America, if you go and ask people what their hydro costs are, they kind of look at you funny. They don't know what hydro costs are. They know what electricity costs are, but the hydro project in Niagara Falls so dominated this province that we refer to electricity in this province as hydro. It's one of the few places in the world where that happens. So when Adam Beck was initiated—was a motivator behind the creation of the electricity generation system in Niagara Falls—it provided cheap electricity to the province of Ontario on an ongoing and consistent basis, and that created an industry; it built up an industry.

Anything that uses large quantities of electricity came to Ontario. The steel industry is an example. It's located in Hamilton, where there are no resources of coal; there are no resources of steel. Why would a steel industry locate in Hamilton without the two main components? Because Hamilton had a great port and it had access to cheap electricity costs on a consistent basis. That developed our steel industry, a steel industry that is very much in decline these days, struggling, hanging on by its fingertips, because our electricity costs are going through the roof. They're being driven up by a misguided green

energy policy, wind and solar, which we're paying huge prices for—three and four and five times what the going rate for electricity is. Projects like this, this seat-saver program, are driving up electricity costs in this province once again.

The pulp and paper industry across northern Ontario is a huge user of electricity. It's being decimated. Half the mills in northern Ontario are closed because electricity costs are out of sight. That's a sad day for Ontario. That's the kind of thing that this event, this lack of integrity, is causing in the province of Ontario.

I believe that there are a number of things that this government has to do in order to get beyond this debate.

First, in a show of good faith, they should supply the unredacted papers that prove the case that they made the right decision on closing these two plants. That's what they seem to believe. That's what all their debate talks about, how they did the right thing in closing these two plants. Then you supply us 36,000 pages, most of which are blank or crossed out, illegible. It just doesn't ring true. As the Auditor General says, it doesn't pass the sniff test.

Secondly, I think there should be a very sincere apology by the Premier to the people of Ontario. He has abused their confidence and spent their tax dollars recklessly.

Thirdly, I think the committees of this House have to be reconstituted, as the motion says, as they were on September 9—all the committees. There was some debate the other day that talked about how this project is holding up the business of the House. I can tell the people of Ontario that there's not a lot of business before the House right now. When bills are introduced for first reading, they go to printing. There's no debate time. They come in on second reading, they're debated, and then they go to committee.

But there are no committees. The government hasn't reconstituted the committees, and they don't want the committees because they don't want these kinds of issues—the committee on Ornge, the committees looking into other aspects of the Liberal government, the ones that ask questions. They're not asking them from the 30,000-foot level, as you will, as most of the debate in this House is. In committee is where they get into the weeds. They have people who are authorities in the areas come in and discuss what effect this legislation may have. The government doesn't want to hear those kinds of intimate debate in committee.

They've come up with a rather short-sighted solution in not reconstituting the committees. In 17 years here, I've never experienced a government that didn't reconstitute the committees automatically. It was never an issue; it just happened. One day there was an order that allowed the committees to continue to do their work. It never made the paper; in fact, most people in this Legislature wouldn't have known that it even happened.

It's difficult to imagine that this House will continue very much longer without reconstituting committees be-

cause there are very few bills. I think there are three bills waiting to go—three or four bills—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Four bills. Our House leader tells me there are four bills waiting to go to committee. Well, they could go to committee in a very short period of time, three or four days. They're not bills of great importance. They're not bills of great content. I guess any bill going through this House does have some importance, but these are bills that do not have a great deal of content, and they could go through the House very, very quickly with all-party agreement. To suggest that we're holding up the committees, holding up the business of the House, that argument doesn't hold water because there's no business to bring before the House.

**0940**

Earlier in the week, leading off the debate, the member from St. Catharines talked about how we shouldn't be picking on Minister Bentley. The previous speaker talked about the terrible things that we're saying about Minister Bentley, the Minister of Energy. I haven't heard us say anything detrimental about Chris Bentley. I think we all think he's a pretty good guy. As was pointed out yesterday, he's a family man. He's a father. He has a distinguished legal career. But he made a decision—he made a strange decision, actually—to withhold these papers, which caused this whole avalanche of events that happened.

Chris Bentley, being a former Attorney General, knew the consequences of his actions. He was asked to do that—I'm sure he was asked to do that—by his government, probably his Premier, and he knew the consequences. I doubt if any backbencher over there knew the consequences. I'll bet that half the cabinet didn't know the consequences of that decision. But as a former Attorney General, he knew.

Now, I can say a lot of nice things about Mr. Bentley; I would never use his name in a derogatory fashion. He's taking the hit. He has been thrown under the bus by this Liberal government, and not one member over there has bothered to phone a tow truck to haul the bus off him. You're letting him stay under the bus.

You could do a lot to help a fine, upstanding member of this House. You could deliver unredacted papers that prove the case that you've been trying to make for the last three or four days, but you haven't done that. You could apologize heartily to the people of Ontario for abusing your power in this House and using funds for political purposes. You could do that, which would help the Minister of Energy, but you haven't done that. You could hold committee hearings, which would defray and bring the truth to the people of Ontario and restore some integrity to this place, this Legislature, that I believe we all love so well. You could suggest that you would pay—I don't believe the Liberal Party could pay back \$650 million, but you could make some reparations along that line. You could do a lot of things to help the Minister of Energy, and you're doing none of them. You're not even phoning for a tow truck.

When you go home tonight, since the House doesn't sit on Friday; you'll have three days—Friday, Saturday, Sunday—to think about this. Look deep into your conscience. Are you doing enough to help a fine member of this House? Did you know what you were doing at the time you did it? I can tell you, the boys in the backroom knew. The boys in the backroom knew. I sat in the backbenches over there. I know how much I knew about issues that came before the House. I knew exactly what they wanted me to know. You did not know what you were doing to Chris Bentley, and now you're doing nothing to help him.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** He's taking the bullet.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** He's under the bus, and it's a sad day. It's a sad day when that's the kind of integrity and the kind of camaraderie that rests in that party over there.

I'm almost out of time, Mr. Speaker, but the other thing that's happening is the plant is being moved to Nanticoke from Oakville—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Sorry, it's being moved to Napanee, and it should be going to Nanticoke. Nanticoke already has the lines established. There are \$200 million that are going to have to be spent on the building of power lines to bring that power to Toronto. Nanticoke already has the lines; it has a coal plant that is going to be shut down. You could replace it. You could replace it with a huge gas-fired power plant. That would be a good thing for Ontario. It would save you money. It's a willing host community, which Oakville and Mississauga were not.

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

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** This is a very sobering and very serious debate that we're dealing with this morning, of course: the issue of contempt that's been raised against the Minister of Energy, my colleague Chris Bentley.

But first of all, this morning I'd like to start off on a more positive note to congratulate Ken Lewenza and his team at the Canadian Auto Workers and the management team of Chrysler Canada, Ford Canada and General Motors Canada in reaching collective agreements over the next four years, which will provide a great deal of stability to the auto manufacturing right here in Ontario.

Just to emphasize that point, I want to note that in a recent report that was put forward by the Royal Bank, talking about the auto sector in Ontario, they put forward a note here that says, "... assembly of light vehicles surged by more than 19% during the first seven months of 2012. New vehicle production has now virtually returned to the pre-recession levels." That is a good thing for the province of Ontario, so I just want to congratulate everybody who was involved in those negotiations.

I want to spend some time this morning—there's been a great deal of talk about political calls that are made during election campaigns, prior to a campaign or during a campaign, that may have some impact on the results of the campaign. I took some time yesterday to do a little



research on the Spadina Expressway issue, and it's interesting that, way back in the early 1960s, Metro council and the government of Ontario of course started to put together a plan to build the Spadina expressway, and it was going to be built in Toronto to move vehicles in a more effective fashion, and indeed Metro council, of course, had spent a lot of time expropriating a lot of properties and shelling out big dollars to make that happen.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** And then, of course, there was a change of leadership in Ontario. Mr. Robarts announced his resignation, and then the new team came over—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you were not here before—we've had many speakers—and there was total quietness in the House, without heckling. So I would ask you to observe that. The next time I stand, it will be a warning. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, Mr. Robarts retired after a very distinguished career as Premier of the province of Ontario, and then he was succeeded by one William Grenville Davis. At that particular time, if you read a couple of the books of the day—look, I just got this one last night; interesting reading. It's Jonathan Manthorpe, *The Power and the Tories*. And in that book, of course, the advice that was provided to Mr. Davis by Dalton Camp, Ross "the boss" DeGeer, Norm "the mechanic" Atkins, Clare Westcott and others—who said, "Mr. Davis, you've got to distinguish yourself from the former administration."

Now, one of the ways they did that very, very quickly was through the suspension of the Spadina expressway, done in the summer of 1971, leading up to the campaign of 1971. In fact, I'd like to quote Mr. Davis, because he made a very interesting comment, and I'm quoting from Hansard of June 3, 1971. Mr. Davis said:

"It is our conclusion that if we are to serve adequately and sensibly the transportation needs of the Toronto area, both in the suburbs and the downtown, we must place our reliance on means and methods other than those which will encourage and proliferate the use of the passenger car as the basic means of transportation.

"In my judgment, there has been a growing evidence and accumulative experience gathered elsewhere on this continent which demonstrates the ultimate futility of giving priority to the passenger car as a means of transportation into and out of the cities.

"Further, Mr. Speaker, the government cannot help but heed the rising public anxiety and concern in questions relating to pollution and environmental control.

"I have no doubt that while the estimated cost of this expressway has doubled over the past seven years, the numbers of the general public opposed to the undertaking have multiplied many times over...I am confident that if the people of Toronto tomorrow were consulted, they

would give overwhelming approval to the decision their government has taken today."

**0950**

Interesting enough, I want to make some reference—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The member clearly is not speaking to the motion that's on the floor of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'm listening very carefully and I'll make that decision.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** The issue of seat-saver has been discussed broadly here, so I'm just putting this in some historical context. If you look at page 209 of Manthorpe's book *The Power and the Tories*, he talks about the 1971 election and how the Tories won five additional—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. I will warn the opposition one more time. The next time I stand up, I'll warn individual members. I've had co-operation all morning and I expect it to continue.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, when you look at page 209, the facts are clear. The Conservatives in that election in 1971 won five additional seats in Toronto—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Halton, come to order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** —and consequently, where were those five seats? Within the Spadina expressway route that was cancelled—very interesting.

Let's move forward to 1999. I want to talk about a very interesting individual, Mr. Schad. Mr. Schad is a multi-millionaire, has the Schad Foundation; he has been very involved in a wide variety of issues over many years. As we came up to the 1999 campaign, he was very concerned about what he considered a very barbaric spring bear hunt.

Let me tell you what happened there. I'm sure Mr. Giorno and Leslie Noble and others huddled in room 210 right down the hallway up there to decide what they were going to do. If you recall, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Schad had threatened that he was going to run a multimedia campaign in southern Ontario showing very graphic pictures of the spring bear hunt. What happened? Pow—they decided to suspend the spring bear hunt.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Point of order?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order: The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Speaker, with all due respect, he's referring to documents that none of us are privy to and some of them are dating back before 1970. I would ask that you require him to share these documents with the House, to validate these arguments he's making.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I will advise the member, who is a long-standing member of this Legislature, that that's not a point of order because

there's no requirement to share documents in this particular situation.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would advise my friend from Durham that he just has to contact Andrew McNaught, a research officer with the legislative library; I'm sure he will give him the same information I have. The library will certainly provide a large number of books; any member can go there and get them.

Let me talk about Mr. Schad for a moment—a very interesting guy. He decided that he's going to get rid of the spring bear hunt in the province of Ontario; threatened the government of the day that he would run a multimedia campaign, particularly in urban Ontario, which perhaps may have had some impact on the electoral outcome in 1999. Hocus-pocus, the spring bear hunt is gone, and we know the results of the 1999 campaign.

The other one that's most interesting that I've taken a great interest in—and by the way, if you ask the Minister of Natural Resources for a cost-benefit analysis about the suspension of the spring bear hunt, none of that material exists. So that was a decision that was made—a political call.

The second one during the same campaign was the sale of the 407. Let me get into that for a moment. The sale of 407 was interesting. The government is facing the electorate in 1999. The Common Sense Revolution said that we're going to be in a balanced budget position. They had an asset that was conservatively valued between \$6 billion and \$7 billion. It was sold to a Spanish consortium for \$3 billion, on a 99-year lease—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Oh, sorry, I thought somebody was—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No, no. I thought somebody was—if I could continue, thanks, Mr. Speaker.

In fact—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Speaker, I distinctly saw, as every member in this House and you as well, that the member from Peterborough took his seat. In this House, when a member takes their seat, they have relinquished the floor. It is time to move on to another speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I take the member's comment seriously. I believe the member believed there was a point of order because someone here stood and said some words.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I made my decision.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** To that point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Renfrew–Nipissing, I made my decision. I would ask you to take your seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Peterborough, carry on.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to finish on the 407. A decision was made to sell that very valuable asset off for \$3 billion in order for—that would be a plug number in the 1999 provincial budget, in order that a balanced budget would be perceived. It was a 99-year lease. We all know that there are people sitting in Madrid, Spain, today, in what I call the second Ontario Place, enjoying their pina colodas with the little umbrellas on their drink and getting every month their revenue cheques courtesy of the province of Ontario.

So to say that there have never been political calls during a campaign is just not a fact. That has been an issue that the opposition has been hanging their hats on. I think I clearly demonstrated this morning that, over a long period of time, there have been political calls during election campaigns.

In fact, it's interesting enough; I want to support a decision that was made by the member from Simcoe–Grey when he was the very distinguished Minister of Energy. I have great respect for him, and I supported his position. If you look at the Globe and Mail back on January 16, 2002:

“Energy Minister Jim Wilson is not able to speak freely about Ontario Power Generation, the main company he oversees as the province's electricity czar, because he has signed an unusual gag agreement.

“Under the agreement, he is to keep confidential any information the government-owned company tells him should be kept secret....

“The minister signed the pledge on September 24, 1999, nearly six months after the government created Ontario Power, one of the two main successor companies to Ontario Hydro.

“Mike Krizanc, a spokesman for Mr. Wilson, defended the agreement, saying it protects Ontario Power in a competitive electricity market,” and he went on to say that it was the right thing to do. Indeed, it goes on to say that the government refused to divulge “most of its 42 studies and other records on the lease, citing cabinet secrecy and a fear that disclosure would damage the province financially.”

Those of us, Mr. Speaker, as you have, who have served in municipal politics know full well, know very well that when things are discussed in caucus, particularly development matters, we're always cautioned that part of the discussion deals with commercially sensitive issues. That is a standard which all governments have applied in the province of Ontario in dealing with issues that could be commercially sensitive in nature. Revealing documents, in fact, may expose the province to legal issues down the road.

I want to talk about a former Speaker this morning, Gary Carr. Gary Carr was a former member of this House and a very, very fine individual who had a reputation next to none when he was Speaker. He did provide a ruling back in the spring of 2003 dealing with the Magna budget, and I just want to quote:

“Before turning to those arguments, I want to explain the meaning of ‘contempt,’ and the best way for me to do

that is to first explain the meaning of 'privilege.' Parliamentary privilege is defined at page 65 of the 22nd edition of Erskine May. Like Erskine May, standing order 21(a) indicates that there are two overarching categories of privilege. The first category consists of privileges that are enjoyed by the House collectively: the power to discipline—that is, the right to punish persons guilty of breach of privilege or contempts and the power to expel members; the right to regulate its own internal affairs; the authority to maintain the attendance and service of its members; the right to institute inquiries and to call witnesses and demand papers; the right to administer oaths to witnesses; and the right to publish papers containing defamatory materials. The second category consists of privileges that are enjoyed by individual members: freedom of speech; freedom from arrest in civil actions; exemption from jury duty; and exemption from attendance as a witness in the courts."

### 1000

He goes on, and he also goes back to a ruling that was made by a former Speaker from Peterborough, the Honourable John Turner, on May 9, 1983, with regard to privilege and contempt. I think it's worthwhile if all members would take the opportunity to read what Speaker Carr issued in 2003 in the spring with regard to the issue of privileges and contempt related to the delivery of the budget that was done at a Magna auto manufacturing plant. It was my understanding that there were gift bags that day, plastic fenders provided by Frank Stronach, as members exited on that famous day. In fact, we should take the time to look at those issues very clearly, the issues of both privileges and contempt, as they were outlined in the ruling by Speaker Carr in the spring of 2003.

I'd like to take a moment now in terms of Mr. Bentley. I have a copy here of the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, and I wanted to give a definition of "attest." The Oxford dictionary says that "attest" means to "confirm to the validity or truth" that evidence or proof has been delivered. "Attestation" is "the act of attesting" to the truth.

It is my view that by signing statements of attestation that were done by the head of the OPA and indeed Minister Bentley, all of the documents that have been requested have certainly been delivered. It seems to me that that is the crux of the problem: all 36,000 pages of documents that have been delivered, and the opportunity for the members of the opposition to go through those documents.

As I said, I want to get back to the issue of when you deal with things in municipal council, when you deal with things in caucus—when there's economic development—the issue of keeping commercially sensitive issues that are not broadly broadcast because of the unintended consequences that may exist if that information was revealed. That has been the standard of cabinets in this Parliament for many, many years.

I said this morning I supported exactly what Minister Wilson did back in 2002. As the energy minister, as related to 1999, he was dealing with some very commer-

cially sensitive information related to Ontario Power, which he said he couldn't divulge. I respect that. He is an honourable man. He made the right decision back in 1999, not unlike the same decision that was made by Minister Bentley. "We'll provide all the documents in detail"—the only ones that were not divulged were ones that may relate to some commercially sensitive issues that could potentially expose the people of Ontario to litigation down the road, something we won't want.

When it comes to energy, it's very interesting. Everybody talks about how our energy system is in a state of chaos in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I know I can't use props, but I just want to make reference to a Globe and Mail article of Wednesday, September 26, 2012. It's an ad that was taken out by our friends in the Power Workers' Union and said, "Ontario's energy advantages can help make Canada a diverse energy super-power."

I ask all members to take the opportunity to read this article. It certainly is, from Don MacKinnon's point of view, the president of the Power Workers' Union, what is going on in the energy sector here in the province of Ontario. It's not the doom and gloom that has been put forward by the members opposite. In fact, it's a very good article, a very detailed article that takes the opportunity to—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You know that the members of this assembly are not allowed to use props. I consider that that is a prop, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, I would ask him to read the article. If he's going to use it, I would ask him to actually read the article to the members of this assembly and let them hear what Don MacKinnon had to say about the energy policy of this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you very much for your point of order. I don't think it's a point of order. I've seen many members read articles referring to their comments.

The member from Peterborough.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Well, in fact, Mr. Speaker, the article's available. I don't mind quoting from it. He's talking about our work in the nuclear field, and he says, "In Ontario, new nuclear reactors will create tens of thousands of person years of new employment, billions of dollars in economic spinoffs, and additional environmental benefits." I agree, because the GE Hitachi nuclear division is headquartered in my riding of Peterborough. I've visited them on many occasions and I can certainly echo what Mr. MacKinnon says in this article, as it's quite relevant to what goes on in my riding of Peterborough, so I agree with him.

He talks about two particular areas of our energy sector where he thinks that we can make good advances. Our government policy is that generation from nuclear resources will be about 50% to 52% of our base load capacity going into the future, so that's a given. He, in fact, is supporting what we're doing in one sector of the energy field.

Mr. Speaker, with my last minute and 38 seconds, I just want to spend some time talking about the quality of a man, Chris Bentley, a gentleman who has had an exemplary legal career in London, Ontario. He spent a lot of his time volunteering to set up legal clinics in the London area. He had a great reputation as a labour lawyer, in fact, doing a lot of pro bono legal work for many, many years for the citizens in London, Ontario. Those citizens perhaps didn't get the opportunity to acquire legal services, but Mr. Bentley was there to provide it.

We are today, of course, supporting Mr. Bentley, a man of great integrity. This is not an issue of putting him under the bus. It's not an issue of getting a tow truck to pull the bus from underneath him. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is here to support an honourable member, an honourable member who has distinguished himself day in and day out in this Legislature. Our side will continue to make sure that the arguments are made on behalf of Mr. Bentley because he deserves that support.

I'm appalled. I'm appalled, Mr. Speaker, at some of the character assassination that's been going on with regard to Mr. Bentley. We'll continue this debate next week. We'll continue debate the week after that, and we can continue the debate all the way to Christmas if we want. But I just want to conclude this morning with a quote from John Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy said, "If more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place"—

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** We're speaking to the motion on the production of documents here to the Standing Committee on Estimates. At the root of this breach of privilege is not just a failure by the minister to heed the warnings of the standing committee of this House, or the ruling by Speaker Levac, to bring forth the requested documentation. No, what's at the real root of this motion of privilege is a government that is lost and that is wandering around in the political hinterlands without purpose or direction; a government that clings to power, no matter what and without purpose; a government that is no longer interested in the public interest, but only in their own self-interest; a government that is not interested in the commonwealth of our citizens, but in their own wealth; a government who no longer seeks power to advance public policy, a public policy agenda or a political ideology, but a government who seeks to advance their own personal entitlements, to enlarge their own perks and to expand their own privileges.

The Dalton McGuinty Liberals are neither the first and I'm sure not the last government to fall into this trap and this downward spiral into that deep, dark well of political power. We have seen this political death wish from all parties in the past. This is not an exclusive Liberal death wish by any means. It often happens to all parties. Unless there is a strong and determined caucus, a caucus with fundamental resolve to serve their constituents; a caucus with a backbone made of principle and a caucus with an indefatigable commitment to purpose over power, and

undaunted courage to realize that ethics must trump entitlements. Sadly, Speaker, this government lacks these traits and characteristics. They may have had them at one time—I'm not sure—but it is obvious they no longer do.

**1010**

While I've been intently listening to and watching this debate, this debate on the breach of privilege, I cannot help but conclude what I believe is self-evident: We have a government and a party that is both in disarray and in decline. Their lust for power has become so all-important that decisions are made not for the people but to keep their hands on the levers of power.

The caucus has begun to consume their individual members now, which is what is happening to this current Minister of Energy. He must be sacrificed so that the collective may continue to hold on to their entitlements and their perks. It's as if a political cannibalization has begun.

I'd like to ask the members here: Where is the member from Oakville, and where is the former Minister of Energy, whose fingerprints are all over this crime scene? And where are they in—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would remind the member, who is fully aware, that we're not supposed to mention members who are not in the Legislature.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Pardon me, Speaker. I was not mentioning today, but their defence of the Minister of Energy through this debate.

I can assure all members of the government that you will not feel satisfied or satiated when this deed is complete. Your appetite for power will require the sacrifice of others. It might be your seatmate beside you, behind you, and maybe yourself. You will find no redemption in defending the indefensible. It can only be found by seeking out and defending your constituents, their interests and their commonwealth.

I watched earnestly as the dean of the Legislature spoke—the Minister of the Environment and the member for St. Catharines. He had a powerful message in his delivery. I'm sure that there were others who read between the lines of the minister's debate and his comments as he spoke of past ministers, ministers of all parties, ministers of the crown who had recognized they had erred and had offered their resignations. The minister spoke of how members from opposite sides of the House spoke highly of those fallen ministers and strongly encouraged the Premier of the day not to accept those resignations. But those ministers remained true and stoic and left their ministerial posts. They kept their integrity, they kept their credibility and they kept their honour.

The Minister of the Environment's message to all of us and to his cabinet colleagues, the energy minister, and I think, also the health minister was that they ought to have offered their resignations. Had this been done, or if the minister had complied with his duty and obligation to this House, we would not be here today with the Minister of Energy facing the possibility of being held in contempt and being censured.

Thomas Jefferson summed this all up in a short phrase, “Nobody can acquire honour by doing what is wrong”—a powerful, short statement that sums it all up, that quote from Thomas Jefferson. It’s time that they stopped doing what is wrong.

The minister may still have a window to regain some stature and re-establish some semblance of honour and integrity, but he’d best not wait till he gets to the top of the 39th step. He must find the courage to honour this House before he takes more steps.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Can I assume the member from Parkdale–High Park has a point of order? I need to know.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Yes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to make sure the House is aware that we’ve got Phil Demers, Brendan Kelly, Brett Whitty, Glen Owen and Angela Bentivegna, who are all former Marineland trainers and employees; Rob Laidlaw, from Zoocheck; and Lauryn Drainie, a campaigner for Change.org here. They’re all concerned about the animals left to suffer at Marineland, and they wish to deliver the signatures of 80,000 people who feel the same way to the Premier. So I would ask for a page to come over.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order from the member from Hamilton Mountain.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to make a quick acknowledgement to all the folks who are here today—because the reading of my bill was supposed to happen today, Bill 110. There will be a rally on the front lawn today. I welcome them all to Queen’s Park and all MPPs to join the rally at 1 o’clock at the front.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry—and I remembered.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Point of order, Speaker: I’d like to introduce two members from my riding: Ronald Grant and his wife. Ronald is a cancer survivor. He spoke this morning at the prostate cancer breakfast. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As I’ve stated in the past, these are not points of order, but we definitely welcome all of our guests, and I thank you for your patience.

It is now time for further debate. The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. I left off earlier this morning, commenting and reflecting on the Minister of the Environment’s comments on this debate on the privilege motion. Now, I want to contrast those profound statements of our most senior colleague here in this House with those of other members of his caucus.

We have seen often some cavalier chatter by many. We’ve seen those members of the government benches who are despondent and clearly with heavy hearts on this matter, but we’ve also seen and heard those lame excuses by members from Guelph, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Mississauga–Streetsville and others.

But we’ve also heard from the Attorney General, who represents Kingston and the Islands, as he gave a historical perspective of this House and spoke highly of past Premiers, especially Premiers Robarts and Davis. The Attorney General presupposed that those Premiers would not have engaged in this activity, and they would not have been involved in a breach-of-privilege motion.

Speaker, I too hold many past Premiers in high regard. The Liberal Oliver Mowat is one of those. His legendary battles to protect the constitutional jurisdiction of the provinces are legendary. But would he have allowed his ministers to willfully dismiss a lawful request from the assembly or its committee? I think not. Laurier is another historical Liberal that I am very fond of, and he stands out larger than life as a statesman. His hallmark, “Freedom for all, privilege for none,” seems to be long lost and forgotten by this McGuinty Liberal government, which much prefers “Freedom for none and privilege for us few” as their hallmark. Laurier or Mowat would never have allowed their campaign teams to supplant the administration of government. They would not have tolerated disrespect for our Parliament.

Yesterday afternoon, I found myself fascinated with the member for Mississauga South, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and his endearing endorsement of the virtues of democracy. I listened intently as he elucidated to this House his and his party’s listening to the people and how it was this government who had found the strength to make the necessary hard choices with the cancellation of the Oakville plant.

But those were not tears of quietly shared sentiments that choked at my heart. They were tears for all those communities who have been calling out loudly and in great numbers against an industrial wind turbine or solar project in their communities, who found their voices quashed under the heavy fist of this government’s Green Energy Act that stripped them of their democratic rights because their community was not so deserving of the member from Mississauga South’s admiration for democracy.

Tell the people of Amherst Island that the people have a voice in McGuinty’s democracy and they will very readily prove to you otherwise. Ask the people of Huron–Bruce, Chatham–Kent–Essex, Prince Edward–Hastings or Durham, just to name a few. Ask them where their democracy is, and the answer is clear: There’s no Liberal seat to be saved or won there, so their voices do not matter.

The member from Mississauga South would like us to believe he and his party have affection for democracy. But it’s all a charade to them, a shell game for power, thinly veiled with redacted contracts, blanked-out emails and secret friends. Now we have the government’s

Minister of Energy called upon the altar of sacrifice by his party for withholding documents, which everyone in this House knows only proves the self-evident: that this government has been caught in their lust for power, having democracy for some when it serves them, but securing it for none when it doesn't.

But it was the government House leader's comments that provided real clarity to the failings of this government. As the government House leader spoke in glowing terms of this august institution and the honour and integrity of its members, the feint and the pretext of his disregard became apparent in his subsequent sentence as he referred to us all as a court of marsupials and was quickly admonished by the Speaker. Is it any wonder that the House leaders could not agree when the government House leader refers to honourable members of this House as kangaroos?

Mr. Speaker, a breach of privilege—and this is a breach of privilege—is a most egregious abuse and demonstration of disrespect. The continued failure of the Liberals to have regard for this assembly will invariably lead to a contempt or censure motion. I ask them to do the right thing, not for us here in the opposition benches but for themselves, and, more importantly, for the people of Ontario and for this institution that is built to protect our freedoms and to guard against injustice.

