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Wednesday 24 April 2013

Mercredi 24 avril 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 24 avril 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

WEARING OF PINS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear daffodil pins today in recognition of Canadian Cancer Society Daffodil Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister has asked for unanimous consent to wear daffodil pins. Are we agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Good morning, Speaker and members. The government will not be calling order G36 but rather government order G14.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NON-PROFIT HOUSING
CO-OPERATIVES STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT
SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 15, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 14, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise to participate in the debate about Bill 14, the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2013, which is yet another bill that has been revived by the Liberals after their similar legislation, Bill 65, died with prorogation. While I'm

pleased to engage in this debate here today, it again comes with apprehension, as this bill would have been enacted into law by now if the Premier and the Liberal government hadn't decided to prorogue Parliament and put their party's interests ahead of what is best for Ontario. The Liberals can say this is an important bill to them, Mr. Speaker, but actions speak louder than words, and they've proven that it's not as important as, say, shuttering the Legislature for four months to avoid a contempt motion and find a new leader, a rather selfish act in the history of this province.

The fact of the matter, to us anyway, is that this is indeed an important issue that shouldn't have to be continually reintroduced, as there are 550 non-profit co-operatives in Ontario—many in my riding—that provide housing for over 125,000 Ontarians. It's an issue that, on a positive note, as we've seen from past debate, seemed to garner support from all three parties. It's a shame it has taken this long to go through the parliamentary process, but I'm certainly pleased that it's been reintroduced and am hopeful that it may soon become law.

Along with my colleagues, I'm generally supportive of this bill and its main intention to move co-operative tenure dispute cases from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. This is where all other housing disputes are settled and, to me, makes sense.

There is one new aspect of the legislation that I'm concerned about, that I want to touch on in a few moments. But for now, let me explain why I believe this legislation is important. Similar to all other landlord and tenant disputes, the proposed provisions in this legislation are the same provisions that all other landlords in the province already have, and that we've agreed, are fair to evict a tenant. Such disputes might include: rent arrears, late payment of rent, wilful damage and illegal activity by tenants or interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of property and so on.

Second, the new provisions would also streamline the resolution process by allowing co-ops to apply directly to the board to terminate a former member's occupancy of a member unit and evict under a few straightforward circumstances. Such conditions might include, for instance, where the former member has terminated his or her membership and occupancy rights; where the former member's membership and occupancy rights have expired as of a predetermined date; and where the former member is a post-secondary student living in a student housing co-operative and has given notice of termination.

As I'm sure most would agree, these are all basic circumstances that, under our current system, would require

going to court and a great deal of time and money. This legislation would reduce the load of these cases and ease the burden on our court system that is not only costly but also clogs up the system.

This brings me to a third reason this legislation is important, and it has to do with legal costs incurred by co-op members each year. The average cost of resolving co-op disputes in court is somewhere between \$3,000 to \$5,000 per case, and with, on average, 300 cases heard each year, it puts court costs to co-op members upwards of \$1 million annually. It's a lot of money considering there is a more affordable option to settle these disputes, and it's money that, instead of wasting, we could be putting toward the housing system.

These are all benefits of Bill 14 and its predecessor Bill 65 that, looking to the past debate, seemed to garner support from all three parties, as I've said, which is certainly a feat, considering the Liberal government's history in this minority Legislature. Considering the past support for Bill 65, to ensure its swift resolution, you would think the government would keep its successor, Bill 14, the same in order to not rock the boat, as we say.

You would think that, Mr. Speaker, but that's not the case. Bill 14 contains an amendment clause that gives the Landlord and Tenant Board the power to waive a \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants. From my perspective, there was no reason to change anything in Bill 65 except if they wanted to, again, just rock the boat. There was no one advocating for the change—no stakeholders, no associations, no one except this Liberal government—and it's incredibly disturbing that a one-sided amendment to the Landlord and Tenant Board would even be considered without widespread consultation.

We don't know the cost of this decision. In a briefing, the ministry could not reveal who will qualify for the waived fee. The fear now is that it will open the floodgates for disgruntled landlords or tenants to take every minor dispute to the Landlord and Tenant Board, causing further delay in a system that is already horrendously backlogged, not to mention the fact that the fee is a cost-recovery mechanism for the board's operations, which means Ontario taxpayers will be called to subsidize revenue shortfalls.

Instead of erring on the side of caution to ensure this important issue is passed in the Legislature, the Premier has taken what should have been a non-partisan bill and made it somewhat political by putting this fee in. From a Premier who prides herself on being different than Dalton McGuinty and repeatedly talking about how much she believes in co-operation, it's certainly strange that she would include what can only be described as a poison pill in legislation that previously had all-party support. In fact, it doesn't make sense. Again, we had co-operation on this bill before prorogation, and now we get an amendment thrown in out of left field.

This is nothing but yet another attempt by the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government to wedge issues and play conniving political games on the backs of taxpayers. It's 100% unacceptable behaviour, but not necessarily

surprising coming from a government that prorogued the Legislature for political gain, cancelled power plants days before the 2011 election to save Liberal seats and are responsible for doubling our \$411-billion debt and \$10-billion deficit.

The \$45 filing fee is completely unrelated and an unnecessary amendment to this legislation that almost defeats the purpose of the bill itself. In essence, we would be moving the cases from one backlogged court system and creating another backlogged system.

While I would like to affirm my belief that the Landlord and Tenant Board is a better option for these disputes—less costly, more efficient and so on—since the Premier seems to have opened the debate about the problems at the Landlord and Tenant Board, it reminds me of a number of other concerns that I have heard from constituents that perhaps should be reviewed.

0910

In one letter I received from a constituent from Collingwood, you can almost feel his frustration. He wrote:

“Dear Mr. Wilson:

“I am writing with concerns about the Landlord and Tenant Act. The rules, the processes, the judgments, do not serve the landlords, they serve the tenants. I am a landlord and have an extremely difficult tenant who runs the show at my property which is located in Collingwood. He parks where he wants, he harasses other tenants. He routinely uses foul and offensive language. He is familiar with the Landlord and Tenant Act, and realizes that it is an extremely difficult process and next to impossible, to have him removed. He has chased many good tenants from my property, because they feel hassled, and they decided to move. He is an alcoholic, who is making life as a tenant and a landlord miserable.

“This is my property (he was there when I bought it) and he runs the show around there with the aid of legislation which is too favourable toward tenants' rights.

“The system is failing me and I have no control over my property.”

Similar concerns were raised in a recent missive out of the Federation of Rental Housing Providers of Ontario in a 2011 report entitled *Justice Denied: Ontario's Broken Rent Dispute Process*:

“Ontario's rent dispute process is broken.... It is excessively long, and is unjust to landlords. It typically takes 90 days in Ontario for a dispute to be finally resolved, and costs the landlord about \$5,200, not including administrative costs, lost time and productivity. That's only the typical process.

“If a ‘professional tenant’ is involved, he or she uses requests for internal board reviews and appeals to the Superior Court to add even more delays; these tenants easily use Ontario's system to bilk landlords of up to one year's rent, suffer no consequences, and cause severe financial and emotional distress....

“Ontario's outdated rent dispute process needs to be modernized. Most other jurisdictions in Canada have fair and efficient rent dispute processes in place, proving an efficient system is achievable. In the western provinces,

the process takes anywhere from one fifth to one third the time it takes in Ontario.

“The broken system is also bad for tenants. For a number of tenants, the delays in the system only make matters worse for them, leading them to develop large arrears which they can't rectify, and ultimately affecting their credit rating and their future.”

You see, if you want to discuss it, there are obvious problems with the Landlord and Tenant Board. We all know that. But if we look at changes, they should be done in a fair and transparent way that allows all parties, both tenants and landlords, to have input. The government's job is to do what is in the best interest of all Ontarians, not just of bureaucrats working under the leadership of an unelected Premier and an unstable minority government. While I for now support this legislation, since the Premier opened the debate, I would like to urge her to consider province-wide hearings on reform of the Landlord and Tenant Board so we can best determine in a fair and transparent way for all involved what is working and what is not.

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: I listened quite intently to what the member had to say and couldn't disagree with him more. I think the Landlord and Tenant Board works extremely well. We made some significant changes about four or five years ago that basically put both landlords and tenants in an equal position, so that if there are issues to be decided by the board on whether the landlord is due his rent or whether the tenant has legitimate issues with respect to repairs and things like that, it would all be done in one hearing. Prior to that, there had to be two separate hearings, and there were all sorts of questions raised in the House for a number of years. It's kind of interesting that since the change was made to have all issues dealt with at the same time, there has not been one question in this House in the last six years about the operation of the Landlord and Tenant Board.

With respect to the potential waiver of fees, rules are to be set by the board, and what we're proposing is absolutely no different from the rules that are already in effect with respect to many other administrative tribunals, such as the Ontario Municipal Board. So it is just a red herring. If the Tories support the co-ops having the right to use the board, like they did last year, they should vote for it. Let's get it to committee, and let's iron out whatever the differences may be. But to call for province-wide hearings is just a red herring.

We're here to do the people's business. Let's get on with it. Let's stop playing games. This bill has now been in this House for 13 hours of debate. It's a little bit like the local food bill, which has been here for about 20 hours of debate. These are good pieces of legislation for the people of Ontario. So stop filibustering every bill that comes here. Let's get to work, get it to committee and get it done. Other than that, have a great day, folks.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Simcoe–Grey, I believe, made the point that needs to be made on Bill 14 with respect to there's probably good and bad.

I think resolving disputes is really what this bill attempts to do, and I think the current experience I have in my riding with the Landlord and Tenant Board seems to have a bias built into it in terms of the position going in. At least that's the perception. I would say anything you can do to clarify some mechanism to resolve disputes without a bias, to look at the facts—I know most members would know from any party that the tenant can be exceptionally abusive to a landlord. In my case, I'm thinking of families that have retired and their income source has been diversified such that they probably own a second home or a cottage that they're deciding to rent. Then they've got a problem tenant and the tenant knows the rules or the ropes, and pretty soon the dispute amounts to not paying the rent, trashing the property, and the landlord, in this case a retired couple, is left holding the bag. There are other occasions when there are arguments to be made, I'm sure, of landlords that are perhaps abusive, as well.

So I think we need to have fairness in any dispute mechanism, and I think the experience that most MPPs, if they're paying attention—we would like to make and streamline the process. The option is, of course, to go to the courts. To go to the courts is going to be an unfair and unbalanced relationship as well.

We have to make sure there's fairness, and I don't see that specifically in the rules here. I'd like to see a little more clarity in the rules of the balance that's going to be in the hearing itself.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Families in my community are waiting years—up to 20 years, almost—for affordable housing. I've been waiting for this debate to come to an end for it seems like 20 years, and the truth is we've been waiting for affordable housing to be built for going on decades now. So I'm actually going to stop speaking right now. We need less talk in this chamber and more action in this province on housing.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise in support of the comments of my colleague from Simcoe–Grey. He has only brought to this chamber what we have heard in terms of criticisms and concerns of this piece of legislation. To hear the Attorney General suggest that we are filibustering when we simply want to debate the issues, I think, is going a bit too far. This is a chamber of debate, a chamber of ideas—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And you can try to shout me down, as you always do, Minister of Transportation, but I'm going to continue to speak. Because as I like to point out, my colleague from Simcoe–Grey has been in this esteemed chamber, both in the opposition as well as in the cabinet, and he has a great deal of experience in speaking

about legislation. He is our House leader. He brought forward, I think, some very valuable concerns, concerns that have been raised by landlords and others across the province, and I think it is legitimate debate.

Our party, of course—the Progressive Conservative Party—will be putting up a number of speakers today on Bill 14, the non-profit housing co-operatives, because we feel that there needs to be more conversation, as, of course, is the tag line of the new Premier. She likes to talk about conversations, she likes to talk about discussions, and she likes to talk about process. Well, when this side of the House decides it wants to engage in conversation, discussion and talk about the process, they want to obstruct us in doing so.

But I must say to my colleague from Simcoe–Grey, I agree with your comments. I agree with your concerns. I think that you’ve done a service not only to your constituents but to the stakeholders involved in this process. I think that it is very legitimate and valid for you to be having this conversation, and I do appreciate the opportunity that we are having this debate at this present moment.

Again, I want to talk about—in the 10 seconds I have left—the fact that this government will only want to talk about discussion and process and conversations when it suits them. But when this side of the assembly wants to debate an issue, they want to shut it down.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Simcoe–Grey has two minutes.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I thank my colleagues who spoke. I say to the Attorney General and the Liberals: You’re the first government—maybe you don’t know this because you’ve had a majority for nine years—not to take bills around the province. On almost every bill, whether it was a Mike Harris or Ernie Eves government, and for many, many governments before that, we always went to the four corners. We went somewhere in the north, usually Sudbury or Thunder Bay. We always went to the southwest, either London or Windsor. We always went to Ottawa or Kingston, and we had hearings in Toronto. That was the norm on almost every legislation—and by the way, it was faster than the process we’re in now, because it took four days, usually, on the road and usually a couple of days in Toronto. We would have it done in a week or a week and a half, in committee.

Your arrogant approach to governing, by trying to shut this place down—in fact, you did, for the first time in history. We had a leadership, I can remember, between Ernie and Mike. We took the weekend to do it, and we brought Parliament back on the Monday, like we were supposed to. You selfish people, you closed it down. You run around to the interest groups and say—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You might want to sit down.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, the member from Simcoe–Grey, I was standing for at least 15 seconds. You ignored me totally, thank you very

much. Secondly, I suggest you stick to the agenda; you were wandering a bit. Thank you.

Hon. John Gerretsen: On a point of order, Speaker: Mike Harris used to say that the consultation took place during the election time. That’s what he said—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That’s not a point of order—

Hon. John Gerretsen: —about consultation.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It’s an honour to rise this morning on behalf of the residents of Dufferin–Caledon to discuss Bill 14, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Excluding the lengthy title, there are certain aspects of Bill 14 that I am supportive of. In fact, I don’t think it’s by any means a stretch to say that certain aspects of Bill 14 not only have all-party support in this House, but have had all-party support for quite some time. I say this because in the last session, the Liberal government introduced a bill—Bill 65, of course—which was also generally well-received by all parties. Bill 65 was, for all intents and purposes, the same bill as Bill 14. This is with the exception of one particular measure that has been added to Bill 14, but I will touch on that momentarily.

First, I just want to summarize how we’ve gotten to this point, and I think it’s a useful exercise. I say this because lately, when I’ve been reviewing government legislation, I get a déjà vu feeling. I get that feeling because a great deal of the government’s legislation was already introduced in the last session. Bill 14 is an example of this because, as I mentioned, Bill 65 in the previous session was almost the identical bill.

As I was saying, Bill 65 was introduced in April of last year—actually, it was April 16, so over a full year ago. At that time, a year ago, our critic for municipal affairs and housing—who does an excellent job, I might add—the member for Leeds–Grenville, stood up in this chamber and outright announced that not only would the official opposition be supporting Bill 65, but also pointed out that we have been calling for its reforms for some time.

On its face, this was a great situation. It was a great situation because, as you know, Speaker, things have been somewhat toxic in this place under this particular government, what with the Ornge scandal and the gas plant scandal, contempt proceedings—well, you get the picture. In light of all that, I think it’s great that there was some legislation that we could all agree on, something that all parties agreed was good for Ontarians and was a well-needed reform.

The thing is, though, like a lot of good legislation that has been proposed, the Liberal government totally wiped out Bill 65 when the former Premier prorogued the Legislature last fall. This is a very important point, I feel, because while I anticipate Bill 14 will be passed on to committee for some needed amendments, I cannot help

but point out that Bill 65 should already be law. I can't help but get frustrated when I hear the respective ministers stand up here in the chamber or go out in front of the television cameras and talk about how critical their bills are and how important it is that they must be passed, because the reality is a lot of these bills could already be law if their government hadn't prorogued the Legislature last fall. Even if you're going to prorogue, there is an opportunity for bills to be carried over. We all know how that system works. That could have happened with Bill 65 as well.

That's why it's so astonishing that members of the party opposite have the audacity to stand in this chamber, as they have previously, and accuse members of the opposition of stalling legislation through debate. It was their party that wiped out all that we had achieved with Bill 65, and you had to restart the whole process. That's the abbreviated version of how we got here today, debating Bill 14.

I want to focus on two points of Bill 14 specifically. One was contained in Bill 65 and, I believe, supported by all parties. The other is a new aspect of Bill 14 that was not in Bill 65. It's the second point, the new one, that I have a slight problem with.

But for now I want to discuss the good aspect of Bill 14, and that is the transferring of tenure disputes from the court system to the Landlord and Tenant Board. This is a good move, it's a practical move and it makes sense. All of the disputes regarding housing, including things like rent arrears, late payment of rent, wilful damage and illegal activities by tenants etc. are settled at the Landlord and Tenant Board, so it only makes sense to have a uniform approach and have everything settled at the same body.

I will point out that the Landlord and Tenant Board is not without problems of its own. However, from a streamlining point of view, this transfer makes sense. This is because, as we all know, the court system itself has its issues with backlogs, not to mention costs. Removing tenure disputes from the courts will thus not only help relieve some of the pressures on our court system but also help save co-op members a great deal of money. Resolving these disputes in the courts costs co-op members approximately \$1 million in unnecessary legal costs every single year, and with these disputes contributing to the court backlog I mentioned, it costs taxpayers too, because of the precious court resources that are being used on these cases. On this we can agree, and have agreed.

I can't help but point out, Speaker, at \$1 million a year in costs to co-op members having to go through the courts, that one could potentially argue this government's inaction and self-serving priorities have indirectly contributed to that penalizing cost because, as I mentioned earlier, Bill 14's original version, Bill 65, was introduced a year ago. Yet here we are a year later, another \$1 million later in legal costs to co-op members, another year later of disputes backlogging our court system, and still we're talking about the same issue—and it's the one we

agree on. So again, we have an example of the party opposite's plain, basic inability to effectively manage our province's government.

As our leader, Tim Hudak, pointed out yesterday during question period, every day, when a newborn child comes into this world in Ontario, they're immediately burdened with a \$20,000 share of the provincial debt. That's due to the financial and managerial incompetence of the Liberal government, and it's a direction that we in the official opposition vehemently disagree with.

But back to Bill 14. As I was saying, this reform of transferring the tenure disputes to the Landlord and Tenant Board is something we can all agree on. Great. So let's get it passed, right? Not so fast. You see, there is a new aspect to Bill 14 that was not in Bill 65, and this is the notion that the Landlord and Tenant Board should have the power to waive the \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants.

Like a lot of things this government says, it sounds good but, upon closer inspection, doesn't really hold up to scrutiny. You see, the ministry couldn't say just who would qualify as a low-income tenant. Alternatively, this low-income status will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

This is problematic, I feel, for a couple of reasons. Chief among them is that the filing fee represents a cost-recovery mechanism for the Landlord and Tenant Board's operation. If we start waiving the fee, my question to the minister would be, where will that money come from?

The money to operate the board is going to have to come from somewhere, particularly with the new responsibility of resolving tenure disputes, as I've discussed. As the transfer of these dispute resolutions will lead to a higher caseload for the Landlord and Tenant Board, it stands to reason that the board may also see a proportionally higher operating cost as well. Otherwise, they will be dealing with backlogs. So that's why I don't think it's prudent to waive a primary source of the board's resources.

0930

The other problem I see with waiving the fee is that it risks seeing a sharp increase in complaints to the Landlord and Tenant Board. This is because, with the possibility of not having to pay a fee, there would appear to be no reason whatsoever not to file a complaint, regardless of its credibility or severity. And as I mentioned briefly before, the Landlord and Tenant Board is not without its problems; it too has issues with backlogs. So risking making those backlogs worse, and thus making delays even longer, I feel, is not a prudent choice, because it means that legitimate and serious issues that need to be addressed could potentially be held up by frivolous complaints; not only the complaints themselves, but also the idea of reviewing every single person who files a complaint to determine, by some set of criteria we are not privy to, whether or not they can qualify as low-income. This too could potentially add substantially to the length of the process, and no one, whether landlord or

tenant, wants to wait longer for a decision. Furthermore, I am under the impression that the fee is typically returned to the tenant if they are successful at the board. So that's an area of Bill 14 that I think is a problem.

I think it's a shame that we had a bill that everyone agreed on, that was supported all around, and now we've changed it in a way to make passing the effective streamlining measures of Bill 14 take longer, and I hope that is resolved at committee.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to make comment on my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon. What I have found in my time serving alongside her—and it has indeed been a pleasure—is that she is a reasoned, balanced person who always brings facts to this table. She does her homework, she represents her constituents to the best of her ability and she also looks at the big picture for Ontarians across the board.

She's made a good point that Bill 65 was here last year and, in fact, could have been enacted, could be law and could actually be serving the people—which we were duly elected to do here in this chamber—and yet, they prorogued. And to her point again, she said there are mechanisms that could have carried that legislation over so that it would have been enacted, but no, we start all over from scratch.

I find it a bit disingenuous of the Attorney General to bring up the word “filibuster.” Yesterday or the day before in debate, he played to the camera and said, “Why are the PCs prolonging all of this?” What he failed to disclose was that the Liberals spoke to that exact, same bill at every opportunity. So it's a bit disingenuous and disheartening, to say the very least.

Our colleague from Leeds–Grenville stood in this chamber a year ago, almost to the day, and advised that the PCs were prepared to support this legislation that would have actually gone forward and helped people. It could have been helping people, it could have eliminated a million dollars in costs and it could have lessened the court backlogs, and yet here we still are, going through this.

She raised a very good point that the bill does allow a transfer of the dispute resolution process from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board, which is a good thing. Any time we can get more productivity through our courts and those people who have other issues to take forward, it's a good thing. But I also agree that the new point they inserted into this new bill, which we're yet doing over again, definitely has potential for increasing complaints.

They can waive the fee, but again, it's very interesting that they use this ambiguity. They want the 30-second sound bite that sounds great to the public and the media stream, but there's never any substance behind it. If you really start to ask questions—how will this work, who really gets impacted, what's the reality?—there's never any fact there. I'm very disheartened that we're doing this again. They're not serving the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened to the discussion by the member from Dufferin–Caledon, and I think she made the points I'm hearing repeatedly here, but they need to be stated. The question then becomes, is the government actually listening?

I was looking back at my notes, and last time—this is the third time this bill has been called, and with all due respect and deference to the people who work in this industry, waiting for the right thing to be done, they've been thwarted one more time in the attempt to get this to committee. The government has the power, in different rules, to end this debate if they find that they have a real intent to resolve the issue, and I think that by bringing in a closure motion on that, they would indicate that they have to negotiate a solution. With a minority government, that's really the politics of all this happening. We find much appealing about this bill. At the same time, there are other things that we feel they should be looking at with a different view.

Some of that is the approach to the budget of Ontario. We feel they've made a complete mess of pretty well everything in terms of spending. Even if you look at the hearings that are going on on the gas plants, the hearings that are going on on Ornge and the hearings that are going on on the neglect in health care with respect to chemotherapy, there's much—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like you to sit down, thank you. The member from Durham is well aware that he's drifting way, way far away from the bill. Maybe you want to get back on track.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Speaker. You're right. I was trying to make a point, though, with your indulgence. The point I was trying to make is that this bill should go to committee. I think we've said that. All of the speakers here see the reasonableness of that point. What's missing is any sense of contriteness or apologetic mode by this government, this not new government—

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: This bill basically is good, and we will support it. It's in need of some minor changes, but the main point of sending most disputes to the Landlord and Tenant Board is a great idea. It creates efficiencies. It saves money—approximately \$1 million in costs—which is currently going to lawyers and court costs when we go to courts now. So that will be a welcome thing because, certainly, co-op housing is intended to be cheap housing for people who are in need of subsidized, cheap housing. Every penny counts. So if we can save \$1 million and that would help provide a few more housing units or better maintenance for housing units, that's a great thing.

I see there are a few points that are not included, which I find kind of funny: no pets; clearing of snow and cutting of lawns would still go to court. I'm a little puzzled by that. Surely the Landlord and Tenant Board could

deal with fairly minor issues like that. But at committee these amendments could be made.

Consideration of landlords' rights against frivolous complaints by tenants who would abuse the system and go to the Landlord and Tenant Board on a pointless, frequent basis: Those kinds of questions have to be addressed, and landlords' rights and concerns have to be addressed.

The fees for cost recovery, I would suggest that would have to be looked at. I'm not sure why we need to be charging fees to people who basically can't afford a house. I would suggest maybe an appropriate thing that a committee could look at would be the waiving of fees.

In short, I think what we have here is the essence of a good bill that our party will support. We look forward to speaking to it at committee, making some necessary changes, having input from people in the community such as landlords, in particular, and making it even better.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be back. I was away yesterday. The Governor General was in my riding. I then had a chance to meet with Minister Meilleur up in Whitney looking at some of the flood damage from the high water levels on the Madawaska system, particularly at Galeairy Lake.

I have heard my colleagues ask repeatedly, "Why didn't the government put this bill through before?" Then they talk about, "Oh, prorogation." They want us now to extricate them from a problem of their own creation. Like, do we have to do all your work for you over there? Have you not figured it out? You had every opportunity before Dalton McGuinty tried to take a walk off the edge of the cliff, so to speak, and declared that he didn't want to work with you guys anymore—because we never see him. You know that, eh? He could have brought in a programming motion that would have ensured that this bill was dealt with. This bill would have been dealt with. Now we see the government wanting the PCs to do their work for them.

0940

Well, the one thing that is very clearly provided for in the standing orders of this House, in the rules of debate, is that every member who wishes to speak to a bill will have the opportunity to do so. The government can change that. The government can take that away. The government has the ability. The government can bring in a closure motion. If they want this debate to end, then bring in a closure motion, but we still have members who believe that they have the right and the responsibility to speak to this piece of legislation. It affects them in their ridings; it affects people all across the province.

Do we want to see this bill move forward? Absolutely. Do we want to see it get to committee? Absolutely. Do we believe that the—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Absolutely" was my last word, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Very good.

The member from Dufferin—Caledon has two minutes.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker.

It fascinates me that for a government that talks about respectful conversation, there was not a single member of the NDP or the Liberal caucus who chose to stand up and comment on my debate.

To the members from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, Durham, Carleton—Mississippi Mills, and Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, thank you for the feedback. Thank you for the comments. Perhaps the respectful conversation that is happening in the chamber and in Ontario is between two parties, excluding the official opposition. I don't know; I'm not privy to it. But I do find it intriguing that no one has chosen to talk about the specific issues that I raised about Bill 14/65 in my 10 minutes of debate.

As I raised, when it comes to the Premier's promise of co-operation and conversations, it's starting to sound a lot like empty rhetoric. The Premier pledged over and over again, with great fanfare, a new approach of co-operation with the opposition parties, yet we just saw an example today where not only did you not participate in the debate and you are not commenting on the debate that is occurring, but you're just sitting—I see half of you on your BlackBerrys and half of you reading the newspaper.

This debate is important to Ontario, this debate does make a difference, and you have a responsibility as a legislator to participate in it and ensure that we are getting it right. That is the point of debating in this chamber. That is the point of committees and public hearings: to hear from the public, to hear from the stakeholders, to ensure that we have got it right. I'm not sure you have it right with Bill 14, and I find it very unfortunate that you have chosen to not even participate in a debate on such an important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the bill, and I'd like to recognize the members from the co-op industry here to listen to debate. Welcome.

I think it's very important to recognize the role that co-op housing plays in our community. Co-op housing provides a unique form of housing for the 125,000 people across the province who live in the 550 co-op housing complexes. It allows its members to come together in a common purpose.

We recognize that not everyone in Ontario can afford to buy a house or a condo. Through its membership-based model, co-op housing provides the opportunity for those who otherwise can't afford to take these things a chance to take pride in ownership over their living environment.

The co-op model is an elegant solution to meet the needs in our community. My riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London is home to a number of co-op housing complexes. I had an opportunity to meet with some of them last December from the Elmview Estates co-op, the Meadowdale Community Housing Co-op, the Pinafore

Station Co-op and the Stirling Meadows Housing Co-op. There are two others in my riding that I have not yet had a chance to meet with: Troy Village Housing Co-op in Aylmer and, of course, the Whiteoak Heritage Housing in south London. Together, these complexes alone provide 340 units in my riding.

When I met with the representatives from my area's co-op complexes, they described to me the benefits of the membership received from having an ownership stake and management responsibilities for their housing units. I enjoyed at the time, December, the fact that people living in the co-ops would get together and have a Christmas gathering for the kids. The kids would receive gifts. It kind of forms their own little community that strengthens each other. I've talked to other people in the community about the co-op housing, and they find it great, the fact that babysitters—they look out for one another's kids when they're out playing. If they have to make a quick errand to go get something in an emergency or just go to the grocery store quickly, their neighbour is quite readily available to help them out. I find that is unique now. We find in the other types of neighbourhoods that we have, or out in the rural communities, where you're far and few between, that it's a lot harder to get the extra help in the community. So this co-op housing pretty much brings together the old-fashioned type of community we used to see 20 or 30 years ago.

Clearly, the virtues of co-op housing are immense, but as with anything, disputes will inevitably arise. The matter of housing, co-op or otherwise, lends itself to a fair share of disputes over things like rent arrears, late payments, wilful property damage and interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of their property.

For years, people have had to turn to the court systems to resolve their disputes. Thankfully, we're not as litigious a society as the United States, but our court systems do get overburdened. That's why I'm proud to say that it was Premier Harris who recognized this and took action in 1997. Under his leadership, Ontario used a tribunal system, rather than courts, to settle tenure disputes in rental housing. This sparked a trend of lawmakers across Canada to keep civil cases out of the expensive court system. Using tools like mediation and arbitration, both landlords and tenants have access to a fair, cost-effective way to resolve their disputes.

While this marked a step forward in rental housing, the move did not account for co-op housing. Members of a co-op housing unit must still rely on the court system to settle their disputes. The ministry has estimated that the cost of resolving co-op disputes in the courts can range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each. Annual legal costs of co-op members for the approximately 300 cases heard each year are in the neighbourhood of \$1 million. These really are punitive amounts for tenants and landlords simply seeking a way to resolve their disputes.

I'll give this government credit. It recognized the deficiency in the system and proposed a piece of legislation to overcome it. Of course, I'm not talking about Bill

14, which is the subject of today's debate; I'm talking about Bill 65.

The two bills, in terms of content and text, are the same. The only difference is, Bill 65 was introduced just over a year ago, on April 16. Back then, the PC Party and my colleagues had said what we're saying now: We will support this bill through second reading and work with all parties in committee to ensure its final form optimizes the benefits for all co-op housing providers and their tenants.

For a government that accuses us of always saying no and of being averse to any types of collaboration, our willingness—eagerness, even—to get the work moving on co-op unit disputes to the Landlord and Tenant Board proves otherwise. It is a policy that makes sense from both a cost perspective and an access-to-justice perspective. The PC Party's focus has always been and will always be to push for the most practical, beneficial and cost-effective reforms, for the benefit of Ontario, and this legislation, in principle, falls into that category.

We were prepared last year to support Bill 65 and work with the government and the NDP to offer reasoned amendments to enhance it. And what was this government's next move when it came to Bill 65? They let it sit on the order paper and ultimately killed it with their cynical move to prorogue Parliament. This is what happens when we have a government that makes decisions based on politics and not on good government. Another example of this is the erroneous bill the taxpayers have been saddled with for the government's GTA seat-saving plan, the gas plant cancellation. When we should have been debating ways to get our economy moving again, creating jobs for the half a million people out of work, and figuring out ways to reduce our debt and deficit before the credit rating agencies downgrade us again, we were locked out of the chamber.

As for Bill 14, previously Bill 65, we are debating it today, knowing full well that it should already be law. If we refer back to some statistics I quoted earlier, in the year that this bill has been delayed, 300 co-op-related tenure cases have appeared before a court, at a cost of a million dollars to the co-op members. Again, the government has delayed progress and hurt the people we're supposed to be representing.

The final point I'd like to make is over an amendment this bill is proposing without any consultation. The bill talks about waiving the fee for the Landlord and Tenant Board for low-income tenants, without actually defining "low income." I'm sure that if a consultation process was done previous to reintroducing this bill, this could have been fixed and clear definitions defined.

0950

My other concern with this bill is, once it gets to committee, of the government actually bringing it back for third reading. There are many bills that we have done over the past two years which—many of them died during prorogation, of course. Now we have a whole slew of bills in committee, and we haven't quite seemed to get them back to this House for third reading. So I call upon

this government, when this bill is finally passed, to get it through committee as fast as possible and bring it back for third and final reading.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: You're joking, right?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: No, I'm not joking; not at all.

Mr. Speaker, I'm definitely feeling that we can work together on this issue. We have done so under the guidance of our lead critic, Steve Clark, from Leeds–Grenville, who has a strong grasp of this issue and other issues that are affecting Ontarians. I feel that perhaps it's time that the government can work with us in the committee and try to get these amendments and consultations put through so that, at the end of the day, we can come up for third reading and get this bill passed, which should have already been enacted into law last year.

Mr. Bill Walker: Why wasn't it?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Of course, it wasn't last year, basically, because of the prorogation that occurred on October 16.

Mr. Speaker, I will love to hear the comments. Perhaps this time around, the government can have a two-minute hit and maybe the third party. My party is continually discussing and giving advice on this bill, and I look forward to their comments.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: With that, I'm pleased to kick in and do this two-minute hit on my colleague from St. Thomas–Elgin–Middlesex—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Elgin. I always call it Elgin–Middlesex. Isn't that something? Elgin–Middlesex–St. Thomas—and London; I'll throw that in there for good measure as well.

But you know what? My colleague here, nevertheless, has really hit the nail on the head in that we have had a concern here because good bills totally died on the floor. As he said, it's great to see this bill come back, because we understand the importance of lessening the burden on ordinary Ontarians. That's what the PC Party is all about, and that's what we stand for.

If we can work through this particular bill—in a cooperative fashion, I might say—we should be able to realize some ease of burden on our folks and allow people who have disputes with their landlords to save some dollars. Instead of going to the courts, they can go through the Landlord and Tenant Board and actually get some realization and some resolve in issues that really shouldn't be stress and extra dollars on a taxpayer who's already burdened.

As I said, we're glad this bill came back. We can't get it through into committee fast enough because this is something that's going to make life in Ontario a little bit easier. But then we have to get to the tough parts. We have to get to what else will make living in Ontario a little bit easier—not only co-operative living, but we've got to address the cost of ever-rising energy bills.

It's a travesty how the government and the third party are dealing with issues and painting by political colours

as opposed to addressing good policy and making sure that we can work together to ensure that life is a little bit more affordable in Ontario. We need to work together to achieve that.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's absolutely a pleasure to follow my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London. Mr. Yurek always comes prepared. He works very diligently on behalf of his constituents. He's concerned about this in his riding, and he's doing his right and his obligation to the people who sent him here to Queen's Park to actually stand up and debate these issues.

I found it interesting—although he may have said it in jest, the colleague across the floor from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell uses the word that we were just “whining.” Well, I would like to take this opportunity to remind him that the role of the official opposition is to challenge the government and make sure that we're bringing the thoughts of our taxpayers to this chamber. Our job is to represent them and to hold the government of the day to account, and let me tell you, Speaker—you know this as well as I do—that's a heck of a big job right now. If we start talking about the corruption of the gas plant scandals that's going to cost the taxpayers of this great province probably a billion dollars or more, the Ornge boondoggle and another billion dollars, the eHealth boondoggle, the tax they said they wouldn't raise—and they still haven't cured the ills of the health ministry despite all of that.

I would be remiss, particularly with my colleague from Huron–Bruce in the crowd, to not bring up the Green Energy Act and that that government removed local democracy from the people who are the closest to the people.

It's interesting that Bill 14—that the Liberals have chosen, along with their coalition partner, the NDP, to not discuss this matter. Yet this legislation has been delayed because of that party and the third party sitting on their hands, choosing not to do anything and to prop them up at budget time last year, and then the prorogation took this off. They could have had all of this in place. They could have actually been helping people, which they always suggest in this House that they're here to do.

This bill needs some revision. We're generally in support of it; my colleague from Leeds–Grenville said that a year ago. Let's get it to committee. We want the two parties to work with us so we can get this to be enacted.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just want to let the members from the Conservatives and the Liberals—I've been in my seat since 9 o'clock. I've been listening to the debate. Part of debate is listening. I have been listening, and I respectfully listened to the points that you have been bringing across. We all agree that this should be referred to a committee, as is my understanding. So let's do that. But I take great offence when you're telling me that I'm not part of this debate. I'm listening. I am here; I am in my seat.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I agree with our colleague down the way that it should go to committee. We will complete this debate at some point, and it will go there.

This is a most worthy bill. It addresses the needs of people who, through no fault of their own, have trouble getting housing. So we're helping them, as a compassionate society, to find the housing they need. A lot of people put a lot of effort into providing housing for people who have this need, at an affordable rate.

The changes in this bill will help make it more efficient and more effective, and more cost-effective, to deliver non-profit housing to those who are in need in our communities. We have people in our galleries who work very hard and talk to all of us in the Legislature about doing just that. So the changes here are most welcome.

We are going to reduce the cost of solving disputes by not going to courts and by going to the Landlord and Tenant Board—we'll save about a million dollars. This will go toward providing more cost-effective housing for people who are in need.

We have a lot of co-op housing in my riding. I've had the pleasure, during campaigning, of knocking on the doors of those people. I met an awful lot of wonderful citizens who, through no fault of their own, are in need of help with respect to economical housing. So it's a wonderful thing that is done with co-operative not-for-profit housing, and we strongly support this.

We do need to go to committee. We will do that; we will support the bill. There are changes that need to be made that will make it even better and fairer for both sides, meaning tenants and landlords, and we look forward to having input into that and to hearing input from people in the community who have concerns and have good input to make this a better bill. We look forward to going there—to going to committee. We look forward to this bill passing, and we look forward to helping people get the housing that they need at the most affordable price possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has two minutes.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You're a little late. Thank you.

I'd like to thank the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, the member from Huron–Bruce, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and his yellow paper and, of course, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Thank you very much for your comments.

I would like to make note of comments from the government side that this is a waste of time. I feel this isn't a waste of time. I was elected to speak on behalf of my constituents, and I know how politics works, over the short time I've been here. If I didn't address this issue, if I didn't say anything in this Legislature, the next election coming up, I'm sure the candidate for the government side against me would raise that issue that I was quiet,

and I will not be quiet for my constituents. I will bring them forward and—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: —my words.

To the third party, we have twice as many members as you in the House, so naturally we're going to take a little bit longer in our debates in order to get every one of our 36 members here an opportunity to address the Legislature.

On the other side of the half is, I agree with you, listening and understanding the debate that's going on. I can only hope that, come budget time in another three or four weeks, you do more than just listen and sit on your hands this year; that you help and vote down this government, because there is no confidence in this government anymore.

1000

Mr. Speaker, this is a great bill going forward. Bill 14, which was Bill 65 originally, should have been passed, as I mentioned earlier, but due to prorogation they had to start from scratch. We're getting close to having this bill voted on and passed. I'm just hoping that this government realizes that once it hits committee, let's speed up the process and get it back here for third reading and get it enacted into law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Am I doing further debate or comments and questions?

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

Miss Monique Taylor: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was actually scheduled for debate today, but I choose not to take my debate time, because we really need to move this legislation forward. We need to get it into committee. The poor people from the co-op housing have been here day after day after day listening to debate. They were not only here during this portion of the session, but they were here before it was prorogued. So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to say, "Enough said." Let's move it on. I've been in my seat since 9 a.m. this morning listening to debate, and I know other members have been also. I'm looking forward to further debate from the Conservatives. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's the shortest further debate I've heard.

Questions and comments?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I support that bill very, very much because of all the good things that co-ops are doing in my community and all the projects that they're moving forward with. But I told you, you better stay here, because the opposition party is saying that they're supporting your bill, but really they're not supporting your bill. That's why they keep talking about it—and you will hear once in a while that they want to change the heart of the bill. That's what they want. They want to bring it to committee, but they think that by speaking and speaking you will go away and then they will be able to say that they are not supporting the bill. So

stay here. It's unfortunate that you have to be here when really you have other, better things to do, but stay here, keep an eye on them—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could I remind the minister that she's not addressing the people in the gallery; she's supposed to talk through me. Thank you.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The message is for you too, okay? Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: To the member from Hamilton Mountain, I believe passionately that she could have used her time to put a voice to her constituents. That's really what this is about. Now, I'm not saying what your voice should be and what comments you should make, but I think the point has been made this morning that we have indeed a right and a privilege, a responsibility. There is a question here today suggesting that we should sit down and just shove this through. To me, there's so much of that going on in this Legislature, and I say in committee as well, where the government, even in question period—and this does apply to Bill 14. The government in question period is ditching the questions off on gas plants, billion-dollar waste, and they're never actually answering the question or disclosing information that they could be said to be covering up. I'm not going to say "covering up," because it would be wrong, but I'm just saying that's the real issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham knows—he's been here long enough—that we don't use words like that. Withdraw.

Mr. John O'Toole: I withdraw that, but—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Not "but"; withdraw.

Mr. John O'Toole: I withdraw.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I guess the point I'm trying to make is this is the third time this piece of legislation has come before this House. On each occasion it's been delayed or prorogued so that the debate has not concluded. I have no confidence in this government that this Bill 14 will actually make it into this House. I believe after the budget—and I believe the coalition between the NDP and the Liberals will pass the budget—we'll be out of here in June and this will not even be in committee. There's all kinds of bills that aren't at committee. I don't have any confidence in this government—and I respect Harvey and his colleagues who are here. You are being manipulated by this government, in my view.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, Mr. Speaker. The reason that this won't get to committee, by the way, for those who are listening, is that the Progressive Conservatives keep putting speakers up on the bill. What we've been asked for from the stakeholders—and trust me, Mr. Speaker,

this is not an earth-shattering bill; this is a very small thing that needs to be done to help our co-ops.

I want to give a shout-out to 55 Howard Park, that celebrated their anniversary just the other day—20 years. We're going to be standing up for about eight to 10 seconds each—we're going to be giving our questions and comments—because we want to see this bill get to committee, and we can make that happen if the Progressive Conservatives work with us on this.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I have a problem with the official opposition's credibility. They have a majority in Ottawa, and I have heard today every member opposite talk about their passion for co-op housing. Could they then explain one thing to me: Why is the majority federal government not renewing rent-geared-to-income subsidies? Why, if they care about this bill and they're not holding it up and obstructing it, are their federal counterparts dumping about 12,000 families out of affordable housing because they're refusing to renew the income supplements under section 95 of the federal act?

The Conservative Party—and how many of you have written one letter to your federal counterpart? How many—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I can barely hear myself. Could you please ask them to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, folks. I'm going to have to start moving into action soon. Get my drift?

Continue.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: If there's any value to the words that these people actually care, how are they standing by, not writing a letter? Why has there not been a question? Why has there been nothing out of the Ontario so-called Progressive Conservative Party, that they're not even aware that 12,000 Ontario families are about to lose their affordable housing because of that party?

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'm pleased to rise today to take part in the continuing debate around Bill 14, the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act.