Mr. Speaker, this Oakville plant is being relocated to my riding. It's being relocated to the existing Lennox generating station. The Lennox generating station is a 2,100-megawatt gas-fired power plant. Last year, it operated at less than 1% capacity. Last year, it operated for a couple of days, mostly in a maintenance role and to provide power for its own systems. It's 2,100 megawatts. It's more than double the proposed new billion-dollar plant to be built beside us. I ask the Speaker and I ask this House if indeed this is a good and proper place for this new gas-fired power plant, beside the existing one. If this is good and proper, then why wasn't it done originally?

1040

Even more importantly, if indeed we can generate power there cost-effectively and deliver it to Oakville, where it is needed, why didn't they just turn the switch on at Lennox and ramp up from their 1% operations to 50%? That's all.

We have heard from this Liberal government that there is no other need, no costs other than the \$40 million in unrecoverables for their breach of the contract with TransCanada. Something doesn't smell right here, Speaker. If indeed that is truthful, they would have been total incompetents not to put that plant there in the first place, or to turn the switch on at the seldom-used Lennox station. We are going into billions of dollars of new expenses and costs for our taxpayers, and for what? For what? A 2,100-megawatt gas-fired plant that sits idle in eastern Ontario, and a brand new billion-dollar-plus plant being built on the same property. I don't know what OPG has sold the property for, but I think it's probably somewhat less than the billion dollars that it's going to cost us to build this plant.

There are more important details to come. This standing committee of the House, the Standing Committee on Finance, must be aware of what is going on behind the cloaks and behind the scenes of this power plant fiasco. We cannot, in all good conscience, make decisions and hold each other to account when there are such blatant, blatant contradictions and hypocrisies that are being put forth.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You do have to withdraw.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I withdraw—such blatant contradictions between what is said and what is known to be truthful.

It surprised me, Speaker. I am quite surprised, and I'll share this. I spoke with the Attorney General during this debate because, as the Attorney General said in his comments, he can see the smokestacks of the Lennox generating station from his house. Lennox is in his backyard. It has been in his backyard since the 1970s. The Attorney General said to me, "Well, that's an oil plant, an oil-fired generating station." I said, "No, Attorney General. It is indeed a gas-fired plant." Clearly, even he was very puzzled that they're building a new gas-fired plant right next door on the same property as an idled gas-fired generating plant which is more than twice the size of the new one.

And I would ask this House and ask the members to take a look at the information provided by OPG on their production levels out of Lennox. It's on the public record: less than 1%. So 2,000 megawatts of capacity sits there doing nothing as we save the seats for Kevin Flynn, the member from Oakville, and a few others.

This has got to stop, Speaker. The Standing Committee on Estimates must get to the bottom of this.

Again, I'll say, you can acquire no honour by doing the wrong thing. Acquire some honour.

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

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order for the minister.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Speaker, to the members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like for us to take a moment to honour the parents of page Jasper Hébert from Mississauga South. We have Eva Bak-Hébert and Brad Hébert here with us. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I have indicated that I've been trying to be lenient, as all members have been pretty reasonable, but we would like to make sure that if these introductions are going to take place, they take place at the beginning or at the end. This is a matter on which I want to stay focused and fluid, please.

Further debate? The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly, I won't begin by saying it's a pleasure to be speaking on this motion—I guess we're speaking on the sub-amendment to the amendment to the motion—but I do feel it's an honour to have an opportunity to stand up and speak about the situation that we've seen developing here in the Legislature over the

last number of days, if not the last number of weeks. I hope to use my time, as much as possible, to put some facts on the table that perhaps have gotten lost with some of the discussions that have gone on previously.

Like many members in the Legislature, I have listened to the remarks and the speeches made by my colleagues from all sides of the House, and again I think it's important that we make sure that everyone understands the situation as it truly should be put forward. It's important for the people who are attending in the gallery today, important for those people who are visiting the Legislature and watching on TV and others.

I am certainly very, very proud of the relationship that I have with my colleague the Minister of Energy, Mr. Bentley. I think we all know him well and respect him well. He is a man of the highest integrity, and I think he handled the situation in a fashion that truly showed respect for the parliamentary process, in light of the challenges that were being faced and the questions that he was being asked under those particular circumstances. As a gentleman who was elected in 2003 and served in a number of ministry positions prior to his position of Minister of Energy—I know that I've had a great opportunity to work with him in some of those portfolios very, very closely, and I can only say that it has been an honour to work with him. I know how much the role of an MPP and the role of minister means to him.

I do think that perhaps the most important thing we can do is to, again, remind everyone of the exact circumstances that transpired. Let me try to run through those for everyone who is listening today. We do know that since this particular debate started on the motion and, prior to that, over the last number of weeks, the official opposition and the third party have attempted to create, I think, what is a myth, and that myth is that the Minister of Energy has willfully attempted to hide or conceal these documents from the Legislature. Quite frankly, I think nothing could be further from the truth, and that's why I think it's important for us to work our way through the process.

On May 9, Minister Bentley appeared before the estimates committee. Between May 9 and July 11, he was there on a number of occasions. He appeared before the committee, and of course the purpose of appearing for estimates—others of us in cabinet have had that opportunity to appear before estimates as well. This was regarding the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister was answering questions related to a number of issues—certainly there's no question, particularly if one looks at the Hansard—committee members from the official opposition spent considerable time asking the minister questions specifically related to the two gas plants which were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga respectively. I don't think there is any argument that while he was before the committee, the minister was certainly being placed in a very, very difficult position. He was repeatedly asked to answer questions related to those two facilities. The overwhelming majority of the questions related to the outstanding

legal proceedings and the confidential negotiations that were under way.

#### 1050

From my perspective, Mr. Speaker, and I think from the perspective of many of us in the Legislature, the Minister of Energy attempted, as best he could, to strike an effective balance between respecting the estimates committee's authority to ask those questions—which included them requesting those documents—and the minister's obligation and his need to protect the public interest in the midst of what were highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigation. There's no doubt that the minister had a responsibility as a minister of the crown, and those responsibilities are different than the responsibilities that we have as members of the provincial Legislature.

Again, it's important to point out that the Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches–East York, certainly recognized, as Chair, the rather delicate, if not precarious, situation the Minister of Energy was in. In fact, the Chair, the member for Beaches–East York, repeatedly ruled that while the committee members were permitted to ask such questions, the minister was able to exercise his discretion and respond to such questions in a manner that would protect or could protect the interests of the province.

Let me just quote the Chair's remarks. Mr. Prue said, "The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions." That was one segment that I saw from Hansard, Mr. Speaker.

Another section that's important for I think all members to be reminded of is that the Chair said on the same day, May 16, "I would advise that I'm going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling."

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, the minister relied on the Chair's repeated statements and rulings that the minister was permitted to respond to questions and document requests from committee members in a manner that did protect the interests of the province.

Following that, the minister wrote to the committee on May 30 and advised the committee that he was exercising his discretion and would not be able to produce the requested documentation as they were confidential, subject to solicitor-client privilege, litigation privilege or highly commercially sensitive.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the opposition chose to ignore the flags that were raised by the minister. They certainly chose to show no restraint. That isn't something we've seen in the past, and it was unfortunate. We know, of course, that on June 5 the member for Cambridge moved a motion to report to the House the minister's failure to produce all the records, pursuant to the motion of May 16, and that of course began this process related to the contempt proceedings.

What I think is so disturbing to many of us and, obviously, particularly those of us on this side of the House, is that the official opposition and the third party, in their attempt, quite frankly, to vilify the Minister of Energy, a man of extraordinary integrity, and I think also, may I say, to score political points, will try to tell you and the public that the minister hid or concealed these records. Clearly, that is simply not true. We need to deal with the facts. I think that's incredibly important. The record absolutely shows that the Minister of Energy at all times was trying to balance—one of the great challenges that many of us have—two important yet competing public interests: the supremacy of Parliament versus the protection of taxpayer interests. As the process unfolded over the summer, I think there was further proof of the minister doing just exactly that.

On July 10, the minister announced that the Ontario Power Authority had reached an agreement with Greenfield to relocate the Mississauga facility and that the government had accepted the OPA's recommendation to relocate it to the Lambton station in Sarnia. In addition, the minister announced a few other aspects related to some other civil proceedings.

With the legal matters pertaining to the Mississauga gas plant having been settled, the minister then directed his ministry to provide the committee with all correspondence related to the Mississauga facility that was responsive to the motion of May 16, except for the records that were subject to solicitor-client privilege. Those documents were indeed provided to the committee.

Certainly, if the minister was in any way trying to conceal those documents, you have to ask the question: Why would he have released them the moment he had a settlement with respect to the Mississauga gas plant? Again, I think it's important that we continue to deal with the facts of the matter.

Speaker, if I may, I'll move on to the ruling that you made on September 13, which related also to the negotiations with TransCanada regarding the Oakville plant. They were still ongoing. As they were still ongoing, the minister was not in a position to produce the documents prior to the Speaker's ruling. On September 13, Speaker, you ruled that while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, you would set aside the matter. You asked the three House leaders to take it upon themselves to find a path that would satisfy the request of the estimates committee.

Generally speaking, I know the member could have moved his motion forward, but in this matter, with your ruling, you exercised your discretion to follow the approach—and I think it was an approach adopted by Speaker Milliken in the Afghan detainee matter—of setting aside your ruling to allow the House leaders to get together to devise a means where both concerns were met—certainly challenging, but one, indeed, where we'd like to think it could happen.

I think, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker—and I trust you will agree with what I'm saying—that what you were doing was recognizing that there were two competing

public interests at play: the interests of the committee in exercising its parliamentary privilege, unquestionably, and the interests of the government and the Minister of Energy, in temporarily refraining from the disclosure of sensitive information in the midst of commercial negotiations and related proceedings. Certainly, that gave an opportunity for all three parties, the House leaders, to talk very frankly about how we could get to come to that ruling.

Again, Speaker, you laid out that this was a pretty unique situation. It was a unique situation, unlike various other cases of privilege, and in that case, it did warrant a unique solution.

The House leaders did meet on I think four separate occasions, actually, to determine whether a solution could be found. We certainly had high hopes that the parties would ultimately reach a solution that struck a balance between the competing public interests identified in the Speaker's ruling. We tabled two separate proposals and we asked for a number of meetings. A couple of times the leaders chose not to continue to meet to discuss it. Certainly, we heard many things publicly as well.

#### 1100

This past Monday—you made it clear you needed a resolution by, I believe, the end of the day on Monday, September 24—the minister was able to announce the completion of the negotiations, the settlement of the Oakville matter. When that was announced, the minister complied. The government complied, the minister complied, and released all 36,000 pages of the records that were responsive to the original motion of the estimates committee.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the request of the committee has been standing here, so one has to ask the question: Why are we here today having this debate? I think it's not inappropriate to say that there is a political agenda at work here. There's no other way to put it other than the fact that the opposition, particularly the Conservatives, has made a decision to stop the regular business of the Ontario Legislature, bringing it to a halt. We saw it in the spring, when they were ringing bells all spring long, and now we have this process under way.

A couple of days ago, we completed debate on a very important piece of legislation, the home renovation tax credit, something that we completed third reading debate on, I believe, Monday. We could have and we should have had a vote on this, Mr. Speaker, but we are not able to do so. Here is a piece of legislation that will help improve Ontarians' lives and certainly help our seniors in a specific way, and that is being held up.

We've seen the Legislature being hijacked by this, ultimately to debate the nuance of documents that I don't think all the members have even tried to tell us they've actually read in full.

Again, I think it's just so important to remember actually what has happened here. We have a minister of the crown, Minister Bentley, again, a man of extraordinary integrity, somebody I think really, truly—if you ask each of the members individually, they would tell



you they admire and respect very much and appreciate working with him incredibly closely. It's just so true. I believe that every member across the floor would say the same thing. But we have them moving forward on a motion when the minister actually has complied with the request.

The official opposition asked for the documents. We certainly made the case that releasing those documents at that time would compromise our ability to negotiate with the company. We concluded those negotiations; 36,000 pages of documents were then provided to the opposition. We complied with their request. We followed through, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Energy followed through.

Now we have—I want to be careful with the words that I use, Mr. Speaker, because you will upbraid me if I don't—a startling process. The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington was referencing remarks made by the Minister of the Environment, Minister Bradley, earlier this week. I think he misunderstood them, misinterpreted them.

Minister Bradley, with the benefit of the long history he has had in the Legislature, was truly trying to alert us to the dangerous process that we were going down with this particular motion. He also was able to give examples—again, with that extraordinary benefit of history—of how parties have worked their way through these kinds of challenges and how members from different sides of the House have responded differently.

Nobody argues at all with the fact that, as elected officials, we must always balance the supremacy of Parliament with the public interest. There are circumstances—and I think they've been well established and I think Minister Bentley established them very well. We were in a very difficult position in terms of sensitive negotiations, but there was always a recognition that indeed it was our goal to release those documents.

What are we seeing? We're seeing the opposition throwing mud against the wall to see, quite frankly, if anything sticks. This is about partisan politics. This is not about a minister of the crown not responding to the will of the Legislature. Indeed, when he was able to do so, he has, and quite frankly it's discouraging to see this kind of process under way, particularly when we're seeing the work of the Legislature truly ground to a halt. There are a number of issues, I think we would all agree—I just heard one of the members across the floor from Hamilton Mountain talking about a private member's bill that she was hoping to bring forward today, and I don't know what will happen this afternoon.

The fact is that we are very committed to the supremacy of Parliament. We are certainly very supportive of Minister Bentley. I will acknowledge that Minister Bentley is a dear personal friend of mine, but he's also somebody I've learned a great deal from. He has served the province of Ontario in an extraordinarily positive way. This is not a process that should be carrying on in our Legislature anymore.

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

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mr. Speaker, we participate in this debate cognizant of the fact that when it concludes with

the vote that must ensue, in the final analysis, we are sitting in judgment of our colleague, the Minister of Energy. The actual wording of the motion that we are debating stands in the name of the member for Cambridge, because it was his point of privilege—acknowledged by you, Mr. Speaker—that we are technically debating. The motion reads as follows:

“That this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012; and

“That the matter of the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby re-constituted as it existed on September 9, 2012; and

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair, and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.”

An amendment to that motion has already been moved, and it reads as follows:

“That the words ‘November 19th, 2012’ be deleted and the following added ‘November 23rd, 2012’.”

A motion to amend that amendment has also been moved, and it reads as follows:

“That, the words ‘November 23rd, 2012’ be removed and the following be added, ‘November 26th, 2012’.”

You'd have to be an expert on Robert's Rules of Order to understand all that, Mr. Speaker, but thank goodness we have the professional expertise of the table staff to help us make sense of it all—and you, Mr. Speaker, your interpretation, which we highly value.

As we know, this debate has larger implications. I did not seek the opportunity to speak to this motion. I was asked to do so. My reticence was, in a sense, understandable. I know the Minister of Energy, not as well as I know some honourable members, but as well as I know many of the members across the aisle. I always say in my riding and I will say here today, Mr. Speaker, there are good people in all three parties in this House, and while we may differ in philosophy and in policy, we can agree on the ends we would hope to achieve for the province that we are all privileged to serve.

I must acknowledge that I like the minister, Chris Bentley. I have nothing against him personally, and of course, we are all honourable members in the parliamentary tradition and, more precisely, in the tradition of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Listening to his colleagues on the government side come to his defence during the course of this debate, there is no question that he is well liked and held in high regard by his colleagues in his own party, who know him best, and his constituents in London West, who know him best of all. They've sent him here in 2003, 2007 and 2011 in the 38th, 39th and 40th provincial Parliaments.

I must say that I do not profess to have the wisdom to be absolutely certain of what the House should decide on

the question before it. When I began writing these remarks last night—believe it or not, on my BlackBerry—I tried to begin with a blank canvas and tried to do so without prejudice. I reviewed again the material and the documents relating to this matter that I'd taken back to my apartment and I began to write. By 11 p.m. last night, I was finished and I'd drawn my conclusion.

On the face of it, Mr. Speaker, as you had ruled, in the Latin, *prima facie*, the minister has breached—or in other words has flouted and disregarded—the privileges of members of provincial Parliament because he refused to release documents to the Standing Committee on Estimates when the committee had duly requested that he do so.

Parliament is supreme. The government of the day is not, and no one, not even the Premier or one of his ministers, can thumb their nose at a parliamentary committee. The government strategists apparently didn't know this at the time of the Speaker's ruling, but they understand it now. Perhaps if they had studied parliamentary tradition to the same extent as they've obviously memorized Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, this debate would not be taking place today.

#### 1110

We know well the government's reasons for its refusal to release the documents. Negotiations were ongoing, we were told, with the private company that the province had contracted to build the gas-fired electricity generation plant before they cancelled it. "In light of the confidential, privileged and highly commercially sensitive nature of these issues, it would not be appropriate for my office or the ministry to disclose information that would prejudice these ongoing negotiations and litigation," the Minister of Energy wrote to the committee. Over and over and over again, month after month after month, this was the excuse.

Of course, the people of Ontario have been disappointed and angered to learn of the politically motivated decisions to cancel gas plants in Oakville in 2010 and, even more cynically, if that's possible, in Mississauga in the midst of the provincial election one year ago. They'd like us to believe, I'm sure, that it's sheer coincidence that they were able to come to a mutually satisfactory agreement with TransCanada—after months and months of negotiations that they initially intended to carry on past the by-elections and possibly even after the general election, whenever it comes—to move the gas plant to the Kingston area, nail down the agreement last weekend and announce it this Monday. They would want us to believe that it will cost taxpayers and/or hydro ratepayers only \$40 million, assuming that people won't think that's a big deal.

They expect us to believe all that? Contempt for Parliament? Where I come from, it's more like contempt for the people of Ontario.

Let's go back for a moment to the events of the past summer. Hoping that no one was paying attention, hoping that no one was reading the newspaper, hoping that no one was watching the newscasts, hoping that no

one was following social media, the government decided in July to disclose the cost of the cancellation of the Mississauga gas plant and its relocation to Lambton. We were told by the Minister of Energy that this decision—again, the one announced during the provincial election, intended to save four Liberal seats in the Mississauga area—would cost \$180 million. He sounded like C.D. Howe, the federal Liberal cabinet minister of the post-war years, who famously dismissed his responsibility as the steward of taxpayers' money when he said, "What's a million?" That statement, more than any other, heralded the defeat of the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent in the 1950s. His indifference that day in July in the estimates committee sounded like contempt not only for parliament, but for taxpayers and/or hydro ratepayers.

I was at the estimates committee that day along with the members for Cambridge, Kitchener–Conestoga and Chatham–Kent–Essex. We all asked pointed questions to the Minister of Energy. To say that he was uncomfortable would be like saying Ontario needs affordable electricity for its economic development—an understatement in the extreme. The next day, it must have been very humiliating for the Minister of Energy when his colleague and erstwhile leadership rival the Minister of Finance publicly corrected him, saying that the actual cost of relocating the Mississauga plant was \$190 million, not \$180 million, as the minister had said the day before.

What's a million? Indeed, what's \$10 million to a Liberal when you can blame it on some 60 years of inflation? In my riding in 2012, \$1 million is still a lot of money. We in Wellington–Halton Hills know that \$190 million, the cost of cancelling the Mississauga plant, is a ton of money, money that could have been used to begin to pay down the provincial debt, cut taxes to stimulate the economy, encourage job creation or invest in infrastructure projects that strengthen our long-term economic competitiveness, and protect our environment. Alternatively, \$190 million would easily build and largely equip a brand-new 60-bed hospital in Wellington–Halton Hills, or it could pay the salaries and overhead for about 380 new doctors for a year. Also, \$190 million could pay the costs associated with hiring approximately 1,900 new police officers for a year.

Let's remember another fact that the government chooses to omit from the present debate: Their rush to build natural gas-fired electricity generation plants is a direct consequence of their flawed and mistaken Green Energy Act and the feed-in tariff and microFIT programs that have followed, paying up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour for power that they in turn sell to the market for five cents a kilowatt hour or less. Approving wind farms in rural Ontario, ignoring the wishes of local residents, dismissing the legitimate health concerns, giving short shrift to the Health Canada study that was announced in July—what if the wind isn't blowing or the sun isn't shining and the power is still needed? Of course, you need back-up that you can fire up real fast, thus the need for new natural gas-fired electricity generating capacity.

Let's talk about the need for electricity at the moment. When the government initially made plans to site gas

plants in Oakville and Mississauga, they correctly pointed out that it made sense to build the plants close to where the demand for electricity was growing, for a long list of good economic reasons. The cost of transmitting electricity over great distances is very high and contributes to upward pressure on our hydro prices, upward pressure on the hydro bill. You need the lines and towers in place, and those lines and towers need to have the capacity to transmit the electricity to where it's needed. If you don't have the lines and towers, you need to build them, again, at great cost. There's also the reality of loss of voltage when electricity is transmitted, which the industry refers to as "line loss." Another big factor in siting gas-fired electricity generating plants is, of course, the availability of the quantity of natural gas that you'll need. Again, if the gas isn't available, new gas mains have to be built to bring the gas to the plant. You can't build a gas plant where there isn't gas to fire it up.

How does it make economic sense to relocate the plants to Lambton and Lennox? Where are the electricity demand studies that show that this makes any sense whatsoever? We've heard in this debate—and the government has not yet uttered a single word to refute it—that the existing Lennox station, an oil- and gas-fired electricity generating station, is almost never fired up. That means the power it can generate is rarely needed in that part of the province, and yet this week they announced they'll build a new gas-fired plant alongside it as part of the settlement with TransCanada. So we build a new plant beside the one that we hardly ever use. It's like having a barbecue on your backyard deck that you almost never use, and in spite of that, going out and buying a second brand new barbecue to put beside it, knowing you'll never use it. But it will sit there and rust, and as the years pass, eventually it will go in the garbage. That's essentially what they're doing.

Let's return now to the documents that the government released this past week. My colleague the member for Nipissing has shown me a couple of them that he made reference to earlier this week in the context of his remarks, and we see of course that there is a lot of blank—a lot of whiteout has been used. Of course, many of these documents are internal communications going back and forth in communications departments. They're not legal documents, Mr. Speaker. They have nothing to do with the legal aspects of this issue; they have everything to do with the spin that the government would hope to put on the issue and how they're going to manage the communications. That's why they've whited so much of it out.

We have seen boxes and boxes of paper and, for the media, the USB clip. Our staff has spent many hours, and into the evenings, going through these documents, and this is what we see: page upon page that has been whited out. But what the government would have described as a sincere effort to respond to the Speaker's ruling is blown away by the whiteout on so many of the documents, and all of that whiteout in a futile effort to whitewash the role of the Liberal campaign team—Greg Sorbara, Don Guy

and the others—in the decision to cancel the Mississauga plant, and likely the Premier, other Liberal Ministers of Energy perhaps and Liberal MPPs.

The truth will come out at committee in due course, as it must if anything good is to come out of this mess. It is indeed a tragedy that the Minister of Energy, a good man, is forced to take the fall for all this. If William Shakespeare were here today, he'd wonder if anyone in the government had read his works, if anyone in the government understood the themes of his tragedies, or had even spent a moment thinking of the meaning of what he had written. Themes like pride and vanity evolving—even degenerating—into arrogance, the pursuit of power at all costs, the willingness to sacrifice all principles in the name of keeping power and, subsequently, the inevitable fall.

That, in the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, is why this matter must be reviewed and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, to get the answers that Ontarians deserve, and that's why this House must support this motion.

1120

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

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Mr. Speaker, I am certainly pleased to rise and speak about my honourable colleague and friend the Minister of Energy.

The Minister of Energy, as I know him, is a person of great integrity and professionalism. He has had an illustrious career as a lawyer, an MPP and a minister of the crown, and certainly his career as the Attorney General was impeccable.

I know that today we are here because of this motion. I do not want to repeat many of the facts which I have heard in here already, but I know that the question of privilege concerning the request for documents of the government and the delay in producing the documents requested has led to this most unfortunate motion. Proceedings in this House have come to a grinding halt. It is something that I feel is important for me to speak on as a friend and colleague of the Minister of Energy.

Mr. Speaker, I reference the Speaker's ruling that a prima facie case of privilege has been established and the motion that is before the House. According to Joseph Maingot in *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, and as was referenced by the Speaker, "It is the House alone that decides whether a breach of privilege or a contempt has occurred, for only the House has the power to commit or punish for contempt."

Mr. Speaker, I will vote against the motion, and I urge all members of this House to do so. Why? Because it is the right thing to do. In this case, the documents requested have been delivered. Was there a delay? Yes. Was there an occasion for this delay?

The Minister of Energy is a thoughtful person. As a minister of the crown, he was handling a request for highly sensitive information. He is someone who understands that the unfettered release of information which will be prejudicial to negotiations into the continuation of the plants would be an issue, and, prudent person that he is, he knew that he had to proceed with caution.

Mr. Speaker, in your own ruling on the point of privilege, you stated that the “House and its committees often accommodate or respect security, legal and public policy considerations; they often accept reasonable excuses for non-production.”

Let us not forget: We are speaking about the very plant that the parties opposite insisted that we move. Did they know that there would be costs associated with their request? Of course they knew; we all knew. We knew there would be costs associated with the cancellation and relocation of the plants, and that did not deter them. They wanted it done at all costs. And of course they knew that the costs would be significant.

This certainly was not a decision to be taken lightly or hastily, and so we have to say that—and I refer to the committee Chair’s acknowledgement of the competing public interest, and of course these interests weighed heavily on the mind of the minister and the minister’s decision, and his decision was to proceed cautiously.

Mr. Speaker, again I refer back to your ruling. You said, “The Standing Committee on Estimates was unquestionably entitled to request the documents sought from the Minister of Energy....”

“I am therefore satisfied that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established.”

Mr. Speaker, you yourself quoted from Speaker Milliken’s April 27, 2010, Afghan detainee ruling: “It seems to me, that the issue before us is this: Is it possible to put into place a mechanism by which these documents could be made available to the House without compromising the security and confidentiality of the information they contain? In other words, is it possible for the two sides, working together in the best interest of the Canadians they serve, to devise a means where both their concerns are met? Surely that is not too much to hope for.” And I repeat: “Surely that is not too much to hope for.”

Mr. Speaker, it is that hope on which I speak today, the hope that we can come to a conclusion that is going to, at the end of the day, work for this House and for all parties involved, and that is not going to tarnish the reputation of a person of this Legislature who is a person of utmost integrity and professionalism.

Again, let us be clear: The documents have been produced. The government House leader has stated in this honourable House that every single document requested was released. But it appears that the main opposition—and I heard someone speak about Shakespeare just a moment ago. It appears that over there, on the other side of this House, the main opposition, akin to Shylock in William Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*, is insistent on their pound of flesh.

I would urge the members of the opposition to put a stop to this motion. In appealing to the good in you, I urge you to look inside of yourselves—and yes, I’m asking you to dig deep down in your hearts and ask yourselves, “Is this about justice?” Ask yourselves if this is what we’re here to do. Ask yourselves, “Can I go home to sleep at night knowing that I have taken part in destroying the reputation, the character”—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me.

To the last minute, we had respect on both sides for each person speaking. Let’s keep it that way.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will tell the member from Durham, who has been spoken to several times about his interjections, when I’m standing, to stop.

Carry on.

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not my intention to insult anyone; it is my intention to put my piece on the record about what I feel about this minister.

Ask yourselves, “Is this what we came here to do?” Ask yourselves, “How do I feel in taking part in destroying the reputation, the character and the integrity of the Minister of Energy, all in the name of getting a political advantage?” I don’t think any of you can answer “yes” to those questions. I don’t think any of the members opposite can have any peace if you allow this motion to proceed.

I tell you, I haven’t been sleeping lately, and I can assure you that I usually sleep like a baby. But why can’t I sleep? Because these last few days have been the darkest days for me in this Legislature, seeing a motion that is so frivolous and vexatious before this Legislature and, more particularly, against one of the finest members of this Legislature.

I heard one member opposite, over there mention the Latin phrase “*audi alteram partem*,” the words written over the doors of this great chamber. That phrase was my favourite Latin phrase in law school, and when I walked into this chamber and I looked over those doors and saw that, I felt good to be here. I felt proud to be here. It had true meaning for me. But today, I feel deeply saddened, because I believe in justice, and I believe justice should be the fundamental tenet upon which decisions in this House are made. I must say to you that while the words “*audi alteram partem*” denote the right to be heard, implicit in that phrase is the right to be treated fairly and justly upon being heard.

Ask yourselves, “Is this fair and just treatment of the Minister of Energy?” And let me point out to you that the answer to that question does not only affect him; it will affect his family and his children; it will affect his legacy. Think about your families and how hard you have worked to build your reputations to leave a legacy for your children, just to have it taken away by partisan policy. I say it’s bad, very bad—not good.