I'd like to commend the member from Leeds–Grenville for taking such an active interest in this issue around co-operative housing since taking on the portfolio of municipal affairs and housing critic for the official opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I've been informed by the table that you're the fifth speaker, so you'll have to sit down.

The member from Hamilton Mountain has a two-minute response.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not want to question that judgment call there. I find it offensive that I'm told that I don't stand in this House

and represent my constituents, because I have stood many times on this bill speaking to the great work of co-ops happening in my riding. I have a fabulous relationship with all of the co-ops. I visit them frequently. I'll give a personal shout-out to a woman who's become a very good friend of mine, Tracy Geddes with Applegrove co-op housing. She had knee surgery the other day, and I hope that she's recovering well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I will not be speaking any further to this debate.

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1008 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: I don't believe she's in the chamber, but I know that she's wandering the halls as part of the delegation of the OFA. It's a pleasure for me to introduce Eleanor Renaud, who is a councillor with the township of Elizabethtown-Kitley. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce the Cassavetes family: Dale, Kim, Cristene and Kevin; grandmother Lillian McConnell; cousin Lauren McConnell; brother-in-law Renzo Vieceli—and Nicole's best friend, Katelynn Labrosse. They are here at Queen's Park today to get answers about Nicole Cassavetes's passing at Sick Kids.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome representatives of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and particularly president Mark Wales and vice-president Don McCabe, who are with us here today.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine who is a councillor for Malahide township and also the president of the OFA: Mark Wales, who's somewhere here.

I also have here—I was talking to him on the weekend—Father Mark Sargeant was somewhere on the premises yesterday or will be today. I just want to welcome him.

Mr. Bill Mauro: This morning, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture hosted a breakfast here. I was happy to attend and introduce to the Legislative Assembly, from my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, the northern rep on the OFA, Ms. Peggy Brekveld.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Our page captain today, Jack Greenberg, has his mother, Tracey Collinson, in with us today and also his father, Mark Greenberg; his brother Henry Greenberg; his grandmother Eleanor Greenberg; and his grandfather Harold Greenberg. Welcome to the Legislature of Ontario.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's my pleasure to introduce some regional directors for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Peggy Brekveld was already introduced by my

colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan, but we have Ralph Brodie, Bruce Buttar, Keith Currie, Larry Davis and Joe Dickenson. Welcome.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Legislature today Frank Kuri, Hugh Moran, Morley Salmon and David Nelms from the Ontario Petroleum Institute. David Nelms was a legislative page here in 1969 when John Robarts was Premier of Ontario.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to introduce today the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants—Debbie Douglas, the executive director; Josie Di Zio, past president; Sudip Minhas, the vice-president and western regional director; Ibrahim Absiye, the treasurer; Don Curry; Léonie Tchatat; Notisha Massaquoi; Maya Roy; and Amy Casipullai. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce Paul Wettlaufer, a board member of the OFA, in the members' gallery. Welcome.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to welcome a wonderful grade 4 and 5 class from Sunnylea Junior School in Etobicoke—Lakeshore who are here today, and their teachers, Rosemary Blackwell and Joanne Barker.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I take great pleasure in introducing two representatives from Meningitis Relief Canada, including the founder and president, Furakh Mir, and Sarbjit Kaur, who are here to mark World Meningitis Day. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Making her first visit to Queen's Park, I would like to ask members to recognize, in the members' east gallery, Cassandra George.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: In the members' west gallery, it's my pleasure to introduce, from my riding of Halton, Mr. Liddar, who is the former deputy permanent representative of Canada to the United Nations Environment Programme and to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in Nairobi, Kenya. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Grant Crack: It's also a pleasure for me to welcome some other members of the board of directors from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture: Larry Freeman, Peter Lambrick, Eleanor Renaud, Louis Roesch, Brent Royce and also—already introduced—Paul Wettlaufer.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to introduce Maddy Stieva. She is the treasurer of the Ontario PC association.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I believe we have unanimous consent to wear carnations in honour of World Meningitis Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There is a belief that we have unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent to wear the carnations? Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to introduce, in the gallery, the executive director of the North Bay and area multicultural society, Mr. Don Curry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Last call for introductions.

I have two of my own. I'd like to welcome, from the great riding of Brant, an OFA director and a friend, Mr.

Larry Davis. We're glad you're here with us in the members' gallery.

Here with us in the Speaker's gallery we have the Honourable Ivan Vrdoljak, Minister of Economy of the Republic of Croatia. He is accompanied today by the ambassador of Canada to Croatia and the consul general of the Republic of Croatia, in Mississauga. Let us give them a warm welcome. We're glad you're here with us today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday your Minister of Finance said that Ontario was the lowest-cost and lowest-tax jurisdiction in North America. I think you know that's not even close to being true.

Your lead on the gas plant committee compared the abuse at the gas plants to a rocket shot to the moon, in terms of being a worthwhile investment. You yourself, in a headline in the *Toronto Star* on April 3, said that the death of Ontario's manufacturing sector is a myth.

Premier, I don't know if this simply reflects that your government has become out of touch, increasingly arrogant, or whatever you want to call it. I ask you, how do those types of attitudes attract a single job to the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, you know, I believe in talking up Ontario and making sure people understand that this is a place where business can thrive.

The comment about manufacturing arose out of the 10 jobs round tables that I did around the province with some of the ministers in the cabinet, where we talked to people who are in manufacturing who are hiring folks, who are talking to us about how we can invest in innovation to in fact grow the manufacturing sector, and how important it is that we not lose sight of the fact that Ontario is an important manufacturing centre.

That's where that comment came from—talking up Ontario, making sure we understand that we can draw industry and investment to the province, rather than denigrating the province, which makes no sense to me at all.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Respectfully, Premier, it's not talk that's going to get Ontario moving forward; it's making the right decisions to grow our economy, to rein in spending, to take Ontario down a very different path.

I do want to focus particularly on the plight of the manufacturing sector. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs under the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government. Sadly, A.O. Smith in Fergus got the news recently that they're closing down and moving to Tennessee with 350 jobs.

1040

My colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, Ted Arnott, has been a champion for the manufacturing sec-

tor. He went to the plant himself to try to fight for those jobs, to keep them here in the province of Ontario. Ted is doing the right thing, but it really hurts his ability to attract jobs to the province when the Premier says that the death of manufacturing in Ontario is a myth. Premier, will you apologize for making those dramatically out-of-touch comments?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I spoke with folks in that situation. I had a conversation with the member. I spoke with folks in Fergus in the A.O. Smith plant, and I know that that's a difficult and painful situation; I understand that.

But the reality is that if we are going to thrive as a province, we need to recognize that bringing business to the province is absolutely a possibility, and it's happening. We have regained 400,000 jobs since the downturn. It's absolutely necessary. So we're making sure that we understand the conditions, making sure we understand what the infrastructure is that's needed, so that we can create those conditions so that business will come to the province. That's what we've been doing; that's what we will continue to do, Mr. Speaker. And I would hope that the member opposite would be part of that endeavour.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I talk about one individual. His name is Dan Bailey. I think, Ted, you've known Dan your entire life. Dan would be in his early fifties, and he lost his job at A.O. Smith, part of the decline in the manufacturing sector that you call a myth. Ted himself, Mr. Arnott, from Wellington-Halton Hills—I apologize, Speaker—has now for probably eight years been highlighting the trend downwards in manufacturing jobs. He has brought good ideas to the table. He fights for folks like Dan Bailey. Mr. Bailey, in his early fifties, is going to have a very difficult time getting back into the job market to provide for his family, to pay off the mortgage.

Premier, I'll ask you again, when you see this type of circumstance in Ontario, don't you think you're wrong to say the decline of manufacturing is a myth, and isn't your obligation to support the policies that the member has brought forward, to actually create jobs, open us up for investment to get Ontario—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact that nearly 32,000 manufacturing jobs have been recovered since the recessionary low—I think that's a good-news story, Mr. Speaker. I think that's something we should focus on.

On top of that, I will just say there are members here today of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. They have come from all across the province, Mr. Speaker, and they—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture know that it is extremely important that in Ontario we understand the importance of the agri-food industry, that we understand that manufacturing includes the agriculture community and includes the agri-food industry, and that innovation in that community, along with in automotive, in natural resources, in agriculture, film, small business—all of that is how we are going to thrive. That's why we've been able to regain 32,000 manufacturing jobs, and we're going to continue on that path as Ontario grows.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, Speaker: I mentioned the challenges that somebody like Mr. Bailey is going to face. The 300,000 jobs that used to be in our manufacturing sector have now left for other jurisdictions like Tennessee, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana. Sadly, while the Premier was visiting, I think, Wellington county, she said the following in response to the loss of jobs at A.O. Smith. She said, "We're trending in the right direction."

Premier, when you look at the 350 jobs lost at A.O. Smith, when we find that Wescast in Wingham just laid off more people yesterday, when Stanpac in Smithville is forced to contemplate sending jobs to Texas instead of Ontario because of our hydro rates, don't you think it's time to take a different course, to actually rein in spending, lower taxes, get hydro rates under control? Isn't that the way to bring jobs back?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We know that global competition for manufacturing is—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We understand that. We recognize that we have to take strong action in order to be competitive, and we've been doing that, which is why 32,000 manufacturing jobs have been regained since the recession. So it's extremely important.

I understand that there is a painful reality that when a particular plant closes or a particular business leaves, those jobs are lost. That is a painful reality. I understand that. But we have to focus as a government, and I would think everyone in the Legislature has to focus, on how we make sure people have the right skills so that we can make sure that they get the jobs that are available, because one of the things that manufacturers say to me is, "We're looking for skilled trades. We're looking for people who have a particular skill set." Our responsibility is to make sure we match the labour force with the labour market.

Those jobs will come to the province. We will have that investment, but only if we are positive and we put the conditions in place.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Chatham, come to order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker.

I don't doubt that the Premier has empathy for Mr. Bailey and the 350 people who lost their jobs at A.O. Smith and those who lost their jobs at John Deere and Caterpillar. But the challenge is, I don't think your government understands the cause of the problem, nor do I believe, Premier, that the Liberal government has an understanding of how to actually move us forward and restore hope to those who have lost hope in our province, who are out of work today.

We've brought forward policies to lower taxes in this province and actually get energy rates under control, to drain that swamp of red tape and regulation and run-around that is, contrary to your finance minister's opinion, the most burdensome in all of Canada. We've put those ideas on the table.

Premier, this should be an alarm bell for you to hit the brakes and go in the opposite direction. Instead of trying to be more like California, why don't you give our policies a chance and restore hope for those without jobs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would have to say that when it comes to A.O. Smith, we are doing everything we can as a government to support those workers, who are in a very precarious situation, and we're certainly, both through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, working with all partners—the unions, the company involved, the local mayor and the other leadership, including the member representing Wellington. So we're working hard to do that.

I talked to the mayor last week as well. We've offered to make available to those communities our Communities in Transition fund, our Southwestern Ontario Development Fund—which, of course, the member opposite, the official opposition, opposed its creation. It's an issue that we're taking very seriously. We know that those are jobs that are going to be lost in the coming months, so we're working hard to make sure that those workers can transition into other opportunities.

When it comes to the manufacturing sector, if in the supplementary I have an opportunity to speak to that, I will enjoy that opportunity.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't doubt that the minister is attempting to respond. He has called the mayor. I just wish you had taken action in the nine years before this plant closed down. The member for Wellington–Halton Hills rang those alarm bells eight years ago. We've brought forward ideas to grow the economy, to create jobs. I be-

lieve the manufacturing sector can make a comeback in Ontario. I believe our better days are yet to come.

But let me ask you this: If you've embarked on policies for nine years that ramped up government spending, that plunged us towards doubling our debt and you're contemplating raising taxes again, don't you understand that's going to cost us more jobs; that's going to dig the hole deeper? It's time to go down a bold new course. Look at our plan. We'll turn the province around and we'll bring good manufacturing jobs back to the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Here's where I disagree. Our manufacturing sector in this province is making a comeback, and it's making a comeback partly because this party and this government supported the auto sector at a time when the official opposition didn't.

Let me also say that in terms of manufacturing sales, the member opposite, the leader of the official opposition, might be interested to know that manufacturing sales rose in eight provinces in February, led by this province; led by Ontario.

In foreign direct investment, this jurisdiction here in Ontario is the third-best jurisdiction in all of North America for foreign direct investment, and let me give you an example that in fact the Speaker might be familiar with. Just last Friday, an announcement was made in Brantford where a company called Hematite, which supports the auto sector, received \$1.5 million from the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. They've added another line; they're doubling employment in the next two years. The president of that company, John Pavanel, said, "Without the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund"—

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

1050

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. New Democrats have been clear since the throne speech that if we're going to support a budget, it has to create jobs, it has to strengthen our health care and it has to make life more affordable.

When families sit down to pay their bills, one of the biggest ones is their auto insurance bill. This government has brought in changes to help make the industry more profitable, but has told drivers time and time again that there's nothing more it can do for them. Is the government finally prepared to take some real action to make drivers in this province have a more affordable insurance premium?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have said that this is an area of great concern to us, that auto insurance premiums in Ontario are too high, that we need to work to make sure that they are lowered, as we have been doing, quite frankly, since 2004. We've made a lot of changes.

Auto insurance rates did go down, on average, I think, 11% across the province. We recognize that they have risen again, and we are committed to working to reduce those.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Here's the frustration for people in my community and for millions of Ontarians in this province: They are paying the highest premiums in Canada. They've seen the government bring in reforms that have put billions of dollars into the pockets of the industry, but their rates keep climbing. Will the government give the Financial Services Commission of Ontario the mandate and the tools to actually bring about a reduction in auto insurance rates by 15%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm just going to contextualize this because there are a number of issues that have been raised by the third party. Auto insurance is one of them. Home care is one of them. Youth employment is another one. I have said quite clearly that these are all areas that we are interested in and have been interested in working on. They are things that I think absolutely need to be addressed, and we are going to do that in a responsible way, and we're going to do it in a way that is practical and doable, that in fact can be implemented.

I've had a conversation with the leader of the third party. I know that this is a concern, and I know there's a particular approach that the NDP would like to take. We have taken that into consideration, and we are going to work to reduce auto insurance premiums in a way that is practical, that's doable and that will ensure that people in the province will continue to be able to get auto insurance, and at a reduced rate.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much. Here's the problem. People in this province feel like they're simply falling behind, but we're determined to make sure they get results in this upcoming budget.

For years, the government has promised that tax cuts to Ontario's largest corporations would trickle down into jobs for Ontarians, that handing out six-figure pay hikes to hospital CEOs would somehow make our patients healthier and that higher insurance industry profits would somehow—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The third party has the floor, please.

Thank you.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —and that higher insurance industry profits would trickle down to drivers.

People are tired of the status quo that's simply not working for people here in Ontario. It hasn't worked, and it's time for some real results in this upcoming budget.

The government has already supported a motion to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. Will the government—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: To the member's question, he knows all too well the efforts and the work we've done as a government to try to combat the issues of fraud, recognizing that the root cause of this is the cost of our claims. The costs of the claims in Ontario are 10 times higher than any other province. We've taken the steps necessary to address those issues. We recognize and agree that premiums, as a result, are much too high. We also recognize and acknowledge that the companies did lose money in previous years.

We are doing what's necessary to initiate the change. We're going to work with all parties to try to ensure that we get at this and that we reduce premiums for all Ontarians and the nine million drivers who exist in this great province. We are going to do this. We're going to work with FSCO to get it done.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Ontarians expect the government will put them first, but instead, this government seems intent on putting private power companies first, like those in Oakville and Mississauga. The Liberals gave a contract to one even though it was borrowing money at 60% per annum. The Liberals told the Ontario Power Authority to abandon its legal defences when it came to settling with another.

Why did the government put the interests of private power companies ahead of the interests of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I appreciate the question. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to believe, but it was just last week that the Auditor General reported on the Mississauga issue. At that time, the very next day, members from the NDP and the Conservatives asked the question about the costs at Oakville: "Why don't you just tell us now the ... cost of cancelling Oakville?" Another one: "Release all of the costs related to the Oakville.... Do it now, Premier. The people of Ontario deserve nothing less." Another one: "Why don't you just reveal the ... cost of the Oakville cancellation?"

Last week, the government did ask the Ontario Power Authority to come to committee with their most up-to-date costs on Oakville. We did move a motion. The government moved a motion yesterday to have the OPA here today and both opposition parties voted against it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, back to you: Two former energy ministers testified they had no idea that their staff were destroying information. But the former chief of staff to those two ministers told us he was destroying information.

Can the Premier tell us whether she can provide any assurance that her staff and the staff of all ministers are acting within the law when it comes to preserving information?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Referred to the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the committee is looking into a whole variety of issues related to the gas plants. In terms of the production of documents, the government has worked in good faith to comply with the committee's rulings to the point where, with the encouragement of the Premier, our members last fall moved forward with a motion to have all government ministries in a very wide sweep produce all documents related to the gas plants issue to the committee—and that member, joined by his opposition colleagues, voted against that.

There is a process in place whereby committees can ask for documents. They didn't want to go the route that we suggested. We are working to comply with any requests that come forward.

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

Interjection.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's kind of hard to provide documents that have been destroyed, Speaker; kind of hard.

Chris Bentley, the former Minister of Energy, yesterday claimed the reason the government's bogus cost number was different from that of the Auditor General's was because the ministry used a different way of counting costs. The Auditor General used standard accounting when he determined the cost of the Mississauga cancellation.

The Premier won't say whether she still believes the \$40-million figure for the Oakville cancellation is the one that in fact is true. Will the Premier tell us whether the \$40-million figure for Oakville was regular accounting or Liberal accounting?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, Mr. Speaker, the honourable member has the gall to ask that question. Yesterday, at the urging of the Minister of Energy and with the support of government members, we asked for a special session to bring the OPA forward, where they could answer a whole range of questions on this issue. That member voted against it.

In terms of the production of documents, let me share a quote from the member from Nipissing and what he told the committee yesterday. Listen to this: "You know the Premier reminds us every day that documents will continue to be turned over, and this is a reasonable request of timing of two weeks. We asked for that day after day after day we've been asking that, and"—listen to this—"have been wonderfully receiving these documents."

Mr. Speaker, we have been working in good faith to meet the committee's requirements. We have gone beyond it in terms of transparency. The opposition preach a good tune here, but they constantly put their hands up to vote against our motions.

1100

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Premier, you've admitted the gas plant cancellations were political decisions, but at the justice committee, your former energy minister twice removed swore that it was because the power was no longer required. He also told the Toronto Star, "It won't be built anywhere in Ontario."

Premier, we've finally uncovered documents that tell us what really happened. This is from your justice ministry: "The government offered to make TransCanada whole by finding another gas plant from which it could make profits, and in return, TransCanada promised not to sue or otherwise embarrass the government." Now, Speaker, we're finally getting to the truth of why this new gas plant is being built.

Premier, did you spend all that taxpayer money just to save Liberal embarrassment?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, it's astonishing that they stand here and they ask questions for information, then they vote against the government motion to have the OPA come before the committee.

Last night, the Premier showed up in this Legislature to participate in a late show with the honourable member. He chose not to participate.

Tuesday morning, the government members asked that the Leader of the Opposition—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's good.

Hon. John Milloy: Government members requested the Leader of the Opposition to come before the committee, and do you know what the opposition did? The official opposition attempted to block that motion.

So perhaps in the supplementary, the honourable member will tell us—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Simcoe–Grey, I'm trying to get somebody else on the other side. Give me a chance.

Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order, and especially when he's answering.

Finish.

Hon. John Milloy: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he will tell us, is the Leader of the Opposition going to play calendar on Tuesday, or will he be there to answer our questions?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, Speaker, if I wanted to see dancing like that, next time I'll buy a ticket to A Chorus Line.

Premier, as if your political motivations weren't enough, let's look at how the plant we didn't need was sited. Under sworn testimony, the former Premier's chief of staff told the justice committee that it was he who came up with the five replacement site options. His number one choice was in Napanee, hundreds of kilometres

from Oakville. I asked him what experience he had in siting energy plants and he said "none." He has no energy experience whatsoever.

Premier, given that Liberal logic, why didn't you just throw darts at a dartboard? You might have gotten a little closer to Oakville and saved the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I ask the Premier again, did you spend all of that taxpayer money just to save Liberal embarrassment?

Hon. John Milloy: Let's talk about political motivation. We've had tweets; we've had YouTube. I have here a Conservative Party pamphlet—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Rural Affairs will not put that up in the air again. If he does, he will be admonished.

Hon. John Milloy: I have here a Conservative Party pamphlet. You can tell it's a Conservative Party pamphlet because the Leader of the Opposition is nowhere to be seen on it, as is usually the case. But let me quote it, Mr. Speaker: "The only party that will stop the Sherway power plant is the Ontario PC Party. On October 6, vote Ontario PC. Elect Mary Anne DeMonte-Whelan. Authorized by the CFO for the Etobicoke Centre Progressive Conservative Riding Association."

And he has the gall to talk about political overtones. The Progressive Conservative Party was 100% against—

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

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday we heard from Lakeridge Health, another hospital that was affected by the diluted chemotherapy drugs. Lakeridge had no idea that there was a grey area in regulation, and had they known, the process for securing those drugs would have been completely different. The hospital is taking its responsibility and doing everything it can to close the gaps in oversight.

My question is: Will the minister be as forthright and admit that she failed both hospitals and patients by failing to provide the necessary oversight?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, what I can tell you is that when I became aware of this situation, I took immediate and swift action. The first concern, of course, was for the patients affected, and I want to commend our hospitals for very quickly identifying the affected patients, reaching out to them, facilitating appointments with their oncologists and providing them with answers to their personal questions.

I then established a working group of all of the affected partners in this. I've appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to lead an investigation of the cancer drug supply chain. I've posted regulations directing hospitals to purchase only from suppliers who are accredited. The College of

Pharmacists is developing a regulation to give them access that they need to these facilities.

I'm very pleased that Health Canada is now taking ownership as well. They are moving on this issue; they know this requires a national solution.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G elinas: I guess the question is there: when she became aware. Why did it take so long to become aware? The grey area was first identified in 1997; this is 15 years ago. Since 2009, a policy document outlining the decision-making process between the two levels of government has been in place. Today we are learning that the problem does not exist in isolation but extends to some of the biggest players in the health care system.

Will the minister finally stop dodging responsibility, commit to doing her job, and close this gap in oversight?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have done exactly that, and the member opposite knows that I have done exactly that. It is clear: This is a national problem. It requires a national solution. Even the federal minister acknowledges that this requires a national solution. Baxter is a company that supplies drugs to Ontario hospitals. It also supplies to hospitals right across the province.

We are doing our part. We are expanding the mandate of the College of Pharmacists. We are instructing hospitals to take this responsibility seriously. It's very important that if the member opposite has suggestions on what more we need to do, I would be most interested in hearing that.

I can assure the House that when I became aware of this, I acted immediately. I took the appropriate steps. If there's more that the member opposite thinks I need to do, I want to hear from her.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Ontario is blessed to have a beautiful north rich with natural resources. It is important to preserve the natural beauty of the north, but at the same time it's also important to promote and ensure the sustainable development of natural resources. The process of such development must take into consideration the interests and aspirations of all stakeholders and for the benefit of all Ontarians.

Minister, will you inform this House about the modernizing of the Mining Act? How will it help the sustainable development of natural resources?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to thank the member from Mississauga-Brampton South for that great question. Certainly, we want to acknowledge the process of modernizing the Mining Act, a very important piece of legislation, and now the supporting regulations are part of a very extensive consultation process. In the two-year period between January 2010 and 2012, we held over 70 discussions and consultation sessions with aboriginal groups and communities, industry stakeholders, environ-

mental organizations and a series of municipal representatives.

One of our key stakeholders is the Ontario Mining Association. I want to share a quote from Chris Hodgson, the president of the OMA, who, members here will know, was previously Minister of Northern Development and Mines in the mid-1990s. Here's their quote:

"The Ontario Mining Association appreciates the consultative and focused approach to the development of the new Mining Act regulations. Ontario competes with other jurisdictions for mining investment, and a clearly defined regulatory environment is critical to ensuring the province continues as a mining leader."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

1110

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Minister, it's great to hear that you have done commendable work to ensure meaningful changes to the Mining Act so that Ontario remains one of the best places in the world for mining exploration and mining investment.

Can the minister share with this House how modernizing of the Mining Act will impact stakeholders, northern communities and economic growth?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you again to the member for the question. One of our goals with the modernized Mining Act is to provide certainty and clarity, and encourage early engagement, obviously, and ongoing relationship-building with aboriginal communities. We've instituted a permanent, focused flow-through tax credit of 5% to encourage investment in mineral exploration and significant tax benefits for new or expanding mines, particularly for new mines in remote areas; and extended the Northern Industrial Energy Rate Program, a huge program—subject of course to annual program funding approval—which supports northern Ontario's largest industrial consumers in reducing energy costs, sustaining employment and maintaining the sector's global competitiveness.

We continue to invest in services such as geological mapping and the digitalization of geoscience information to help Ontario's mineral exploration sector identify areas of economic opportunity—a hugely important piece of legislation, and we're grateful for all the support—

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

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday we reached a new low in the growing gas plant scandal. In an embarrassing spectacle at the justice committee, two former energy ministers played dumb rather than providing answers. Throw in the current minister, and the theme song for this debacle is Three Blind Mice.

Premier, I'm worried, not that performances like yesterday undermine your credibility—not that there's much left—but what worries me is investors seeing this cast of characters that this scandal has produced and questioning if Ontario is really a place to do business. Isn't it time to

stop playing this dangerous game with Ontario's future by finally showing some leadership and providing the real cost to cancel the Oakville plant?

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Premier, just a moment, please.

I'm going to mention this: I'm not particularly impressed with the tone used. Although it did not use unparliamentary language, it is not the race to the top that I've been requesting. I would ask all questioners and people giving the answer that you consider that, please, to keep this place in good decorum.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know the government House leader will want to speak to the events at committee, but I really think that at this moment in our history in the province, it's very important that all parties work together. We're here in a minority Parliament. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition has said that his party is opposed to the budget before having read it, and I don't understand that way of doing politics, but that's what has been said.

I don't think that we should, as a Parliament, be intent on an unnecessary election. I think that we should be trying to work together. I would invite the member opposite to work with us. I would invite the party opposite to work with us. I think that's what the people of Ontario are looking for as we go into this budget. I would at least ask that the party opposite read the budget before they vote against it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Premier, here's how bad it is: The only one that seems to be making sense over there is the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, and last week people called him a space cadet.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Withdrawn.

I think he has finally come down from the clouds. I'm actually going to quote him. It's a quote from the Toronto Star. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville said, "It's our responsibility as a government if we've got" something new "to add that we add it as soon as we know it."

Premier, you know the true cost of the Oakville plant now. You just want to bring the OPA boss in to be your fall guy again. Well, the buck stops with you, Premier, not a bureaucrat. Will you take Mr. Delaney's advice and do something responsible and tell us the cost of the Oakville plant cancellation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: This is absolutely outrageous. The government went forward yesterday—you want to talk about yesterday at committee? We went forward with a motion to have a special meeting where the OPA could come in and answer all the questions the opposition had; they voted against it.

We asked the Leader of the Opposition to come on Tuesday morning; they attempted to block it through a motion that we put forward. The Premier came to this

chamber last night for two late shows, and two of their members chose not to participate in them.

If anyone has an apology about what happened yesterday related to the gas plant file, it's the members of that party over there.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last year, Hamilton fell in love with Nicole Cassavetes. This 14-year-old young woman and her family battled numerous hardships while Nicole awaited a heart transplant. Tragically, two weeks after the transplant, Nicole died.

Today is the first anniversary of Nicole's death. Her family is here today, speaking publicly about their year-long battle to get answers surrounding her treatment and passing at Sick Kids Hospital.

Why does this family have to go through such great lengths to get answers in our health care system? How can the minister help them today to get the answers they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite. I would like to welcome family members here. This is a case that I am not familiar with. It would have been preferable had the member notified me of this case so I could have more information for the family. I would be more than happy to meet with the family after question period to understand what questions they have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Nicole's family continues to be haunted by questions regarding her care. They have quietly worked through all the proper channels over the past year, but they still are without answers.

The buck needs to stop here, Minister. The existing oversight in our health care system is clearly failing Ontarians. For families like the Cassaveteses, having an independent third party to answer their questions and help guide them through would make a world of difference to them and many Ontarians.

Speaker, will this minister listen to the families like Nicole's and commit to Ombudsman oversight of our hospitals today?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the first question, I will be more than happy to meet with the family after question period, and I can learn more about this situation and make sure that you get answers that you deserve.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Phil McNeely: This question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, Ontario's small and rural hospitals are an integral part of the communities they serve. Not only are these hospitals vital for providing care in a timely, efficient fashion, but many Ontarians rely on their local hospitals to provide a wide variety of services. But there's no doubt people living in rural communities face some unique challenges. Ensuring our

small and rural hospitals continue to provide excellent care for all Ontarians is of critical importance.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, could the minister please update the House on what our government is doing to strengthen our rural hospitals?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for his passionate advocacy on this issue. I can assure you that we are committed to those small and rural hospitals that are so important in their communities.

I was recently in Seaforth, where I was able to announce some of the projects that were being funded by a special \$20-million fund for small and rural hospitals. I was very impressed by the innovation, by the transformation that is under way in our small and rural—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron–Bruce, come to order, and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I was extremely impressed by the innovation that was being demonstrated by these projects that will strengthen access to care in small and rural communities. We are determined to provide all Ontarians, no matter where they live, with access to the right care, at the right time, at the right place.

I was very pleased that four of the 23 new hospitals are in rural Ontario—

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister, for your response. I'm glad to hear the new Ontario government takes the needs of small and rural hospitals seriously.

Improving and modernizing these hospitals is critical to ensuring they remain effective, efficient and accessible to the communities they serve. Providing access to the right care at the right time and in the right place supports Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care. It is part of the new Ontario government's effort to build a strong economy and a fair society for the benefit of all.

1120

I recently heard some good news about rural hospitals' funding in southwestern Ontario. Speaker, through you to the minister: What are some specific examples of efforts our government has undertaken to strengthen and improve small and rural hospitals in this part of the province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his question. Of course, we know that rural communities have unique health care. That's why we're making important investments. Just this last Monday, I had the opportunity to visit Wingham on the west coast of Ontario, and Mount Forest. I experienced warm hospitality from the member from Huron–Bruce and the member from Perth–Wellington.

Our government is supporting renovations and improvements at the Wingham and District Hospital and the Waterloo Wellington LHIN. I was very pleased to join with the members—and I had a great lunch in Wingham at Grumpy's café. All the talk there that day was about the new Chinese investment for two casting plants in Wingham, Ontario. It was a good-news day to be in Wingham, Ontario.

We'll continue to make strategic investments in rural Ontario. That's what our new government is all about, and that's what we're doing each and every day.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, while the Premier was busy buying off the NDP, or, as they're now known, the Liberal farm team, the justice—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. First of all, sometimes it is hard to hear unparliamentary language because of all the chatter, and second of all, I got it. The member will withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Finish your question, please.

Mr. Michael Harris: The justice committee heard from former energy ministers Duguid and Bentley. Given the continued evasion and selective amnesia of Liberal witnesses, it's not surprising that both of them denied having any knowledge of a \$712-million offer to TransCanada.

Speaker, we can accept that Minister Duguid may not have known since Premier McGuinty chose to cut him out, not trusting him with this file. What we can't accept, though, is that the Premier and the energy minister are as clueless as Minister Duguid.

The TransCanada negotiations went to cabinet. We know that. We also know that Premier Wynne was chair of cabinet. The Premier knows what it cost to cancel the Oakville plant, so why doesn't she just come clean right here, right now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, it's beyond incredible. Government members yesterday put forward a plan where the OPA would appear in front of the committee to answer all the questions as technical as any member wanted, to go through the entire process by which these various plants were dealt with. They voted no. They're demanding answers from the Premier. She shows up for a late show last night; they don't participate.

We have some questions on this side of the House about the costing that the PC Party had when they put out pamphlets like the one that I quoted from earlier, and yet when we attempted to call the Leader of the Opposition, they tried to block it. Perhaps in the supplementary he will confirm to this Legislature whether the Leader of the Opposition will appear next Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. to answer our questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, back to the Premier: It must be difficult for the Liberal members to watch the Premier's credibility evaporate each and every passing day. And while the Liberal apologists in the NDP are willing to excuse any scandal, no matter how large or how egregious, as long as they get bought off, we in the PC caucus are determined to get answers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I've got to point it out before you do. The member will withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdrawn.

Speaker, the gas plant scandal is knocking on the Premier's door. She was the chair of cabinet. Her name is on the documents. She was briefed on "buckets of costs." The Premier should save Minister Chiarelli the run down the hallway and save him the aggravation. Will she come clean and reveal the costs of the Oakville cancellation right here, right now?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, if you want to talk about knocking on someone's door, let's talk about the Leader of the Opposition, who made a YouTube video where he stood there with his adoring PC candidates in a crowd of five or six onlookers and said that if he was elected, it would be "done, done, done."

It was his candidate, Mary Anne DeMonte-Whelan, who put out this pamphlet saying, "The only party that will"—underlined, Mr. Speaker—"stop the Sherway power plant is the Ontario PC Party."

Again, why are all the honourable members over there failing to answer my very simple question? Next Tuesday morning, 8:30 a.m., will the Leader of the Opposition be there to answer questions? Later in the day, the Premier will be there to answer questions. We'd like the OPA to come forward, but they keep blocking it.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: It has been almost a year since the federal government decided to shut down the Experimental Lakes Area, a world-renowned site.

After much pressure from within Canada and across the globe, the Ontario government announced today that it has finally seen the light. It has finally seen the light. It has only taken a year. They finally realized and recognized the importance of keeping the ELA operational.

But your announcement didn't provide any details at all as to what funding it will put in place and what exactly you're willing to do to save the Experimental Lakes Area.

My question is straightforward: Is the deal final, and what commitment has your government made to ensure that this important site remains open?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am so pleased that the member opposite has asked this question. I think it is just fantastic. I know that she cares about this issue.

It was about a year ago that I was in Kenora and I met with Mayor Canfield. He was driving me around; we

were talking about bridges and roads. He talked to me about the Experimental Lakes Area. I was very concerned, because there was a question about whether it was going to survive. It is a federal project, as the member opposite knows.

So I am thrilled that we are stepping up to the plate, that we are going to work with the government of Manitoba, with the federal government, with the Institute for Sustainable Development, and we are going to come to an arrangement where this terrific and unique science endeavour will be able to go forward.

We know that the operating costs are up to \$2 million. We have said that we are going to support this. There are some details to be worked out in terms of capital costs. That's what the negotiation is about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone in my riding and across Canada who stepped up and fought hard to keep the Experimental Lakes open. It was through their petitions, their town halls, their statements, debates in this House and press conferences across the world that this government has finally seen the light. This site is not about politics; it's about groundbreaking research. People are looking—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're getting there. Just settle down. I would ask the Minister of the Environment to take a bit of a break.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: As I said, this site is not about politics; it's about groundbreaking research. People are looking to this provincial government for a real plan. This government is not providing the basic answers to some of the most important questions around the ELA.

People are desperate to know who will pay the operating costs, who will cover the liability and what steps have been taken to ensure this site will remain open permanently.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Be seated, please. No, no, they're the ones who did it. Be seated, please.

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I think it's a great day in Ontario when you see levels of government coming together to recognize the importance of the Experimental Lakes Area in Ontario, which is a gem and to which many scientists have come from all around the world to study important issues: climate change, and the impact of pollution on our water. A whole variety of important scientific experiments have taken place there for so many years.

What our Premier said today is that we would work with our partners, such as IISD, the federal government, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the ministries in Manitoba, that all have a role to play. I think what you're seeing is a collaborative approach of coming together to say we all have a stake in this important invest-

ment that has been there so many years. There are ongoing discussions right now. We look forward to working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to make this a reality.

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Every day, many seniors in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River consider moving into a retirement home as they enter a new chapter in their life.

Seniors want a place where they feel comfortable and accepted. They want a place where they are cared for and treated with respect, and their families want to ensure their safety. It is important that residents feel safe and are protected in their new accommodations.

1130

With the concerns of seniors and their families in mind, can the minister please tell us what our government has done to protect those who decide to live in a retirement home in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: My thanks to the member from Scarborough–Rouge River. It is indeed a very good question. It reflects the genuine concern of the member himself, and mine and that of the government as well.

For many seniors, a retirement home is a place where they may be spending the rest of their best years. Therefore, in 2010, our government took action and passed the Retirement Homes Act, the first such legislation in Ontario. The act sets very clear guidelines and levels of care that our seniors should be receiving and are entitled to receive in retirement home living.

The act provides safety, comfort and peace of mind not only for the residents themselves but for the family members. We will continue to see that indeed they will receive such care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: This is great news for our seniors. Many of our seniors are not fully aware of how the Retirement Homes Act offers protection or benefits to them. At times, many seniors and families are concerned about potential safety issues, but I know our government has taken strong action to keep seniors safe in Ontario. It is important that seniors are provided with the information on how the Retirement Homes Act protects their rights, safety and standard of living.

Can the minister now tell us and all seniors across Ontario how this act will be enforced, and also, what are the benefits to them?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, through you to the member and to all our seniors in our province, let me say that the Retirement Homes Act legislates strong protection for seniors. It created the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, an independent body that conducts its own random investigations and inspections; oversees compliance and enforcement; mandates the level of care and safety standards, emergency plans and training for staff; and much more.

For the first time in Ontario, there is a public registry for retirement homes, and as of July 1, 2012, all retirement homes, in order to continue to operate in Ontario, must indeed apply for a licence.

These are positive changes that are helping seniors live in a safe, secure environment and continue to enjoy years of fulfillment and meaningful life.

POWER PLANTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Premier. Last Monday, the Auditor General reported that the Ontario Power Authority paid Greenfield \$41 million in labour costs that Greenfield had incurred between 2004 and 2012. However, the Auditor General also tells us this amount was paid with no supporting documentation: no copies of payroll, no T4s, no other information.

My question for the Premier is, is it not common practice to require this kind of documentation, or can any company provide blanked-out charges on invoices and receive money from the government to pay employees?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, the opposition is asking for detailed answers to a variety of issues related to the gas plant. Yesterday, government members went forward with a motion asking that the OPA come forward for a special session where they'd be able to cast light, I'm sure, on many of the issues that have been raised today. Do you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? They voted against it.

Last night, the Premier came to this chamber to participate in a late show, and two of the members that had called for it over there chose not to participate.

You can't have it both ways. You can't come here every day and ask detailed questions and then, when the government tries to provide those opportunities—we go before the committee and offer a government-wide search of documents, and that member's party votes against it. They can't have it both ways.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Back to the Premier, and I hope you'll be able to answer for me on this question: This past Monday, a week after the Auditor General released his report on the cost of the power plant, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing responded to a question regarding reimbursement costs in Thunder Bay. She said, "I plan to be in Thunder Bay later this week to talk with the mayor and councillors to make sure that we have the receipts that we need because at the end of the day we have an Auditor General" we're responsible to. "We have to provide the paperwork, but we want to be there to help that community."

Why does the Liberal government need receipts to help flood victims but not for the relocation and costs of our power plants?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: The Auditor General was a witness before the committee last week and had a chance to address many of these issues, and we offered to go farther by having the Ontario Power Authority come forward for a special session today. First, the opposition voted against it. Then they attempted to block our efforts to have the Leader of the Opposition come before the committee. We're going to have the Premier there next Tuesday. She has committed to it. But what we want to know is, is the Leader of the Opposition going to play calendar? He's too busy to come forward to talk about his strong support for the cancellation of the gas plants and why in the last election he so strongly promised to talk about his analysis that was done—his costing was done.

I am waiting for a member of the opposition to stand up and confirm that he will be there to explain why he went forward with such strong support for the cancellation.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Minister, along with my colleague the member for Timiskaming, we met about a month ago to talk about the state of the highways in northern Ontario and about how the winter road maintenance that is going on right now is quite frankly substandard and full of highway closures. I'm going to have a page come over here and sent to show you the picture that was taken yesterday on Highway 11 outside of Hearst. The road there was closed, Minister, when there should have never been a closure. It's not as if it never snowed in northern Ontario. What's wrong is the standards to which those contractors are being held to maintain the highways are lesser than they were when the Ministry of Transportation used to do them. You said you were going to look into this matter. Why are highways still being closed on moderate snowstorms in northern Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm quite happy to answer. I want to thank the member for the question and I also want to thank both him and his colleague for working with us on this issue.

As the member knows, the standards have not changed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's the problem.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, no. I appreciate the concern. I want to say that I do believe this is a very sincere concern, one that I share. We are looking at ways—and I've taken the advice of the members opposite—on how we can improve those standards. We are working very closely on that right now. We're reviewing that with the regions. I will be up, actually, tomorrow meeting with mayors in northwestern Ontario and talking about this very issue, and I will continue in my supplementary to give a more full answer.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Minister, clearly this is showing that your privatization initiative isn't working. You're trying to get contractors to maintain a highway to a lesser standard than we used to ourselves when we used to maintain those highways. It's not as if, as I said earlier, it doesn't snow in northern Ontario; it's been snowing for centuries in northern Ontario. The difference is we used to be able to get the highways plowed.

So, I'm going to ask you again: Will you reverse the decision of your government to privatize, or at the very least increase the standards in those contracts so we can drive on those highways and not see closures like we did yesterday?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is a continuing conversation that I've had with mayors who have said that their own snow removal this year was particularly problematic because of the nature of the mix of precipitation and the challenges that they had. This wasn't unique to the Ontario situation. There are different weather patterns and there are different challenges, very seriously. That is part of it.

I've also said to you, very seriously, that I think we could do a better job there, and you've given this government some suggestions, which we are taking very seriously. I will look into this particular matter. I thank the member for it. I am again taking this review very seriously. I will be back in northern Ontario literally tomorrow, and I look forward to continuing the conversation with the member opposite, and I appreciate his sincerity.

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

The member for Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

VISITOR

Mr. Jim Wilson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome to the Legislature today Mr. Keith Currie, a director of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member from Nipissing on a point of order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I rise on a point of order. While I intended to be at the late show last night, I was sadly at the sideshow, the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's enough. Be seated. That's not a point of order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You know, just because question period is over doesn't mean that I lose authority.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes, Speaker, on a point of order: I want to extend my apologies to the Premier for not being here last night. There was an error in my scheduling. I'm willing to reschedule that for tomorrow evening if the Premier is willing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's another way to do it.

The Minister of Finance on a point of order.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to make a formal announcement to the House that I will be tabling the 2013 budget on Thursday, May 2, at 4 p.m.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we recess, I do have a comment to make, and I would really appreciate no comments. I'm going to say this as—somewhat sorry and frustrating, and at times sad, that members are taking to personal insults or commenting on individuals. I'm going to ask and challenge us that this does not help this place, our reputation and what we stand for. I'm going to ask you as honourable members, which I treat all of you as, to avoid the personal comments, the insults or the comments about anyone's attendance. I think we can do better, and I'm asking us all to do that.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It gives me great pleasure to introduce today Furakh Mir, chair and president of Meningitis Relief Canada, as well as Sarbjit Kaur. Please welcome them to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, and welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD MENINGITIS DAY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, it's my pleasure to rise today to recognize World Meningitis Day.