The Minister of Energy should not have his reputation, his character and his integrity impugned because he dared to act responsibly, given the position he was placed in, in waiting for the ruling of this esteemed Speaker of the Legislature and in acting within the time period prescribed by the Speaker.

The important business of this honourable House has been disrupted long enough by this unfortunate debate,

not to mention the continuous ringing of the bells to stop the people's business earlier this year. The work of the people of Ontario has to go on. They send us here to do it. We should not cast it aside due to the pursuit of partisan politics. Important business of this esteemed Legislature is at a standstill.

I was looking forward today to the debate of my proposed Wireless Services Agreements Act this afternoon, but, no, this House is today tied up with this frivolous and vexatious motion. What has occurred is unfortunate, and it is not reflective of true—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll just take a moment. Thank you.

It being 11:30, this House is recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1131 to 1300.*

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

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** As I rise again today, Mr. Speaker, I think it is apropos in the matter at hand to refer to a quote from the late Viscount Hewart, a former Liberal member of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom, a member of the Privy Council and former Attorney General, like my friend and colleague was. He said, and I quote, "Not only must justice be done; it must also be seen to be done."

That is why I rise in this House to speak against this frivolous and vexatious motion. I have stood up for justice all my life. Knowing the Minister of Energy and the relationship I have had with him since I was elected in 2007, the character, integrity and plain decency of this person, if I did not stand up when I see a miscarriage of justice in the making right here in this Legislature, I would be remiss and irresponsible.

When I was first elected to this esteemed Legislature, Mr. Speaker—and I speak personally now—I was new to politics, a neophyte whose only claim to power was having been elected by the people of Scarborough–Guildwood. There was much transitioning to do, and as I tried to find my way, there was one person in this Legislature who stood out in my mind. It was the then Attorney General, now Minister of Energy. He sat to my left, in this very seat where I now sit, and he always had an encouraging word for me. When I went to cabinet and I was nervous about a presentation that I had to make, he would come over to my chair and talk to me about my presentation before, and he would give me some encouraging words at the end of cabinet. He would come over and he would put his hand on my shoulder and say, "You did good," even when I didn't do so good. There was one time when I presented and someone asked me a very difficult technical question, and before it came back to me, he addressed the question. It was as if he knew that I may have some difficulty with the question and he wanted to pre-empt it—a selfless and empowering act of kindness, I would say.

I would dare to say, Mr. Speaker, much like how Daniel Kahneman speaks of his friend and collaborator in

his Nobel Prize winning book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*—and I paraphrase—I found in the collaboration that the minister "frequently saw the point of my sometimes-vague ideas more than I did," and he provided "an unfailing sense of direction."

Those are but a few examples of the minister's selfless and empowering acts of kindness. That is why I stand here and make these statements today, Mr. Speaker, among so many other things that I said before.

While some may look at me just as a neophyte, a black woman who came not from money or power, the minister saw in me a person worthy of his attention. But that was not all. He saw a little bit more. He saw how difficult it must have been for me to be the only black person in the Ontario Legislature and a neophyte here, and the best part about all of this was I never had to say anything to him. He knew, as if he had a sixth sense. He had a sense of decency that I needed some help, someone to uplift and empower me, and I felt his acts of kindness were like he was saying to me, "I know that you can be just as good as me if I give you a hand up." He voluntarily took on the job of being there for me, much like a guardian angel. For that I thank him, and I say that he demonstrated to me, beyond the shadow of a doubt, what a kind and decent person he is.

On a professional level, I saw the minister as a person of the utmost integrity and sound judgment. When he spoke at cabinet, it was well reasoned and with much confidence. I saw the respect that other members accorded him and felt he was someone to emulate.

My feelings in this regard remain the same today as each and every day that I have been in this Legislature since 2007. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened that I have to be here in this Legislature speaking to a frivolous and vexatious motion against someone who is a truly decent and respectable person of the utmost integrity. I beseech you to reconsider this motion in the interests of justice.

I would remind you that both the opposition and the third party did not just ask, but demanded, the cancellation of the plants. The residents of Oakville and Mississauga wanted the plants cancelled. The people spoke; we listened. That, Mr. Speaker, is the foundation on which democracy is built: listening to the people. We listened to the opposition party, too, and they all knew there was a cost to taking that step, but the principle of democracy triumphed.

It is time to stop the partisan games and get on with the people's business. This House has ground to a halt. The Tories spent all spring delaying—

**Interjection:** Who wrote this?

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** I wrote it myself, thank you very much. I speak from the passion that I believe is the truth.

The Tories spent all spring delaying the people's business. You have delayed the business of the House by ringing the bells ad nauseam and prevented this House from conducting the people's business. You asked for documents. We concluded the negotiations and we deliv-

ered the documents to you in compliance with the request. The document request has been satisfied. Now you're making a mockery of the institution of Parliament by impugning the reputation of an honourable minister, an honourable man who has served this province with distinction, to gain political advantage. That is not good.

What is occurring is unfortunate and not reflective of true justice. To my friends—and, yes, that includes all of you over there on the opposite side of this House—I know you have heard this phrase before, and I quote: “Be careful of the power you wield.” Today I say to you, do not rise up with a sword to strike our friend, our esteemed colleague, a person of great integrity and character, but rather rise above partisan politics and wield the sword of justice.

I would close by quoting someone I have truly admired, one of the greatest freedom fighters of all time and a person who truly understood justice, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, who once said, “True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” In this House, justice should prevail.

Thank you very much.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now back to reality. I rise today to speak to the very serious matters before us and, like many who have spoken before me, I do so with purpose but without pleasure.

This time last year, my days were spent going door to door in my community of Burlington, talking to everyone I could about what mattered most to them: the issues and interests that gave them reason to get out of bed in the morning, the concerns that nagged them, the worries that kept them up at night. Going day to day and door to door, I never took anything for granted. I understood that long hours, challenging work and devotion to your constituents is what makes it possible for us to be here in this place. We are their allies and their advocates. We are guardians of their trust, and, together, of the trust of all the people of the great province of Ontario.

I will not claim that it is easy work, Mr. Speaker. I doubt any of us would, however long would have been served in this place. Politicians as a group have never had a smooth relationship with the people they serve. I know that from campaigning and from constituency work since being elected. Some people have very intense feelings about the work that we do, and not always in the way you would hope. But I am grateful for all political conversations, pleased to be in this House, and honoured as always to be working for the people of Burlington and Ontario.

That said, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply disappointed and saddened to be debating this matter. I am disappointed and saddened to have to plead the case that the people deserve to know what is done in their name, on their behalf, with their money. I am disappointed and saddened to have to argue that needless secrecy should be weeded out wherever it appears. I am disappointed and saddened to have to insist that when a government talks about its commitments to transparency and accountability, it means just that, full stop.

In its words and in its actions, this government has shown that it has no real commitment to transparency, that it apparently doesn't feel answerable to the people of Ontario. It pains me to say it, but that's where we are today. The government has not made a sincere and full disclosure.

**1310**

Once again, we are dealing with something that should, in a better world, be unthinkable: the political motivations surrounding the cancellation of two gas plants. We are trying to get to the bottom of a series of events surrounding the abuse of taxpayers' resources for nakedly political ends.

Speaker, we pursue this matter in order to fulfil our responsibilities as the official opposition and to ensure that the public interest is upheld. It is not a personal matter. It is not a partisan matter. It is a procedural matter. The Legislature has a right to these documents, and yet the Liberals continue to show disdain for these rights and privileges.

Commenting on this very serious debate, the Premier remarked to the Canadian Press that, “I'm hoping that the opposition will have their fun, come to their senses and recognize that we've got to move beyond this.” Speaker, this is not a matter of having fun, and I am frankly dismayed that the Premier views this matter so lightly.

The principle of responsible government is one where we charge cabinet to make decisions on behalf of the people of Ontario. In turn, the cabinet must be held accountable to the Legislature. This is a principle that goes to the very heart of our democratic system. No member, no minister, no party, no government can claim that it has a monopoly on the public interest. This is a matter that must be dealt with by the House as a whole, which can debate and decide this matter once and for all. The Speaker said as much when he noted that, “a decision to be selective with respect to production is a decision for the House or the committee.”

We do not pretend to know what exactly is missing from the package, but it is clear that it is far from complete. It is clear that the package does not comply with the Speaker's ruling and that the government's actions run counter to ancient parliamentary rights.

And it is equally clear that a point of privilege remains and we debate this matter here today because of the minister's conscious decision. The minister would have understood his decision challenged the rights and privileges of the Legislature and its members. It is a decision that the former Attorney General would have understood better than most; he would have known that he was courting a contempt ruling.

His refusal to fully disclose the request details took place on multiple occasions over several months, and every step of the way, he understood the road he was on. For reasons we cannot guess at, the minister has chosen to take the hit for his government. That is his choice and his choice only. This is a cabinet minister who has refused to completely disclose information related to the partisan cancellation of power plants and carefree

spending of taxpayers' money. They cannot go unchallenged.

Restoring the people's faith in government is without question the defining challenge of 21st-century politics. That's true around the world, but it is especially true in Ontario, a province whose government has spent most of the last decade reeling from scandal to scandal.

For the last nine years, the government opposite has demonstrated most of the worst habits of modern democracy. The people want to believe in better, and in order for us to transform this province into the Ontario that we know it can be, we need to do better.

Ontarians care about integrity. They want bold leadership, capable of making decisions that are courageous, necessary and right, and they expect their elected representatives to be true to more than just partisan lines and the politics of convenience. We are caretakers of a fragile trust, and each of us plays a very important role.

We must take steps to regain and maintain the confidence of our communities, and we must rebuild civic engagement among young Canadians who continue to feel the system neither speaks to them nor represents them. We must take steps to regain or maintain the trust of our constituents and our communities, because it is only through recapturing the respect and admiration of our citizens that we will restore Ontario to true greatness.

There was a rush of new blood in the House around this time last year and another since then, but unfortunately there are still too many reminders of the stagnant legacy, chronic mismanagement and misplaced priorities of the McGuinty government. Hansard is thick with their scandals—and two of those scandals are, of course, the cancellation of the power plants in Oakville and Mississauga. Through all of these sorry events, we have heard a lot of talk about transparency, but more to the point, we have seen a government that is secretive above all else, a government that is still apparently unable to deal with the reality of minority government.

Ontarians expect a government that is confident and competent enough to open its doors to the world without resorting to the black box hocus-pocus of backroom deals and a party loyalist turned super-connected lobbyist.

We've heard time and time again members opposite, sentimental and somewhat patronizing, talking about the noble PC governments of the past. I find these high-minded put-downs not only unbecoming but entirely out of place, given their own track record.

Contrary to the wisdom and advice of the power authority, the government made a hot political decision rather than a cool, rational one. The reason for the Oakville plant's cancellation, as we've heard from some members on this side of the House, was that the generating capacity predicted when it was commissioned was later found to be surplus to capacity. In other words, Ontario didn't need that plant. Ontario already had enough power—more than enough power—so much power that any additional plants would be unneeded. The realization came late in the game because the due diligence had apparently not been done before signing the contract.

Oversight and due diligence were also in question in Mississauga.

On September 24, 2011, just 12 days before the provincial election, the Premier announced that he was scrapping a controversial gas plant in Mississauga. Almost a year earlier, in October 2010, the Premier made a similar announcement that he was scrapping a \$1.2-billion, 900-megawatt power plant in Oakville that was already under construction. The loss of those two plants made it possible for the government to hang on to a handful of seats. These shamefully wasted resources, spent to do nothing at all, Mr. Speaker, except to make a problem go away, came at an enormous cost.

I've talked before about opportunity cost, the things that we could have done but now cannot because of our chosen course of action. The \$190 million, which was said to be the cost of the Mississauga cancellation, could have provided a year's tuition for 27,000 Ontario students. It could have paid for well over 6,000 cancer treatments or go to hiring more than 2,000 nurse practitioners. It could have made winter easier for vulnerable Ontarians, but of course it did not because this government had other priorities, because this government saw a more urgent need.

In light of these scandalous events, the people of Ontario have rightly asked: What was really going on? Who was calling the shots, and what were they thinking? Someone recently wrote that this was either incompetent planning or political opportunism, but it could have been both. The chain of events that led to this decision to cancel these plants speaks to the worst of government. It is trumped only by the decision made since then to suppress all details related to those cancellations in contravention of a parliamentary privilege and a breach of the Speaker's ruling handed down on September 13, 2012, when the documents were ordered released.

The notion floated by the government that these documents are complete is far-fetched on a number of levels. For one, as has been pointed out, they appear to contain no communications from the current or former Minister of Energy, and no communications from the Premier's office or from the Liberal campaign staff who, by some accounts, were shockingly involved in the decision to close power plants.

Those gaps are significant enough, but then there are the deletions, whiteouts and omissions, and intentionally blank pages, that are sprinkled throughout the documents. Attachments referenced in letters are routinely left out. Entire chains of correspondence are not even included in the so-called disclosure packages. These documents were delivered as supposedly complete, but they are clearly anything but that, Mr. Speaker. It's confusing.

The morning that they released these documents, the government announced that a settlement between the province and TransCanada for the cancellation of the Oakville power plant had been reached, and yet thousands of pages are missing or whited out within this raft of documents. At least 1,000 documents have nothing in them but a title.

Imagine for a moment someone cutting Genesis or Exodus out of the Good Book and then expecting you to accept what is left over as the Bible. That is the extent of the omission we're talking about here.

Picture yourself watching a film that had every 10th frame taken out. You would have a serious flicker. It would be like trying to focus on the bulb in a strobe light, Mr. Speaker. No reasonable person would believe for a second that they had just seen the extended director's cut, and yet that's the extent of omission we're talking about here.

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On the face of it, the documents that were tabled midday Monday would be, to most people, a crushing load, even if it was on a thumb drive. And indeed, 36,000 pages of documents sounds, to many Ontarians, like serious disclosure. Yet the questions we must ask are: Is this enough? Is this everything? In a matter such as this, in response to a request such as the one that has been made of this government to table all documents related to the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville power plants, compared to "all," is "reasonably complete" enough, Mr. Speaker? I would argue it is not.

There are still glaring gaps in the government's account. What we have learned since this process first began in the spring is troubling enough. With each new account that the government has been prepared to offer Ontarians, there are as many shocking details as there are inconsistencies and inaccuracies.

The Mississauga plant cancellation that we were first told came at a \$180-million cost is soon discovered to have had another \$10 million attached to it. And as the member from Nipissing pointed out earlier this week, we have discovered an additional \$5 million since then. This is just one example related to one aspect of the closure of one of the two plants addressed in this request. There has been, and there continues to be, a pattern of evasion used by this government. Let's give them their due: They are very, very good at it. But the time has come to stop the spin.

When I came here, I was taken aback by the way this government, despite its talk of co-operation and collaboration, routinely snubbed suggestions from the parties opposite, how this government routinely ignored opposition members' input and generally behaved as if there was nobody else in the room, then acted as if we were the ones being difficult. That may be fair play during question period, but this is another matter entirely.

As I remarked in my maiden speech, the Legislature is an expression of our highest aspirations for ourselves as a people, and even though the right choices will often be hard to swallow, and while the chemistry of this session may be difficult, we must not flinch from making the decisions that are in the best interests of Ontarians. This is a case in point. We in the House now find ourselves in a strange and uncomfortable moment in Ontario's history. What we expected of this government was full disclosure; what we demanded of this government was full disclosure. Full disclosure was their legal obligation,

and it was a legal obligation that the government has clearly failed to honour.

Four months ago, there was an order issued compelling the Ministry of Energy to table all documents related to the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville power plants. Earlier this month, that directive was repeated by the Speaker in a ruling that indicated that the government was bordering on contempt. It is clear that what the government has offered this Legislature and the people of Ontario is not the whole story. Transparency is transparency, Mr. Speaker. If you are being partially transparent, you are being opaque.

We've heard about this idea of unrecoverable costs and unstated costs—hundreds of millions, perhaps billions; so many zeros that you lose track. I would argue that not all of these unstated costs are financial. This government's actions have had, and will continue to have, a very real impact on the business of government. They will ripple through this House and across the province. And until this issue is resolved, there will be a very grave stain on the legacy and reputation of this government.

This failure to fully disclose does more than obscure the facts around an embarrassment to this Liberal government; it does more than impede the health of our system of government. It feeds cynicism and distrust around the entire concept of modern government. Ontarians expect better, and Ontarians deserve better. We, as Progressive Conservatives, and our leader, Tim Hudak, will offer that to all Ontarians. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Tuesday, September 25, 2012, was a sad day in the history of this House and will be recorded in history as such. The reason was the motion tabled in this House by the honourable member from Cambridge.

I rise in this House today to speak on this motion and express my deep disappointment. I have known the Honourable Chris Bentley for a number of years—five of those years as his colleague in this House, and after that, one year as his parliamentary assistant at the Ministry of Energy.

I want to take a few moments to talk about the accomplishments of the Honourable Chris Bentley in his portfolios. As we all know, he was elected to this House in 2003, and upon his arrival in this House, he was responsible for five portfolios. He was appointed first as Minister of Labour, then minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, then Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, then Attorney General, followed by the current ministry, Minister of Energy.

In his capacity as Minister of Labour, he hired 200 more health and safety inspectors. He ended mandatory retirement, which is a milestone in the labour history of this province. He raised the minimum wage, which was kept constant for the past 13 years by the previous governments. He established a review of the WSIB and



brought in radical improvements to help injured workers. He signed a federal-provincial deal to ensure employers paid payroll taxes and WSIB premiums.

At the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Minister Bentley launched Employment Ontario, providing newcomers with greater access to skills training and career opportunities. He revamped OSAP; introduced the Reaching Higher plan; provided a student access guarantee; introduced the pre-apprenticeship project and other apprenticeship training initiatives; and improved access to post-secondary education for aboriginal students.

In his capacity as minister responsible for aboriginal affairs, he established the \$13-million Métis development fund; strengthened the northern economy through the northern training partnership fund; signed a memorandum with First Nations to continue a tax exemption after the HST was introduced; and during his tenure, Ontario received a public service award from the United Nations for its work with aboriginal communities.

In his capacity as Minister of the Attorney General, the Honourable Chris Bentley reformed the Family Law Act to make divorce—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. There are several discussions going on in the chamber and it's very difficult to hear the speaker, so I'd ask you to keep your voices down.

Carry on.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** He reformed the Family Law Act to make divorce proceedings faster and more affordable; introduced the Good Government Act; increased transparency for the justice system; provided more help for male victims of sexual abuse; introduced Justice on Target that reduced the average length of criminal case proceedings by 30%, which was a very important step forward in our justice system; reformed Legal Aid Ontario; launched Ontario's new human rights system, creating a tribunal and commission; resolved lawsuits more quickly by changes to monetary limits of the Small Claims Court; introduced stricter rules for young offenders who drink and drive; and updated provincial liquor laws.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk in this House about the decision being made to relocate the power plants in Mississauga and Oakville. In order to provide some context for the decision to move the power plants, I want to provide you with some examples of support from local residents and also local politicians.

**1330**

Gary Carr, chair of the regional municipality of Halton, on July 15, 2009, in a letter to the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, writes: "The regional municipality of Halton calls upon the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure to terminate the procurement process to site any electrical generation capacity in the Clarkson airshed area that would adversely affect ambient air quality in the Oakville and surrounding area."

Emil Kolb, the chair of the regional municipality of Peel, on August 6, 2009: "The regional municipality of

Peel calls upon the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure to terminate the procurement process to site any electrical generation capacity in the Clarkson airshed area that would adversely affect air quality in the Clarkson area."

Terence Young, Conservative MP for Oakville, in a letter to the Premier, the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, on November 9, 2009, writes: "Further to my October 15 letter wherein I enclosed 133 petitions opposing the planned gas-fired power plant in Oakville, I now enclose 35 additional petitions signed by concerned Oakville residents...."

In addition to these three politicians, we also had over 950 letters from members of the public sent in to protest the building of the Oakville power plant.

Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, the opposition, on the other side of the aisle, also called upon the government to move the power plants. I want to take this time to read into the record just a few notable examples of the PC and NDP members showing their support for moving the power plants from Oakville and Mississauga.

The member from Halton—I'm quoting from Hansard, June 1, 2010: "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them."

MPP Toby Barrett, in a letter to Minister Duguid on June 21, 2010: "The potential for future alternate generation at Nanticoke to replace that slated for the proposed and disputed Clarkson plant should receive ample consideration."

The member from Halton, in a press release on September 14, 2010: "Minister, will you move the Oakville power plant?...."

"I am asking the minister to consider moving this plant."

The NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, on March 3, 2010, in the *Globe and Mail*: "Gas plants should only be a last resort and should be built away from densely populated areas."

Mr. Speaker, we took all the above advice into consideration and made the right and responsible decision. We are a responsive government and, as such, made the decision to move the power plants. We did what we were elected to do. We heard real concerns from families, local politicians and opposition members, and we responded. We wanted to ensure that no plant went forward in Oakville, and we took action.

The decision to move the plant to Lennox is creating local jobs, and the party on the other side is dead set against the creation of hundreds of local jobs in Napanee. Mr. Speaker, let me bring some quotes from local residents and politicians.

Gord Schermerhorn, the mayor of greater Napanee, is quoted in the *Kingston Whig-Standard* on September 25, 2012: "It's 600 construction jobs, 25 permanent jobs, and millions of dollars spent in the construction. It's going to be the most up-to-date plant that could possibly be. We're very happy about that."

Stephen Paul, who is the director for economic development for Lennox and Addington county, in the

Kingston Whig-Standard again, on September 25, 2012: “From an economic development perspective this is a significant investment by a private corporation and the government in our community. Any time we have that happen, which creates 25 new permanent jobs and up to 600 construction jobs, that’s a pretty significant impact for Lennox and Addington county. This isn’t something that comes around every day, and for a rural community, it will be a significant investment...”

“[T]hese are well-paying jobs, highly technical, highly skilled, and that’s important for a community to be able to attract those jobs here.”

Mr. Speaker, the motion passed in the estimates committee states: “that the Standing Committee on Estimates, herein ‘the committee,’ under standing order 110(b), stating that ‘each committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and things,’ directs the Minister of Energy as well as the Ministry of Energy and Ontario Power Authority to produce, within a fortnight, all correspondence, in any form, electronic or otherwise, that occurred between September 1, 2010, and December 31, 2011, related to the cancellation of the Oakville power plant as well as all correspondence, in any form, electronic or otherwise, that occurred between August 1, 2011, and December 31, 2011, related to the cancellation of the Mississauga power plant.”

I just want to quote a few paragraphs from an article published in the Globe and Mail on Wednesday, January 16, 2002, under the title “Gag Order Keeps Nuclear Lease Secret.”

“Energy Minister Jim Wilson is not able to speak freely about Ontario Power Generation, the main company he oversees as the province’s electricity czar, because he has signed an unusual gag agreement...”

The agreement “places almost unheard-of control over what a minister is allowed to say in the hands of a company he oversees. It gives the company the ability to restrict Mr. Wilson’s use of information, even though the province owns Ontario Power and presumably could issue directives to it....”

“Mike Krizanc, a spokesman for Mr. Wilson, defended the agreement, saying it protects Ontario Power in a competitive electricity market.”

The motion that was tabled on Tuesday, September 25 by the honourable member from Cambridge, Dr. Rob Leone, states:

“I move that this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012; and

“That the matter of the Speaker’s finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby reconstituted as it existed on September 9, 2012; and

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.”

Mr. Speaker, the ministry staff began to work overtime to get the documents prepared in a diligent and responsible fashion. The motion set above shows the irresponsibility of the opposition party and the political games they are playing with not only this side of the House, but with the people of Ontario. I sat on the estimates committee and observed the minister responding in a very responsible manner to all of the questions put forward by the opposition. As a lawyer, the minister was very much aware of the sensitive nature of many of the documents provided. As such, he was not able to provide detailed answers to some of the questions due to solicitor-client privilege.

**1340**

Mr. Speaker, the motion asked for all correspondence which occurred over the 15-month period relating to the Oakville power plant and over the five-month period relating to the Mississauga power plant. As you can imagine, the set of requested documents would be quite significant in size. Not for a second did the members on the other side think about the unrealistic timeline they had set for the government to produce such a set of documents, documents which, when finally prepared and delivered, are now being attacked by the opposition in yet another political tactic to tarnish not only this government’s reputation, but that of the Honourable Minister of Energy.

The minister complied with the ruling of the Speaker and the motion of the estimates committee. The minister released documents at a time when an agreement was reached and the interests of ratepayers would not be compromised.

There has been a lot of talk about blank pages and the sections being redacted or whited out. This is part of a very sad tactic by the opposition to taint and bring forward doubt about the documents which were provided by the Ontario Power Authority. So in simple form, I will try to address the topic of the redacted sections.

The motion brought forward at the estimates committee clearly states as follows—and I am going to paraphrase: “all correspondence, in any form, electronic or otherwise, that occurred between September 1, 2010, and December 31, 2011, related to the cancellation of the Oakville power plant as well as all correspondence, in any form, electronic or otherwise, that occurred between August 1, 2011, and December 31, 2011, related to the cancellation of the Mississauga power plant.” This is exactly what was provided. The sections that appear to be redacted are sections that do not relate to the above motion and do not relate at all to the decision to move the Oakville and Mississauga power plant. It is that simple, honourable members of this House: We are not hiding anything. We have provided all documents requested, nothing more and nothing less. If they look at the documents, they will see that all pertinent information relevant to the committee’s request and in line with the Speaker’s ruling have been released to the Clerk.

It is sad to see the political games being played by the opposition. It is sad—the accusations of deception being made indirectly by the statements being made, in the nature that the documents provided are incomplete.

Mr. Speaker, we are here talking about a man who is highly respected in his riding, who is highly respected in the province of Ontario, who is highly respected as a lawyer, who is highly respected as a professor, who is highly respected as a member of this House, and who has been elected three times to this House, and a man who held five cabinet positions in the past nine years. He is a sincere man. He is a man with high dignity and integrity, sincerity and professionalism. The motion is nothing except tarnishing the remarkable reputation of such a human being.

I urge all members of this House to reject this motion. In particular, I urge the honourable member from Cambridge to withdraw this motion and let this House continue its business. Let this House continue dealing with the business of Ontarians.

My time is almost finished, but I'm just going to say a few words about Minister Chris Bentley's accomplishments as Minister of Energy and also his ministry's accomplishments in the past nine years. In the past nine years, just for example, we have created 10,000 megawatts of generation capacity in order to meet the power shortages which we faced in the past. We've invested \$13 billion in new generation since 2003. We have brought a renewable energy policy to Ontario. We are closing coal-fired plants. We have already shut down nine plants, and we are shutting down the rest in the next few years.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Simcoe–Grey.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Speaker, to get the business of this Legislature focused on co-operatively moving meaningful legislation forward through this House, I seek unanimous consent to reconstitute the Legislature's standing committees immediately with the existing committee structures as they existed on September 9, 2012.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I have a request for unanimous consent. Agreed? I heard a no.

Further debate? The member for Oshawa.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Moving forward, again continuing on with the main motion—actually the amendment to the main motion of Mr. Leone, which is that this House direct the Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately—immediately—with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, which is very key, Mr. Speaker: May 16. We're going back to then, and I'm going to bring that into the debate as I talk about this, because we're talking May 16 now, and here we are in September.

This went through on May 16: "That the matter of the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with

respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby reconstituted as it existed on September 9, 2012." That is very key, because after September 9, we all realize what's taken place with the committees, as my good colleague our House leader brought forward. He tried to bring forward unanimous consent to reconstitute those so that we could continue on.

I'm going to enter this into the debate, and I'm going to respond to a significant number of earlier debates brought forward by the member from Peterborough as well as the Minister of Natural Resources and a number of others that I'm going to include in my debate.

"That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair": Now, I realize that in order to be in compliance with this, we have to ensure that the Speaker allows the prima facie case to come forward, which includes the correct wording, and of course that includes "at the call of the Chair." The Chair of the committee of finance and economic affairs prior to September 9 was a government member, so the concern there is what will take place, should this move forward at that particular time, and when this moves forward, regarding the ability of that Chair to call the committee to order.

There is an understanding that there are 10 days of time by which we will move forward, and I am moving forward and discussing the contents of the actual main motion and getting to the other part.

It "... shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012," and then it was amended by Mr. Leone to read "That the words 'November 19, 2012' be deleted and the following added: 'November 23, 2012,'" which was then re-amended by Mr. Tabuns: "That the words 'November 23, 2012' be removed and the following be added: 'November 26th, 2012.'"

Part of that is, as I mentioned, the wording "at the call of the Chair," and the concern, if it's chaired by a government member of committee, if that individual would call that committee.

I've sat in committee as a Chair in the past, in a previous government, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the record will show that I called a very contentious issue before my committee when I had that opportunity to utilize that 10-day period and I didn't. I moved forward with the calling of that. I'm not going to discuss that; that will be up to the government members to review those options. Quite frankly, the third party brought it before the committee at that time, and it was quite congratulated for the fact that we moved forward in the proper proceedings in the operations of the House.

You see, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with these operational functions of the House, we, as opposition, have certain abilities by which we can operate in this House, and that's complying with the rules and the guidelines that have been established and issued to every one of our members here and all members of all parties.

The Speaker has determined, quite frankly, that this debate is well within the rights and the rules that have been brought forward. We're hearing from a significant number of members that are coming forward today, and as they have yesterday, stating that it's a waste of time and it's inappropriate and all those matters. Well, quite frankly, the Speaker has ruled on that, and that is questioning the Speaker's ruling every time they say, "Stand up and say that," which is disallowed in our House. Quite frankly, we may be starting to call these individuals to question when they start to do it because I've now brought it forward that every time that they say that it is not right, that is questioning the Speaker's ruling, because he's decided that the debate is warranted and allowed to move forward.

**1350**

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the rules and how debate proceeds and the fact that this is continuing on, all we need to do is look at the past—you may correct me; I'm not sure whether I'm in the right that if a member is no longer sitting in the House I can mention him by name—the actions of Mr. Curling in the House and the filibuster that took place at that time. Now, we only look and see what happened with the House and how the House reacted when we were in power at that time and what the opposition members did.

**Interjection:** They forget.

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Yes, many of the members forget, and it's important for us to remind them of these things that have taken place.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Oh, yes. Well, there was a number of members that utilized that, an extensive period of time.

All governments go through a learning period, as we did when we first formed government in 1995. If you look at what took place with the NDP at that time, in regard to the large filibuster that took 10 days—10 days—with Bill 103, where we learned at that particular time—and I don't see it happen too often anymore—where we brought the bill to the committee of the whole as opposed to a separate committee. Once it entered the committee of the whole, that opened a whole new series of rules that allowed the opposition members to use those rules to their advantage, which allowed that 10-day filibuster at that particular time to take place to bring forward an issue at the expense of government and disallowing other actions moving forward in key business of the House. As opposition members, we only have certain aspects that we can use, which are the rules. We are complying with those, and we'll continue on to use those rules to our advantage in every aspect.

As I listen to the debate here today, I hear a certain two levels of debate taking place. I'll ask the members, or whoever else is watching, to look at Hansard. What is taking place is that we're hearing different key messaging coming forward from cabinet and from the other members of the government as it is taking place. You're certainly hearing three key specific aspects from

the cabinet members when they speak. One is very prominent, which is to support their member. What that tells me is when they're supporting the member, it's because a decision was made at a cabinet level—we only have to interpret what's taken place—and that those individuals were privy or part of the decision-making process, and they need to stand behind and support their member. That is coming forward very strong.

Not only that, but we're also hearing compliance. So first, it is support the member. Secondly is that they want to emphasize that there is compliance with the guidelines of the Speaker. That's being constantly mentioned, that here it has come forward that these individuals are complying with what's taken place, or the government is complying, with the Speaker's ruling and have complied with the timelines and everything given.

But what happened to the first date that I mentioned very clearly, that took place in estimates on May 16? It was from May 16 until September that we had to go to the Speaker in order to get the compliance to take place. So from that period—from May 16 to September—from our perspective we were not in compliance with the guidelines of the committee, which is the order of the House to produce this documentation. So compliance was not taking place in any way, shape or form in that until the Speaker had to step in and force the government to do so, which initiated the debate that we're now entered into.

Not only that, but the last thing that we're hearing from the cabinet ministers—so first was support of the member, second was that there's a compliance with the guidelines, as we're establishing, and thirdly was that the opposition parties were part of the decision-making process. Quite frankly, no. I mean, they're in government for a reason. They're in government to make decisions. They are the ones that made the decision, and from my understanding there is somewhat of an event that the government members will be attending this weekend to try to assure the attendees at their large event this weekend that "The other parties were all part of this process; it's not just us."

Well, quite frankly, that's not the case at all. What we're seeing here is that the decisions were made from the very support of the individuals who are coming forward being cabinet ministers supporting their cabinet colleague and would indicate that there is large compliance in that. The reason I mention that is, if we're dealing in a court where we're discussing these issues, look what took place with some of the other issues. What happened with, for example, eHealth? With eHealth, there was something substantially different: The minister stepped down. This minister—and quite frankly the minister in Ornge—is not stepping down. What might be the possible reasons for that? Well, look what happened. Our understanding was that the minister who was at the helm at eHealth when the Auditor General's committee brought it forward—I was a member of that committee—and then lo and behold that individual stepped down, and our understanding was that they would be put back into

cabinet, the next one to come back in. And lo and behold, that didn't take place.

I would question the members to look at the debate level by that individual who was removed from cabinet and the private member's bills that were introduced by that individual at that particular time. That certainly wasn't with government policy at those times and, quite frankly, broke ranks, and unfortunately the individual is no longer here with us to continue with us because they would be an individual of dissension, or perceived dissension.

What's taken place now is that—"No, we can't have that take place again. These individuals will remain in cabinet and we will stand behind them because we can't have the dissension in the ranks that came forward in the past," from the past experience when a cabinet minister was removed from their cabinet.

You only have to look and see—and we have to try and move forward with all these discussions of what's happening, and how we can try and make sense of it all in the fashion that we are given here.

I would certainly say—and to the government members, I would say—from what we're seeing here, that the government advisers are certainly well informed about all the details that have taken place. And I would make sure that, as a government member, any future aspects that come forward—that they're well informed on all these things that are happening, because quite frankly, the government members are hearing about this in their ridings on a regular basis. When the decision was made by cabinet, these individuals were not privy to it, from what I'm seeing and hearing and getting the sense of, to the extent that they should be, because of the sheer response that they're taking from the individuals—you want to make sure that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Well, we all have that sort of perception, as my colleague the member from Durham mentions, about a mushroom aspect.

As I've said on a regular basis, the challenge to change is found through the analysis of self and the acceptance of fault and responsibility. In other words, we as individuals have to be able to stand up and find out for ourselves, and not be dependent on being given the information on a regular basis. So I would certainly hope that those individuals out there would make sure that, in the future—and any other possible others were coming forward.

We mentioned about the committees not being struck, Mr. Speaker—the Auditor General's committee. Well, this may be a little bit of a surprise, but if the Auditor General is not in committee every Wednesday and Thursday when it's sitting, the Auditor General is back out doing more research and finding other areas that may be contentious. Look at the Ornge issue and what was taking place there, and many other aspects coming forward that give the auditor more time, as opposed to being in committee, to do the research as necessary.

I want to get into some of the responses from the member from Peterborough and his remarks in the

Legislature. He had mentioned about a number of other issues dealing with government operations and funds, such as what I've already mentioned, regarding eHealth and what took place there. But the member from Peterborough had mentioned certain things such as the Spadina Expressway and what had taken place.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** Of course, I was listening; I'm paying attention. Sometimes people are surprised but, yes, we sit, we listen; we don't look at the face but we listen to the dialogue—

I went and did the research on it; a couple of differences here. One is the payout in regard to the cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, which was not mentioned at all because, apparently, it didn't appear to be that there is any equivalency of payout in regard to that issue when it took place.

When we're talking about the lines, the \$220 million in transmission lines, the over \$200 million in the turbines along with the \$195 million, and in the area of \$650 million of a cost to cancel the plants, as compared to the Spadina Expressway, which didn't have that cost at all.

The other aspect about the Spadina Expressway was the fact that it didn't take place during an election, which was very concerning, because the other issue taking place during an election, you know—we constantly hear about the seat-saver component where individuals were saved seats as a result of it, but it didn't take place. So it was a little bit—not apples and apples; we're talking potentially apples and oranges here.

I'm going to go on about some of the other things the member from Peterborough mentioned. He mentioned the spring bear hunt and what had taken place there. Of course, the member would know that the courts in Kenora—when it was challenged in the courts—specifically stated that governments make political decisions on a regular basis and had every right to do that.

What he may not have mentioned was the article or the editorial in Ontario Out of Doors shortly after that. It was by Burton Myers, the editor and publisher of Ontario Out of Doors, where he specifically stated that he was surprised that it happened. Not that we weren't warned, mind you. It goes on to say that Conservative MPP Jerry Ouellette from Oshawa spoke to every individual possible, himself included, and everybody knew what was happening, but nobody did anything about it, just like him, because he was more concerned with taking the family to Vancouver on a vacation.

**1400**

The point being here, Mr. Speaker, that there was large dialogue. There were groups and organizations that were participating in that particular possible political decision that was made, yet what happened here? Where was the political decision? Where were the members? Quite frankly, that issue was discussed extensively within caucus on a regular basis, and a call to arms was sent out to every major organization—those in Peterborough and through the entire province—and nobody said anything

because it appeared that nobody cared on that issue. Where were the caucus members on this particular one and how informed were they? That's the point I'm trying to make here, Mr. Speaker; that it certainly didn't appear to be at the same sort of level.

Some of the other things that the member from Peterborough stated: Certain documents were determined to be on the ability of the committee to deal with, because it wasn't in the public interest. What the member had said was that the minister had determined that there were documents in there that would not be in the best public interests to decide. The difficulty with that is, when you make statements like that in the committee—which is giving guidance to the government or the ministers and direction on how things should happen—it should be followed through, and they weren't. The Speaker has made a decision, and guess what? That's why we're here debating that, because that decision was not a correct decision at that time.

To use the same comparison, though, during the Ornge committee debates, we had legal individuals who were sitting in the committee at that time to ensure that there was no disclosure of anything that might prejudice a future case coming out of that, to ensure that there was compliance with the guidelines of the committee and to ensure that, if there were other actions to take place, it could move forward.

What's happening here is, one committee is doing one thing—the Auditor General's committee brings in legal representation to make sure there's complete compliance and disclosure of all details—yet in the other committee it's, “No, we're going to decide. This is in the best interests and this is how it's going to unfold.” Well, the reason we're here debating this is because it was the wrong decision to be made. We want to make sure that future aspects like that don't continue on.

The Minister of Natural Resources had mentioned, I believe, that there was a political agenda here. Well, the political agenda is: We have rules and guidelines that we have to comply with. We only have the ability to use the rules to our advantage to move forward, to bring points forward to the public. A lot of the public in our constituencies are not well aware of what has taken place with the closure of these two plants, and we're trying to ensure that they are fully aware, that they are given the opportunity through media outlets and through the avail of this debate to continue on to gain a full understanding about what's taken place, how that decision was made and the end result of the cost to the taxpayers.

The movement of that plant was discussed by the previous member, from Richmond Hill, and the fact that there were hundreds of potential jobs. Were they saying there would not be those hundreds of potential jobs in Oakville when that took place? But also, the impact of that is that transmitting that energy required to those locations where it was set to come forward is going to have huge impacts, and we can talk a little bit about that. The Ministers of Energy and those energy experts, as my colleague from Durham is, talk about line loss. If you try

to send that energy from where the plant's going to go to where it was slated to go, you're going to have huge amounts of line loss, so you're going to have to produce more energy in a less effective manner and a more costly manner to the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. When you talk about these things like, “We're just moving it to another location,” there is huge impact that that's going to have.

We in Oshawa—and as the member from Peterborough mentioned, it was good to see that Ken Lewenza and the CAW and General Motors came to conclusion, that those individuals will be back in there. Quite frankly, I have some strong concerns that, at one point, General Motors in Oshawa had over 22,000 workers—we certainly don't have the numbers there that are there now. I can tell you, when we were given the privilege and honour to govern, the number one question was, “Do we have to work another weekend?” The number one question in today's economy is, “Have I got a job?” We want to make sure that we can do as much as we can to keep those people working everywhere, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the difficulty, though, Mr. Speaker, is that we have two different levels of compliance. So when the Minister of Natural Resources says that we have complied as the other ministers have in this House, what they're not talking about is the fact of what their understanding of compliance is. They bring a document forward that's 36,000 pages, but there are 1,000 pages whited out and potentially over 2,000 pages missing. How is that in compliance?

That is something else that needs to be determined, Mr. Speaker: At what level do we determine that compliance has come forward? Certainly when you receive documentation with a large number of pages—over 1,000 pages whited out and potentially over 2,000 pages that aren't even there because the trail seems to end at that particular point. From our perspective as opposition members, we will continue to use the rules to say that we don't think there's compliance here.

We would like the committee to move forward so that we can get down to the bottom of this. If the government is really concerned, I don't know why. It happened last in 2008. They haven't tried to move forward in asking for the question to come forward in order to move forward with their supposed agenda.

Those are the issues I wanted to bring forward, to make sure they're on the record, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

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

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to be involved in this debate today. The first thing I want to say is to put things into context.

Last Tuesday, the Speaker made a ruling, and that ruling has led to this debate here. That ruling basically said that—I'm not going to repeat it all—“While the Speaker may find that a prima facie case of privilege exists and give the matter precedence in debate, it is the House alone that decides whether a breach of privilege or

contempt has occurred, for only the House has the power to commit or punish for contempt.”

Then he finally goes on—and I’m just going to quote towards the end of it—and he says, “Either way, it is the House, not the Speaker, that is in the position to make that determination.

“That being the case, I understand that the member from Cambridge has been advised on what an appropriate motion would be in response to a prima facie finding of breach of privilege such as this. I will now turn to the member from Cambridge to determine if he does wish to proceed with that motion.” The member from Cambridge did proceed and produced a motion, and the motion basically says, “That the matter of the Speaker’s finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates, be referred to Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby reconstituted as it existed on September 9, 2012; and

“That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair, and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.”

That’s the motion that’s in front of us. It has been amended twice, both changing the date—one was moved to a different date, becoming November 23, and then a further motion changed the date to November 26. We’re presently debating that second amendment. We are going through that process. We’re still discussing the main point that the Speaker brought forward on this issue. Since there are two amendments, we follow the rule that we debate the amendments first. We’re debating the second one regarding the date, and we could actually potentially, after that’s dispensed with or voted upon or put aside—then we’d have the first amendment to deal with. Every member would have a chance to speak for 20 minutes. There are 107 members in total. The Speaker doesn’t speak, so conceivably 106 members could speak on this, not once and not twice but three times, on the second amendment, the first amendment and the motion itself.

Everything in this House has been brought to a grinding halt as we deal with this issue. We started dealing with it on Tuesday. There were speeches made on Tuesday, speeches made on Wednesday and there are speeches being made today, on Thursday, and we’re still on the second amendment. We don’t meet here on Friday. We come back on Monday and we’ll continue. We’ll continue with the second amendment, and go back to the first amendment later and debate that. A whole new set of speakers line up and debate that first amendment. Finally, once that’s dealt with by 106 members, we can conceivably go back to the first actual motion that was put forward by Mr. Leone from Cambridge and actually debate his motion. From a procedural point of view, Mr. Speaker, we could be here for a week, a couple of weeks or several weeks if we decide to take this out to the full extent.

What I want to do is just bring out my point on this. The Speaker basically said in his ruling on Tuesday that

“I think there’s a case potentially of a prima facie breach. Therefore, I’m going to let the House decide. You guys talk it out, debate it amongst yourselves and decide whether or not we’re going to find a case of contempt.”

**1410**

So we could be here for days and weeks discussing this, and as a part of parliamentary procedure, we go through this exercise. There’s no real rule written down somewhere that it’s exactly what we have to do. It doesn’t say, “You must do this, this and this and therefore find this.” It’s all part of the parliamentary custom or tradition that exists, not only here but in Parliaments throughout the world, and these customs or traditions are unwritten rules that are followed by a legislative body.

For example, in this Legislature, when the day begins, there’s a parade that comes in. I think it comes from downstairs. The Speaker comes in with the clerks and the Sergeant-at-Arms. They come in and bring the mace in. The Speaker takes his chair, and then the Sergeant-at-Arms puts the mace down and goes to his seat and sits down, and the day begins. There’s no rule—you won’t find that anywhere in the standing orders—but that’s what we do as a tradition or a custom in here.

My argument today is that there’s nothing written about what we’re doing today, but it’s going to be basically determined by custom and procedure. We can debate this, finish the debate in the next day or two, or we can go on for several weeks. We could send it to the committee, or we could decide, “No, let’s end it here and vote on it here”—either send it there or not. So there are many options in front of us, and these are not necessarily options that we have to follow. We can do whatever we want, basically, on this issue.

What has happened here is that the matter has become extremely political. We’ve got the opposition saying, “Let’s go on. There is a case of contempt here, and let’s go forward and punish the minister responsible, the Minister of Energy, or else we keep on debating this.” We, as members of the government, have gotten up and defended the integrity—and I do too—of the Minister of Energy, and there’s no doubt about that, his integrity and so forth, but we have also discussed the fact that he’s an honourable man and that we should end this now.

But I think the point that’s trying to be made here, in my view, listening to the many speeches, is whether or not we should politicize this and punish one member of this Legislature for an action that he supposedly did. In my view, he released the documents, 36,000 pages of documents, as requested by the Speaker, and fulfilled the request that was made. The opposition wants to take it further and has decided to go into this whole issue of punishing the Minister of Energy even further. My argument is that, as custom and tradition, we should not go any further. The thing should come to an end, and that should be it.

I’m going to give you an example, Mr. Speaker, which we all know well. The budget is usually presented in the Legislature, but there’s no rule that says that Ontario’s budget shall be held in the Legislative Assembly at

Queen's Park. So several years back, the Premier at that time, Mike Harris, and many of his cabinet ministers and colleagues in government at that time decided to hold the budget at Magna, an auto parts plant located here in the GTA, some part of the greater Toronto area. There was outrage about it. There was outrage from the public, the media and the opposition that the Magna budget was held outside of here, but there was no rule written that the budget had to be introduced and discussed here in this Legislative Assembly. It was still allowed to be presented as a budget because, again, parliamentary custom and procedure are unwritten rules, and basically the most important thing was, in that government's view, to present the budget at that time of year, springtime of that year, and they decided not to have it here and to have it somewhere else. This assembly was vacant, and there was not a single person sitting in their chair. I think some opposition members were here for a few days, and then they left and everything was shut down. The budget was communicated through the media from the Magna plant. The point that I want to make, again, is that at that time the members came back here to Parliament, to the Legislature—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Could I ask you guys to keep it quiet or take your conversation outside? I'm trying to listen to him, and you're very close to me. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Getting back to the Magna budget, at the end of the day, when the members of the Legislative Assembly came back, the motion was put forward—I think it was by the opposition—to find that the government was in contempt of the Legislature for holding that budget outside this Legislature.

The same is happening today. There is an attack by the opposition saying that the Minister of Energy is in contempt. But the problem is, in contempt of what, and for what reason? He complied in every respect with what was requested by the Speaker, and he presented 36,000 pages of documents, information around the two plants that were being constructed in Oakville and Mississauga. That information was released last Monday night, I believe. The next day, there was a motion put forward to take this to a committee and look for a prima facie case of contempt.

I think it should stop at that point. We don't need to go any further than what the Speaker requested us to do: discuss the issue amongst ourselves. It becomes personal when we decide, "You know what? Let's go after the Minister of Energy and embarrass him in front of his colleagues, in front of his family and in front of the public in general." I think that's wrong. Based on tradition and parliamentary custom, he did comply with the Speaker's request, and we all know here that he complied. He released the 36,000 pages.

The opposition has mentioned several times that many of the documents were whited out. What I think really

happened was that they were photocopied over one night. I don't know when it was, but they were released, I think, on Monday at noon, so it must have been on Sunday—I'm not sure exactly when—that the documents were all put forward. The Minister of Energy, who is an honourable man, as a member cabinet, basically said, "These are honestly all the documents that I have," and gave them to the Clerk.

The Clerk's office then photocopied them. I don't know how they could do it so fast; 36,000 pages is a lot of documents. Now it could be that you have a page similar to this one with some information on it, and it could have been photocopied on the other side, so you end up with a blank page, and someone says, "This has been whited out." I'm not blaming anybody here, but it could be that perhaps, in those 36,000 pages, a couple of the pages were photocopied on the back.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** That's what happens with those keys, right? What do they call them? EB keys?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Yes, you basically take a USB device, which stores memory, and you photocopy all these 36,000 pages. Then you put them into a USB memory device.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Stick.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Memory stick. Thank you, member from Peterborough.

Then that's handed over to the opposition. The opposition then puts it in their computer, presses print and 36,000 pages are printed. I would never, ever point my finger toward the Clerk's department or any other department here. At the end of the day, we're accountable for what happens in this Legislature.

So you get 36,000 pages and some of them are blank. The opposition is going to jump on it and say, "Aha, a blank page. It's been whited out." Well, it can be the photocopier itself that is copying pages and then accidentally copies a blank page. So let's not jump to conclusions here and say the minister—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Should have been a Xerox—better quality.

1420

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** We should not jump to conclusions that some pages were whited out. I mean, 36,000 pages is a lot of pages to review. I think we would be best served if the opposition looked at those pages, reviewed the pages that are there—the 36,000—and then determined whether or not all the information has been provided. The minister has said, "These are all the documents I have." He signed a letter saying, "These are all the documents that I have in my possession," and all these documents have been released now. They're public.

The opposition and the public in general have a chance to look at these documents, and they're doing that right now. It doesn't take a day or two; I think it takes several days. You want to follow up on some of the information that's in front of you to make sure that everything has been complied with and, if not, then argue that later on.



But the most important thing of all is that there is a certain tradition in here, parliamentary custom, unwritten rules that we follow. The minister has complied with what was requested. The Speaker said there may be a prima facie case of contempt, of breach here, and basically said, "Members of the House, do it yourselves. Discuss it amongst yourselves and determine amongst yourselves what to do." There was a motion that was passed on Tuesday morning, which I mentioned. The member from Cambridge asked that this matter be taken to a committee and be debated there and reported back, whether that be November 16, November 23 or November 26.

My argument is that that's not necessary. I think the documents are there, the information has been released. In my view, if the Speaker were to ask me, "What do you think, member from Scarborough Southwest?" I would say that the minister has honourably complied with the request that was made by the opposition. The documents are out, and they have a chance to review them.

I think this Parliament would be better served if, instead of pushing aside all business to argue this motion in front of us, which we've done, we had regular proceedings, which include an hour every day between 10:30 and 11:30, question period, to ask questions. That's when the opposition has a chance—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, given the gravity of the topic under discussion, I would ask if you would check for a quorum.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Check that we have quorum.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Anne Stokes):** A quorum is present.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** A quorum is present. Proceed.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I'm not sure if that's parliamentary procedure or custom, I'm not sure if it's written down. It is written down, actually, in the standing orders.

What I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that we have complied and the minister has complied, and we are not utilizing the time and this institution in the best way possible. I think that the most important thing is that if we were involved in regular business, the opposition could hold us accountable, hold the government accountable, using the documents they have obtained, by asking questions of the minister, the Premier or any other member of the executive council, otherwise known as cabinet.

Instead, we have decided to descend into this debate, and I think it lowers the institution. Other members have articulated it much better than I have, but it lowers this institution completely to a much lower level when you have this kind of debate. The better road to have taken is to have received those documents, read them, come to question period and start asking questions of the gov-

ernment. We had Tuesday, Wednesday and today where there has been no question period at all, and if this goes on next week or for several weeks after, you're going to have question period deferred or cancelled or not held at all, and the truth will not come out, because we're not actually involved in asking any of those questions, if the opposition has concerns, and holding the government and the minister and the Premier accountable for what happened with those two gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

In my view, it's unfortunate. We all know, when we walk out of here at the end of the day, what has happened, what we're doing here, and that's the opposition trying to embarrass or censure or find that the Minister of Energy is in contempt of this Legislature. I don't think he is; I think he complied. He released the 36,000 pages and he fulfilled the request made by the opposition. The Speaker basically has said, following his own parliamentary custom and procedure, "You know what? I'm not going to rule on this. Let the members here discuss it and bring me back a recommendation or a finding."

Mr. Speaker, I know I've gone on on this one issue, but it really speaks to me a lot. I have not argued the issue of the integrity of the minister because there is no question that he has integrity; there's no question that he's an honourable man. The issue becomes procedure. In my view, the better way to proceed would have been to have question period and follow those procedures rather than stall this Legislature and bring to a grinding halt the work that is required to be done by this Legislature for the good of the taxpayers and the people who live in Ontario, the approximately 13 million people who live in this province. That's what I'm here to do. I'm here to work for that instead of trying to politicize this and trying to go after one member and embarrass him.

I thank you for the opportunity. I would like to go on longer, but I understand my time is 20 minutes, and that time has been completed.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Let me begin by asking all of you to think back to September 2011, if, like me, you were engaged in the ritual of elections. In my case, I remember this particular date in September 2011 because a call came to me that I needed to be at someone's house in the Holland Marsh, part of my riding. That was because at another point—that is, in Mississauga—the McGuinty Liberals announced that they would not be proceeding with the Mississauga gas plant. The government has admitted that this decision was done in reaction to overwhelming community opposition prior to the last election campaign. There's a quote: "This was a campaign undertaking at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision, which occurred after the election." This is the quote of the finance minister in estimates on July 19, 2012.

I remember that morning very well because the press was there, the mayor was there, other community leaders—but most importantly, the people who lived right in the immediate neighbourhood. We were all there because

the government had decided that this was a good location for a peaker plant: in northern York region.

I'll come back to that in a moment, but I want to set the stage because of the fact that, very clearly, we have an admission that this was a political decision. This had nothing to do with whether it was necessary.

I want to jump ahead to September 13, 2012. This is when Speaker Levac rules that there is a prima facie breach of privilege and says that Bentley is obligated to table documents and Parliament has an absolute right to call for people, papers—that would be papers that have stuff printed on them—and things, per the standing orders and ancient rights.

As a result of the Speaker's ruling, it became very, very clear that there were certain ground rules, just two of them. The one quote, "The right to order production of documents is fundamental to and necessary for the proper functioning of the assembly"—and with all due respect to the previous speaker, I would suggest to him that blank pages do not offer that opportunity. The Speaker goes on further: "The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records." Certainly, we've heard comments to the contrary by those across the aisle.

The other thing that I think is important to set the stage is also the question of, what does it mean to have a contempt ruling against you? The Oxford Dictionary describes it as "a feeling that a person or thing is beneath consideration or worthless, or deserving scorn or extreme reproach."

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I think it's important to keep that in mind because, besides the question of the contempt of the minister in the case that the Speaker has ruled on, I'm going to suggest that there's a greater contempt. There's a greater contempt that's greater and much more than that of a single minister. It is the contempt for good and honest government and for the people of Ontario.

I look back at some of these demonstrations of what I consider to be the greater contempt. We look at a billion dollars wasted on eHealth without any kind of transparency. We look at the months that we have tried to bring to scrutiny the whole debacle of Ornge, and then the Premier stands in front of us and urges us to hasten passage of Bill 50. Of course, he didn't introduce it, necessarily, at the point at which he was asking us to debate it. But he's described that, particularly Ornge, as something that shouldn't be repeated, almost assuming a kind of mea culpa, that "I've got a bill now that will cover off everything that went wrong." Of course it leaves out the fact that Ontario had a very successful air ambulance service for decades prior to the Ornge scandal. Most recently, he explained his position of this sort of mea culpa arrangement when he discussed, only a day or two ago, the success of the gas plants, and, well, it was only two gas plants that were a problem out of 17. I think many of us would say that this demonstrates a greater contempt.

When you start looking at some of the pieces of legislation and some of the decisions that have been made, I

think it becomes clearer, when you look at no clear, coherent or scientifically based system of planning for public policy in the province of Ontario. I'm reminded of the Green Energy Act, with no local input. I look at the decision to put a gas plant in Bath, which is just this side of Kingston, and that is going to require a grid improvement to be able to get to GTA west—a \$200-million improvement. And there's no transparency in our system. We asked for months to know the details of Samsung. Actually, I think that's when we found out what re-dacting means.

But the question, then, that that really begs when we're talking about the greater contempt is, why didn't this government establish clear policy for our energy needs for the whole province? How difficult is it to find out what global positioning means? That's a line hidden on the electricity bill. Why didn't it simply follow the environmental assessment process to decide whether energy plants adversely affected human health and the environment? If the government knew how to plan for the future, it wouldn't have the problems it has had building new plants. It wouldn't have panicked in the election and cancelled the Mississauga plant. So I think it's really important to understand that there is a bit more to the contempt, as we begin to look at some of the actions taken by this government.

I mentioned already the Green Energy Act, which was to eliminate the possibility of a NIMBY influence. I think there's a certain irony now when you look at what's happened in Mississauga and Oakville, a very expensive NIMBY influence, I think. But part of the revolutionizing of energy production was the dismantling and decommissioning of the coal-fired furnaces.