Meningitis appears suddenly and can be fatal within just 24 to 48 hours. It often goes undetected at first, because its symptoms resemble the flu. Tragically, about 1,000 Canadians will die from meningitis this year, most of them young people, and many who survive will face long-term disability such as neurological damage, hearing loss or limb amputation.

I'd like to recognize Ms. Furakh Mir and her organization, Meningitis Relief Canada, for all of the work that they have done to raise awareness and to provide support to affected families. I'd also like to thank the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, who will be introducing the Meningitis Awareness Day Act here today, which would recognize April 24 of each year as World Men-

ingitis Day in this province. This recognition is a simple gesture that would greatly increase public awareness.

This is an important cause, and I know that many of my colleagues in this Legislature support it. I am particularly affected by this, having had one of my own young children suffer from encephalitis, which is very closely related to meningitis. Thankfully, he survived and is flourishing. But I can say, on behalf of everyone who has suffered or seen a loved one suffer from this potentially deadly disease, that you're really making a difference. Thank you very much for all of the efforts of your organization.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to highlight two individuals—heroes of our community, really—who have dedicated their lives to saving others. My friend 10-year-old Kaidyn Blair was an organ recipient at the tender age of one. His life was saved by someone whose selfless act to become a donor gave Kaidyn the chance to live, and live he has. It has been 3,654 days since Kaidyn's transplant, and he is celebrating his 10-year liver anniversary by encouraging one person to be a registered donor for each day since his April 27, 2003, transplant. So far, Kaidyn has encouraged 243 people to register, and I'm confident he will reach his goal.

Also, it was one year ago Friday that Chrissy Klassen literally gave a part of herself to ensure another would live. The 24-year-old gave up a quarter of her liver so that a nine-month-old local baby girl could survive. She learned about the need through a Facebook page that the girl's mother had devoted to finding a suitable donor for her ailing daughter. Three months later, she was accepted, and as far as she knows, the baby, now a toddler, is thriving.

I highlight these stories because there continues to be a great need in our province for organ donation. One of those waiting is two-year-old Emily Ledoux. At five weeks old, she was diagnosed with the same condition that Kaidyn had, biliary atresia. Like Kaidyn Blair and Chrissy Klassen, I'm certain more Ontarians will choose to make that special gift of life. I urge all eligible Ontarians to visit beadonor.ca and to fill out your donor card. It only takes a couple of minutes to ensure that your life could save another.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I rise today to mark the 98th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, marked the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. On that date, 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders were arrested in Constantinople, and from then on, Armenians were uprooted from their homes and force-marched for hundreds of miles into isolated and deserted lands while being deprived of food and water. Few had little hope of survival.

The tragic and brutal deaths that resulted set the world stage for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, Adolf Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not even lift a finger for those of Jewish heritage because, in his words, “Who today remembers the Armenians?”

This past weekend, members of all levels of government, from all political stripes, were present at the Armenian Community Centre in North York to commemorate the 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children who were massacred.

Speaker, I applaud the Armenian community’s efforts to acknowledge their past, while working with other Canadians to build a future based on mutual respect. They have made a significant and enriching contribution to my community of Vaughan and to our entire province and country. I offer my sincerest condolences to the families as they mourn the lives that were lost. Let us keep all of our friends of Armenian heritage in our thoughts today as we work together to prevent terrible tragedies like this from ever happening again.

FLOODING IN BANCROFT

Mr. Todd Smith: Like the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I have constituents who are fighting to deal with the terrible aftermath of the flooding in the central and eastern Ontario regions.

I was in Bancroft on Friday, attending community events, as the flood waters began to rise on the York River. By the time I left the town on Friday night, water levels were already perilously high.

Over the course of the weekend, sections of Highway 62 and Highway 28 were washed out as the river rose over its embankment. These highways are major arteries leading in and out of North Hastings. Many residents of Bancroft, McArthur Mills and Maynooth use these highways as routes to the hospitals in Peterborough and Belleville in the event a condition is too critical for the smaller hospital in Bancroft.

Community leaders in Bancroft have done an outstanding job responding to the emergency in the community. Special recognition should be made to Bancroft Fire Chief Pat Hoover and Mayor Bernice Jenkins for their efforts in the community over the weekend. Schools in Bancroft are still closed today, and they’ve remained closed since the flooding began.

Bancroft has continually found its small tax base stretched to the limit recently with the increased cost of policing. The damage caused by this week’s events will only further put a strain on already overburdened taxpayers there.

I want to again thank Mayor Jenkins and Chief Hoover for their efforts and all volunteers from the town and neighbouring municipalities who came in to fill up sandbags and keep the flood waters at bay. Let’s get some help for Bancroft.

WALLY MOLE

Ms. Cindy Forster: I’m pleased to rise today in the Legislature to recognize a very special individual in the city of Welland receiving our community’s top sports honour as a lifetime achievement award. Wally Mole, an 86-year-old Welland native, a friend, a retired realtor, was presented with the H.L. Cudney Sportsman of the Year Award at the 41st annual Welland Sports Promotion Committee banquet on April 5.

Wally has spent 12 years working as the chair and behind the scenes to maintain the Welland Sports Wall of Fame at the local Seaway Mall. He is a true volunteer in every sense of the word, putting thousands of hours in to ensure the Welland Sports Wall of Fame continues to recognize Welland sports heroes.

Volunteers are what keep so many sporting events going in our community and have such a positive impact on our young people and sports overall in the city. I can safely say that without people like Wally Mole, there would be no such sports celebrations. His tireless work is invaluable and deeply appreciated. He didn’t do this for accolades or recognition; he did it for the love of sports and his community.

I commend the Welland Sports Tourism Alliance and the Sports Promotion Committee in choosing Wally as the Sportsman of the Year in Welland. It’s a well-deserved recognition, and my congratulations to Wally—a job well done.

WORLD MENINGITIS DAY

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I rise today to tell you about one mother’s fight to raise awareness of a very important issue. Ms. Furakh Mir is a mother from Brampton. I believe she’s here in the gallery. Several years ago her baby boy, Sulayman, became ill. The local hospital and walk-in clinic both said it was nothing serious, but she knew—her mother’s instinct told her—that something was very wrong with her son, so she took him to SickKids, where he was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis. He was treated and, thankfully, recovered.

This is Furakh Mir’s story, but it could be anyone’s. The fact is that bacterial meningitis can strike without warning. Unlike most diseases we can think of, this one actually affects mostly children and teenagers. Some who get it can face permanent disability; some will even die if not caught in time. The public, and even health care professionals, simply aren’t aware of the symptoms of this disease.

Her experience has inspired Furakh Mir to found the registered charity Meningitis Relief Canada. She now dedicates her time and effort to raising awareness around meningitis, and supporting individuals and families affected by this terrible disease.

1510

I rise today on World Meningitis Day to commend everyone who has worked so hard for this worthy cause. I also know that my colleague across the floor the MPP for

Bramalea–Gore–Malton will be introducing a bill later today to recognize World Meningitis Day, and I will support it.

ROBOTICS TEAM

Mrs. Jane McKenna: On the weekend of April 4 to 6, Burlington residents took special pride in the results of the Pine Tree Regional Robotics Competition in Lewiston, Maine. Competing against a slate of high school robotic teams from around the world and before a crowd of thousands, Burlington Central High School's robotics team became regional champions for the first time in the school's history. The team had a 17th place showing in qualification rounds and was selected by two Maine teams to join up as a trio, powering through elimination rounds and closing with a thrilling gold medal win.

To anyone who follows the team, that shouldn't come as a total shock. Last year, the school picked up a second place and a third in Canadian and US competitions, and the team's commitment is bone deep. They put countless hours of work into constructing the robot making for many late nights and early mornings.

Central also has a strong program in advance manufacturing; great hometown partners in the Eaton Group, Thomson-Gordon Group and BMP Metals; and an outstanding mentor in teacher Chris Arnold.

The team now advances to the FIRST Robotics World Championship in St. Louis, Missouri, from April 24 to 27, where they will be among 300 teams competing.

This is my son's school, Mac McKenna, so this is an extra shout-out to that. Go Trojans!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Never try to down a Trojan.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I would like to take this opportunity to share with the House a story of love, care and hope. The story was conveyed to me by John Birks on behalf of his parents, Catherine and Lt. Hugh Birks, who were recently honoured by the Brampton Guardian as the longest-married couple in Brampton for their 67 years of a happy and peaceful married life. Catherine and Lt. Birks, congratulations.

Their son John wrote, "My father is 95 years old. They both still live 'at home'...."

"We have been extremely fortunate to have experienced the very best of the health care system. My parents are (relatively) healthy considering their age, but, as should be anticipated, some health-related challenges do develop with lightning speed. Our experiences with the staff at Peel Memorial/Brampton Civic hospitals have been entirely positive, as have been the rapid and capable responses of 911 emergency responses.

"Perhaps we have the best of each world, relatively healthy geriatrics, an educated, observant caregiver ... and an outstanding health care service...."

"They are a shining example of things going 'right' in our province."

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of our government's record and its continuing efforts to the delivery of health care that all Ontarians deserve.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mr. Jim McDonell: In this great province of ours, we all know of people who have gone beyond what is generally expected to make a real difference. It may be in the business that they've started or operate today and the dividends it returns to the community, or the people who have given hours and hours of their limited time back to the communities.

At this time, I wish to take this opportunity to recognize some of the residents of my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry who, through their hard work, business initiative and the spirit of service to their peers, have made a huge difference in our community.

When I was mayor of South Glengarry, we initiated a special night each year to honour and thank the special community leaders. Last Saturday at the 8th Annual South Glengarry Business and Community Awards, the following awards of recognition were handed out. The Youth Merit Award went to Allister MacDonell. The Community Service Award went to the Friends of the Ruins St. Raphaels. Peter and Louise Sommers of Newbrabant Farms received the Excellence in Agriculture Award. Sangster's Sons Merchant general store was recognized as the Business of the Year. Robyn Denis of Auld Kirktown received the Entrepreneur of the Year award. The South Glengarry Citizen of the Year Award went to Anne Donkers as a recognized long-time volunteer in many local groups, including the Lancaster Optimist Club.

Also last week, I was pleased to attend the South Stormont Volunteer Appreciation Night, where the township gathered more than 100 of their very deserving volunteers. The highlight of the night was the recognition of Sandra Donnelly as the recipient of the Fran Laflamme Volunteer of the Year Award for countless hours given to the community.

It's important to recognize these people in our communities who truly make such a difference, and I salute them.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Clark assumes ballot item number 30 and Ms. Elliott assumes ballot item number 26.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BIRTHPLACE OF THE NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE BERCEAU DU DRAPEAU NATIONAL DU CANADA

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 57, An Act to recognize Brockville as the birthplace of the National Flag of Canada / Projet de loi 57, Loi visant à reconnaître Brockville comme étant le berceau du drapeau national du Canada.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm just going to quote from the preamble for a bit, with your indulgence.

On February 15, 1965, the national flag of Canada was raised for the first time on Parliament Hill.

Canadians today share a tremendous sense of pride for our national flag, and the maple leaf has become symbolic around the world for the values of freedom and tolerance Canada represents. The journey from design to a place in the hearts of Canadians was difficult, and its successes can be attributed to a plan devised in the city of Brockville.

To survive the Great Flag Debate, we needed a champion, and the Honourable John Ross Matheson, MP for Leeds county, was that champion. He was chosen by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson to be the chair of the flag committee, and Matheson suggested that the role of project manager would have been a better fit. Working long hours, many from his home on North Augusta Road in Brockville, Matheson developed the strategy to ensure the maple leaf design was on the final selection board of that panel.

With that, Speaker, I'll just end my remarks.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As the member knows, we always accept reading from the explanatory notes. That's very good.

MENINGITIS AWARENESS DAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE JOUR DE LA SENSIBILISATION À LA MÉNINGITE

Mr. Singh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to proclaim Meningitis Awareness Day / Projet de loi 58, Loi proclamant le Jour de la sensibilisation à la méningite.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, meningitis is a very serious infection caused by the inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. Ten per cent of those who contract this disease will die, and those who do survive are often left suffering permanent disabilities for the rest of their lives.

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Because the symptoms are so similar to those of the flu, it can be easily overlooked or dismissed. Too many families have been devastated by meningitis infections, and it's largely due to a lack of awareness. This bill will help Ontario families get awareness and support that they need to raise awareness of this potentially deadly and preventable disease.

I thank the member from Whitby–Oshawa for indicating her support. This is a bill that I would gladly allow the government to take over, and that I encourage the government to take over, so we can ensure that April 24 is proclaimed Meningitis Awareness Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also suspect that was read specifically from the explanatory notes. That's good.

Introduction of bills? Motions? Statements by ministries? It is now time for petitions from Durham.

PETITIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I cherish the simple honour of being a member. I cherish the honour of a simple petition here, representing my riding of Durham.

The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) is proposing construction of a new transformer station on a 100-acre site in Clarington, near the Oshawa-Clarington boundary;

"Whereas the site is on the Oak Ridges moraine/greenbelt;

"Whereas concerns have been raised about the environmental impacts of this development, including harm to wildlife as well as contamination of ponds, streams and the underground water supply;

"Whereas sites zoned for industrial and/or commercial use are the best locations for large" electrical transformers;

"Whereas most, if not all, residents do not agree this project is needed and that, if proven to be necessary, it could be ... accommodated at alternative locations such as Cherrywood or Wesleyville;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Ontario Legislature support the preservation of the Oak Ridges moraine, the greenbelt and the natural environment at this site. We also ask that the Ontario Legislature require the Clarington transformer station to be built at an alternative location zoned for an industrial facility and selected in

accordance with the best planning” and environmental principles.

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Addison, one of the pages here.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “Whereas agencies that support individuals with a developmental disability and their families have for several years (beginning in 2010) faced a decline in provincial funding for programs that support people with developmental and other related disabilities; and

“Whereas because this level of provincial funding is far less than the rate of inflation and operational costs, and does not account for providing services to a growing and aging number of individuals with complex needs, developmental service agencies are being forced into deficit; and

“Whereas today over 30% of developmental service agencies are in deficit; and

“Whereas lowered provincial funding has resulted in agencies being forced to cut programs and services that enable people with a developmental disability to participate in their community and enjoy the best quality of life possible; and

“Whereas in some cases services once focused on community inclusion and quality of life for individuals have been reduced to a ‘custodial’ care arrangement; and

“Whereas lower provincial funding means a poorer quality of life for people with a developmental disability and their families and increasingly difficult working conditions for the direct care staff who support them; and

“Whereas there are thousands of people waiting for residential supports, day program supports and other programs province-wide;

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

“(1) To eliminate the deficits of developmental service agencies and provide adequate new funding to restore services and programs that have in effect been cut;

“(2) To protect existing services and supports by providing an overall increase in funding for agencies that is at least equal to inflationary costs that include among other operational costs, utilities, food and compensation increases to ensure staff retention;

“(3) To fund pay equity obligations for a predominantly female workforce;

“(4) To provide adequate new funding to agencies to ensure that the growing number of families on wait lists have access to accommodation supports and day supports and services.”

I couldn't agree more. I will sign this and give it to Madelyn to be delivered to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Petitions. The member from—let's see; so many. Oh, I'm sorry. I missed Kevin—the member from Oakville.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: No problem. Thank you, Speaker. I've got a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It says:

“Whereas the agri-food industry is now and has historically been one of the primary economic drivers in Ontario; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario support local processors and producers in Ontario through purchasing and consuming locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meat and processed food products; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario farmers and Ontario food producers by leading by example; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario celebrates local Ontario producers and processors and promotes the good things grown, harvested and made in Ontario;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 36, the Local Food Act.”

I agree with this. I will sign it and send it down with Jack.

ALGONQUIN LAND CLAIM

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the preliminary agreement in principle draft for the Algonquin land claim includes Foy Provincial Park. If this land is transferred to the Algonquins of Ontario it may no longer be accessible to the general public;

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

“To permanently protect Foy Provincial Park. The MNR website states that ‘Ontario’s provincial parks and conservation reserves are dedicated to the people of Ontario and visitors for their inspiration, education, health, recreational enjoyment and other benefits with the intention that these areas shall be managed to maintain their ecological integrity and to leave them unimpaired for future generations.’

“Please remove Foy Provincial Park from the Algonquin land claim.”

It is signed by hundreds of people from my constituency. I will affix my signature to it and send it down with Annie.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have a petition here from the good people up in Manitouwadge, who are presenting this petition:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas, regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I will sign my name to it and present this to page Madelyn.

INDUSTRIE AGROALIMENTAIRE

M. Bob Delaney: J'ai une pétition adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que l'industrie agroalimentaire est maintenant, comme elle l'a toujours été historiquement, une force de l'économie ontarienne; et

« Attendu que les Ontariens et Ontariennes soutiennent les producteurs et transformateurs locaux en Ontario à travers l'achat et la consommation de fruits, légumes et viandes d'origine locale; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement de l'Ontario et la première ministre de l'Ontario soutiennent, entre autres, les fermiers et producteurs alimentaires ontariens; et

« Attendu que la province de l'Ontario célèbre ses producteurs et transformateurs locaux en Ontario et encourage la production alimentaire locale dans la province ontarienne;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à ce que l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario passe et promulgue le projet de loi 36, la Loi sur les aliments locaux. »

FISHING REGULATIONS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary is printed each year by the Ministry of Natural Resources and distributed to recreational fishermen throughout the province to inform them of all the relevant seasons, limits, licence requirements and other regulations; and

“Whereas this valuable document is readily available for anglers to keep in their residence, cottage, truck, boat, trailer or on their person to be fully informed of the current fishing regulations; and

“Whereas the MNR has recently and abruptly drastically reduced the distribution of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary such that even major licence issuers and large fishing retailers are limited to one case of regulations per outlet; and

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“Whereas anglers do not always have access to the Internet to view online regulations while travelling or in remote areas;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the production of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary to previous years' quantities such that all anglers have access to a copy and to distribute them accordingly.”

I affix my signature in full support.

DOG OWNERSHIP

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this on behalf of the over 1,000 dogs that have been killed just because of the way they look, not because of what they've done, and I'm going to give it to Glory to be delivered to the table.

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to look after their sick or injured family members without fearing that they will lose their jobs at a vulnerable time;

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve to be able to spend time looking for a child that has disappeared, or take time off to grieve the death of a child that was murdered without fearing that they will lose their jobs;

“Whereas the federal government has recently extended similar leaves and economic supports to federal employees;

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario families and wish to foster mental and physical well-being by allowing those closest to sick or injured family members the time to provide support free of work-related concerns;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 21, the Leaves to Help Families Act.”

I fully support it, and I will give it to Madeline.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas, beginning on January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from the WSIB and had private insurance; and

“Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119.”

I approve and I sign my name to it and give it to page Jack.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

“Whereas the latest policies from the McGuinty”—Wynne—“government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

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

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

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough’s oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt’s electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities, such as Scarborough–Agincourt, with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to

redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission’s report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain, in its entirety;

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

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I agree with this, will sign it and send it down with Glory.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

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

“Whereas families are concerned about proposed changes to the Special Services at Home Program (SSAH) and the Passport Program under the Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act (2008); and

“Whereas the system should allow for the seamless transfer of benefits to the Passport Program when the person turns 18 years of age, and not the current unacceptable cancellation of benefits and reapplication process that puts the person with an intellectual disability on a huge waiting list for months for the re-establishment of their benefits; and

“Whereas on September 20, 2012, the Legislature passed a motion by Progressive Conservative MPP Christine Elliott to immediately strike a select committee to develop a comprehensive developmental services strategy for Ontarians that addresses the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness;

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

“The government immediately strike a select committee to develop a comprehensive developmental services strategy for Ontarians that addresses the needs of children, youth and adults in Ontario with an intellectual disability or who are dually diagnosed with an intellectual disability and a mental illness and coordinates the delivery of developmental programs and services across many provincial ministries;

“To declare a moratorium on any changes until the select committee reports back to the Legislature and its recommendations are acted upon.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

Mrs. Meilleur moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 51, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2013 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

I rise today to talk about security and civil rights, and about how we balance the two when it comes to protecting Ontario's courthouses, electricity generating plants and nuclear facilities. Striking that balance is the intent of the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2013, which, if passed, will repeal and replace the Public Works Protection Act. Simply put, the time has come to modernize the legal framework under which we protect our courthouses and critical infrastructure such as nuclear and electricity generating facilities.

The Public Works Protection Act, or PWPA, was passed at the outset of the Second World War. In 1939, fears of Nazi saboteurs disrupting and destroying water and power plants, dams, roads and bridges motivated our predecessors in this Legislature to enact the PWPA.

We have seen this week that there are still people who would like to attack our way of life, but we have also seen that we have measures in place to protect our way of life. We face different realities today than we did more than 70 years ago when the PWPA was introduced, and we have modern tools to deal with these realities. We also have different expectations. We live in an open and democratic society where balancing civil liberties with the protection of critical infrastructure is an important debate. We welcome that debate, but at the same time we

must act. We must act so that we can fulfill our mandate to ensure that Ontario's nuclear and electricity generating facilities, as well as the Ontarians who live near them, are adequately protected, and we must act so that we can respond to legitimate criticisms made about the PWPA.

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Vous vous souviendrez que les clauses de la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics ont récemment été appliquées. Juste avant le sommet du G20 en juin 2010, la police de Toronto avait demandé d'utiliser les dispositions de la loi afin de protéger le périmètre de sécurité autour de la réunion.