In 2001, Elizabeth Witmer, the then Minister of Energy, announced the closure of the Lakeview generating station. In the election of 2003, both the Liberals and the Conservatives promised to close down the rest of the electricity-generating coal-fired furnaces. The difference was that the Liberals promised the completion by 2007; the PCs by 2015. I remember asking the minister, why the difference in timing? Simply put, one was the assessment of experts; the other, wishful thinking. Today we have reduced coal-fired energy in the province, but no party can claim to have a monopoly on the decision to close down those furnaces, despite the rhetoric of the government.

As part of the shift, gas plants were introduced—northern York region was a site. I want to take members back to the time when the member for Oakville was busy trying to get the plant stopped in Oakville. I had the opportunity to speak to his bill, and I made a few comments at that point that my constituents were undergoing, obviously, the same kind of concerns with the energy plants: "The government first tried to meet this need by building new power lines" and then they changed and decided to go to a peaker plant.

"I note that the member for Oakville wants to ban peaker plants from coming any closer than 1.5 kilometres to a school or a residential area.

“Let me inform this House that the peaker plant planned for my riding is a lot closer than 1.5 kilometres from the Holland Marsh District Christian School.” The plant, as proposed at that time, beside the Holland Marsh itself—the source of most of our summer vegetables in Ontario, and on the very land that this government “thought vital to be included in the greenbelt.

“A few short years ago,” they had “deemed this land to be protected from intrusion. Now the government,” at this time, was “prepared to sacrifice the principles of its own greenbelt law.”

So the question, then, of the greater contempt grows, as you can tell.

The next opportunity was a couple of years ago, when the Environmental Commissioner made some comments about the government’s decision. He “revealed the sham that is this government’s environmental protection system. He revealed that local citizens had made multiple requests to bump up the peaker plant in my riding to a full environmental assessment. He said that the requesters made compelling arguments.

“People are worried about possible impacts of the proposed natural-gas-fired generator on local farmland and water, and whether the plant conforms to local and provincial planning policies. The province denied their request, and the commissioner said that if a request was not granted in this case, it is difficult to imagine a situation when such a request would be approved. In fact, the commissioner could not find any bump-up requests that this government has granted.”

So it doesn’t use its own laws; it wants to exempt the whole project from the Planning Act; and as I say, it is a demonstration of these issues.

I note these examples from my own riding to illustrate a point. We would not be here debating this contempt motion if it wasn’t for the government’s confused, ramshackle and frankly incompetent approach to our energy system. The power plants in Oakville and Mississauga were proposed and are necessary because we need the power; because the Liberals plan on closing all of Ontario’s coal plants; because the Liberals aren’t making any lasting decisions on our nuclear plants. So they went ahead with these power plants but got cold feet during the election.

This government has shown contempt for many in our community. One only has to look, more recently, at its contempt for the horse racing industry, its 60,000 jobs, its \$2-billion contribution to the Ontario economy. The horse racing industry had a contractual arrangement that this government cast aside. Hard-working, successful people in the industry woke up one morning to find their lives, their incomes and their futures destroyed by the stroke of a pen. Some \$50 million was tossed their way to help them go bankrupt and unemployed and euthanize their horses. This is surely contempt for law-abiding citizens of Ontario.

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When we look at the problems of the deal that has been made, when we look at \$450 million to be used for

the transfer of these plants, there are more examples of the greater contempt when you think of how badly this province needs (a) its energy and (b) its transparency and rules to be able to follow and to be able to grow our economy. Instead, we toss money aside, surely to the contempt for law-abiding citizens.

It is a group not yet mentioned for whom this Liberal government has demonstrated its greatest contempt: my constituents, those people who live in places like Port Bolster, Cookstown, Bell Ewart to Cook’s Bay and many places in between. Those people are the people who work hard to raise their children, to pay their mortgages. Those are the people who coach a sports team, support the Lions and take pride in their community and its well-being. They obey the laws and pay their taxes.

They are also like the vast majority of Ontarians. They want to have respect for the people they elect. They want to trust the people they elect to act with the greater good in mind, to act prudently and judiciously with their money. They have witnessed the opposite. They have witnessed millions of dollars tossed away for the convenience of a political party desperate to save seats. They have watched how the infrastructure of a complex process like the siting of a gas plant and the accompanying environmental process—even the bricks and mortar already in place—can disappear with the ease of seeds from a dandelion in a warm summer breeze.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It’s a great metaphor. It’s a wonderful metaphor.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you.

“Contempt” is described as “a feeling that a person or a thing is beneath consideration.” Feelings are not static. They grow in strength or gradually dissipate. The danger of contempt is that this feeling will grow. It will be fed by cynicism, directly related to lack of plan, lack of accountability, lack of transparency, money tossed to cover up and to silence, and rules as flexible as an elastic, led by a Premier who, at the end of the day, must answer to the people of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I rise today to debate this motion with much sadness. Mr. Speaker, let us begin with the facts. In the 2011 provincial election, all three parties promised to cancel the Mississauga gas plant if they were elected. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hudak, on October 5, one day before the election—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can I have order in the opposition benches?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** As a matter of fact, Mr. Hudak, on October 5, one day before the election, considered cancelling the gas plant in Mississauga so important to his electoral results that he spent that morning staging a media event at the site of the gas plant, telling anyone who would hear him out that he would cancel the gas plant if he became Premier.

Asked by the media if he would scrap the Mississauga plant if he formed the next government, Hudak replied,

“That’s right. Done. Done, done, done.” So this was not a promise buried somewhere in the Conservative Changebook. Oh no. This promise was front and centre for Mr. Hudak, and the same goes for the NDP—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** May I remind the member that the rule of the Legislature is that we do not refer to people by name. We do so by their riding or their title. Carry on.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Given this context, as a relatively new MPP it is indeed very disappointing as well as astonishing that the opposition would now turn around and accuse us of doing something that they themselves promised to do. Even a grade—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Once again I’ll ask the members: The previous speakers had total silence of the House, and everybody was listening. I would expect us to provide the same to the current speaker. So I’d ask your indulgence. Thank you.

Carry on.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Speaker, even a grade 3 child would intuitively know that to behave this way is to have no credibility. This is feigned outrage at its worst.

The other issue is, what would the opposition have done had they formed government? Their options would have been to break their promise and continue to build a gas plant, or start negotiations to cancel the plant and incur the costs associated with it—I repeat, incur the costs associated with it.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Lambton–Kent, you’re warned.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Mr. Speaker, I would like both opposition parties to explain here in the House exactly what they would have done. Would they have broken their promise, or would they have kept their promise and incurred the costs associated with it?

Instead of acknowledging that outcomes would have been similar, given that all three parties promised the same thing, they choose to play dirty politics, the kind of needless politics that have ground the business of the Ontario Legislature to a halt again. The Tories spent all spring delaying the people’s business, and now this.

On Monday, Speaker, I had been looking forward to having a third reading vote—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member for Chatham–Kent, you’re warned.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** —about the healthy home renovation tax credit, something that will improve Ontarians’ lives and help our seniors. Instead, the opposition has hijacked the Legislature to debate the nuances of documents they admit they haven’t even read in full.

Let’s remember what happened here. The Tories asked us for some documents. We made the case that providing these documents would compromise our ability to negotiate with TransCanada. We then concluded the negotia-

tions, and the opposition received all 36,000 pages of documents that complied with their request. We followed through. The government even went so far as to put each and every document on a USB key and provide one to each of the opposition parties, in addition to the Clerk. The request of the committee for these documents has been satisfied. The matter should be over.

Instead, what we have from the opposition is nonsense like this statement on September 25 from the member from Cambridge. I quote from Hansard: “It’s now the end of September, and we’re just getting a few more trinkets of documents...” Speaker, since when did 36,000 records constitute trinkets of documents?

We should be standing here today working together, debating legislation to make this province a better place. Instead, we’re debating this contempt motion. Why are we doing this? Speaker, we are doing this because the opposition is trying to throw any mud, any mud they can against the wall in a desperate attempt to see if anything sticks. This motion is purely about partisan politics, nothing more. They’re making a mockery of the institution of Parliament. Ontarians deserve better.

I started with a brief background of the facts. I will now take the time to take a slightly more detailed look at how we got here. As I’m sure the members of this House are aware, the OPA contracted to have the Oakville facility built to meet the energy demands of the area at the time. The Ontario Power Authority contracted with TransCanada Energy Ltd. in September 2009 to design, build and operate, over a 20-year term, a 900-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating station in Oakville. In October 2010, the government determined that the project would not proceed. It’s a decision that was not only supported by the local community, but was supported by the Leader of the Opposition and the Ontario PCs.

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Hansard, June 1, 2010, and I quote the member from Halton: “The people of Oakville have told you they don’t want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them.”

The Globe and Mail, September 25, 2011, and I quote the Leader of the Opposition: “We’ve opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga.”

While no formal litigation resulted from the government’s decision, the government and TransCanada had been engaged in formal arbitration and confidential settlement discussions until a resolution was successfully reached on September 24, 2012.

With respect to the Mississauga facility, in April 2005 the Ontario Power Authority contracted with Greenfield South Power Corp. to develop and operate a 300-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating station in Mississauga. Over the course of the next number of years, particularly as construction got under way at the facility, community concerns were brought to the attention of the government, and of all of the political parties during the fall 2011 general election campaign.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party and the Ontario New Democratic Party made a commitment

during the course of the campaign to cancel the plant. Shortly after being re-elected, our government announced its intention to relocate the Mississauga facility. In this case, there were some formal litigation proceedings under way, as well as confidential settlement discussions in relation to the cancellation of this project, until a resolution was successfully reached on June 10, 2012. After some long and hard negotiations, the OPA and the proponent reached a deal to relocate the 300-megawatt natural gas plant on part of Ontario Power Generation's Lambton generating station site. The new site will take advantage of existing transmission and other infrastructure, as well as the expertise of local workers. The construction of the plant is expected to provide up to 200 jobs over the next two years.

Over the course of the past several weeks, Speaker, the official opposition and the third party have attempted to create a myth, a myth that the Minister of Energy willfully attempted to hide or conceal these documents from the Legislature. Nothing, Speaker—nothing—could be further from the truth.

Let's look at the facts. Between May 9 and July 11, the Minister of Energy appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates for the purpose of answering questions regarding the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister answered questions relating to a number of issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent a lot of time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants which were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga, respectively. While before the committee, the Minister of Energy was placed in a difficult position. He was repeatedly asked to answer questions relating to the Oakville and Mississauga facilities. The overwhelming majority of the questions related specifically to the ongoing outstanding legal proceedings and confidential negotiations. The Minister of Energy attempted to strike an effective balance between the committee's authority to ask these questions and request these documents and the need to protect the public interest in the midst of highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigation. He has a responsibility as a minister of the crown, and it is different from the responsibilities that we have as members.

The Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches—East York, to his credit, recognized the precarious situation of the Minister of Energy. In fact, he repeatedly ruled that while committee members were permitted to ask such questions, the minister was able to exercise his discretion and respond to such questions in a manner that protected the interests of the province. I quote the member for Beaches—East York from Hansard on May 16: "The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions."

Again I quote the Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches—East York, from Hansard on May 16: "I would advise that I'm going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may

choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling."

So, Speaker, here we have a member of the opposition acknowledging that the Minister of Energy was in a difficult situation and did need to protect the public interest.

The minister relied on the Chair's repeated statements and rulings that the minister was permitted to respond to questions and document requests from committee members in a manner that protected the interest of the province, an interest that now seems to be lost on the opposition. As a result, the minister wrote to the committee on May 30 and advised the committee that he was exercising his discretion and would not be able to produce the requested documentation, as they were confidential, subject to solicitor-client privilege, litigation privilege or highly commercially sensitive. Unfortunately, the official opposition ignored these flags that were raised by the minister. They showed no restraint, something we've seen so often, unfortunately, from the Ontario PC Party in this place.

On June 5, the member from Cambridge moved a motion to report to the House the minister's failure to produce all responsive records pursuant to the motion of May 16 and to kick-start these contempt proceedings. The official opposition and the third party, in their attempt to vilify the Minister of Energy and score cheap political points, will tell you that the minister hid or concealed these records. Speaker, it's simply not true. Let's deal with the facts. The record shows that the Minister of Energy at all times was trying to balance two important yet competing public interests: the supremacy of Parliament versus the protection of taxpayer interest.

Here is the best proof of all, Speaker: On July 10, the minister announced that the OPA had reached an agreement with Greenfield to relocate the Mississauga facility and that the government had accepted the OPA's recommendation to relocate the Mississauga facility to Lambton station in Sarnia. In addition, the minister announced that he had settled the related civil proceedings in the state of New York. The legal matters relating to the Mississauga gas plant having been settled, the minister directed his ministry to provide the committee with all correspondence relating to the Mississauga facility that was responsive to the motion of May 16, except for records that were subject to solicitor-client privilege. These documents were provided to the committee.

Speaker, I ask this House: If the Minister of Energy was trying to hide or conceal the documents, why would he have released them the moment—I repeat, the moment—he had a settlement with respect to the Mississauga gas plant? Let's deal with the facts, folks. As negotiations with TransCanada regarding the Oakville plant were still going on—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Oxford, come to order.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** —the minister was not in a position to produce the documents prior to the Speaker's ruling. On September 13, 2012—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member, please have a seat. Point of order, the member for Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, for five weeks now the Liberal House leader has refused to re-strike standing committees of the Legislature. I wish to ask for unanimous consent to re-strike so we can continue the investigation into the Ornge—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** That's not a point of order.

Carry on.

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**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** On September 13, 2012, the Speaker ruled—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I asked for unanimous consent. I didn't hear the Speaker ask if there was unanimous consent.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We're in the middle of someone's speech.

Carry on.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** On September 13, 2012, the Speaker ruled that while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, he would set aside the matter and ask the three House leaders—

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Point of order: the opposition House leader.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I respectfully request that you reconsider. The honourable member from Oxford was completely within his rights, within the standing orders of this House, to ask for unanimous consent.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I take the opposition House leader's point of order, but the member stood on a point of order, and he did not make it very clear what he was seeking until I said it was not a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I have a request for unanimous consent to move a motion. Agreed? No.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** On September 13, 2012, the Speaker ruled that while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, he would set aside the matter and ask the three House leaders to take it upon themselves to find a path that can satisfy the request of the estimates committee. The direction was clear. He sought an opportunity for frank communication to settle the matter in a way that satisfied the request of the estimates committee.

The House leaders met on four separate occasions to determine whether a solution could be found. On this side of the House, Speaker, we had high hopes that the parties would ultimately reach a solution that struck a balance between the competing public interests identified in the Speaker's ruling. The government tabled two separate proposals that would have facilitated the public release of the records while accommodating the government's concern about the ongoing commercial negotiations and related proceedings.

Unfortunately, the discussions didn't get off to a good start. The opposition wouldn't attend the meetings that the Speaker had set up last week to broker a solution. I think that's a pretty good indication of how committed they were to the process: not at all. The opposition House leaders were unwilling to consider the government's proposal or engage in any serious discussions. It's extremely disappointing, Speaker, that the opposition decided on Friday to walk away from the negotiations. It's irresponsible and shows that they just don't care about the Speaker's authority or Ontario taxpayers.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** They don't care about the Ontario taxpayers. Instead of trying to use the weekend—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** On a point of order, Speaker: I distinctly heard the member for Mississauga-Cooksville impugning the motives of the opposition, saying that the opposition didn't care about the Speaker's ruling. Speaker, that's offensive, and I would ask that the member withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** On your point of order, I did not hear the member say any such, because the place was very noisy. I've been trying to keep everyone quiet, but—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Can I finish?

But I will give the member an opportunity. If you did say it, it's really your choice to withdraw.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Mr. Speaker, in the interest of erring on the side of caution, I withdraw.

That said, Speaker, it's extremely disappointing that the opposition decided on Friday to walk away from the negotiations. It's irresponsible and, as I mentioned earlier, it shows that they do not care about the Ontario taxpayer.

Instead of trying to use the weekend to find a solution, they decided to play politics, point fingers and ignore the public interest. Instead of trying to find common ground, as the Speaker requested, they left, and used the time to spin the media with inaccuracies.

I'm disappointed that instead of working together in advancing the interests of Ontarians, we are wasting time over here. I urge this House to get back to work and work in the interests of the Ontarians who elected us here as their representatives to further their interests.

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

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I've risen here in this hallowed chamber a few times now since my election almost a year ago today, and unfortunately, I'm saddened to say that I stand here today to speak to this motion. I think most of us share the sentiment that it is disappointing that we need to take this appropriate measure to restore parliamentary procedure. As members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, it's our responsibility to hold the government of the day to account. That is our democratic duty. I'll be

talking about duty a little more later on, but it's our democratic duty.

I got into politics because I felt that the principles of accountability and transparency in government should reign supreme, and now, I stand here because those very principles are being challenged—principles on which members served, in times gone by, with distinction here at Queen's Park.

Documents have been turned over, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that they have not been turned over in their entirety. As my honourable colleague from Nipissing pointed out, repeatedly, there are thousands of pages that have been redacted, whited out or are just missing. Listening to the government try to spin this and communicate it in such a fashion, to blame other individuals who don't know how to, perhaps, operate a photocopying machine, I find it quite disheartening that they're trying to, once again, blame others for their actions. It's disappointing.

Do the honourable thing. Do the right thing. Stand up and admit that when you're wrong, you're wrong. That's what the people want to hear. That's what the people of Ontario, the constituents with whom these fine members in government, in the third party and, of course, over here in opposition, expect—and they should come to expect that, Mr. Speaker.

These photocopied documents that have been whited out, that have no shred of correspondence, again as my colleague from Nipissing pointed out—many of our staff and interns stayed up going through these supposed documents, to get to the bottom of this scandal. I find it, again, disheartening to find that the truth is being covered up.

1510

If we could only white out some of our \$411-billion debt; perhaps that's this government's plan for getting Ontario back on track. Let's just white out the debt or pretend it doesn't exist. A lot of their policies leading up to this point would suggest that this might be a part of their grand strategy, Mr. Speaker.

We have already been on record saying we were against the gas plants being built in the first place, and the spin that the government is putting on this is one that they're not taking credit for.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** We've made it very clear, Mr. Speaker. We would not build those gas plants. Our responsibility—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Minister, order, please.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:**—to the people of Ontario is to get to the bottom of this fiasco, right the wrongs and ensure that citizens' hard-earned tax dollars are never again invested into a Liberal seat-saving program. But this begs the fundamental question: How are we supposed to get them their answers when we don't have all—I mean all—of the documents?

The complete absence of correspondence with the previous minister and a very limited amount of correspondence from the ministry itself calls into question whether or not this government had any idea what was going on. We find that this is a pattern developing with this Liberal government. We've seen this with Ornge, Mr. Speaker, and what happens to taxpayers' dollars when there are no controls in place.

These are hard-earned tax dollars. Liberals seem to think that it's their money that they spend frivolously, and here we have citizens across the province of Ontario who are struggling to stay in their homes. And here we are, trying to get to the bottom of this tax fiasco.

I want to talk about two things that seem to be vanishing from politics, Mr. Speaker: Respect and trust. Respect for elected officials of all stripes is at a historical low, and I think one of the key reasons for this is that citizens no longer trust their elected representatives. A sense of cynicism has emerged. You hear voters say this over and over: "Who cares what they say? They'll just break their promises anyway." Voters are not willing to respect people they cannot trust. This sense of apathy is unhealthy in a democratic system. This sense of apathy is why we're seeing declining voter turnout and declining faith in the overall political system.

Some members have discussed the great statesmen of the past. The member from Peterborough eloquently talked about fine members like Premier Bill Davis, a great statesman, a Progressive Conservative, I might add.

I think each member here strives to be a great statesman—

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Statesperson.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:**—statesperson; thank you—a statesperson of the future. But people are not going to place their trust and therefore respect in politicians if things do not change; and things have to change, because change is good. This government has proven that change is needed in the province of Ontario.

For nine years, people have seen a government that breaks promise after promise and seems to do so without skipping a beat.

What some of my honourable colleagues on both sides of the House have said is true: Governing is not always a flawless game—agreed. But when mistakes are made, there needs to be not only an acknowledgement of this mistake and a proper apology, but there has to be a clear understanding of why this has happened—why, and to whom was responsible.

Let's not forget, the current Minister of Energy, I believe, is a good man. From what I know—I've spoken to the minister on several occasions—he's a very honourable man of principle who has been thrown under the bus by this Premier and the former minister of the portfolio of energy.

**Interjection:** Who was that?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I believe it was the Minister of Economic Development.

What led to this error? When you're trying to get to the bottom of something, when you're trying to resolve

an issue, perhaps find compromise—I always instructed my students to ask questions. This is how we learn. Ask the hard questions. Don't settle for mediocrity. Ask the hard questions and don't give up on that. Make sure you get the answers that you require. We haven't seen that, Mr. Speaker. We have not seen the co-operation that's expected from this government on this motion—"release all the documents." "All," by definition—

**Interjection:** Hold the whiteout.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It might be whited out in the Oxford dictionary; I'm not sure. But "all the documents" implies each and every one in its entirety. We haven't seen this.

Most importantly, how do we avoid making the same mistake twice? Well, Mr. Speaker—

**Interjection:** Get rid of the Liberals.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** That would be a good choice.

We've seen time and time again—I alluded earlier to the fact that this current government, under Mr. McGuinty, the Premier of this province, has not been steadfast in maintaining promises to the people and delivering on those promises. This type of activity is going to continue until the people of Ontario decide—and the recent poll that just came out would indicate that our Liberal colleagues are in some hot water. If there was an election held today, they would finish in third place—

**Interjections:** Fourth.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Fourth.

This government has accused the opposition of holding up important legislative business and stalling the Legislature from getting things done. This accusation disturbs me. It is their decision-making that has raised serious questions that require serious answers. Rather than hand over all of the documents, they chose to provide us with only part of the information. This only makes us wonder what else they can possibly be hiding.

1520

Mr. Speaker, when I taught Shakespeare—and one thing that I have learned in studying Shakespeare is that we humans can only base our actions on information that we get; then we can move forward based on the knowledge that we acquire. Well, in this situation, we don't have the information. We don't have that knowledge to make reference, to ask questions. Based on that lack of knowledge, we, like the rest of the citizens of this great province, are left in the dark, not knowing exactly how much this fiasco is costing the taxpayers.

I'd like to offer a quote from Richard Armour. He said, "Politics, it seems to me, for years, or all too long, has been concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong." While this is particularly true this week, Mr. Speaker, over the past few days, particularly yesterday and this morning, our party has been accused of playing petty partisan politics. I'm confused. Since when is holding this government to account not the duty of the opposition? And since when is hundreds of millions of dollars "petty"?

This is not about partisanship, Mr. Speaker. This is about the fact that it is morally wrong to mislead the people of Ontario. This morning—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member to withdraw that statement.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Withdraw. I will not mislead any further.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I caution the member: Withdraw, and we let it sit at that, please. Withdraw?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Withdraw.

This morning, one member of the government referred to this motion as frivolous. So now it's frivolous to simply question whether the cost of this cancellation is \$40 million, \$190 million, \$450 million, \$640 million, or perhaps we'd like to start throwing numbers closer to a billion around.

And is it frivolous to ask who is making these decisions? I've heard members of the government say that Mr. Bentley has not done any wrong. I'm not judging, but given the information that we have, it would indicate to us that we can't base our accusations, our decisions, on fact, on truth. The fine people of Northumberland—Quinte West I have the privilege of serving deserve better. The people of Ontario deserve better. Indeed, this hallowed chamber deserves better.

Another member of the government said, "We are saying we made a decision around these gas plants that, in retrospect, we would not make today, so we take responsibility for that." I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, but simply stating that responsibility has been taken without quite literally providing the documents to back it up is just rhetoric. The people of Ontario have learned the hard way over the last nine years that this government's promises cannot be relied on.

What bothers me is the suggestion by this government that opposition members are on a witch hunt. We've been accused of personally attacking the Minister of Energy. Let me be clear: The minister's great personal integrity is not the issue here. The issue is the lack of transparency and accountability by this government in disclosing the actual costs of these plant relocations. This issue stems from this government's inability to adjust to its minority status in the Legislature.

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

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I join the debate with much pleasure. It's always a pleasure to walk into this particular place here, which we call home, or the chamber of the people, and debate various issues with different flair.

One thing is for sure, and I think every member may share in that: It doesn't matter what flair the debate may apply on a daily basis; it is one of those very particularly interesting things that we come to this place to deliver our best.

This issue that we are debating today is important—more, perhaps, than others that at different times we debate in this House. But without taking any value from other issues, everything that we debate in this House we do on behalf of the people that we represent, and we serve our constituents.



I have to say that, speaking on this particular topic, I'm not very much enamoured, if you will, to speak on an issue that gives me a bit of difficulty, given the issue itself. I really don't know if I should apply more time to the content of the motion or the intent contained within the motion.

The fact is that we are trying to perhaps shoot the messenger here. I have to say, before I get on with my remarks and then forget the most important thing, I acknowledge that the person that has done so much, not only as Minister of Energy but other ministries; within his own community; within his own professional field; is a person of impeccable qualities, of the highest integrity; is a distinguished professional in his own field, the legal field; is a dedicated public servant, having served as minister of other ministries and presently as Minister of Energy; and is a respected member of the peers in this House and the people in his own community. I speak of member Mr. Bentley, the Minister of Energy.

What takes us here today? What brings us into this House to debate this particular issue? Let me read it for the benefit of the people watching. They may say, "What the heck is going on in the House? We have no idea what they are talking about." I have to say that perhaps—I say "perhaps"—the public is not fully aware, doesn't have a full acknowledgement, of what we are debating in the House today.

Let me say that perhaps later on—maybe in several days, once we debate this issue further, once we get some more press releases in the news media and stuff like that—people will come to see what we are really discussing, and then they may start to throw their arms around and say, "What the heck is going on? Let's get some common sense in that House and let's get on with the business that should be done in this place here."

What has brought us to debate this particular issue in the House today? It is a motion brought by the member from Cambridge, Mr. Leone, with a further amendment to the motion itself. The motion asks "that this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012." And then there is an amendment: "That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012." Then there is another amendment by Mr. Leone himself: "That the words 'November 19, 2012' be deleted and the following added: 'November 23 ...'" on Friday. Then there is another amendment to the amendment that comes from the member from Toronto–Danforth, Mr. Tabuns: "That the words 'November 23, 2012' be removed and the following be added: 'November 26, 2012.'"

**1530**

Democracy is a wonderful thing, it really is, because now what happens? Under our democratic system, we are debating the amendment to the amendment, and then, who knows? We may decide that everyone wants to

debate the amendment, and when that is over, everybody wants to debate the motion, and then, given our democratic freedom of this assembly, we may have some other motion and then debate some other motion on the same issue all over again. I have to say, Speaker, that someone said that democracy works when the governing majority gives the minority an opportunity to be heard. This is what's happening in the House today: The minority is having its day. We are hearing them; the public is hearing them.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Sergio, you're the minority.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I appreciate that.

The fact is that the opposition is fulfilling their own responsibility, as they should. But the fact is that as we are debating this issue, which they brought to the floor of the House, because they introduced the motion—with all due respect, Speaker, you have directed the Minister of Energy to provide all documentation, release all documentation, with respect to the issue to this House. Well, we now have that. The opposition has all the documentation that they were requesting. So what is it? Are they happy with it or are they unhappy? I have to say they are unhappy; otherwise, we wouldn't be here discussing this issue today, because if they were happy, they would have said, "Okay, we got it, so let's get on to discuss other business, the important business, of the House, the business of the people of Ontario."

Having provided all the documentation—the minister, having heard the direction from you, Speaker, and having delivered some 36,000 pages—does it mean that when the opposition says, "Uh-uh, this is not all, this is not true," are we saying that the minister, then—it's not delivering according to your direction, Speaker? I think we should pay some attention to that, because if the minister is not acting according to your direction, then something is very wrong here. It means somebody is not telling the truth. And when somebody's not telling the truth, we know what the other option is.

We heard many times that this issue is nothing more than a fiasco. In my other language, a fiasco is a nice round bottle of wine dressed on the outside by straw, but the wine inside is very good. I really don't know how "fiasco" got to acquire this particular taste, because that particular wine in that fiasco happens to be really, really good wine.

But let's get back to the issue. We are not the only ones who said we should be opposed to these particular stations—by the way, they are only two out of 17 stations in Ontario. We had the opposition, both the Conservatives and NDP, agreeing with us. They agreed, Speaker. I'm not saying that; we have something on record here. For example, on June 1, 2010, from the Hansard, Mr. Chudleigh said, "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them."

The Globe and Mail, on September 25, 2011, Mr. Hudak: "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga," and we will continue to oppose that.