There was uncertainty and vagueness associated with the PWPA that was highlighted as a result of its use during the G20. Later in 2010, the Ombudsman, Monsieur André Marin, produced a report that raised important questions about how the PWPA works and how it was used during the G20.

Also, our government asked Justice McMurtry to review the scope and appropriateness of the PWPA and to provide recommendations. The report recommended that the PWPA be repealed after Ontario had considered potential policy and security gaps as a result of its repeal.

In response to Mr. McMurtry's report, the government committed to consult publicly on replacement legislation that would repeal the PWPA. Clearly, there was a need for us to act and, as a result, we introduced the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act. In his review of the PWPA, Monsieur McMurtry found the definition of “public works” to be too broad.

One of the things we needed to define more clearly, following the report, was what should be included in the proposed legislation. The replacement legislation is more focused and builds on the current uses of the PWPA for security at courthouses, nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities. The Ombudsman's report also helped guide how we would replace the PWPA.

Dans son rapport, l'ombudsman, M. André Marin, a conclu que ce règlement adopté à la demande de la police de Toronto n'était pas justifié dans notre société moderne. En particulier, l'ombudsman se demande pourquoi la population ontarienne n'a pas été informée de l'adoption du règlement qui donnait des pouvoirs qui ne sont pas utilisés fréquemment dans notre province.

Monsieur Speaker, we have listened to both Mr. McMurtry and Monsieur Marin, and we have listened to all our partners from across the political spectrum.

It's important to note that Bill 51, which will repeal and replace the PWPA, includes government and opposition amendments. It's new, so we have amendments. These were agreed to during last year's review of the proposed legislation by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. All key stakeholders were consulted, and all key stakeholders support the legislation.

Bill 51 incorporates feedback from our partners, in particular when it comes to religious accommodation at courthouses. The proposed legislation also includes minor technical changes, making explicit that the bill

does not affect the judiciary right of access to courthouses.

Our proposed legislation and associated regulation identified the narrow categories of infrastructure that are protected under it. Any changes to the act would be subject to legislative debate. This is because an amendment would be needed to add other types of facilities that could be protected under our proposed legislation. We have made the process open, transparent and accountable.

Bien des choses ont changé en Ontario depuis la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et l'adoption de la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics. La loi est désuète. Elle n'est plus nécessaire dans son cadre juridique actuel, même si certaines de ses mesures sont encore utilisées, comme je viens de le dire.

It's important to note, as Justice McMurtry did, that other laws exist to help keep our critical infrastructure secure. The Criminal Code gives the police powers to deal with breaches of the peace and riots. Common law gives the police important powers to preserve the peace and protect life and property. The Ontario Trespass to Property Act is also a potential source of police powers to arrest without warrant those who are unlawfully on certain premises or who were recently unlawfully on those premises. In addition, our Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act allows an emergency order to be put in place to restrict travel and movement to and from specific areas in the event of a declared provincial emergency. Finally, regulations under the Police Services Act mandate police services to put in place procedures consistent with plans to deal with acts of terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, you can see that more specific and modern legislation has made the PWPA outdated and unnecessary. Many large cultural, sporting and political gatherings are secured regularly by police without invoking the PWPA. Police rely on the Police Services Act, the Criminal Code and other legislation to effectively protect the people of this province.

Un principe constant dans nos efforts pour abroger et remplacer la loi a été d'écouter nos partenaires. À cette fin, nous avons rencontré et discuté avec des Ontariens et Ontariennes et des groupes qui nous ont aidés dans notre décision.

We have consulted widely with municipalities, civil liberty advocates, the police, and representatives from the nuclear sector, electricity producers and court security.

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From the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, we heard that any new powers should be tailored to address unique security threats that arise within the nuclear security context, and that these powers should be clearly articulated and communicated to the public. Mr. Speaker, this legislation addresses the concerns of the CCLA.

Bill 51 also looks at the issues surrounding the security of Ontario's courthouses.

La nouvelle loi établit des pouvoirs nécessaires pour assurer la sécurité dans les palais de justice et précise les amendements à la Loi sur les services policiers qui doivent être apportés. Le projet de loi tient aussi en

compte les questions entourant les accommodements de nature religieuse qui ont été soulevées par nos partenaires l'an dernier.

From the energy sector, we heard that the operators of nuclear installations and electricity generating facilities would like to maintain the ability to appoint peace officers for the purpose of protecting a nuclear facility. I'll provide more details on the powers given by the proposed legislation in a few minutes, but let me say that we agree with our partners from the energy sector on that issue.

We also listened to Justice McMurtry. With this proposed legislation, we are meeting our commitment to repeal the PWPA and implement key recommendations of the McMurtry report. In particular, we are repealing the Public Works Protection Act, setting out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security, and introducing stand-alone legislation respecting security at prescribed energy generating and nuclear facilities.

The Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, if passed, will not only lead to the repeal of the PWPA, but will give us a new law that deftly balances civil liberties with the protection of critical infrastructure. Let me give you some examples.

As it relates to court security, the legislation will address court security through an amendment to the Police Services Act. We have generally replicated, with some updates and clarifications, the powers available under the PWPA.

La loi octroie au personnel de sécurité les pouvoirs suivants, si l'exercice de ces pouvoirs est raisonnable, afin de s'acquitter de ses responsabilités :

—exiger qu'une personne qui pénètre dans un palais de justice ou qui s'y trouve présente une pièce d'identité et fournisse des renseignements afin d'évaluer si elle représente un risque pour la sécurité;

—procéder à la fouille, sans mandat, d'une personne qui pénètre ou tente de pénétrer dans des lieux où se déroulent des instances judiciaires ou qui s'y trouve, ainsi qu'à la fouille de son véhicule et des autres biens dont elle a la garde ou le soin;

—procéder, sans mandat, en employant au besoin la force raisonnable, à la fouille d'une personne sous garde qui se trouve sur les lieux où se déroulent des instances judiciaires ou qui est transportée à destination ou en provenance de ces lieux et à la fouille des biens dont elle a la garde ou le soin.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize that while the legislation may require a person entering or attempting to enter a courthouse to submit to a search, identify himself or herself or provide information, if anyone does not want to comply, they can simply walk away.

However, if they persist in entering the courthouse after refusing to provide information or submit to a search, court security personnel can refuse entry and demand that the person leave the premises, using reasonable force, if necessary, to exclude or remove the person.

If the person continues to try to enter or refuses to leave, they could be arrested. These powers are justifiable measures to ensure the security of our courthouses and help maintain the efficiency of our judicial system.

En ce qui concerne les autres installations, nous avons réduit la liste des ouvrages publics aux centrales électriques et aux installations nucléaires. La loi, si elle est adoptée, ne s'appliquera qu'à une liste très courte d'installations.

The legislation will apply to prescribed electricity generating facilities and prescribed nuclear facilities. Currently, on the nuclear side, the legislation and its anticipated regulations will only apply where major nuclear reactors are located. We anticipate this will include the premises of the reactors operated by Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation and Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. The act permits the appointment of security personnel at these facilities as peace officers with the power to require any person who wishes to enter, or is on, the premises to produce identification and provide information for the purposes of assessing the person's security risk, and search upon consent any person, property or vehicle entering or on the premises.

Similar to the court security legislation, a person can simply walk away if they do not wish to submit to a search, produce identification or provide information. If they persist in entering the facility after refusing to provide information or submit to a search, security personnel can refuse entry and demand that the person immediately leave, and use reasonable force, if necessary, to prevent their entry or remove them. Any person who continues to try to enter or refuses to leave the premises could be arrested.

We're also going to establish the same offences and penalties as for court security: 60 days in jail or a \$2,000 fine, or both.

The act also provides the authority to make regulations to prescribe electricity generating facilities and nuclear facilities; govern the appointment of persons providing security; govern the qualifications, training, duties and oversight of persons providing security; govern the exercise of the powers of a person providing security, including powers as a peace officer; and impose duties on the operator of the restricted access facility with respect to the provision of security services under the act.

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Monsieur Speaker, I'd like to repeat that adding other categories of infrastructure other than nuclear and electricity generating facilities would require amendments to the act. No other categories of infrastructure could be added simply through regulation. The process for changing an act is very transparent and open, and the content of any proposed amendments is subject to public debate, and that's key for us.

Dans le cadre du processus législatif, et encore aujourd'hui, nous discutons toujours avec nos partenaires afin de nous assurer que ce projet de loi nous donnera une loi efficace. En discutant et en écoutant nos partenaires—leurs commentaires et leurs positions—nous

sommes mieux en mesure de conserver le large consensus qui existe présentement.

I remind you, Monsieur Speaker, that we incorporated government and opposition amendments last year when the bill went through committee. I'm happy to say that after all that work, we achieved a broad consensus on how to proceed. We all agree that we need balance and, if passed, that is exactly what this legislation will provide: a balance between protecting certain facilities and protecting the civil liberties that Ontarians expect and deserve. We now have proposed legislation that protects critical Ontario installations and respects the rights of its citizens.

In closing, I want to thank all those who came before the committee and gave us their good advice to make sure that we are, with this new legislation, serving the community well while protecting civil liberties.

I ask the members of this House to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): We'll continue the debate with the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased and honoured to follow the minister and rise in support of the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2013. As the minister has stated, we need to modernize the legal framework for the protection of some of our most valuable and vital infrastructure and of our courthouses.

We know that despite the fact that the Public Works Protection Act is generally used in a limited fashion, we rely upon it on a daily basis to provide security at nuclear and electricity generating facilities and at Ontario courthouses.

Mr. Speaker, as we move to repeal and replace the PWPA, I believe it is important that we look at the situation that was facing our predecessors when the act was made law. The origins of the PWPA go back to the start of the Second World War. At that time, our predecessors in the House were worried that our power plants might be sabotaged. In fact, our predecessors were so concerned that on September 19, 1939, the House convened for an urgent and extraordinary session to adopt this law at that time. Our records show that the law was adopted in under three days and with bipartisan support. That's unbelievable. So, obviously, there were some concerns, right?

I have some quotes from the leaders of the day that I want to share with the members here to give you a flavour of the importance of the PWPA at the time. In a Globe and Mail article dated September 20, 1939, the Conservative opposition leader, George Drew, was quoted as saying that he agreed with the act and would support it. With the country at war, he said, it was necessary to protect hydro, railways, public works and industries linked with war production. Premier Hepburn was even more blunt. In that same article, he was quoted as follows: "The greatest service a Nazi sympathizer could do would be to destroy these plants." Fortunately, there were no attacks on our facilities. The war ended, but the law stayed on our books and drew little attention.

A lot has changed since 1939. For example, the Criminal Code of Canada, modern federal anti-terrorism legislation and the provincial emergency legislation give our police services the tools to prevent, investigate and manage the fallout of terrorism. In other words, we would not create any legal gaps for ourselves by repealing the PWPA and replacing it with the legislation we have proposed for facilities that have made use of the current act.

In addition to the threat of terrorism, some stakeholders have asked how the proposed legislation may impact security during the 2015 Pan Am Games and similar major events. Police have powers under common law and statutes such as the Criminal Code to enable them to maintain public order when this is required. Temporary security for major events is generally dealt with at the local level by the police of the jurisdiction and affected municipalities. The province will work with the stakeholders to ensure that an appropriate and effective security plan is in place for the Pan Am Games.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before the House today achieves a balance between the need to provide powers to protect certain facilities where the need for that protection exists, against the desire to use those powers in a way that minimally infringes on the civil liberties of Ontarians.

The bill certainly responds to a key recommendation by former Chief Justice Roy McMurtry. In his report, Mr. McMurtry concluded that there was a need for continued protection of these facilities but found the original PWPA to be an outdated legal tool with too broad a definition of what constitutes a “public work.” He therefore recommended the repeal and replacement of the PWPA. That’s what Ontario’s new government is doing.

It’s important to note that Bill 51 includes the government and opposition amendments that followed last year’s review of the proposed legislation by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. All stakeholders supported the legislation; it’s true. The opposition may not remember that; let me remind you. Bill 51 incorporates the feedback from our partners, in particular when it comes to religious accommodation at the courthouses. I remember distinctly that the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton asked that question at committee, and I remember hearing the witnesses asking us about accommodation.

I want to take a minute—the proposed legislation talks about it. Under subsection 138(6), the heading “Accommodation”: “When a person who is authorized by a board or by the commissioner as described in subsection (1) exercises powers under this section with respect to other persons, he or she shall ensure that those persons are accommodated in accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Human Rights Code, and this includes accommodation in connection with creed or disability,” in the proposed bill.

The proposed legislation also includes minor technical changes regarding the preservation and making explicit the judiciary’s rights of access to the courthouse.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is the largest nuclear jurisdiction in North America. There are 16 nuclear reactors capable of generating electricity and supplying Ontario with en-

ergy to power our industries and light our homes. But whereas nuclear installations in Quebec and New Brunswick are in remote areas, two of our most important nuclear generating stations are in Durham region: in Pickering and Darlington.

Our challenges are different. Securing these facilities requires balancing the powers given to those protecting them with the rights of Ontarians who reside nearby or conduct recreational facilities near these installations. The replacement legislation would allow for the current use of the powers granted under the PWPA for security at courthouses, nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities. But there are differences in how these powers could be applied, and they are in line with what we have heard from Mr. McMurtry and the Ombudsman in their respective reports.

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The PWPA currently gives guards the authority to exercise their powers in the approaches to public works. This is particularly relevant for our partners from the nuclear sector. The approaches to a facility were a concern for Mr. McMurtry and the civil liberties groups, because it was vague and hard to define. Under our proposal, the guards would exercise their specified powers only on the premises. These powers would not apply off-premises.

There were concerns raised—again, witnesses who came before the committee had some concerns about that. Since the approach falls outside the premises of the nuclear facilities, any security issues should be addressed in partnership with the police of the jurisdiction. I believe this is a reflection of the balanced nature of this bill.

We know that the G20 summit in Toronto, in June 2010, led to many questions about the usefulness of the PWPA. A security-led event of this magnitude is uncommon even for a large city like my own, the city of Toronto. A more modern legislative framework was needed. That is why we are moving with the repeal and replacement of the PWPA. We are doing so in the spirit of openness and transparency.

The minister recognized the various stakeholders we have consulted. I also want to thank our colleagues from the committee and our member from up north—I can’t remember his riding. I know his first name; I can’t remember the riding. I can’t mention it.

Hon. Jeff Leal: What’s his first name?

Ms. Soo Wong: The Great White North. Up north. He knows who he is.

Anyway, I know the two opposition parties took a lot of time to review the bill, and I want to acknowledge their contributions to Bill 51. We have consulted with all sectors involved, from municipalities to police organizations, from civil liberties groups to power companies, from Canada’s nuclear regulators to provincial ministries and the federal government. We have been very thorough, and that is one of the reasons behind the broad support for this bill.

The replacement legislation is focused on what we know to be current uses of the PWPA: security at court-

houses, nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities. Owners of other public works and the police have sufficient authority to address security needs at these facilities under other legislation, including the Trespass to Property Act. It is one of the motivations behind our decision to make the addition of any new category of infrastructure possible only through a legislative amendment.

Changing an act is, by its nature, a transparent and open process. We in this House know that it goes through many steps, starting with the bill being read, then it goes to second reading and then to committee, and that's the right thing to do. The content of any proposed amendment is subject to debate in the House—and we will be doing that very shortly—and in committee. Again, I believe it's the right thing to do. The public's input will be sought.

Once again, the process will be open and transparent, and we welcome any improvements. If there are any new things we have not included in the proposed legislation, let's hear them through the debate or through the committee. That's essential for us in helping to maintain the trust of Ontarians and for them to know that their safety and respect for their charter of rights is paramount for our government.

If a member of the public wishes to conduct business inside a courthouse, or if they wish to enter a nuclear or electricity generating facility, they have to abide by security procedures. However, if someone does not wish to subject themselves to these security measures, they have every right to simply walk away. We respect people's choices. This is what it's all about: balancing the legislation and ensuring security of these important facilities in Ontario.

We have made provisions in the proposed legislation to ensure that the PWPA is not repealed before all the necessary measures to protect courthouses and nuclear and electricity generating facilities are in place. There will be no gaps in ensuring the safety of these vital facilities while regulations are being developed.

Given the fact that our proposed legislation is coming to the House—we're dealing with legislation that's so outdated and everybody knows it's outdated, and this is the right time to address it. The accompanying regulations will be developed in partnership with our stakeholders—again, in consultation with our stakeholders. So every step of the way, there will be consultation and having conversations with stakeholders who will be affected. The ministry will undertake further consultations on the regulations. The regulatory framework will be clearly spelled out because we believe that's a right thing to do.

In summary, we believe the proposed legislation strikes a just balance between security and civil rights when it comes to protecting Ontario's courthouses, electricity generating plants and nuclear facilities. We are making our law more modern to reflect the values shared by Ontarians, values that have evolved since 1939 and the start of the Second World War. Some of the young

pages weren't even born. I would dare say some of us hadn't even been born when this piece of legislation was passed in the House. We no longer fear saboteurs operating in the dark of night and menacing our power and water treatment plants, or our dams or bridges.

We need no longer depend on a piece of legislation drafted more than 70 years ago to know that our critical infrastructure is secure. We rely on sophisticated police services and modern legislation to deal with the unexpected, and that, again, is the right thing to do. We need to update how we protect vital installations and civil liberties.

I encourage all our colleagues in the House to consider improving this bill—and our proposed legislation does not mean just today but also for the future. I enjoin the members of this House to support this legislation, and thank you for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member from Perth–Wellington, is he in his seat? No. Now he is.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you for reminding me to get back to my seat, sir. I appreciate it.

This is a bill that was introduced last time, last session, and unfortunately, due to prorogation, it died on the order paper. It would seem to me that if bills are that important to this government, they would think of those things before they arbitrarily stop the business of the House.

It's a bill that repeals the Public Works Protection Act. The Liberals say they are replacing the archaic secret service law police used to place hundreds of people under arrest during the G20 summit in 2010. I guess it's certainly something that is supportable by all parties. But it interests me that if these bills are so important to the people of Ontario and to this government, they should have maybe been thought of before prorogation was enacted last time, when all these bills died.

I want to quote our leader, Tim Hudak, when he said, "Nobody forced them to bring in the secret law at the G20. Nobody forced their arm. It was a major scandal for the province." And now the government has introduced legislation to try to take the attention off what happened during the G20 summit.

So I would ask the government, if they happen to be around in the future—prorogation is something that does kill bills, and they should be reminded of that. If these bills are so important, they should be brought to the attention of the House probably a little sooner than when they have been brought in the past.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I listened intently to the opening lead of the minister and of the member. We discuss a lot of very important issues in this House, but this is pretty high up on the list because it's about people's safety and people's security.

Yes, the member from the PCs brings up an important fact: that we are having to re-debate this because the House was prorogued. It is a relevant point. I think the most relevant point is, where this bill comes from is that

during the G20 steps were taken by the government that were, in fact, quite questionable. People's rights were trampled on. Perhaps one of the most serious for us in this House is that—I wasn't here at that time, but if my memory serves me correctly—those steps were taken by the government while the House was in session. We have to be very, very cognizant of that.

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This bill is being brought forward to replace that very old act that was proclaimed during World War II, when, yes, very few of us were around, so we're having a chance now to make this act better. The government has proposed one that hopefully we can work together and try to amend to make it as strong as possible so that cannot be abused by others for purposes that are not in the best use of the people's House. Thank you.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I think the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and her parliamentary assistant, the member from Scarborough–Agincourt, made the case today why this bill is so important. It was originally, of course, brought in in 1939, the Public Works Protection Act, and at that particular time, of course, the United States did not enter the war. The Americans did not enter the Second World War until December 1941, and there was this fear at that time that Nazi saboteurs or sympathizers in the United States could potentially come across Lake Ontario, Lake Erie or one of the Great Lakes and actually sabotage generating facilities right here in Ontario. Of course, that would have put a real dent into the Canadian war effort, and legislation was brought in at that particular time.

But fast-forward to, of course, the very tragic events in Boston a week ago and the revelations just this week that there were terrorists that had a plot to destroy a Via Rail train in this country. It would have created enormous havoc and potentially cost lives. Our great police forces, working together, were able to uncover this plot and make the appropriate arrests.

In my riding of Peterborough we're very close to Darlington, that nuclear facility just down the road, about 35 to 40 kilometres away, in Durham. This bill will actually bring in some additional security that is so important in terms of what could obviously be a target. In this day and age, we don't know. There are so many cells and groups out there kicking around that we have to always be on our guard.

This is a very important piece of legislation, when it is approved, to make sure that we bring the utmost protection to facilities right here in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's a pleasure to rise and to address Bill 51, the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2013.

You know, unlike the Public Works Protection Act, the PWPA, this act actually is very limited. It covers very limited categories of infrastructure. I think it's important

for people to also realize that the proposed legislation would do the following three things. First of all, it would repeal the PWPA. Secondly, it would set out a legislative amendment to the Police Services Act to address court security. Thirdly and lastly, it would set out stand-alone legislation respecting security at prescribed electricity generating and nuclear facilities.

Our position, for the PCs, is pretty straightforward. The fact that this is straightforward legislation addresses the conclusions raised in the Ombudsman's report by following the recommendations of the McMurtry report. It's unfortunate, however, that the Liberal government has wasted so much time with prorogation when this important bill could have been passed last year.

I think it's important to note as well that this bill is being reintroduced after dying on the order paper in its third reading. It's really unfortunate. It was originally introduced because it led up to the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto and the fact that the McGuinty cabinet had invoked regulation 233/10 under the PWPA, making the G20 zone a public work from June 21 through the 28th.