Early this morning here, the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington made a particular

quote. He said, “The McGuinty government is not the first and not the last government”—meaning making a blunder, if you will, or making an inaccurate decision or making a mistake or whatever you want to call it. There’s so much truth in that. In the past, present or future, there will always be a government that is going to make a mistake, big or small or medium, but always at some cost. If we were to think otherwise, then I think we better rethink our position in this House, because we don’t belong on this planet, because to see a government that would be perfect is impossible.

Having said that, let me say this: No one would like to see taxpayers’ money—if you can call it, let’s say, wasted, to give it a nice resonance—wasted. But if we look at the past, what happened? To give you some other ideas of how governments work, I’ve been here a few years and I’ve seen what happens during my stay in this House. I was part of the opposition when—actually, it was before my time; I was still a councillor in the city of North York when we wanted to build the subway extension to York University. That was 20 years ago. I don’t have to tell you—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Not that far off—the cost of those 20 years of delays and misconceptions.

I don’t have to tell you that, I believe it was 1991, or 1992 maybe, when Mr. Harris was debating the subway along Eglinton Avenue. The mayor at the time, my friend Mayor Lastman, said: “No, no. I want the subway up on Sheppard Avenue.” A political decision was made to mothball the Eglinton subway.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That was 1996.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** In 1996—thank you. That’s quite a few years ago. Did anybody ever ask the cost of mothballing the Eglinton—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Point of order: The member for Nipissing.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker. Point of order: For five weeks now, the Liberal House leader has refused to re-strike the standing committees of the Legislature. I wish to seek unanimous consent in order to re-strike the investigation into the Liberal scandal into Ornge. I’m looking for unanimous consent to reconstitute all of the standing committees immediately with their existing committee structure as they existed on September 9, 2012, and that the said committees be reconstituted until at least August 31, 2013.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would ask the member, because this is about the third or fourth time a similar motion has been moved, that—

*Interjection:* There’s nothing in the standing orders—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I will deal with it. Can you let me finish? I also realize it’s coming from the same party at all times. I will take this one, but the next one, I’d ask that the House leaders at least consult each other.

I have a request for unanimous consent. Agreed? I heard a no.

The member for York West.

1540

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Hold the clock. The member for Durham, on a point of order.

**Mr. John O’Toole:** How come the clock is stopped, when points of order are called, only when our side is losing time—I do question that. Yesterday, I lost almost three minutes because the Speaker stood while the clock ran. I lost the time to make my points about this condition that we’re dealing with, of contempt. I feel offended by it, and it’s not justifiable. Please explain that to me: why you’re stopping the clock to save them the time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would say to the member that I’ve been consistent all day.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order, the member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, I do not want to challenge you in any way, but in the standing orders, a point of order is always in order; it must be taken. If it’s a repetitive one, it really doesn’t matter. A point of order is in order. A member is allowed to move it, and I would ask you to consult with the table next time, because he would be in order to do so.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I did take his request. I’m just saying it has been the fourth time. I’m just asking the House, so that at least we could carry on our business.

The member for York West.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Thank you very much, Speaker. This is part and parcel of our democratic system, as well, and I can appreciate that.

Let me go back to what I was saying before. I want to take the members of the House back to the Mike Harris years, when the Eglinton line was mothballed. I have no idea how many millions were spent to dig out Eglinton Avenue, just to abandon it.

Everybody remembers what happened to the Allen expressway. What happened? Another political decision was made to stop it at Eglinton Avenue. I don’t have to tell you, Speaker, how many years ago that took place. Thousands of cars, on a daily basis, now come to a very sudden end at Eglinton Avenue, and no one has bothered to check the cost of this particular decision made many, many years ago.

I think the biggest blunder, if we want to really attach some—

*Interjection:* eHealth?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Well, that’s one of those.

Let me say, the 407—that was not a sale, but it was gifted away to a Spaniard consortium, at the expense of every Ontarian. Do we know, did anybody ever ask how much that cost and is still costing and will cost the taxpayers of Ontario? My grandchildren’s grandchildren’s grandchildren and theirs and ours and Ontarians all will be paying for that misstep that was selling the 407—millions and millions of dollars.

You know, Speaker, the member was right: It’s not the first, and it’s not going to be the last. We will have many

more. But the fact is that we are dealing with the issue today, and I hope that we deal with it in a very non-partisan way, according to the rights of the House here, because in the end, we all have to respond to the people out there who put us here in the first place.

As much as the opposition has the right to bring issues to this House, there is a particular point when those very same taxpayers will say, "Enough is enough. Let's concentrate on our daily lives, our daily living. Let's concentrate on jobs, on education, on health care, on providing the best that we can for the people of Ontario." These are the things that I think we should be attaching more particular interest to than an issue that I have to say has become maybe vindictive in some ways—and I'm not referring to any member who has gotten vindictive modes versus any other. I think it's the beast that we deal with on a daily basis in this House.

Given that, let me bring this scenario on the floor of the House. Since the opposition have agreed publicly that they would have done the same thing—opposing the two stations—

**Interjection:** Except it would have cost more.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Well, maybe it would have cost more, maybe less. Who knows?

But let's play the scenario that if we were to go ahead and build both stations, disregarding the will of the local people and the local elected officials there, including the mayor. Speaker, I wonder, a few years down the road when maybe another government would be in place, what they would have done. Would they have closed those two stations and said, "We promised back in 2011 or 2012 that we would cancel them, that we would not go along"? Imagine what would be the damage in those days.

I can fathom, Speaker. First of all would be the consequence that someone would have to pay, and who would do that? The particular government that would be in place at the time. And who would suffer the consequences? The people of Ontario. If it costs \$190 million today, Speaker, imagine how many billions it would cost when you have to completely close—shut down—an operating facility.

On top of that, there is the fact that if we had gone ahead and built the two stations—I haven't heard in this House, and I have to say I have heard good comments on both sides of the House—what would have been the consequences, maybe health-wise, air pollution, perhaps some other catastrophe? Have we ever given any consideration to that, to those two communities there? What would have happened? Maybe unknowingly, while this hurts, it's a good thing to happen.

I think we should dwell on this particular issue, because I don't think anyone considering running and forming a government, let's say, maybe three, four, five or 10 years down the road would come back and say, "Ten years ago, we decided to cancel it." How could they do that, Speaker? At what cost? First of all, we're talking about replacing energy that we all need. We do hope our economy will grow, that Ontario will grow and we'll need more energy on a daily basis. Or are we going to

revert, go back and buy from Michigan—from the States—or from Manitoba?

I remember when we had to buy power in US dollars from the States because nothing was done. I would say to the members of the House: Look what we have accomplished in the past eight or nine years, even with respect to energy. I would say, take that into consideration when we continue deliberation of this particular issue. I admire the opposition for being steadfast and saying, "We are the opposition. We want to look into it. We want to see. We want to make sure." I say, go ahead and do it; it's your responsibility. But once you look into it, then I think it's time to say, "We are satisfied," or, "We take further issues and further action."

But for this time, I have to say that this is what's in front of us, and we have delivered—the minister has delivered—what they were looking for. I think they should be looking at everything they got. I don't think they got through 36,000 pages—hits or whatever you want to call it. Speaker, the fact is, we delivered to them on your direction, on behalf of the people of Ontario, and I hope we can move on on this issue.

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

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I stand before you today in this revered Legislature to speak to the motion put forward by my colleague from Cambridge. The motion, with its amendments, deals with the reluctance of the Minister of Energy to release the paperwork regarding the cancelled power plant contracts in Mississauga and Oakville. In response to a point of privilege made by the member from Cambridge on August 27, the Speaker ruled on September 13 that a prima facie breach of members' privilege has been established, after he investigated the reluctance of the minister to release these documents to the members of this House.

The motion by the member from Cambridge is in response to the Speaker's ruling of September 13, and charges that this Liberal minister is in contempt of this House. This unprecedented matter in the modern era has seized the agenda of this House. Mr. Speaker, as you know, the decision to cancel the power plant project in Mississauga was made a year ago, in the last two weeks of the provincial election. The decision was made by an unnamed political staffer from the Liberal campaign in Mississauga; so said the finance minister at the estimates committee. This decision was purely political, and this government did it to save Liberal seats. It worked. The Liberals won the local seats they wanted to keep by making this decision. They make no excuses about it. They admit it.

**1550**

The decision to cancel the power plant project in Oakville was made in October 2010, during the last month of the municipal election. No doubt, Liberal-friendly candidates were running for city council and school board trustee positions. The gas-fired power plant would have been a top issue for those candidates. I can see that the Oakville decision was to help those Liberal-minded candidates get elected. A sitting government

always likes to have friends it can count on at the municipal level. Again, this was part of their strategy to interfere in the electoral process to their advantage, using taxpayers' dollars.

Unabashedly emboldened by their perceived cleverness, the Liberals have crossed the line one too many times. This takes the cake. Not only is it evidence of corrupt behaviour, but it is a sad testament to what the Liberals are: bereft of all ethics—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** I withdraw.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Carry on.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** At the time of the two power plant project contracts and cancellations, the Liberals had a majority government. The decision to sign these contracts was wrong in the first place. The locations were bad to begin with. The rash, simple-minded decision to cancel these contracts was made by a rotting government after years of near absolute power in the Legislature. There have been no real checks or balances for years.

This minority government situation we find ourselves in now is bringing more transparency. Before the election last October, the government could make a decision unilaterally. Now they can't, and we, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, have tools at our disposal to hold the government to account. The people of Ontario decided to withhold a third majority from this government. They stopped the unfettered reign of the Premier and his team, and it's a good thing they did.

This situation brings to mind the 19th-century historian and moralist John Emerich Edward Dalberg Acton, the first Baron Acton, who studied governments through the ages. He commented on how power, left unchecked, leads to corruption. The thought processes of omnipotent governors in power for too long become compromised and reprogrammed, recalibrated towards self-interest and self-preservation. A sense of self-entitlement pervades. His famous saying describes this government perfectly, in my opinion. He said, "Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Hypothetically speaking, how does a corrupt government act? It could start with compromising the electoral process by using public funds for political gain. Then it could try to hide evidence of any self-serving, costly or biased decision-making. If its opposition finds proof of evidence, a corrupt government withholds that evidence from an investigating legislative committee. Further, they would withhold this embarrassing information, the paper trail of the deals, until after a doubleheader by-election. Then, only after the Speaker of the House demands the evidence and threatens contempt charges, a corrupt, compromised government would release the documents of evidence only in part, not in whole.

It would be like pulling teeth to try to work with such a government and, more tragically, it would be very, very expensive for the taxpayer.

So how much money—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

I would warn the member, because I asked you to withdraw the previous statement, that you're attempting to do the same—slightly indirectly. So I warn you, as you carry on.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

How much money is the current Liberal government in the hole on these two deals? How much of Ontarians' hard-earned cash has this government wasted this time? How many good programs will the government have to forgo because of this waste? It may end up to be billions. But the current price tag for this debacle is \$645 million: \$195 million on the Mississauga plant and \$450 million on the Oakville plant. The Liberals wasted—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Member for Durham, if you're not going to keep order and you're not in your seat, that's a double—so I'd ask you to come to order first, and if you want to heckle, you'll have to sit in your own seat.

Carry on.

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** The Liberals wasted at least \$645 million on this seat-saving scandal; 4% of our deficit this year is paying these costs.

I suggest that the Liberal Party should pay for these politically motivated decisions. The Mississauga decision was even made by a political campaign staff member, not the minister, but it is the minister's responsibility. This government, and more specifically the government's political party, needs to take responsibility for their actions and accept that this decision was not made in the interests of Ontarians; that people of Ontario did not receive a benefit; the Ontario Liberal Party did; and so the people should not pay. Literally, paying the price for this ill-advised decision would be the only way to make it right; \$645 million needs to be given back to the people of Ontario. Such costs should not be borne by the taxpayer.

These are the costs of Liberal election campaign tactics that go too far and cost too much. The cost consists of relocating the plants after substantial construction had occurred, the geographic realities of the new sites, as well as contractual penalties, and this is only what we know at this moment. We're still going through the computer scans of 36,000 pages that comprise the file on these two cancelled contracts. Unfortunately, the package of information the Liberal House leader dropped in our mailbox at lunchtime on Monday contains a lot of paper but not much ink; 36,000 pages of severely questionable material was submitted by the government House leader. It is obvious the file is incomplete.

Troubling as it is that the government would try yet another stall tactic for us to get through, worse is the insult to the people of Ontario. The government House leader knew what he was doing when he sent those partial documents—10% of the pages are blank, redacted. Letters or presentations that were pertinent to our review are missing; only their cover letters are included. There are partial emails from senior bureaucrats, but sensitive

material has been blanked out. The package doesn't even contain any correspondence by the Minister of Energy when he was in the driver's seat on this deal—no emails, no notes from the minister, not even any correspondence to or from the Premier. I am bewildered by this.

After stonewalling us at committee since May 16 and after the Speaker's ruling of September 13, which demanded that all pertinent documents be released to the House by September 24, this Minister of Energy is still playing games. He needed to fully comply with the Speaker's request; he did not. In my opinion, the minister is in contempt of this House, in contempt of the people of Ontario and in contempt of our parliamentary democracy.

This minister should have resigned his position to clear the air on this issue; he did not. Lack of judgment and an interest in the Premier's job prevented him from making that admirable choice. The Premier has allowed this to go on, and still today he is absent on the issue.

**1600**

Our democratic tradition is the basis of our society. Electing honest representatives to vote on our behalf has long been ingrained in us. It is second nature for us to go to the polls and hope the system will work the way it should, as a co-operative, consultative, honest decision-making human machine built on trust and acting on our behalf. Goal number one is to protect the public trust. Sadly, our democratic machine has broken down on Ontarians. The public chooses their elected representatives for their honesty, trustworthy compassion and willingness to devote themselves to public service. In contrast, the public has long been hoodwinked into believing a façade by the Premier and his pals.

The truth becomes clear if one scratches the surface. Willfully, the Liberals have smashed the public trust again and again and again. Members of the public and members of this House deserve better. For democracy to work, transparency is key. By its actions, this government does not believe that transparency is a virtue. It does not believe that oversight and accountability are cornerstones of good government. For them, truth is a dirty word. Spin is their first thought, obfuscation comes second and respect for taxpayers comes last, just below prudent financial management.

The government must comply with the requests of committees of the Legislature in a timely manner. They do not have the luxury or discretion to ignore. Questions posed need to be answered. Transparency of decision-making is critical to the essence of government, because that is what MPPs are hired to do: make sound decisions out in the open on behalf of the public.

The endeavours of the government are funded by taxpayers. If the public can't watch how their money is being spent, and if the public can't scrutinize actions—past, present, and future—taken by their government, then it is not a functioning democracy. This government is operating like a banana republic, expecting to answer to no one.

Why isn't this government answering our questions? Why aren't they forthcoming with all the documents? What are they hiding? What is on those thousands of

redacted pages: evidence of compromised decision-making that exposes more truth, evidence of more money thrown at voters to sway opinion? The people want to know. Ontarians want us to hold this government to account. Ontarians want us to follow the money—their money—and ensure that the integrity of this House is upheld. The people want us to get to the bottom of this pool of contempt. Poor judgment does not excuse the disrespect this minister has shown this House.

Tuesday afternoon, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stood in her place, pointed across at us and accused us of manufactured discontent. She accused us, the official opposition, of being disingenuous. Listen, this mess is not our fault. We didn't cancel contracts with total disregard for the public purse in the middle of an economic recession. The way she sees it, and no doubt the way her government colleagues see it, she thinks we're making this an issue that is larger than it really is. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing feels that this breach of members' privileges is a non-issue.

I guess that tells us that she would have done the same if she was the Minister of Energy. She supports her government's decision to keep taxpayers in the dark. By her comments, it is clear that she supports the hiding of truth from the opposition and the public. To her, saving a handful of Liberal seats in the last election is worth \$645 million of taxpayer money. It appears that the minister subscribes to the notion that people like to be bribed with their own money.

Manufactured discontent, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing says. Horse feathers, I say. Manufactured consent is more like it. They would not have cancelled or relocated those power plant deals if they did not have a political reason to do so: to buy votes, to buy the consent of the voter to give the Liberals four more seats toward majority rule. Manufactured consent is what we're really dealing with. Part of the government's manufacturing process has led us to this week's debate. This government's own actions have led us to this point of contempt, not the official opposition. We don't need to look for ways to be discontented with this government. They have given us myriad reasons to be discontented over the years. In the least, they are the author of any manufactured discontent present today. Even after admitting that clearly this is a decision that they would not make today, this minister points the finger at us. It seems that the only reason the government wouldn't make the decision again is that they got caught in the act. Clearly, if they can hide it, they will hide it.

This makes me question all the other government information on all the other scandals. The Ornge scandal is another example of questionable information. How much other skulduggery has gone on behind closed doors? We just don't know what we don't know. This beleaguered government plays fast and loose with the people's trust and money. We know that. The Premier has got us into a \$260-billion debt and a \$15-billion deficit with his audacious errors in judgment. The \$645 million from this scandal is the latest cherry on top. The province of Ontario has never been so in the hole.

The case for ministerial contempt is clear. We need to send this serious issue to committee for proper due diligence.

This motion, as amended, would set up the finance committee of the Legislature that the Liberals are refusing to set up, which is another example of their contempt of Parliament. The finance committee is the right place for members to question the government on this issue. The committee will confirm whether contempt of the Legislature did occur. The committee will decide on the appropriate sanctions. After their work is done, the committee will report back to the Legislature. If the Legislature does not swiftly denounce the true ministerial contempt, we will be plagued by this precedent. If we don't nip this in the bud, this and any future government will be able to use this to justify similar actions.

We must protect the spirit of openness, accountability, and transparency upon which our democratic institutions are founded. It is imperative that we all vote in favour of this motion. If this motion fails, we will not be able to find out the whole story. We need to hold this government to full account.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Je veux vous dire que mardi dernier, le 25 septembre, la journée de la francophonie, était une journée très sombre pour moi. Je devais me lever ici dans la Chambre pour parler aux Franco-Ontariens et leur dire comment ce gouvernement-là les appuie et quel beau travail ils font pour faire rayonner la francophonie en Ontario. Que ce soit nos professeurs, les gens dans notre système de santé ou les citoyens en général, les francophones sont ici depuis 400 ans, et on va célébrer très bientôt le 400<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'arrivée de Champlain. Mais on n'a pas pu célébrer ensemble parce qu'on a commencé ce débat. On ne sait pas où est-ce que ça va nous mener. On entend l'opposition parler de leurs préoccupations. On ne sait pas combien de temps ça va durer; ça va peut-être aller jusqu'à Noël. J'espère un jour pouvoir me lever en Chambre et parler aux Franco-Ontariens du 25 septembre, la journée des Franco-Ontariens que ce gouvernement ici a adoptée. On n'a pas pu leur en parler. J'espère que les gens de l'opposition étaient prêts à leur parler aussi.

Je veux vous dire aussi pourquoi je suis venue en politique. Je suis venue en politique parce que je voulais faire une différence, parce que j'ai été élevée avec des parents qui me disaient toujours qu'on doit remettre à la communauté ce qu'on a reçu de la communauté. J'étais une personne qui a été très chanceuse. J'ai eu des parents extraordinaires. J'ai été élevée dans un petit village, une communauté tricotée très serrée, et c'est en leur nom et avec leur aide que je me suis rendue où je me suis rendue aujourd'hui.

1610

Alors, je suis venue en politique non pas pour débattre ce qu'on débat aujourd'hui, mais je suis venue en politique pour aider les citoyens de l'Ontario, les citoyens

d'Ottawa-Vanier—les aider, les écouter, répondre à leurs préoccupations. C'est pour ça que cette semaine on devait passer—bon, que ce soit la troisième lecture du bill sur le crédit d'impôt pour rénover les maisons pour aider nos personnes âgées ou le Bill 50, l'amendement à la Loi sur les ambulances, parce qu'on veut s'assurer que les citoyens de l'Ontario puissent avoir un système d'ambulances lorsqu'ils en ont besoin, un système efficace, un système qui sera là quand on en aura besoin ou d'autres projets de loi qui devaient être adoptés ou qui devaient passer en deuxième ou en troisième lecture. Alors, on n'a pas pu avancer dans notre agenda politique, mais on doit aujourd'hui défendre ce que le gouvernement a fait quand on a annulé le projet du plant d'électricité de Mississauga et de celui Oakville.

Mais je suis ici aussi premièrement pour parler en faveur et défendre la personne qui est au banc des accusés aujourd'hui, qui est notre ministre de l'Énergie, Chris Bentley.

This Minister of Energy, Chris Bentley, is a man of integrity. I would like to take this opportunity to explain why I and many members in this House feel that way. First, let's start from the beginning. The member for London West received a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Western Ontario and obtained a law degree from the University of Toronto. Two years later, he obtained a master's degree from Cambridge University in England. He is a lawyer who practised criminal and labour law for almost 25 years. He's a man of integrity. For 10 of those years, he also taught part-time at the University of Western Ontario law school, where he helped to establish the law school career office.

As Minister of Energy, he has put public interest first as the deal reached clearly shows. Speaker, it's a sad day when members resort to disgusting personal attacks like this. Ontarians deserve better. I will proudly stand on this side of the House any day of the week and support the principled actions of this minister.

La communauté francophone connaît très bien ce ministre. D'ailleurs, lors de l'assemblée générale des Franco-Ontariens il y a une semaine passée, il m'a remplacée à London pour parler, dans la langue de Molière, de l'apport des francophones, répondre à leurs questions et les remercier. Aujourd'hui, il est au banc des accusés par l'opposition. À la place de discuter du fait qu'on a annulé ces deux plants-là, on fait des attaques personnelles. Je ne suis pas venue ici à Queen's Park pour me prêter à ces jeux dont je suis tout à fait contre. Si on veut débattre aujourd'hui ce qui a été fait, qu'on débattre la cancellation de ces deux plants-là, et qu'on n'attaque pas un homme d'une grande intégrité.

D'ailleurs, j'ai rencontré récemment des gens, autant du côté juridique que la communauté des juges, et ils étaient très déçus de voir ce qui se passait ici aujourd'hui.

On sait que le ministre de l'Énergie a été aussi le procureur général et il a, pendant quatre ans, exercé ce rôle-là avec intégrité et respect. Je peux parler au nom de toute la communauté juridique ici en Ontario et ailleurs de l'apport du ministre Bentley lorsqu'il était procureur général.

Alors, on a eu ici en Chambre des gens, des politiciens—que ce soit du côté des néo-démocrates ou du côté des conservateurs, on a eu des politiciens exemplaires. Je vous dirais, monsieur le Président, après 21 ans en politique, que sauf une exception, j'ai toujours vu des gens qui étaient en politique pour les bonnes raisons, et je n'accepte pas aujourd'hui voir ces nouveaux députés, qui viennent avec un texte préparé par leur parti, dénigrer le rôle de politicien. Je n'accepte pas ça. Ça fait 21 ans que je suis en politique. Ça fait 21 ans que je travaille très fort pour mes commettants. Ça fait 20 ans que je côtoie des politiciens extraordinaires. Et je n'accepte pas qu'aujourd'hui on vient descendre un de nos collègues qui a une personnalité extraordinaire et une intégrité sans pareil.

Je vous nomme des gens qui ont été ici en Chambre et qui ont—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Point of order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Mr. Speaker, the minister is suggesting that we have been talking against the Minister of Energy's personal professionalism. We have not, and I would ask her to withdraw that. She's trying to establish that somehow we're impugning him at a personal level. We're accusing him of wasting \$650 million of taxpayers' money: nothing more, nothing less. This is about transparency and accountability, and I will not accept it.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would say to the member, thank you for your point of order. I've been listening carefully myself, and I'm sorry; I disagree with you because it's been carrying on this way on both sides all day.

Minister?

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président. Comme je vous disais, on a eu ici dans cette Chambre des membres extraordinaires.

Je vous nomme Bob Welch, un ministre conservateur qui a laissé sa marque ici.

Je vous rappelle aussi Bob Nixon, qui a laissé des marques extraordinaires, qui a été un politicien sans pareil ici.

Je vous rappelle Stephen Lewis. J'ai eu toujours un plaisir à écouter Stephen Lewis. Si vous voulez parler de quelqu'un qui était un orateur extraordinaire et qui l'est encore, c'est Stephen Lewis.

Je veux aussi vous parler de Bill Davis, qui était un premier ministre extraordinaire.

Je veux vous parler de Roy McMurtry, qui nous rend encore des services extraordinaires et qui a été un très grand juriste.

Je veux vous parler de Sean Conway. Si vous vouliez entendre une belle présentation, une belle prestation dans cette Chambre—les gens ont invité les amis à venir dans les galeries lorsque Sean Conway parlait.

Je veux vous parler aussi d'Ian Scott, qui a été un procureur général avec une intégrité, avec une sérénité, qui était l'ami d'à peu près tout le monde. On ne lui connaissait pas d'ennemi.

Je veux vous parler aussi de Jim Renwick, qui a aussi passé dans cette Chambre et qui a laissé des marques indélébiles.

Alors, moi, je respecte tous mes collègues dans cette Chambre, et je veux aussi qu'on respecte mon collègue le ministre de l'Énergie.

Pourquoi est-ce qu'on a annulé ces deux plants d'électricité?

**1620**

As I am sure the members of this House are aware, the OPA contracted to have the Oakville facility built to meet the energy demands of the area at the time. The Ontario Power Authority contracted with TransCanada Energy Ltd. in September 2009 to design, build and operate, over a 20-year term, a 900-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating station in Oakville.

In October 2010—not in October 2011—the government determined that the project would not proceed. It did so for two reasons: clear evidence that it no longer required a facility in Oakville to meet energy demands, and a response to the significant concerns voiced by the community and local elected officials, including Mayor Burton, MPP Kevin Flynn and, yes, MPP Ted Chudleigh.

The government's decision was not only supported by the local community; it was supported by Tim Hudak—I'm sorry—supported by the Leader of the Opposition, of the Ontario PCs.

Hansard, June 1, 2010: Mr. Chudleigh said, "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them." That's what Mr. Chudleigh said.

In the *Globe and Mail*, on September 25, 2011, the Leader of the Opposition said, "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga."

While no formal litigation resulted from the government's decision, the government and TransCanada had been engaged in formal arbitration and confidential settlement discussions until a resolution was successfully reached on September 24, 2012.

In April 2005, the Ontario Power Authority contracted with Greenfield South Power Corp. to develop and operate a 300-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating station in Mississauga.

Over the course of the next number of years, particularly as construction got under way at the facility, community concerns were brought to the attention of the government and all of the political parties—including the fall 2011 general election campaign. What happened then? During the campaign, the Ontario Liberal Party made the commitment, in response to mounting community concern, that if re-elected, the government would relocate the Mississauga facility to another location.

The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party and the Ontario New Democratic Party made the same commitment during the course of the campaign. And in the *Globe and Mail*, September 25, 2011, the leader of the PC Party said, "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga."

Shortly after being re-elected, our government announced its intention to relocate the Mississauga facility.

In this case, there was some formal litigation under way, as well as confidential settlement discussions in relation to the cancellation of this project, until a resolution was successfully reached on July 10, 2012. After some long and hard negotiations, the OPA and the proponent reached a deal to relocate the 300-megawatt natural gas plant on part of Ontario Power Generation's Lambton generating station site.

The new site will take advantage of existing transmission and other infrastructure as well as the expertise of local workers. The construction of the plant is expected to provide up to 200 jobs over the next two years. I'm sure that the MPP representing Lambton is very happy to see these jobs, and I'm also sure that the MPP representing Sarnia—we're closing the jail in Sarnia, so there will be job creation in Sarnia.

Over the course of the past several weeks, the official opposition and the third party have attempted to create a myth that the Minister of Energy wilfully attempted to hide or conceal these documents from the Legislature. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let's look at the facts. Between May 9 and July 11, the Minister of Energy appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates for the purpose of answering questions regarding the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister answered questions relating to a number of issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent considerable time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants which were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga, respectively.

While before the committee, the Minister of Energy was placed in a difficult situation. He was repeatedly asked to answer questions relating to the Oakville and Mississauga facilities. The overwhelming majority of the questions related specifically to the ongoing, outstanding legal proceedings and confidential negotiations.

When you are negotiating, you're negotiating behind closed doors; you don't tell the opposition what you want to settle for. So it's nonsense to say that the Minister of Energy wanted to hide documents from the opposition.

Actually, last Monday we sent 36,000 pages of documents—so they have it; they can look at it. I don't think that they're looking at it; it's their aides in the back who are looking at these documents, and they are told by their aides that there's something missing. I don't think so.