There was a lot of media coverage on this, and unfortunately, a lot of people were arrested during this time. About 1,100 were arrested, and only 140 were charged. For that, we will support this, but it's about time it has come forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister has two minutes to reply.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First, let me say thank you to the members from Perth–Wellington, Timiskaming–Cochrane, the Minister of Rural Affairs and the MPP for Chatham–Kent–Essex for their input in this bill.

I want to give special thanks to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. When this bill was first introduced, she was my parliamentary assistant and did extraordinary work to get this bill to committee and to get consensus from the people around the table.

I want to thank also the Ombudsman, M. André Marin, qui nous a fourni des bons commentaires sur comment on peut améliorer, en éliminant cette loi-là—comment on peut l'améliorer et surtout s'assurer que les citoyens sont en sécurité quand ils entrent dans nos palais de justice, que ce soit des avocats, des juges, des policiers ou des citoyens qui vont témoigner. Alors, il nous a donné de très, très bons commentaires.

Aussi, le juge McMurtry, qui est un homme extraordinaire avec une réputation incroyable et qui nous a donné, lui aussi, des commentaires qui nous ont bien aidés. Et l'avocate Nathalie Des Rosiers, qui est l'avocate-conseil pour la « Canadian Civil Liberties Association » et qui est une avocate très respectée qui a été la doyenne de la faculté de droit civil de l'Université d'Ottawa. Je veux remercier tout ce monde. Merci.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to follow the minister and join the debate on Bill 51. God; like Yogi Berra would say, it's like déjà vu all over again. I think

I've been in this movie. In fact, we were all in this movie last year.

Mr. Speaker, I beg your indulgence a little bit. As you know, today is World Meningitis Day. I did want to comment a little bit on that and on the fact that we're wearing these carnations. I can't say that I wear everything that comes forth into this chamber, but I did put on a carnation today. I have the daffodil for cancer. April is cancer month, in honour of all of those who have fought and are fighting cancer. Particularly, I wear it in honour of my mother, who passed away in 1974 from lung cancer. We all wear these daffodils for different reasons, but I think we all wear them for very important reasons.

The carnation is for World Meningitis Day. My brother Michael contracted meningitis when he was, I think, maybe four or five years old. He's over 50 now, so I'm not 100% sure. I think he was four or five. I'm a little bit older than he by a few years, and I remember how difficult that was for my parents and the rest of our family. But I remember even more succinctly our daughter Heidi, who contracted meningococcal at the age of 12 in 1993. That was probably one of the most difficult times for my wife and me, and the rest of the family as well. Heidi ended up in CHEO, and the doctors there said that within an hour she would have been gone. Meningococcal is a fiercely virulent form of meningitis that causes blood poisoning, and normally the subject has about 24 hours to live after they've contracted the disease.

I could talk for a long time about it, but it was one of the most trying experiences of my wife's life, because she was following the ambulance. She was ahead of the ambulance going to Ottawa because they told her they needed to treat Heidi in Pembroke first, and that trip from Arnprior to Ottawa was the most difficult period of her life, because she knew Heidi was in that ambulance, but she didn't know if Heidi was alive or if she didn't make it. So that was one hell of a trip from Arnprior to Ottawa.

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In the end, not only did Heidi survive, she survived without—many times, those who survive have brain damage and other permanent disabilities. Heidi has none of that—a little bit of scarring. She is now 32 years old, and her career is working with disadvantaged children, mentally challenged children. She's wonderfully good at that, but she is also a wonderful mother, and today her daughter, Lilli Elma Joan Coburn, is one year old. I had to talk about that. To Lilli, happy birthday, and of course, Heidi, we're just glad you're here. Love you.

So let's talk about the War Measures Act and the Public Works Protection Act, and let's roll the clock back to 1939, if we may. The member for Peterborough had a short response there, and I know he's a man who takes considerable interest in our history here in Canada and particularly the history of those who fought for freedom in the world wars, and I know he has a great deal of knowledge on that subject. In fact, I was chatting with him earlier today on that very issue.

You can understand the climate of the day. Hitler had invaded Poland, and by doing so begun the Second

World War, because Britain had an agreement with Poland that if they were invaded, Britain would come to their aid, which they did; and by extension we, as Canadians, were drawn into the war when Britain declared war on Nazi Germany, when Hitler invaded Poland.

As the member for Peterborough—the Minister of Rural Affairs. He is the member for Peterborough, but he's also the Minister of Rural Affairs. As he pointed out, the United States did not immediately enter the war, and there was some considerable concern that access to Canada might be gained through the United States and the waters and the borders that we share. At the time—you have to understand the mindset of the day—there had to be some serious legislation passed in order to protect our security. So the federal government passed the War Measures Act; Ontario followed with the Public Works Protection Act, and fortunately the act hadn't been reviewed much since the war ended in 1945.

We see wars today, and the scope of them. While there's a tremendous amount of money expended on them, and there's a tremendous amount of equipment and technology, the world wars were fought by people, massive numbers of soldiers and airmen. My father was a veteran of the Second World War, as many of the people who have served in this chamber were, those who served at the time that he would have served.

You know, my dad didn't like to speak very much about the war, because I think it was an uncomfortable subject for them. I think sometimes a lot of veterans who served in the Second World War did a fair bit of drinking, and you wonder why. You know, the horrors that they faced as soldiers, infantrymen, airmen and sailors in that war had a lifetime impact, and if you weren't there, you couldn't possibly understand it the same way.

I was chatting with some folks yesterday—and I want to commend the minister, Minister Meilleur, for joining us in South Algonquin yesterday and coming to view some of the facilities that were threatened by the flood waters of this past weekend. We're just praying and hoping that the rains today are not severe enough to exacerbate the problem. But we do know that further down the Madawaska River system, concerns are growing, because we have a reservoir called Bark Lake that allows us to fill that, obviously, to the extent that we can, and after that, it's going to mean that that water is going to continue to be passed down the Madawaska River. There's other water coming into the rivers further south, from the York River, which is causing problems in Bancroft etc.

I do want to thank the minister for being there yesterday. I was glad to be able to join her there as well, meeting with the folks from South Algonquin. They have a tremendously coordinated response team in place. The minister herself complimented them on the job they have done.

We do hope that nature is co-operative in ensuring that the flooding has crested or peaked, and we can hope that it doesn't get any worse at this point.

At that meeting, I was also chatting with some folks. We had some time to chat before the minister got there,

because she had other places she was visiting, as well, that were threatened by the floods. We were talking about how it was all men soldiers at that time, and that they would come back from the war and it was basically, “I don’t want to hear about your problems. The war is over. Get on with it.” They were boys. They were young, in their twenties. They had just experienced something that—most people cannot even imagine the horrors. We didn’t understand post-traumatic stress disorder. You hear about it every day today. Then you think about the numbers of soldiers that we had in the theatre in Europe and in the South Pacific. We basically turned them loose and said, “You’re on your own.”

There was a program in place which was very helpful, in that people who had served in the military and served as veterans in the war did have access to government jobs as they became available, and they did get priority. We’re thankful for that, and I know that many of them were thankful for that. But other than that, there wasn’t a whole lot of support surrounding the experience of having been in that war. Today, of course, it’s a whole lot different. We understand these things a whole lot better.

After serving their country as a soldier, many of these people continued to serve in various capacities, and many of them found their way here or in the House of Commons, or in the various Legislatures across the country, depending upon what the province of their residency was. So they continued to serve.

I don’t know when the last veteran of the Second World War would have sat in this Legislature—I don’t know if they keep those records—but it has been some time, obviously, because you’d probably have to be at least 86 or 87 to have served in the Second World War. So it has been a while since we would have had someone who actually served and has also served in this Legislature. It has changed the dynamic around this place.

This morning, I had the opportunity to speak to June Turner, the widow of a former member from Peterborough but also a former Speaker of the Legislature, John Turner, who passed away in January of this year. We had a nice chat. She remarked how my father and her husband were good friends here, as so many of them were who would have had those similar experiences; that you could talk to someone who actually knew exactly how you felt when you were talking about those issues and those experiences.

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I had a nice chat with Mrs. Turner today, and I hope that over the next couple of weeks I might even have a chance to meet her. We’re looking forward to that. I never did meet John Turner, but I know—because their tenures here were overlapping—that my dad and Mr. Turner would have had many good conversations here and many good times as well in their capacities as MPPs. Both were former businessmen as well, so they would have had lots to talk about during their time in the Legislature.

When I was talking about it last—I’ve got to tell you, when I say “last year,” it was March 2012 when I last

spoke to An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act. It was then Bill 34, in the last session of this Parliament. It is now Bill 51 in this session. So it is basically 14 months—we’re almost into May—since I last spoke on the efforts of this Legislature to pass repealing legislation.

I must say, when I spoke about it, my colleague from Nepean–Carleton—I was talking about my dad’s service, and he had served in the battle of Caen, but I didn’t even know that; I found out through my brother. The member from Nepean–Carleton—I want to thank her—had her husband, Joe Varner, who works for the department of defence in Ottawa, research my father’s military record. She was able to get a copy of his military record. I thank her and her husband for doing that. I need somebody probably from the military to decipher it for me, but nonetheless it’s a wonderful thing to have for myself, and I’ll make sure my kids get to see it too.

It’s almost 14 months since we talked about this bill to repeal the Public Works Protection Act. You really have to ask yourself: What have we been doing? What have we been doing all this time?

I just want to go back also to when they brought in the War Measures Act. On February 19, 1942, they had in Winnipeg a what-if day. Just again, to illustrate what was the mindset of the day in Canada at that time, they had a what-if day. It was, “What if the Nazis invaded Canada and Winnipeg?” What if they invaded? Of course, we have these things today—these mock disasters where we recreate or pretend-create a disaster to see how our first responders are going to work, to see how the public is going to interact and to see how we’re going to be able to get beyond the disaster, if it was to ever happen.

On February 19, 1942, in the city of Winnipeg, they had exactly that. It was depicting a Nazi invasion of our country to see how our support systems, the public, all of those things, would work cohesively and coordinatively to ensure that we were safe. That was important. That was how people lived in those days.

There’s nobody in this Legislature, with the exception of Monte Kwinter, who would have been—I don’t think there’s anybody else—around in 1939. Maybe 1942—I don’t think so. Monte Kwinter certainly was. But imagine the daily fear that was out there when the world was at war. These were the kinds of exercises that people were going through. Today, we don’t think about it that much. The Public Works Protection Act, when it was imposed or used as the lever to pass regulation 233/10 on June 2, 2010—it was an inappropriate use of that act.

I know the minister has talked a lot about the changes in the act. Let’s get it on the record, Speaker. We support the bill. We support the repeal of the act. We support the changes. But I don’t think it’s fair to this Legislature or to the people of Ontario to pretend that this thing just came out of the minister’s office because folks were looking to make things better, and, “We’d like to bring in a new piece of legislation. It’s going to be an improvement and good for all, and we’ve got to make sure that we can protect the courts and the nuclear facilities.” No.

The reason we are debating this legislation, the reason we debated Bill 34 14 months ago was because of the dog's breakfast they made of the Public Works Protection Act and how they used it to provide security and police presence at the G20 here in Toronto in June 2010. The regulation gave them the powers from June 21 to 28. The actual G20 was only June 26 and 27. It was a totally inappropriate use of power.

The police were not informed properly of what their true powers under the act were. But what angered a lot of people—I'm going to get to that at some point here today—was how that regulation was passed. You see, on June 2, 2010, this House was in session. We were sitting, just as we are today. Now, I know the reason we have to bring this bill back again under another number, another bill, Bill 51—I know the amendments that were talked about in committee when we were debating Bill 34 have been incorporated to the largest degree in this bill. But the reason it's coming back a second time is that the government—either they didn't know what they were doing, or they did it by design, or they were just trying to get out of this place—prorogued the Legislature on October 15, 2012. By proroguing the Legislature, they killed the bill. They killed Bill 34, which had already gone through committee—had already gone through first reading, had gone through second reading, had gone through committee. It was at third reading stage in this House—third reading stage. All that was left was a few hours of debate and this bill would have become law—would have become law. It would have been already enacted. I think it's a fair question: Who's to blame? Who's at fault here? The opposition didn't prorogue the Legislature. The opposition didn't shut down the debate. The opposition didn't bring this on.

Now, this whole episode of how it was used at the G20—and I have in my hand—under a great deal of pressure from the media, the opposition in this Legislature and people all across the country, the government felt forced, particularly when it was found out that this secret legislative regulation was passed in a secret cabinet meeting while this House was in session. There was no reason for the government to do that. If they believed that the Public Works Protection Act should be utilized to protect the participants and the visiting countries at the G20 and the representatives of those nations, if they believed that that was necessary, then they had a responsibility to come to the people of this Legislature, the people who are duly elected by their constituents all across this province.

1650

We're all equal in here. We all have one vote, and we all represent a constituency. Some people may be members of the executive council. We understand that. In our parliamentary system, one party is the government, other parties are opposition, and the members of the executive council are members of the governing party. We understand that. They have a great deal of power. But as members of the Legislature, we're no different. We have one vote. But particularly in the circumstances of a majority,

they run the show; they control it. But it was an abject abdication of their responsibility to do it the way they did it.

When I walk through the halls here in this Legislature, I get goosebumps. When I walk down and I see those names engraved on the marble wall—every person who has ever sat in this chamber as an elected member has their name engraved on that wall. It isn't for show, Speaker. It's so that we understand that the people who came before us have left a legacy that we are responsible for protecting—the Legislature of the province of Ontario. We should not denigrate the memory of those who came before us and we should not denigrate the work that they've done here by passing legislation at secret cabinet meetings that should have come to the floor of this chamber. That was wrong.

I have to ask myself, and I have to ask the folks on the other side, again, what were you thinking? What was going through your mind that you could possibly believe that this was the right thing to do? There was no crisis on June 2. There was plenty of time to let the people know. And what did you get out of it? Well, you got out of it a real mess because once it was known by the people of Ontario and once it was known by the media what you were doing behind closed doors, people were infuriated. People were infuriated.

I don't fault the members of the police force. Things were done that have been shown subsequently to have been abuses of power, but they were led to believe that they had that power. You have to understand that if you give law enforcement officers a tool in the tool box, so to speak, then they rightfully feel they are compelled to use that tool if they feel the situation warrants it, because if they don't use that tool and something goes haywire, as they say, then they'll be accused of not using the authority and the power that was granted them. But there was a tremendous amount of misunderstanding as to what the actual powers that were being conveyed to the police were when they passed that legislation.

The members of the cabinet who sat there and debated this—and there were other members of the Legislature, as well, who sat in that meeting. Some of them are cabinet members now. I was looking for that list, but I can't come up with it while I'm trying to talk. I can't do two things at once, Speaker. There were a number of people who were at that meeting who passed that, and I have to ask them, as I ask everyone in this House, when you made that decision, how could you possibly have felt that you were doing the right thing? How could you possibly have been able to justify that you were going to give the kind of powers—you must have known something was wrong. You must have known it was wrong, that you decided to do it in that fashion. Because if you had no fear, if you believed that what you were going to do would have the support of this Legislature and the support of the people, then you would have brought it to this chamber and you would have asked the duly elected members, "What is your view? What is your opinion? Is

this what we need to do to ensure the safety of the people at the G20?"

Hey, we understand that protecting those representatives of other nations was paramount. That absolutely, without question, was the priority at the time. Security had to be a number one priority. We know that ever since 9/11, terrorism and terrorists have been on the minds of Canadians, Americans and people all around the world. When you have people visiting from other countries, you do not want to run the risk that one of those dignitaries could be injured, killed or have other people fall victim to a terrorist attack. Look at what we recently just had—an attack. We don't know all of the details, but the bombs at the Boston Marathon—people were killed. Young people were killed. Hundreds were injured.

We're always on alert, and we have to be on alert. Recently, of course, we had the thwarting of a possible terrorist attack on Via Rail, and I take my hat off to all of the law enforcement authorities, all of the investigators that worked continuously on this file—counterterrorism—to ensure that we are safe, or do their very best that things like this don't happen. My only concern, quite frankly, is that while I'm very, very pleased we were able to catch these people before something happened, I have my concerns and reservations about our legal system that will probably—because they didn't actually commit the terrorist act, we'll have these people back in our midst far too soon. I don't think we deal with those people harshly enough at all.

In my view, how we would be dealing with terrorists is—it wouldn't fit with the Canadian way because we don't allow capital punishment in Canada. People who commit terrorist acts—I have no hesitation in saying that they should be recipients of the harshest punishment possible. I was very dismayed, I must say, when the new federal Liberal leader intimated that instead of dealing with the crimes of terrorists, we need to get to the root causes—I'm paraphrasing, not quoting—of what made them feel excluded from society. When somebody commits a terrorist act, I'm not really worried about their feelings at that point. I'm worried about the other people, the innocents, who could fall victims to those kinds of people. I think those comments of Mr. Trudeau are quite regrettable.

As I said earlier, the Ombudsman, André Marin, who produced this report—interestingly enough, he didn't call it the "investigation on regulation 233/10"; he didn't call it Report on Using a Sledgehammer to Deal with a Fly. He called it Caught in the Act. This is an official report of the Legislature done by André Marin, the Ombudsman. He did a very, very thorough report, and he made it crystal clear—crystal clear—that this was an inappropriate use of the government's authority and quite frankly an insult to the rest of the members of this Legislature.

1700

I know that many of the members who are here today were not actually here when this regulation was passed—233/10 was of course done in that secret cabinet meeting on June 2, 2010. Many of the members were only elected

here in 2011, and in the case of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, she was elected in a by-election in 2012. But someone was in those seats that the new members occupy, and they were frozen out of the decision-making process.

I would ask all the members—I'd ask those new members today—how would you feel if this Legislature was sitting today and the government passed a regulation that basically said, "You don't count"? Well, if you don't count, then neither do your constituents. If you don't count as a member of this Legislature, then what does that say about how the government feels about your constituents? I am only here by the grace of the constituents who have voted me here. I am here on their behalf, just as every other member of this Legislature is. We are here because our constituents have sent us here. If we're to be responsible to them, then we have the right to expect that the government is going to be responsible to us.

I just want to read a couple of things out of Mr. Marin's executive summary, which should tell people pretty clearly what he thought of the actions of the government. Now, as one of my colleagues said earlier, there were over 1,000 people arrested during the G20. A hundred and some were actually charged, and I think a lot of those charges were subsequently dropped, probably as a result of the fact that everyone realized that what we were doing here was not the action that was necessary, given the circumstances.

Mr. Marin's executive summary item number 1:

"Regulation 233/10, passed to enhance security during the G20 summit, should never have been enacted. It was likely unconstitutional. The effect of regulation 233/10, now expired, was to infringe on freedom of expression in ways that do not seem justifiable in a free and democratic society. Specifically, the passage of the regulation triggered the extravagant police authority found in the Public Works Protection Act, including the power to arbitrarily arrest and detain people and to engage in unreasonable searches and seizures. Even apart from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the legality of Regulation 233/10 is doubtful. The Public Works Protection Act under which it was proclaimed authorizes regulations to be created to protect infrastructure, not to provide security to people during events. Regulation 233/10 was therefore probably invalid for having exceeded the authority of the enactment under which it was passed. These problems should have been apparent, and given the tremendous power Regulation 233/10 conferred on the police, sober and considered reflection should have been given to whether it was appropriate to arm officers with such authority. This was not done. The decision of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services to sponsor the regulation was unreasonable."

That is executive summary item number 1.

Do you think, if this chamber of 107 members would have had a chance to discuss what we were going to do for the G20, that we may have realized that this was overkill, that it was inappropriate? It was not the right piece of legislation.

What we're doing here today with the new bill, which is about protecting infrastructure and protecting security around courts—that's what we should be doing. We understand that. But I don't think it would be fair to the police, whose reputation suffered a great deal as a result of this—the police in Toronto; the police from across the country who came to support, because of the numbers that were required—and it wouldn't be fair to the over 1,000 people who were arrested if we don't also remember that the government of the day used their legislative powers unnecessarily to confer unnecessary powers to the police, powers that subsequently, it shows, were not clearly understood by the police as to how they could actually use them with respect to the circumstances that we were engaged in with the G20. As I say, it's déjà vu all over again. We're back here, when we should be moving beyond that.

But again, in August, when the proverbial stuff, as they say, was hitting the fan—in August 2010, a cabinet shuffle. You know what cabinet shuffles are, Speaker. When it's getting a little hot, when the fox is getting close to the chicken house, all of a sudden you get a cabinet shuffle. And they said, "Ay yi yi. We've got to do something with Bartolucci. We've got to get him out of community safety." So, on August 18, 2010, a cabinet shuffle. The minister who was there for the bill—but I don't specifically fault Rick Bartolucci. This was a cabinet—coming right from the top. He was part of it, but so were other members of the cabinet. Anyway, he was unceremoniously shoistered out of cabinet—not out of cabinet, but to a different ministry, so that—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: How do you spell "shoister"?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't know.

I think Jim Bradley then became the Minister of Community Safety. I might be wrong on that. I'd have to go back and check my notes.

But of course, they'd bring in a seasoned guy like Bradley, who would be able to deflect criticism quite well, and, of course, "Well, I didn't—who? Me?"

Mr. Robert Bailey: "It wasn't me."

Mr. John Yakabuski: "It wasn't me." The fingers go; they're pointing out there at somebody, but "It wasn't me."

Listen, Dalton McGuinty was a master at this, a master at changing the channel by having a cabinet minister shuffled out and a cabinet minister shuffled in. He was a master at trying to get the heat off of—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Himself.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, himself, yes, but also other members of the cabinet that he thought might be underperforming. So he would move them quickly out of that portfolio.