On this side of the House, when we make a wrong decision, we're not afraid to step back and say, "We're listening to Ontarians, so we're going to take a step back."

When the opposition party under Mike Harris made the decision to close the Montfort Hospital and there was criticism from the citizens, I would have liked them to be like these people that are Bill Davis, John Robarts and all these people. I would have liked their leader at the time to take a step back and say, "We made a mistake."

No; Franco-Ontarians, the francophones from Ottawa and some anglophones, too, pooled their money together,

and they had to go court and to the appeals court. I'm told also that this government, when they were in power, wanted to go to the Supreme Court—even if they lost—all the way.

When you make a mistake, you should be big enough and tall enough to say, "I've made a mistake."

I'm coming back to my dear friend the Minister of Energy. Mr. Speaker, there are two types of people in the world: There are those who make noise and there are those who make a difference. I'll say to you that the former Attorney General, the Minister of Energy, is in this second category; he's one who is making a difference.

I thank you very much to give me the opportunity to speak today.

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

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm privileged to rise today to speak to the motion of contempt on the production of documents that are placed before us as members of this House.

As all members of all sides of the House are aware, this is a very important matter. During this debate, I've heard a number of the members of the government benches state publicly that they think this debate is a poor use of time, or that the Minister of Energy is being pilloried or attacked personally. Nothing could be further from the truth.

They believe that the citizens of Ontario aren't watching at home or following the media reports and generally don't care. But I think they are underestimating the people of Ontario, who, above all, expect those who represent them in Ontario's Legislature to be open, honest and working in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

**1630**

For the record, the people in Sarnia-Lambton are watching, and they do care. They care and they have a lot of questions. Right now, the people in Sarnia-Lambton are wondering, "When will we hear from the Premier on this issue and in this debate?" He has said that all decisions ultimately end with him: "The buck stops here." So we are awaiting his standing in this chamber to clear the air.

The people in Sarnia-Lambton are wondering, "When are we going to hear from the Minister of Finance?" His job is to be the steward of the finances of the province, but he seems to be absent without leave while hundreds of millions of dollars have been squandered in this energy deal.

I can't believe that the Liberal campaign team during the last election would have dreamt of doing anything or making a move of that sort knowing that it would affect the bottom line of the province of Ontario. The finance minister must have been involved. When we have this all-party committee, we'll get down to that and we'll find out the real truth.

Right now, the people in Sarnia-Lambton are wondering when the former Minister of Energy will join the debate and explain his role in this fiasco. Right now,



people in Sarnia–Lambton and across this province are wondering when the current Minister of Energy will also join the debate and explain this mess, and how he allowed the Premier of this province to hang this millstone around his neck and cause the heartache and problems to himself. I think he's carrying the can for this whole government, for former ministers and for a decision that was made that's unduly going to affect his career, and it's unfortunate.

Why won't this government release all documents to the estimates committee so that they may carry out their work that they are mandated to do by the ancient parliamentary rules of our Legislature?

Some of those questions are those that the people of Sarnia–Lambton have asked me to raise here. Maybe they have those questions because the values and lessons in responsibility that people learned growing up in the rural part of Ontario and especially in Sarnia–Lambton are different than values and lessons people learn elsewhere. I would doubt that, but there may be an explanation in that.

Because the residents of Sarnia–Lambton are listening and are so interested in this motion of contempt in the production of these documents, I'm going to take the opportunity to lay out a few of the facts for my constituents who are listening at home. It is now well documented that this decision was made in reaction to the overwhelming community opposition prior to the last election campaign with regard to these gas plants. In his testimony, in his own words to the estimates committee on July 19, 2012, the Minister of Finance stated unequivocally: "This was a campaign undertaking at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision, which occurred after the election."

Then, during a meeting of the estimates committee, the Liberals first tried to claim that the matter of canceling gas plants was before the courts so as to prevent documents from being tabled; this argument was ruled invalid. Next, the members argued solicitor-client privilege. Again, this argument was ruled not applicable by the Chair at the time, striking down their ability to tie up the committee's request for documents. Finally, the government argued that documents related to the cancelled plants were commercially sensitive and thus too important to share with those elected representatives of the Ontario Legislature. Again, the committee demanded those documents, and despite the authority of the committee, the Minister of Energy still refused to co-operate. As a result, the estimates committee had no choice but to table a report to this House advising the Speaker that the Minister of Energy could be in breach of privilege for contempt of the Legislature because of his refusal to table those documents.

It should be noted at this point that \$190 million is just the cost to relocate the proposed site for the plant at Mississauga. The actual construction and cost of building transmission lines from Lambton county to the GTA,

where the power would be needed, is still to be determined. Many of us had hoped that that sort of information would be included in one of the 36,000 pages released by the Minister of Energy, but unfortunately, it wasn't.

On August 27, 2012, the member from Cambridge raised a point of privilege to draw attention to the minister's refusal or failure to table documents to the committee. On September 13, 2012, the Speaker of the day ruled a prima facie breach of privilege, and made the express point that the Minister of Energy was obligated to table all the requested documents, and Parliament has an absolute right to call for people, papers and things per the standing orders and those ancient rights and prerogatives of the Legislature.

Then, on the very day—September 24, 2012—that the Liberal government was to table those documents requested by the estimates committee, they announced that a settlement between the province and TransCanada Corp. for the cancellation of the Oakville power plant had finally been reached.

The Minister of Energy indicated during question period in this House that the cost to protect the seat in Oakville would be what he termed "a good deal"—his words—at \$40 million. That's not a good deal in Sarnia–Lambton, Mr. Speaker; it might be in Toronto and even in London. I'm not sure.

The documents released later that morning, however, indicate that the true cost to save the Liberal member's seat in Oakville and relocate this gas plant would be closer to the neighbourhood of \$450 million. That's broken down as \$210 million for those turbines that TransCanada had already purchased, \$200 million for new transmission lines and \$40 million in non-recoverable costs. Mr. Speaker, those are the undisputable facts and bring us to where we are today.

Again, just to reiterate, the former speaker mentioned that \$190 million was awarded to the company to cancel the plant in Mississauga, and \$450 million to not build a plant in Oakville. This is \$640 million at a minimum that we know has been drained from the provincial treasury by this Liberal campaign team and the Minister of Energy—the former minister and the present minister—without a single megawatt of power being produced anywhere in this province. For myself and the people of Sarnia–Lambton, it's truly unbelievable that at a time when our community in Sarnia–Lambton and those across this province are facing so many challenges, the massive sum of \$640 million could be willfully squandered by this Liberal government. None of this makes any sense to the people of Sarnia–Lambton.

It's not surprising that the minister decided to move the cancelled Mississauga plant to Lambton county. Sarnia–Lambton has long been known as the energy hub of Ontario and has long met the energy needs and petrochemical needs for the people of Ontario and, in fact, North America. My community relishes this role it plays in the province. We have over 5,000 skilled trades workers in my riding just chomping at the bit to get ready

to build this energy infrastructure that will support this province for future generations.

A number of years ago, the former minister and this present minister could have taken my advice. I wrote to them at that time advocating, on behalf of the community of Sarnia and the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce, that we would take the present Lambton generating station, which is idle most of the time, and renovate that plant and turn it into a gas-fired plant at that time—go off coal and go to gas. I was surprised that the minister didn't take my free advice, but maybe the advice he was getting from the treasurer—because I noticed in estimates, I was watching in estimates one day—

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Why spend nothing, Bob, when you can spend \$650 million?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Exactly. I was watching the Minister of Finance in estimates one day, and he was asked that question by one of our members on the committee that day. I actually asked him to ask it; I was unavailable to be there. The minister said, “Oh, you can't revamp a coal plant. To my knowledge, it wouldn't be possible to revamp the coal plant.” Well, that's ludicrous, but if that's the kind of advice that a senior member of cabinet—the executive council—is giving to his colleagues, I can understand why there has been such a foul-up on this. On the OPA's and OPG's own website, they talk about the possibilities of retrofitting coal plants to gas. It's on the grid, it's got the infrastructure and the employees, and it could be done. They could have saved themselves a whole lot of money by doing this. They wouldn't be paying a company \$190 million as a penalty fee to come down to Lambton county. That's another story for another day. We'll get into that another time. Let's get this committee started.

**Interjection:** Good idea. Get that committee started.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes. To this government, \$190 million or \$300 million or \$640 million means very little. The Minister of Energy—and the Premier, by his own admission—believes \$40 million spent on something called “unrecoverable” is a good deal for the people of Ontario. They obviously went to the C.D. Howe—who was a former minister in the federal government who said in the 1956 pipeline debate, for those who are historians, “What's a million?” when he was questioned on that. I see the member from Wellington–Halton Hills nodding his head. Maybe that's the school of thought the Liberal politicians went to.

I heard quite a history lesson the other day from the member for Peterborough about John Robarts and Leslie Frost, but I never hear them talk about Mitch Hepburn. I never hear the Liberals ever talk about Mitch Hepburn. Someday I'm going to get up, and I'll read into the record some stuff about Mitch Hepburn. They never mention Mitch Hepburn. You'd think the government—they only talk about Frost and Davis and Robarts, and there's a good reason they talk about them: because they delivered responsible, good government to the province of Ontario.

**Interjection:** That's a good comment.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Good segue, eh?

1640

**Interjection:** Yes.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They weren't too very darned proud of Peterson either.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** No, no. I forgot about him.

In the last two months, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Community and Social Services knows specifically that my community is facing challenges, as all communities in Ontario are, in funding supports for adults living with developmental disabilities. In the last two months alone, two families in my community have notified my office that because of lack of provincial funding, they can no longer physically or financially care for their adult children and, as a last resort, they have had to make the heart-wrenching decision of surrendering their children to the care of province.

Now, how do I go back and tell them there's no money for care when \$650 million or more has been wasted on this fiasco? I don't know how any Liberal member can stand up with a straight face and say this was a good deal. I tell you, it doesn't sell back in Sarnia–Lambton. I wish somebody would come down there and try and make that case.

The political games this government is engaged in are threatening supports and services that are so important to the people of this province, and the people of this province are taking notice.

I'd like to read into the record an article titled Hiding the Gas Fiasco that was in the National Post the other day. I won't have time to read it all; I see my time is limited, unless the member from Durham will move unanimous consent that I have more time.

“The Ontario government, perpetually digging itself out from under its energy policy messes, has mastered the art of shovelling costs off to other agencies in the hope that nobody will notice. Last week, in another typical move, Energy Minister Chris Bentley announced that the government's main electricity agency, the ... OPA ... had successfully negotiated the Liberals out from under the government's breach” of a “\$1.2-billion contract.”

I won't read the rest of it; it's on record. Ladies and gentlemen, I recommend you go to the National Post.

They say, “Since when do companies, in this case TransCanada Corp., walk away from a deal worth a billion dollars in exchange for peanuts? They don't and there's no reason to believe TransCanada has done it this time.”

This will all be coming out in the record.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to skip on: “It appears that by 2017, when the new plant is completed, OPA—which is not an operating company but a policy-making-outfit—will be sitting on a \$210-million liability. When the plant starts producing electricity, TransCanada will repay the \$210 million over the 20-year term of the contract. Under Ontario's green energy plan, even if the Bath plant's power”—we're now talking about the plant near Napanee—“is not needed, electricity ratepayers will still pay for the electricity they don't need.

"That the new plant may never be needed is no surprise." I heard the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington say this morning, I think, that the existing plant there, which is a gas and oil plant, is sitting idle. It's a 2,100-megawatt plant. All the infrastructure is there. Why would we build another brand new plant there and spend those millions and millions of dollars?

"The final cost of the Oakville contract breach, likely in the hundreds of millions, will be added to the \$190 million the government paid to kill" the plant at Mississauga.

"One way or another, these costs are going to show up in the bills received by Ontario electricity consumers.... The OPA turbine purchase will have to be paid for. And OPG—the provincially owned electricity generator—has become the dumping ground for the whims of past and present Liberal energy ministers. A few examples of costly directives" are "Big Becky, a new tunnel under Niagara Falls that will add marginal" production "at a cost of \$1.6-billion." The price for this will be somewhere between 12 cents and 14 cents over its life.

"OPG was directed to proceed with Mattagami, a \$2.6-billion hydro dam project that will produce power in the spring, when demand is low," when wind and solar are produced, and they will spill. That cost was unknown but likely will average 20 cents.

These are all records from Parker Gallant in the *National Post*.

"OPG has been directed to give up land use in Lambton near Sarnia for the Greenfield gas plant instead of a much cheaper conversion of the ... coal units at that location. The Power Workers Union estimated that 950 MW of coal generation at Lambton could have been converted" for much less "than the \$190-million cost to move the Mississauga plant." On the OPG website, Minister of Finance Duncan said he didn't think that was possible.

"As a result of the policy dumping, OPG will no longer be able to contain the rising costs of renewable energy entering the grid due to 'first to the grid' rights that wind and solar have been granted in Ontario. Consumers will find that the 5.3-cents-per-kWh cost of OPG power in 2011 will increase substantially as these various projects reach the production stage...."

Again, these are the thoughts and opinions of Ontario residents who are fed up with the way this government is handling business in Ontario.

But it's not only the public. I'm going to read the *Toronto Star*. It had a couple of headlines yesterday in the newspaper. It read, "Liberal MPPs Vent over 'Embarrassing' Power Plant Payouts." The *Star* reporter described how many members of the government caucus and backbenchers are becoming worn out by the actions of this Premier in the matters of this province.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** How many of you really knew what was going on?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'm sure many of the members—they're all honourable members, and if they'd known what was going on, they wouldn't have to sit here today

and defend it. Some people should have stood up and threatened to resign over it, like members in the past have.

This is a quote from the *Star*: "Some MPPs insisted they would have been just as candid if" the Premier "had been in the room, while others said that his absence made it easier to rage"—rage against the night—"against decisions made by the Premier and his senior advisers.

"We've got to get out of this. This is embarrassing," one minister told her caucus" colleagues.

An editorial piece again, Mr. Speaker, in the *Toronto Star*, entitled "McGuinty Owes Ontarians an Apology for Power Plant Fiasco," published September 25: "... power plant far from where the electricity is actually needed. It is shelling out at least \$40 million"—that's another.

"Cancelling the Oakville power plant and moving it to eastern Ontario is anything but the 'very good deal for taxpayers'.... It's shocking that he could have" said this—this is the Premier, in Oakville—"with a straight face, repeatedly called this debacle a deal. Granted, it's a less bad deal than the \$190 million the Liberal government spent to cancel a Mississauga power plant just two weeks before last October's election. But that's an absurdly low bar" they've set for themselves.

"Worse, the government withheld public documents on the Oakville" plant "for so long that" the minister "now finds himself in the middle of a rare contempt-of-Parliament charge—a mess the Liberals"—the government, the executive council—"brought on themselves.

"In total, Ontarians will ... pay at least \$230 million and get absolutely nothing for it."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Yes, I see my time is running out.

A lot of what we've asked for in this Legislature is predicated on having a select committee to move events. I'd like to read from Hansard, Mr. Speaker. This is the Legislative Assembly debates of May 12, 2003. A very esteemed member of this Legislature at this time, who was a member then—Premier McGuinty—said:

"We're going to start by scrapping the changes made by the Harris-Eves government that concentrated power in the Premier's office....

"We're going to give legislative committees more clout, enhancing their powers to call ministers and question them in depth about the issues of the day.

"We're going to give power to an all-party committee to initiate legislation. We saw something fabulous that took place in an all-party"—that was Premier McGuinty on May 12, 2003.

If it was good enough for the backbencher and—I guess the Leader of the Opposition at that time; I'll correct myself. If it was good enough for Premier McGuinty at that time, as Leader of the Opposition, it should be good enough for this government and Premier McGuinty at this time.

I would urge that the government think about this contempt motion, evaluate what you've done, how you've mishandled the finances of this province, the energy file, and do the right thing.

I'm sure it's going to be a great weekend in Ottawa. I wish I was able to be there. But I'm sure there will be a lot of debate about this, and there should be. When you get in that ballot box and the secrecy of the ballot box down there, you folks know what to do. Do the right thing. When you get in there, do the right thing. Send a message. Send a message. Better days are ahead.

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

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I'm pleased to join the debate and to go over what has happened, because we really have a situation here where nothing new has been brought forward, and yet—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** We listened to your members when they spoke, with respect—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would appeal to members on the opposition benches. Everyone has had their opportunity to speak. You may disagree with them—that's your personal opinion—but I'd ask you to let the debate carry on.

The member for York Centre.

1650

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** The official opposition have ground the business of the Ontario Legislature to a halt again. The Tories spent all spring delaying the people's business and now we have this.

Today we were supposed to have a third reading vote about the healthy homes renovation tax credit, something that will improve Ontarians' lives and help our seniors. Instead, the opposition has hijacked the Legislature to debate the nuances of documents they admit they haven't even read.

Let's remember what happened here. The Tories asked us for documents. We made the case that providing these documents would compromise our ability to negotiate with TransCanada. We concluded the negotiations and the opposition received all 36,000 pages of documents that complied with their request. We followed through. As elected officials, we have to balance the supremacy of Parliament with the public interest, and our government did just that.

But the opposition is trying to throw any mud they can against the wall in a desperate attempt to see if anything sticks. The motion is purely about partisan politics and nothing more. They're making a mockery of the institution of Parliament, and Ontario deserves better.

As I'm sure the members of this House are aware, the OPA contracted to have the Oakville facility built to meet energy demands of the area at the time. The Ontario Power Authority contracted with TransCanada Energy Ltd. in September 2009 to design, build and operate, over a 20-year term, a 900-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating facility in Oakville. In October 2007, the government determined that the project would not proceed.

It did so for two reasons: clear evidence that it no longer required a facility in Oakville to meet energy demands, and a response to the significant concerns voiced by the community and local elected officials, including Mayor Rob Burton, MPP Kevin Flynn and, yes, MPP Ted Chudleigh. The government's decision was not only supported by the local community; it was supported by Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs. In Hansard of June 1, 2010, Mr. Chudleigh: "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them." In the *Globe and Mail* of September 25, 2011, Mr. Hudak: "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga."

While no formal litigation resulted from the government's decision, the government and TransCanada had been engaged in formal arbitration and confidential settlement discussions until a resolution was successfully reached on September 24, 2012.

In April 2005, the Ontario Power Authority contracted with Greenfield South Power Corp. to develop and operate a 300-megawatt natural-gas-fired electricity generating station in Mississauga. Over the course of the next number of years, particularly as construction got under way at the facility, community concerns were brought to the attention of the government and all of the political parties during the fall 2011 general election campaign. During the campaign, the Ontario Liberal Party made a commitment in response to mounting community concern that, if re-elected, the government would relocate the Mississauga facility to another location. The Ontario Progressive Conservative Party and the Ontario New Democratic Party made the same commitment during the course of the campaign.

In the *Globe and Mail*, September 25, 2011, Mr. Hudak said, "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga."

Shortly after being re-elected, our government announced its intention to relocate the Mississauga facility. In this case, there were some formal litigation proceedings under way, as well as confidential settlement discussions in relation to the cancellation of this project, until a resolution was successfully reached on July 10, 2012. After some long and hard negotiations, the OPA and the proponent reached a deal to relocate the 300-megawatt natural gas plant on part of Ontario Power Generation's Lambton generating station site. The new site will take advantage of existing transmission and other infrastructure, as well as the expertise of local workers. The construction of the plant is expected to provide up to 200 jobs over the next two years.

Over the course of the past several weeks, the official opposition and the third party have attempted to create a myth that the Minister of Energy wilfully attempted to hide or conceal these documents from the Legislature. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Let's look at the facts.

Between May 9 and July 11, the Minister of Energy appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates for the purpose of answering questions regarding the

2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister answered questions relating to a number of issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent considerable time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants which were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga respectively.

While before the committee, the Minister of Energy was placed in a difficult position. He was repeatedly asked to answer questions relating to the Oakville and Mississauga facilities. The overwhelming majority of the questions related specifically to the ongoing outstanding legal proceedings and confidential negotiations. The Minister of Energy attempted to strike an effective balance between the committee's authority to ask these questions and request those documents and the need to protect the public interest in the midst of highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigation. He had a responsibility as a minister of the crown, and it is different than the responsibility that we have as members.

The Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches–East York, recognized the precarious situation of the Minister of Energy. In fact, he repeatedly ruled that while committee members were permitted to ask such questions, the minister was able to exercise his discretion and respond to such questions in a manner that protected the interests of the province.

In Hansard of May 16, Mr. Prue said, “The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions.”

In Hansard of May 16, Mr. Prue also said, “I would advise that I’m going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling.”

The minister relied on the Chair's repeated statements and rulings that the minister was permitted to respond to questions and document requests from committee members in a manner that protected the interests of the province. As a result, the minister wrote to the committee on May 30 and advised the committee that he was exercising his discretion and would not be able to produce the requested documentation, as they were confidential, subject to solicitor-client privilege and litigation privilege or highly commercially sensitive.

Unfortunately, the official opposition ignored the flags that were raised by the minister. They showed no restraint, something we've seen so often from the Ontario PC Party in this place.

On June 5, the member from Cambridge moved a motion to report to the House the minister's failure to produce all responsive records pursuant to the motion of May 16, and to kick-start these contempt proceedings.

The official opposition and the third party, in their attempt to vilify the Minister of Energy and score cheap political points, will tell you that the minister hid or concealed records, and it's simply not true.

Let's deal with the facts: The records show that the Minister of Energy at all times was trying to balance two important, yet competitive, public interests: supremacy of Parliament versus protecting of taxpayers' interests.

And here is the best proof of all. On July 10, the minister announced that the OPA had reached an agreement with Greenfield to relocate the Mississauga facility, and the government had accepted the OPA's recommendation to relocate the Mississauga facility to the Lambton station in Sarnia. In addition, the minister announced that it had settled the related civil proceedings in the state of New York. The legal matters relating to the Mississauga gas plant having been settled, the minister directed his ministry to provide the committee with all correspondence relating to the Mississauga facility that was responsive to the motion of May 16, except for records that were subject to solicitor-client privilege. Those documents were provided to the committee. If he was trying to hide or conceal the documents, why would he have released them the moment he had a settlement with respect to the Mississauga gas plant?

**1700**

Let's deal with the facts: As the negotiations with TransCanada regarding the Oakville plant were still ongoing, the minister was not in a position to produce the documents prior to the Speaker's ruling. On September 13, 2012, the Speaker ruled that while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, he would set aside the matter and ask the three House leaders to take it upon themselves to find a path that can satisfy the request of the estimates committee.

The traditional procedure when the Speaker apprises the House that a prima facie breach of privilege has been found is that the member raising the matter is immediately allowed to move a motion. In this matter, however, the Speaker exercised his discretion to follow the novel approach adopted by Speaker Milliken in the Afghan detainee matter by setting aside his ruling in order to allow the House leaders to devise a means where both their concerns are met. His approach was taken for two reasons, as evident in the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker recognized that there were two competing public interests at play: the interests of the committee in exercising its parliamentary privileges and the interests of the Minister of Energy in temporarily refraining from the disclosure of sensitive information in the midst of commercial negotiations and related proceedings.

The recognition of the opportunity for the three parties, through frank communication, to settle the matter in a way that satisfied the request of the estimates committee—the Speaker's ruling clearly laid out that this was a unique situation, unlike the case of privilege, that warranted a unique solution. The House leaders met on four separate occasions to determine whether a solution could be found. On this side of the House, we had high hopes that the parties would ultimately reach a solution that struck a balance between the competing public interests identified in the Speaker's ruling, and the government tabled two separate proposals that would have

facilitated the public release of the records while accommodating the government's concern about the ongoing commercial negotiations from related proceedings.

Unfortunately, the discussions didn't get off to a good start. The opposition wouldn't attend the meeting that you, Mr. Speaker, had set up last week to broker a solution. I think that's a pretty good indication of how committed they were to the process: not at all. The opposition House leaders were unwilling to consider the government's proposal or engage in any serious discussion.

On Friday, we asked them to attend a meeting. They stayed less than five minutes and threw in the towel, making it clear that they were not interested in negotiating. It's extremely disappointing that the opposition decided on Friday to walk away from the negotiations. It's irresponsible and shows they just don't care about the Speaker's authority or Ontario taxpayers. Instead of trying to use the weekend to find a solution, they decided to play politics, point fingers and ignore the public interest. Instead of trying to find common ground, as the Speaker requested, they left and used the time to spin the media with inaccuracies.

Shortly after announcing the settlement of the Oakville matter, the Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority released all 36,000 records that were responsive to the original motion of the estimates committee. The government even went so far as to put each and every document on a USB key and to provide one to each of the opposition parties, in addition to the Clerk. The request of this committee for these documents has been satisfied; the matter should be over.

We should be standing here today working together and debating legislation to make this province a better place. So why are we debating this contempt motion? This is about the politics of constant conflict that we have seen perpetrated by the Ontario PC caucus over the past 12 months in this province. This is about the factions that are now in control of the Ontario PC Party. They see compromise and co-operation as weakness. They see politics as a blood sport and government as a dirty word. This is the same crew that referred to new Canadians as foreign workers in the 2011 election campaign, and the one who authorized hateful literature during the campaign. These are the same people who orchestrated the defeat of one of the longest-serving members of their own caucus, the former member for Carleton-Mississippi Mills. This is the party that opposed the first budget in the first minority government in years in Ontario before they even looked at it. This is the faction that voted to remove interest arbitration reform from the budget even though they were proposing that in their Changebook. It is the party that rang bells, filibustered committees and blocked legislation for months in the spring session.

This is not the party of John Robarts and Bill Davis. Those fine gentlemen would never have used this place for such callous and vindictive means as this.

Why are we here? It's simple. The opposition is on a political witch hunt.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to add a couple of things historically. In 2002, when the Conservative government

of the day tabled their budget, they said it was balanced. When we came to power, we found that not only was it not balanced but there was a \$6-billion deficit. To this day, the Conservative Party says that is not true, notwithstanding that the Auditor General has confirmed it. It just goes to show that they think all the virtue remains on one side.

I want to tell you another little story; this was back when Larry Grossman was leader of the party. He stood up—we had a deficit—and he said, "The Conservative government has never had a deficit." At that time, I was finance critic and had the records, and I went over to him and said, "Larry, the last three budgets you had were deficits." He said, "You're kidding." I said, "I'm not kidding. They were deficits." He said, "I can't believe that. I was always under the impression that we never had a deficit."

We have this situation where, if this isn't what I consider to be a redundancy—everything that has to be said has been said. And I'm as guilty as anyone; I'm repeating things that everybody else has already said. So if that isn't obstructing and hijacking the Legislature, nothing is. We're going to be hearing more and more people saying exactly the same thing, when instead, we should be getting this to committee, getting it to a point where we can actually ask questions. Because you're not going to get any answers from us; we're giving you our point of view, and you're giving us your point of view.

I think it's time that we get to the business we're here to do, and that is to look after the people of Ontario and bring forward the legislation that's standing on the order paper.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I have been watching this debate with some interest for the last few days. If we had a moment of silence for every million dollars wasted on these power plants, the House would have to remain silent for 10 hours. That's how much money we've spent.

**Interjection:** Isn't that something?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Terrible. It's just awful.

I would like to open my talk and remind the House of a couple of passages that I think are very—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Keep us awake. That's all we're asking.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'll try.

Anyway, our leader, the leader of the official opposition, made a statement in the House, and he had a very good first paragraph. He said, "I want to begin by saying how utterly regretful it is that we have come to this point, to the point where a minister of the crown, somebody entrusted with billions of dollars of investments and taxpayers' money, is on the verge potentially of being found in contempt of the very Ontario Legislature that he is here to serve, in contempt of his colleagues in his own party, and the parties on the other side of the House, and thereby in contempt of hard-working taxpayers across" Ontario.

Speaker, the energy minister is facing a serious and unprecedented situation in our province's history. The

Speaker of this House found that there was a prima facie case of contempt by the Minister of Energy when he did not provide documents relating to the relocation costs of the Oakville power plant.

Furthermore, we are now debating a motion to find the energy minister in contempt of Parliament because the material he reluctantly tabled is full of whited-out sections or information that is entirely missing.

**1710**

Speaker, this issue of contempt was debated in this Legislature some 104 years ago. In 1908, a member of this House—oddly enough named Mr. Henry Pettypiece—

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** No relation.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Mr. Pettypiece spelled his name different from mine. I've had some colleagues ask me if I'm related to him, which I am not. But like Mr. Pettypiece in 1908, I now find myself in a similar situation: debating a motion of contempt.

I'd also like to quote the PC House leader, the member for Simcoe–Grey, in his letter to the Speaker on September 25, 2012. He says, “Clearly, the minister, the government House leader and the Premier do not understand the gravity of this matter. The powers and ancient privileges of the House are not some game with which the McGuinty Liberals get to play. Rather, those powers and privileges afforded to the democratically elected officials of Ontarians are the hallmark and the cornerstone of our provincial Parliament and our representative democracy.”

The member from Simcoe–Grey summarizes well the importance of this motion. He explains why the government's refusal to hand over all of the documents relating to moving the Oakville power plant is an attack on our parliamentary democracy.

I was troubled by a comment from the government House leader earlier this week, who likened this debate to a “kangaroo court.” Speaker, it is outrageous that a minister of the crown would compare our Legislature, the cornerstone of our province's democratic society, to a kangaroo court. I was also troubled to hear the Minister of Consumer Services refer to the contempt motion earlier today as “frivolous and vexatious.”

Furthermore, the Premier himself said this to the Canadian Press earlier this week: “I'm hoping that the opposition will have their fun, come to their senses, and recognize that we've got to move beyond this.” Mr. Premier, this is not a laughing matter. It is not a game. Your energy minister is facing a motion of being in contempt of this Legislature.

The Premier's comments, the government House leader's comments and the Minister of Consumer Services' comments show the arrogance of this government and their obvious disregard for this House. Their words also show a disregard for our democratic rights and beliefs. The government keeps accusing us of bringing this Legislature to a halt. They say that we are holding up the business of the House. Just this afternoon, our House leader asked for unanimous consent to have all legislative committees re-established. But how did the government

respond? They said no. So don't blame us for tying up the business of the House.

Speaker, I'd like to provide an example of an interesting case in the United Kingdom involving an accusation of contempt of Parliament. In the British House of Commons in 1819—that's just before our relatives came here from the old country over in Ireland—a man was found guilty for a “willful suppression of evidence, and a high contempt of the authority of this House.” The offender destroyed a document after appearing before a parliamentary committee. The Sergeant-at-Arms held the man in custody until the next day, when he was later released.

Let me quote the Speaker of the British House of Commons from this incident in 1819:

“This is an offence of the most serious and grave nature, both as affecting the dignity of this House and the ends of justice; and had this offence been committed by you with the deliberate intention of impeding the examination now in progress, it would have been the bounden duty of this House to have punished it with the utmost severity.”

Even though those words were spoken 193 years ago, I think they are very appropriate for the debate we are having here today.

What this government has done is totally inexcusable. They have wasted hundreds of millions of dollars in a desperate attempt to hold onto Liberal seats in Mississauga and Oakville. What's worse, the Minister of Energy and the Liberal government intentionally worked to keep taxpayers in the dark on the true cost of these cancelled power plants.

Speaker, I have been involved in service to my community for many years, and I believe I have spoken before about my membership in the Monkton Lions Club since 1987. We have helped with many projects in our community, such as building a new arena, rebuilding our Lions Pavilion, and helping to build a world-class baseball diamond where we hosted an international invitational fastball tournament for many years.

The Lions Club motto is “We Serve,” and we have a number of guidelines to help us in our work, one of which is: Do not tear down another person's house in order to improve your own. I am not going to stand here and criticize the personal integrity of the Minister of Energy. I believe him to be a person who works hard for his constituents. It's too bad his party is letting him flounder. They've thrown him under the bus and they're not helping him get out from underneath it.

The Minister of Energy was forced to supply documents to the House about the decision to move the Oakville power plant; however, he did not do this. We did not ask him to provide redacted documents or whited-out documents or documents with missing attachments. Speaker, we asked for all the documents. The reason that parts of the documents are missing is because of my previously stated remarks; it is because the Minister of Energy or the Premier or the previous energy minister, Mr. Duguid, did not want this Legislature or the people of Ontario to know what the whole story really is.

I want to point out that the Minister of Energy is not only facing a motion of contempt by the Legislature but he is also facing the contempt of many people in Ontario. They are upset with this government and their failed Green Energy Act. They are angry that industrial wind turbines are being forced upon them with no regard for their concerns. The government said that they listened to local opposition of the gas plants and that's why they cancelled them, but they will not listen to local governments in rural ridings.

In Perth–Wellington, we are very concerned about this government's policy on wind turbines. The government is quite prepared to pay hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to save the Liberal-held seats in the GTA. It is quite prepared to conceal documents that reveal the true extent of their politically motivated waste and mismanagement. Yet when it comes to our concerns in rural and small-town Ontario, this government and this minister are prepared to dismiss them without a second thought.

This is the kind of double standard that contributes to the rural-urban divide. I spoke about this growing divide in my motion which was debated in this House on September 6. This government, in my opinion, has widened the rural-urban divide to an extent that is both unprecedented and unacceptable. Here are just a few ways that they've done that.

They introduced a Green Energy Act which time has proven to be a costly failure and a massive power grab. Inflated prices for wind and solar projects have driven the cost of energy through the roof.

Without any credible economic analysis, they cancelled the slots-at-racetracks program. They created chaos in our province's horse racing industry, showing contempt for rural and small-town Ontario.

They increased the burden of red tape and duplication affecting our rural and small-town municipalities. They provided no funding and very little direction for municipalities about the new source water protection act.

1720

Speaker, they continue to overregulate agriculture. The Endangered Species Act fails to compensate farmers should an endangered bird or animal be found on their property.

They also brought in school transportation procurement policies that have wreaked havoc in rural Ontario, destroying the livelihoods of those who for many years have safely transported our children to school every day.

They stood by while their policies caused hydro costs to skyrocket. Manufacturers—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Point of order.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to section 23(b) of the standing orders, where a member "directs his or speech to matters other than,

"(i) the question under discussion; or

"(ii) a motion or amendment that she intends to move;

or

"(iii) a point of order."

I think we're straying somewhat in terms of the motion that's currently before the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I thank the member for his point of order. I'm listening very carefully, and I will rule when I realize that he's off track.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker.

They have also stood by while their policies caused hydro costs to skyrocket. Manufacturers, small businesses and residential customers took a big hit, yet the government showed no concern for them, not even for seniors or those on fixed incomes.

Finally, they refused to share gas tax revenues with small and rural municipalities.

These examples show a government out of touch with rural and small-town Ontario, but it's worse than that. Through the actions of the Minister of Energy, the government has shown contempt for all taxpayers—indeed, all citizens in this province. This government is unwilling to acknowledge the high price Ontario is paying for their mismanagement. In reading documents—the very limited and select documents that the Minister of Energy was forced to release—it becomes clear that the government is not coming clean on all the costs involved in relocating the Oakville power plant. It will cost taxpayers much, much more than \$40 million. The true costs will be closer to \$450 million, and when we add in the Mississauga plant, the amount rises to \$640 million or \$650 million.

Speaker, \$650 million could hire a lot of doctors and a lot of nurses for our communities in Perth–Wellington. On a personal note, my brother-in-law suffers from Lou Gehrig's disease. There's no cure for that. Just think: \$600 million might have gone to research into that disease. It's just incredible. The government could have used the \$640 million to partner with our municipalities to maintain the roads and bridges we use every day.

Getting back to the documents the Minister of Energy was forced to table this week: As outlined in schedule B of the memorandum of understanding between the government and TransCanada, there is a \$40-million payment for unrecovered costs and a \$210-million payment to purchase TransCanada's gas turbines.

The OPA documents further reveal that an additional \$200 million will be required for new transmission lines, a cost which was concealed by the Minister of Energy for the past two years.

But don't just take the figures presented in the MOU. Let me turn to the Society of Energy Professionals to see what they say about the Oakville power plant relocation. The Society of Energy Professionals says that the \$40-million figure neglects to talk about all the other, much larger, associated costs. The society says that it is imperative that taxpayers also be allowed to look at both the original contract signed with TransCanada and the new contract.

The Society of Energy Professionals also talks about the process behind the relocation of the Oakville power



plant. Mr. Rodney Sheppard, president of the Society of Energy Professionals, has this to say about the Oakville power plant relocations:

“Transparency in this matter is paramount. We should know what rates people will be paying for decades to come as a result of this deal. This decision once again demonstrates that political expediency and not system planning is what drives electricity policy in Ontario.”

Clearly this is a government that governs by polls, not according to an energy policy which is in the best interests of the province. They are playing politics with Ontario’s energy system in a bid to save Liberal seats in the GTA.

Speaker, I would recommend to the government a book called *The Power of Parliamentary Houses to Send for Persons, Papers and Records: A Sourcebook on the Law and Precedent of Parliamentary Subpoena Powers for Canadian and other Houses*. The book was written in 1999 by former Liberal member of Parliament Derek Lee. Mr. Lee served as an MP for 23 years; he is an authority on the topic of parliamentary democracy. In his book, Mr. Lee cites the following examples for people being found in contempt of Parliament in the past:

- refusing to be sworn or take upon themselves some corresponding obligation to tell the truth;
- refusing to answer questions;
- refusing to produce documents in their possession, or destroying documents in their possession that have been sent for;
- giving false evidence;
- willfully suppressing the truth;
- persistently misleading at committee; and
- trifling with a committee.

Such examples of contempt obviously apply today in this government. They should apologize to the people of Ontario.

Although I wasn’t a member of provincial Parliament at the time my colleague the member for Simcoe–Grey stepped aside from his role as a Minister of Health, I nevertheless was watching provincial politics. The member for Simcoe–Grey resigned with honour and dignity over a mistake made by a member of his staff. He understood the concept of ministerial responsibility. He stepped down; he did the right thing.

There was also the resignation of now-Senator Bob Runciman because of mistakes someone made in revealing the identity of a young offender in a speech from the throne. Senator Runciman did the right thing. He did not show contempt for this Legislature; his actions were noble.

There’s an interesting editorial in yesterday’s *Toronto Star*. Here’s what it had to say about the power plant relocation:

“Instead of trying to convince skeptical Ontarians that these decisions were ‘missteps’ and things aren’t as bad as they seem, McGuinty and his energy minister ought to come clean and issue a frank apology for what is, at root, a political fiasco driven by electoral considerations.”

Let me remind members that this editorial was in the *Toronto Star*.

The amount of spin I’m hearing from the government as they rally the troops and try to protect the Minister of Energy is making me dizzy. A couple of hours ago, the member from Mississauga South had the audacity to blame a photocopier for putting blank pages in the 36,000 pages of documents that the Minister of Energy was forced to table.

I’ve only got 12 seconds here. Unfortunately I can’t get to the rest of it, but we need to get this to committees; we need to form committees. And that’s the way we have to get this done.

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

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thanks very much, Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** What’s that?

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Preach to us, Ted.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Brothers and sisters—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Yes.

I wanted to start by sharing something that my dad used to share with me a lot when I was a kid. He would say, “Teddy”—Little Teddy. I hated it when he called me Little Teddy. You can see I’m not Little Teddy anymore. He would say, “Good judgment is based on experience and experience invariably on bad judgment,” to which my mother would add, just to clarify, “Teddy, that means learn from your mistakes.”

Good judgment is based on experience, and experience is invariably—

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**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** And mothers are always helpful.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** And mothers take a much more simple and direct approach with their kids than dads do.

I only say that because no one in this Legislature is saying that these two plants that will cost the people of Ontario a pretty penny, to say the least, were a good idea. In fact, decidedly, the contrary is the case. Mayor Burton didn’t like it. The MPPs from a couple of parties didn’t like it. The people didn’t like it.

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** Mayor McCallion certainly didn’t—

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** God help you when Mayor McCallion doesn’t like something and wants to tell you about it. It was out there.

In the election campaign, there were crowds of people who followed the various candidates for political office around to make sure that they knew they didn’t like it either. Looking back, the “good judgment based on experience” motive, I think—motif—fits, and fits well enough that every political party, ironically, during the campaign, said that if they were to have the good fortune to be elected to government, they would cancel the plants, too.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** And it would have been free of charge.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Sufficient in the knowledge that they didn't have to explain—well, maybe that's not fair. Maybe you had costed it in your program. Maybe you had done the research and costed what that would have been. But again, let's understand that there appeared an emerging consensus that it didn't make sense and we should stop it, and as history will record, we did exactly that, having made the commitment.

Now, from all of that, the legal jargon and everything else, we now get this contempt motion, and I'm having some difficulty with it. I've got to tell you why.

No one in this Legislative Assembly moved a contempt motion as the old Tory government flip-flopped on their energy policy, ultimately leaving Ontario with a \$25-billion-plus stranded debt, which we're still paying off. The member for Perth–Wellington said, "If we had a moment of silence for every million dollars, this place would come to a standstill." I want to tell you, if we had a moment's silence for every million dollars that constituted the stranded debt, I calculated that we'd take 56 weeks off here. We wouldn't do any work in a year for that. I appreciated actually the creativity of the member from Perth–Wellington, but maybe he doesn't have the same sense of history that some of us do.

We had the municipal partners out there that we try, on a good day—we don't always listen as well as we could. Downloading's a good example of that. Forced amalgamation's a good example of that. You want to talk about democracy? We had a referendum in my municipality, and 98.4% said, "Don't do it."

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** And they did it.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** But they did it. But you know what? No one moved a motion of censure on that that I recall. I would have loved to. No, I wouldn't have, because that would not have been in keeping with this place.

So they were all pleading with us to do this, and we did it. Those cries didn't fall on deaf ears. In fact, all three political parties and their representatives and those who wanted to be representatives listened very carefully and promised to do the same thing.

I point that out because this is really too strict a paradox. Think about this: to demand from others certain actions, which you concur with, and then criticize, even condemn, them for doing what you claim you would have done all along. It's no wonder the people of Ontario, from time to time, just look at this place and shake their heads.

I've got to tell you, one of my daughters has been very active in professional and little theatre. She came here, and she watched the proceedings of the assembly, and—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Halton, come to order, please.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I've often said to her, Mr. Speaker, what my mom and dad said to me: that public service isn't an option, it's an obligation—and I have encouraged her to look at some things that she could do. I think somebody said there are two kinds of people in the

world—they must have known my mom: those who make a noise and those who make a difference. I've always encouraged our kids to make a difference.

She sat here for half a day. We then went to supper, and I asked her, "What do you think?" Do you know what she said? She said, "That place is village theatre for ugly people." That's what she said. She said, "You would no more get me to commit to being one of you people out there than walking backwards as far as"—so this place, she noted, and on a bad day, I note, has become somewhat dysfunctional, to say the least.

It wasn't always like this, by the way. I can remember working here back in 1975—

*Interjection:* I didn't know that.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Yes, I was the executive assistant to one of the House leaders here when my good friend Bill Davis was the Premier of the province. We know each other well, and we keep in touch occasionally. He's a fine fellow.

Those were the days, by the way, when there were giants in this House—sincerely, there were giants.

I looked at one of the pictures framed here, and it brought back some memories and a few tears. Frank Miller was great; Roy McMurtry, a Chief Justice; Robert Welch, who became a very good friend; Stephen Lewis, one of the most articulate human beings on the face of the planet; Ian Deans; a young Sean Conway—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you, the member from Halton.

There are a lot of discussions on the opposition side, and I would remind you again that when your member was speaking, the House was in total silence.

I would also say to the member from Halton again, I've asked you to come to order several times, and you continue shouting across the floor, so the next time will be a warning.

Minister.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** He's a good guy; I know him well. But thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Morty Shulman—do you remember Morty? We called him Morty Showman. He was great.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I could tell you some great stories too, like the time he brought the gun into the House to show how lax security was. Then he went out to his car and went to Jamaica, while everybody stewed.

Bob Nixon; my old friend Maggie Campbell; Elie Martel—God bless him. Did I mention the young Sean Conway? His oratorical splendour will never again be matched in this House, I can tell you. Jack Riddell, a former Minister of Agriculture, who to this day is held in great respect—why do I share those names, the giants? Well, I've got to tell you, when I look around this place today, I often get the sense that there aren't too many giants here anymore, I've got to tell you. I don't know where they've all gone.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Oh, there are giants here, but there don't seem to be as many of them—the giants who understood what it meant to be fair and decent and even-handed, who stood up for and defended the finest traditions of this place.

I remember a story—Gilles, you remember this too; sorry, Speaker, the member opposite may remember this as well—when the magnificent Stephen Lewis got up and he asked the Premier, Bill Davis, a question—true story; I'm not making this up. Bill Davis listened to the question, he rose slowly and he said—you've got to remember—

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Point of order.

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**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Stop the clock. Point of order, the member for Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I know the standing orders state that he must be speaking to the topic at hand. I'm not objecting to the history lesson, but I would ask, if the Minister of Agriculture is not going to speak to the issue at hand, maybe he would like to speak about the horse racing industry and what he's going to do to the farmers who are—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask the member to have a seat.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

I appreciate the member moving a point of order, but I'm trying to keep all of you quiet, so I can listen. I don't have a chance to put it together when I have people shouting at each other.

Minister.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my friend opposite for calling me to the account, because he's a responsible member of this House, and I always appreciate his sage advice.

Anyhow, the very loquacious Stephen Lewis got up and asked the Premier of the day a question. Bill Davis rose and he said this: "Stephen, that's a very good question. I wish I had a very good answer, but I don't. You give me a couple of days, and I'll get back to you with a very good answer," and he sat down. The Speaker then said, "Is there a supplemental?" He said, "No, Speaker, no supplemental. That's good enough for me."

That's how we used to work in this place. I remember it well.

If that were to happen today, dare I say it, do you know what would happen? Somebody might get up and say, "That minister should apologize and resign because he doesn't know his file." You wouldn't want to say, "I don't know, but I'll get back to you."

Anyhow, perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps I'll be surprised. Perhaps we will show that we today still understand the concepts of fairness, decency and defending our finest traditions. I hope so. I pray so. Perhaps we will rise above the narrow divisions and the political pandering that reflect a much more shallow understanding of this place than our history would call us to recall.

We didn't have TVs then. We didn't have reporters in the House. We didn't have BlackBerrys. In fact, we didn't even have offices here. Four MPPs would share an office with one staff person. I was fortunate enough to be one of those staff people—great learning experience. I know it was a different time, but sometimes we can learn a lot from our history and we can use it as a springboard for a recollection of what's good and decent and proper and right. I think good, decent, proper and right people reside in the seats of all parties in this Legislative Assembly, then and now.

Speaker, let's be honest, or if the rules preclude us from using the word "honest"—we talked about the truth setting us free; let's be honest and truthful—then honestly, let's try our best to be fair, decent and perhaps even-handed. I'm not going to take my full 20 minutes. I don't believe for a moment in my heart of hearts, I simply don't, and I can't bring myself to believe in my heart of hearts that there's anyone in this House today who in their heart of hearts actually believes that the Minister of Energy, the member from London West, is in contempt of this place. It is my fervent hope that we will recall that good judgment is based on experience, and experience, invariably, on bad judgment; that all of us have fallen short in this place and in other parts of our lives; that we need to be refocused, radically refocused, on what's good and decent and fair and right, and what the people of Ontario want to see this place produce, and being about doing it.

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I just want to start off by letting the Minister of Agriculture know that there's at least one member, and I think many more on this side of the House, who do believe the minister is in contempt.

But I also agree that the House shouldn't be here, not just for the same reasons as the party opposite. The Liberals want to deny that they have done wrong by the hard-working taxpayer with their politically motivated decision to cancel the Oakville and Mississauga power plants, as well as by using every trick in the book to conceal documents that expose the truth.

For me, I don't even think we should be here as a historic example of the government's contempt of parliamentary privilege of one of our own members. It's embarrassing for this government that it has come to this, especially considering nothing like this has come before the Legislature for over a hundred years.

It's one thing to make what is likely going to be a billion-dollar mistake in Oakville, doubled by Mississauga, for ill-advised campaign decisions. It reflects badly on all policy-makers who have pledged to dedicate their activities for the service of all Ontarians.

That's why it's so shocking for me to discover amongst these documents that legal counsel was actually tasked by the Ministry of Energy to discover ways to justify the cancellation of these very plants. Specifically, a mad scramble amongst bureaucrats ensued to find justifications for the cancellation of the Mississauga plant. If there had actually been a legitimate reason, then bureau-

crats wouldn't spend days pitching creative excuses back and forth and evaluating the fallout of each. That was in the documents that you provided us with, by the way.

They needed a way to issue a directive that may result in the revocation of Greenfield South's licence to generate electricity. This would be made possible if the revocation could be connected to either "energy conservation, load management, energy efficiency, or the use of cleaner energy sources including alternative or renewable energy source."

Now, where have we heard each and every one of those excuses before, for the cancelled plants? That's right: Oakville and Mississauga. But perhaps the real reason is public misfeasance or abuse of public office. Squandering what will likely be billions in failed energy projects for political gain is an outright abuse of government power.

And guess what? The documents that weren't redacted or blacked out reveal that the Liberals were afraid of that, too. The Minister of Energy actually asked legal counsel for a "Coles Notes on tort of misfeasance in public office ... including defences." In other words, the minister wanted examples where a public office-holder had abused power, and the possible defences for those offences. That sounds pretty guilty to me, Speaker. But don't just take my word for it, when you have this half of the House over here saying the exact same thing.

I've listened for days upon days now to your eulogizing of your Minister of Energy by the Liberal colleagues. Apparently, they even acknowledge that his days as minister of this disastrous file may be numbered.

Here are some examples—I'll just give you a couple: "He's a good man," "a wonderful family man," "a decent man," "a man of integrity," "highly respected," "hard-working."

"The Minister of Energy is a man of honour. He is a minister who rolled up his sleeves and sat down, as he just announced, and got a deal in this matter. He has worked to protect the public interest...."

Wow. Now, if only that were the case and he actually worked to protect the public interest instead of protecting his party's reputation by covering up his past mistakes on his energy file.

For the amount of times that honour came up in his eulogizing, one has to think that his colleagues have been compensating for something, perhaps trading honour for partisan politics and a lust for power at the cost of billions to taxpayers.

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To be fair, these misgivings represent the McGuinty government as a whole—winning elections before serving Ontarians. Despite their kind words, they're still effectively throwing the current Minister of Energy under the bus. Where's the tow truck? They threw him under the bus for the actions of the former Minister of Energy and the campaign team—but then I remember that he is responsible now for the contempt of parliamentary privilege by obstructing committees from meetings and the access to thousands of documents. That is until he

finally submitted to overwhelming pressure to do the right thing and release some files this week—some files.

Unfortunately, doing the right thing, for a Liberal, seems to be a fairly elusive concept. So instead, our staff was buried in thousands of documents, of which a significant percentage were blank or redacted. You should be embarrassed by that—absolutely embarrassed.

Based on what we saw, it seemed that only the bureaucrats were working on the energy file. Incredibly, there was an extraordinarily little amount of communication that went on at the highest levels, the levels of responsibility of the ministers of the crown who are sitting right across from me now. Either there was a massive lapse in leadership, or more documents than we can imagine are still being hidden, maybe under that desk right over there.

One other massively apparent theme is that the deeper we delve into these files, the steeper the costs to the hard-working families of Ontario for these power plant cancellations and relocations. We know for sure that the amount taxpayers will be accountable for in the unrealized Oakville plant is in excess of \$450 million, probably more like—we're going to get up to around \$650 million. I suspect this is likely just the tip of the iceberg. A slide deck by the Ontario Power Authority indicates that the government will actually be "pleased" if the costs of this cancellation do not exceed \$1.2 billion. They should have redacted that one.

The jury is still out on the Mississauga plant total cost. We're still waiting for the Minister of Energy to do the honourable thing and present the outstanding documents. But if the government is proud of that \$1.2-billion number for Oakville, I'm guessing the same may go for Mississauga, and then we're talking about double.

So I ask my colleagues opposite: Was it worth it? Using your power to blow through billions of Ontarians' tax dollars to save your Mississauga and Oakville colleagues' seats? Or in other words, was it worth it to go from a minority government without the seats to a minority government with the seats? Oh, wait. Sorry, that's right; you haven't realized that you're a minority government yet. This is evidenced by your obstruction of committees altogether. Today we've already had motions, that have been shot down, for unanimous consent to strike committees to get government going again. You, my friends, are obstructing this Parliament.

Your redaction of documents, even your refusal to submit to the will of the majority in this Legislature to remove non-tax-neutral HST from home, heating and hydro bills—the will of the majority of Parliament—and creating an Ornge select committee—just two examples of where you do not respect this very Parliament. I see a pattern developing here. I think we all see a pattern developing here.

There are more interesting discoveries in the long and winding paper trail; for example, further flawed logic within the grossly mismanaged energy file, like solving one problem by creating another and another and another. This is not a rational way to mitigate the costs of damages caused to companies who had already invested in building these plants. Yet that is exactly what this

government intended to do with TransCanada Energy Ltd. after terminating the Oakville plant contract.

A draft directive from the Minister of Energy was discovered designating the Ontario Power Authority to negotiate with TCE and award the contract for the new Kitchener-Waterloo plant to potentially mitigate losses TCE incurred—by the way, that's where the power is needed, not in Lennox and not in Sarnia. This was to be combined with an implied pressure that litigation may disqualify TCE from future project RFPs. That's right. The Premier's office actually issued talking points on mediation with TCE, including, "You [TCE] have to know that it would be very difficult to win the [Kitchener-Waterloo] project," if litigation commences. Internal legal counsel, to the rescue again—with a prompt response saying that, "Nothing in our government RFP template rules ... outright that if you are in litigation you are precluded from bidding. In fact, you can't be disqualified from bidding just because you've sued the government."

So that didn't work. Neither does non-competitive bidding or sole-sourced tendering, as unequivocally it costs more.

To summarize, you blew it by cancelling the project well under construction. Let's be clear about that. You knew you were way on the hook for damages to TCE, potentially even for the extensive loss of future profits; thought about using some empty threats; then attempted to actually negotiate by sole-sourcing TCE for another plant at, again, our expense as taxpayers. But that didn't go so well. The settlement negotiations were "an unmitigated disaster," according to the documents from TCE's lawyers.

How all that wound up wasn't so clear because of the massive gaps within the documents, where apparently everyone agreed not to email each other until some kind of legal proceedings commenced half a year later. It would be funny, if it wasn't so sad.

It's exactly this type of flawed decision-making and mismanagement of the energy file that keeps costs soaring. Where does it leave us? By the way, when costs soar, who pays the bill? Taxpayers, the people who elected you; that's who. We're actually stuck with a government so intent on winning seats in elections that it will waste billions of taxpayers' dollars if it suits their needs and then use every trick in the book to obstruct parliamentary privilege to cover up their abuse of power—misfeasance.

The Liberal government has truly lost sight of the line between right and wrong and their sole purpose for existence: to serve Ontarians in this House.

They have the gall to stand here eulogizing the career of one of their own already and pointing the finger at those of us doing what they should have been doing all along, which is standing up for Ontarians.

As Canadians and Ontarians, we typically pride ourselves on accountability and transparency in government, but today, we disappoint our country and our province

and those who stood in this House before us over 100 years ago.

I'm not so sure about anyone else, but when I came into office, my goal was to uphold the democratic principles that make this province great and to serve the citizens in my riding of Barrie and, of course, all the citizens of Ontario as well. To me, if not for some of my colleagues, things like accountability, honesty, transparency and integrity actually matter. Yet, now, here we are, not debating new legislation that would help the people of Ontario but, instead, this matter of principle and privilege, which you don't seem to think is important, as evidenced by every speaker who gets up here today.

We are here because a cabinet minister of this government, for the first time ever in the history of this province, may be found in contempt by obstructing access to important documents that will hold the government accountable for several shady, politically motivated documents. And for what? So the Liberals can save face like they saved the four ridings that landed them in this mess in the first place.

By playing games with the assembly and, by extension, with all of Ontario in the name of self-promotion, this is proof that the Liberals—this government has lost its way and has forgotten why we're all here: To represent the best interests of the hard-working citizens of Ontario.

Our Speaker himself has said that the right to order the production of the documents is fundamental to and necessary for the proper functioning of this assembly. Refusing to do this in full, as I just mentioned, but it's worth mentioning again, would mark the first time in the history of Ontario that an Ontario cabinet minister would be found in contempt, and deservedly so.

The Liberals bought themselves time to figure out what to do with the Speaker's orders, but this is ridiculous. They're even going to these lengths to conceal these documents; that they're willing to break the law that we're all sworn to uphold. A little backwards, isn't it?

What's the cost of this evasiveness? Well, beyond the disgrace of our Legislature and yourselves, frankly, this comes at a high financial cost as well, at a time when Ontario is painfully hurting economically.

The last decade, under this current government, we've landed on a collision course with a \$30-billion deficit, a \$400-billion-plus debt, record unemployment. Despite receiving over \$3 billion in equalization payments, Ontario's deficit today is three times the size of all of the other provinces combined, nationwide.

Meanwhile, this government's spending is increasing rampantly, and 14 of the 24 ministries in the last austerity budget increased their budgets. This is the reality that this government fails to realize.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<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	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<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	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
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	
<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	









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