So then, when everything was really going bad, when this conference was over, when this G20 was over, and we were starting to find out about what really went on—July 9; that's my son Lucas's birthday—from July 9 to 26, when all of it was hitting the papers really, really hot and heavy, where was the Premier of the day? On vacation. He took that opportunity, when he should have been

answering questions, to hole up, disappear. We don't know where he went; we don't know what he did. We know what he didn't do. He didn't come to Queen's Park and answer the questions that he should have been answering.

1710

At that cabinet meeting, the whole cabinet was at the table for the passing of the regulation, Speaker.

Also there at the time were the member for Peterborough, now the Minister of Rural Affairs; the member for Ottawa Centre, now the Minister of Labour; the member for Ottawa–Orléans; the member for Mississauga–Streetsville—when he's not visiting the moon; the member for Willowdale, who is now also in cabinet; the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, who is no longer in the Legislature; the member for Ajax–Pickering, who is no longer in the Legislature; and the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, who is no longer in the Legislature. Those were seats that the members lost, or they didn't run again. I've got to ask: Why didn't one of them speak up? They weren't in cabinet. Their lives were still spent a lot in their constituencies and living with the real people. Why didn't they speak up? Why didn't they ask themselves, "Am I just going to be quiet and do what the corner office always tells us to do—all those well-educated folks in the corner office who know more than everybody? Are we just going to let them run the show again, or are we going to ask ourselves, what's the right thing to do for the people of Ontario?"

As I said, security is an important consideration. It was an important consideration then, and it's an important consideration now. In fact, I know my colleague from Barrie has raised the concern about security for the Pan Am Games, which are only two years away—well, sometime in 2015. I'm not sure of the exact date. We're getting closer to these Pan Am Games that are going to be here, and I think they've got a total budget to run the games of a few hundred million, and it doesn't appear that they've taken into proper consideration the security for them whatsoever.

The G20 summit—and, hey, I have to ask, goodness gracious, do these things have to be that expensive? Between the G20 in Toronto and the G8 at Huntsville, the bill was about \$858 million—\$858 million. You have to ask yourself, with all of that money that was being spent, you'd think they could have planned the security in a little more commensurate way, commensurate with the threat that actually existed here at the time.

My colleague talks about this scandal—and I call it a scandal because it was so wrong—this scandal to enact regulation 233/10. It followed, in this government, the scandals at eHealth, where we're talking \$1 billion, and the scandal at Ornge, where we really don't know how much it's going to cost, but I think it's a fair bet that it's in the hundreds of millions of dollars—money that was inappropriately spent or money that was used to enrich people who were given the authority by this government to do just that. The issue there was proper oversight. And now we've followed it with another scandal in Missis-

sauga and Oakville, the cancellation of these gas plants, and the figure of \$858 million—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Might be low.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —could be low. So it could have cost—can you imagine that? You know, we're talking a billion dollars. What good could we do in this world, in this province, with a billion dollars?

It just seems that every day there's a new reason why this government has, quite frankly, lived beyond its best-before date, and it just seems that the arrogance and the belief that they have a divine right to government becomes more and more entrenched, because, you see, we have the Premier, and this is the kind of—I know I'm not speaking directly to the bill, but I am speaking around the bill. I'm on the kernel of wheat but I'm not right down to the wheat germ there, you know.

So it's the attitude. The attitude that existed then, when they passed this regulation that circumvented the charter, that was likely unconstitutional—that attitude still exists. It's still there, and that's the problem with this government. It's the attitude that with their self-belief that they have a divine right to govern, they don't think they can do wrong. They don't see eHealth as being wrong. They don't see the fiasco at Ornge as being wrong. They don't see what they've done with the power plants as being wrong. They don't see the massive unemployment, particularly in the manufacturing sector, due to their energy policies as being wrong.

They continue to feed off themselves, thinking, "As long as we believe we're right, we're right." Now, isn't that a scary thing, Speaker? "As long as we believe we're right, we're right." That's the attitude—

Ms. Catherine Fife: That's wrong.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's wrong. Yes, thank you very much. The member for Kitchener–Waterloo says, "That's wrong," and she's right. There's always a wrong and a right. But when you start to believe that whatever you decide is right, that you are not subject to the views of others, that you are not subject to ethics, you are not subject to rules, you are not subject to the responsibility of responsive government, then you've crossed the line and it gets very dangerous. It gets very dangerous because then you start to believe that you ride above democracy, that you actually ride above democracy. That's the kind of attitude, and I hear that every day throughout the province, that this government doesn't really act like it feels it is answerable to the people.

That is the very basis of our system, the very basis of democracy. The people rule. We are only granted the honour of standing here, sitting here, on their behalf, but the rule of the people should always be supreme, and I'm very concerned with what I'm seeing in this government on a daily basis. There just seems to be this attitude that we rise above the people. No one rises above the people—no government, no government agency.

I want to go back to the report, Mr. Speaker. A couple of other things that Mr. Marin said—I'm going to skip to number 9 because I don't think I'm going to have enough time here. Is there any way of getting more?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Let's have a motion for another hour.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So we go to number 9 of Mr. Marin's report. It talks about the history. I guess I've covered some of that. It talks about the creation of the Public Works Protection Act as a war measure.

1720

So the only way to understand why the Legislature of Ontario would create a statute conferring police powers of this kind is to hearken to history. The Public Works Protection Act is a war measure. It was enacted in 1939 during an emergency session of the Legislature in the days that followed the declaration of war against Germany, to deal with the threat posed by saboteurs against Ontario's infrastructure.

Guards and police officers were given the kind of authority one might expect in a time of war or emergency circumstance, the kind of authority that stretches, if not transgresses, constitutional rights. Yet here, in 2010, with the province of Ontario, conferring wartime powers on police officers in peacetime? That is a decision that should not have been taken lightly, particularly not in the era of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

By its very nature and design, the Public Works Protection Act, because of the severity of the situation and because of the gravity of the times, was designed to give the kinds of powers that would actually transgress people's rights, because drastic times call for drastic measures.

Having the G20 in Toronto was not World War II. It was the visitation of leaders from across the world to join here to meet to discuss like problems around the world, potential international solutions to problems that exist around the world, to deal with specific issues in certain parts of the world and to deal with the economic challenges etc. It's an ongoing dialogue between world leaders, but it wasn't World War II.

Why, then, would the people on that side of the House, the people of the executive council, have enacted regulation 233/10? It was wrong. We have to do better in this place than to trample on the rights of the very people we have sworn to represent in order to advance our own agenda. That's wrong. That's what happened here. The government of the day trampled on the rights of the very people they had sworn to represent, particularly when they took those oaths of cabinet. They trampled on those rights in order to advance their own agenda. They've done that repeatedly here. I'm becoming very concerned.

I only have a couple of minutes left.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Let's have a motion for another hour.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's no moon shot.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No. So I do want to talk about the fact that we are going to support the legislation. We are going to support the legislation. It's overdue. We should have done it.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What's that?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Could we have first, second and third reading at the same time?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't think we're going to do that. The minister wants us to plow this through. My goodness gracious, we'd be guilty then of doing exactly what they did at the cabinet table. We're going to have a healthy debate on this bill. I'm going to say straight out that I'm going to commend the minister and the member for Scarborough–Agincourt. Is she still the parliamentary assistant?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: No, unfortunately.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No. But she was the parliamentary assistant, and she did a good job on it. We incorporated many of the changes that were asked for. The bill is supported by both parties—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'm glad you two are having a lovely discussion. I'd like to be part of it. Thanks very much. So we will go through the Chair, won't we? Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. Unlike the people of Ontario, you will not be excluded from the discussion, as they were when the debate was going on about 233/10.

The folks at OPG, the folks who run the nuclear plants up at the Bruce, the law enforcement agencies that deal with court security—they like the bill; they like the changes in the bill. So we are going to support the bill.

But, as I said, we're going to have a healthy debate. We have many members who didn't even have the opportunity to speak to the original bill, Bill 34, so they'll have an opportunity to speak to Bill 51. I'm sure members of the third party want to speak to it as well. But at the end of the day, I think that it is absolutely, completely necessary, not only because we need updating, but—I want to make it very clear—because of the way that this government acted so callously and so wrongly, it is important for this Legislature to take away from them the power to ever do it again.

By repealing the Public Works Protection Act as it is currently written, we will, I hope—but I never know what scheme they could be coming up with behind closed doors—we hope that we will have taken away from them the power to enact this legislation in the way that they did in 2010, because we know the temptation will be there. We know they'll be tempted to trample on people's rights. That will happen again. It's their nature; it's the way they are. But if we take away that weapon by repealing the Public Works Protection Act, I'm hopeful that, at the end of the day, we'll have a good, strong bill to protect our courts; a good, strong bill to protect our nuclear facilities; and the repeal of the Public Works Protection Act to protect us from the Liberal government. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure, actually, to follow some of the comments made by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He rightly points out that at the time when this original bill was debated, I was on

the outside of Queen's Park, and I can tell you that the concern from the general population in this province with how the security measures were brought in to deal with the G20 in Toronto—there were huge amounts of alarm by the people of this province.

Fundamentally, people recognized that it was wrong, that there had been abuse of power. A lot of people actually also felt that the G20 should never have been in Toronto. Some of my good friends actually thought that we should have held it up on perhaps a reservation in northern Ontario and showed the rest of the world how some First Nations, Métis, Inuit people live in this province and in this country. I'm sure that they would have welcomed the \$850 million in infrastructure projects, like bunny trails and gazebos. But I think they would have preferred to invest it in clean water and affordable housing and roads and sewage systems.

That said, of course we're going to support the repealing of the Public Works Protection Act because we can never open that door again to that abuse of power, and we, on this side of the House, have grave concerns about how the government went about bringing in those security measures.

I think it's also important to recognize that we've never heard an apology to the people who were quite honestly—whose rights were trampled on. We did not recognize our own city during those days. The not apologizing certainly seems to be a trend that we're seeing. Let's get this passed. Let's make sure that that abuse of power never happens again.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I was here for all of the members' speeches this afternoon. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—I just want to touch on the first part of the speech, what I thought was very important to me, personally, when he talked about his father. His father was a member of one of the most storied regiments of the Second World War: the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders that were headquartered in Cornwall, Ontario. If you read Ted Barris's book, *Canadians at Normandy*, you get a chance—I recommend the book because it talks about the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders at length as they moved from the beaches of Juno through to Cannes; and of course one of the decisive battles was the closing of the Falaise gap, which essentially trapped the German army in Normandy. It was the Canadian Army and one of the most storied regiments—the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders—that played a pivotal role during the early days of the Normandy campaign.

1730

When he talked about that, it drove home what I find, of course, is that great history of the greatest generation. We out of Peterborough had several members from the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. One of them is still surviving, a guy by the name of Joe Sullivan, who resides now at Fairhaven long-term-care home in Peterborough.

To understand what those gentlemen did during those early days—you know, Mr. Speaker, you and I and everybody, all the 107 members here today, are here because of the exploits of that greatest generation that allowed us to serve.

Mr. Speaker, the first part of the speech I think is something that you and I and all of us need to talk about more frequently, because we're here because of them.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, this is straightforward legislation that addresses the conclusions raised in the Ombudsman's report following the recommendations of the McMurtry report. It's unfortunate that the Liberal government has wasted so much time with prorogation when this important bill could have been passed last year.

The outdated Public Works Protection Act included wartime powers for the protection of public works, but relied too much on the discretion of the minister, and we saw where that got us when the member from Sudbury was the minister, before he was stripped of that ministry. The former Minister of Public Safety and Correctional Services and the McGuinty cabinet used that discretion to secretly introduce special powers for police and fostered the widespread confusion that followed by abdicating any responsibility to clarify what the law said. This legislation removes the minister's discretion to grant special powers of arrest, but it does not address the lack of sound judgment and finger-pointing demonstrated during the G20 by the McGuinty cabinet.

This bill is being reintroduced after dying on the order paper in the third reading, with all-party support I might add, when the former Premier prorogued Parliament. And that, too, Speaker, was a very sad occasion in the history of this Parliament when, just as the Liberal government was about to be held to account for the gas plant scandal, the former Premier and several of the former cabinet ministers, including the finance minister and the Minister of Energy, left this Parliament, and many of these important bills died on the order paper.

So, while I support this bill, I also want to remind the Legislature why we're here debating it yet again.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I think it's important that we all take a moment and really realize what we're discussing here and the importance of having these discussions in regard to what happened back in 2010. I wasn't here at the Legislature yet. I was watching in horror what was happening. I couldn't believe that this was happening in my own backyard, in my own province, just a six-hour drive from the front steps of my home.

When you look at this, you're talking about the largest mass arrest in Canadian history, where 1,100-plus individuals were assembled and basically stripped of whatever rights they had, just trampled and put into the backs of these vehicles; everything was taken away from them.

That is something that we need to discuss. That's the basic denial of your democratic rights. That's the basic

denial of what we have fought so long for, and it's basically what identifies us as Canadians, as having that freedom to express ourselves when we believe that wrong is being done to us. Now, for an instant, just for a fraction of an instant, if this particular law was—and I hate to say it—indeed appropriate, do you not think that that information somehow would have been trickled to the individuals that were coming out so that they know their appropriate actions and they know that if A happens, B is going to be the result? That was not done. Those essential notifications were not taken upon by this government to notify those individuals.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke really touched on something that I remember: the attitude. The attitude that was there then is the same attitude that is there now, which is why this government seems to be really disconnected with what is happening in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has two minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the Minister of Rural Affairs, the member for Nipissing and also the member for Algoma–Manitoulin for their comments. It was a long address; I'm just glad they stayed awake.

I just want to say to the Minister of Rural Affairs that the SDG Highlanders, the Glens—my father was a member of that regiment, the Glens. I got to know a few of those folks over the years in my time here as well, and it is something that I think—we'll soon lose that opportunity to speak to someone who actually experienced that, and it's going to be a tremendous loss when that happens. History can record things, and we can have archived stories of battles, but having been the generation that followed that greatest generation, we've had a wonderful opportunity and experience to live among those people to whom we can never, ever repay what they've done for us. So I thank the member for his comments on that.

Again, to reiterate, we're going to support the bill, Mr. Speaker, because it's about time. But I cannot express any more strongly how I feel about how wrong the government was to conduct itself in the way it did at the time. They may have believed that what they were doing was necessary, but they didn't take that time for sober second thought, and we have to take the measures to ensure that actions like that never happen again.

Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from—I'm sorry; the Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: “The member for Peterborough” is okay, Mr. Speaker, because I'll always be that to my constituents back home.

An opportunity to speak this afternoon on Bill 51, and it's funny: The other day, I was rereading Ted Sorensen's book called Counselor, when he was one of the advisers to President John Kennedy. In the early part of the book, Ted Sorensen has a paragraph about the Bay of Pigs,

which was the not-successful invasion of Cuba in 1961. Ted Sorensen took some advice from Edward R. Murrow, and of course Edward R. Murrow was one of the American media giants in the 1950s and 1960s. Mr. Murrow's advice to Ted Sorensen as counsellor to President Kennedy was this advice: "An error does not become a mistake until you've refused to correct it." Then Mr. Sorensen, in his advice to the President—of course, President Kennedy went on television and admitted his error at the Bay of Pigs and took full responsibility for that.

Mr. Speaker, I see Bill 51 in that kind of context, so let's look at the historical perspective for a moment. In 1939, the Germans were conquering most of Europe. There were two legislative acts that were brought in in Canada. Here in Ontario, it was the Public Works Protection Act, brought in to provide the authority to protect utilities and other key pieces of infrastructure because of the potential of Nazi saboteurs coming across the Great Lakes to here in Ontario, because, of course, we know that the Americans didn't enter the Second World War until after November 7, 1941, with Pearl Harbor.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: December.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In Ottawa, of course, the government of the day, Mackenzie King, at the advent of the war breaking out—Canada, I think, declared war on September 10, 1939, and Great Britain on September 1, within those days—the federal Parliament brought in the War Measures Act, which would provide special powers in order to secure installations right across Canada in the event, again, of espionage and saboteurs.

We'll fast-forward to October 1970, which was the October Crisis in the province of Quebec. Pierre Elliott Trudeau is Prime Minister, and he invokes the War Measures Act to give police forces, primarily in Quebec but indeed right across Canada, special powers because of the kidnapping of James Cross, who was consul general for Great Britain in Montreal. We know of the tragic murder of Pierre Laporte, who was Minister of Labour in the provincial government of then-Premier Robert Bourassa.

An interesting side note, Mr. Speaker, is that my late mother was then a nursing supervisor at St. Joseph's Hospital in Peterborough. Lakefield College is just to the north of Peterborough. Often, members of the European royal families would send their sons and daughters to Lakefield College School. Prince Andrew of the current royal family in Great Britain, the House of Windsor, actually went to Lakefield College School. But to tell this story, there was a member of the Spanish royal family who had an attack of appendicitis. That individual was brought to St. Joseph's Hospital in Peterborough. My mom was the night supervisor. At that particular time, that individual from the Spanish royal family—it was during the October Crisis—actually was protected by two RCMP officers through the War Measures Act, because they thought that, after the kidnapping of James Cross, there was the potential that members of European royal

families might be the target. So here is this individual, a prince, who came to Peterborough and had security guards from the RCMP because it was at the height of the October Crisis at that particular time.

We then fast-forward to 12 years later. The gentleman that brought in the War Measures Act in October 1970, Prime Minister Trudeau—we just celebrated, the other day, the 31st anniversary of the patriation of the Constitution and indeed the bringing to Canada of what we're also very proud of, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. So it's interesting that the Prime Minister who brought in the War Measures Act—special powers—some 12 years later brings in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms through that particular process.

Subsequently, through a number of governments in Ottawa, they brought in a new piece of legislation that fit the times in order to prevent terrorist activity here in Canada. Bill 51 is part and parcel of that; no question. At that particular time, we had world leaders through the G8 and G20, and we were encumbered with the responsibility of providing security for those world leaders that attended the G8 and the G20. We took that security challenge as a very important thing to do, to make sure that we provided the necessary security. Thank God, nothing happened, but if something did happen, there would have been fundamental questions of whether we had taken the appropriate action to provide security for those people who were here in Toronto.

I think some of the people in the third party have raised a very legitimate question: Was having a G20 summit in the heart of Canada's financial district in downtown Toronto the wisest course of action at that particular time? Some have suggested that it should have been held out at Downsview, which would have been a more isolated area, an area where providing security would have had fewer challenges. But of course we all recognize in this House that hindsight is always 20/20.

I think you really have to take some time to really think about the assessment of the security risk. I remember, during my time as a city councillor in Peterborough—I had the privilege of serving from 1985 to 2003. Once or twice a year, of course, the Peterborough Lakefield police would come to city council and they would provide us with an intelligence update in terms of what potential security threats are out there. I think you really get an appreciation when those very brave men and women, who put on the uniform each and every day to provide police services to protect us—so you get the sense, when you go through those briefings, of the kinds of challenges that may be faced at a city level, a municipal level. Of course, we know the security risks that a G8 or G20 can bring to a community.

But one of the things in the context of the discussion this afternoon about Bill 51, as I mentioned earlier in one of my two-minute responses, is that this past week police forces in Canada, in Ontario, through superb intelligence, were able to thwart a potential terrorist attack. There was going to be perhaps a bombing—I think the intent was very clear—of a Via Rail train, which, of course, we all

thank God it didn't happen, but there could have been significant deaths and injuries, and it would have brought about some challenges and the loss of economic activity and other day-to-day activities. So we want to thank those men and women that were involved over the last probably number of weeks, months and perhaps years, that were tracking these individuals. That gets to the heart of why we certainly need Bill 51 in terms of providing the appropriate legislative framework in terms of security here in Ontario.

I always get the opportunity to correct my record, and indeed the Americans came into the war on December 7, 1941, which was the invasion and the attack on Pearl Harbor, and as FDR said so eloquently, a day of infamy that would be forever recorded in the annals of American history.

I do get questions from time to time—Darlington is about 45 to 50 kilometres south of Peterborough—in terms of the security around that particular nuclear generation facility. Of course, in Peterborough we are the headquarters for the GE Hitachi nuclear division, which on its own accord has a level of security in terms of people that are entering that particular plant on Monaghan Road each and every day. There's a companion operation in Arnprior, Ontario, that actually does the pellets that find themselves into the fuel bundles that ultimately end up in both Darlington and Pickering, and indeed Bruce.

We are, over the last little while—this bill, in its previous version, of course went to committee. There was the standing committee that did a clause-by-clause review of then-Bill 34, which is Bill 51 now. There were a lot of amendments that were made in order to strengthen this particular bill. We wanted to look at protection of our courts, protection of our nuclear facilities, of course—very, very important. Ontario, the province of Quebec and the province of New Brunswick are the three provinces in Canada that have nuclear facilities, and we are very concerned to bring about the appropriate protections for these facilities in Ontario. Of course, all three of them are surrounded by—Darlington and of course Pickering are within the GTA, and Bruce is up in the beautiful area of Huron—Bruce, which I learned this week is the lovely west coast of the province of Ontario. The member from Huron—Bruce was very kind and very gracious to point that out during my wonderful visit to Wingham, Ontario, last Monday.

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So what happened at committee, through the good work of the opposition and indeed the third party, to make sure that this bill, the latest version of Bill 51, would be consistent with what we know in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, which are very, very important? When you look at those two things, the Charter of Rights and Freedom, like medicare, of course helped to define what being a Canadian is all about today, and the Ontario Human Rights Code—very important. I think it was originally brought in—somebody will correct the record—by former Pre-

mier John Robarts, and then of course enhanced under Premier Bill Davis.

I think it's important that we get rid of and repeal an act that came about in 1939 under circumstances that today are much different. So, by working together in this Legislature, we have now put together Bill 51. Bill 51 will be sent to committee again, so there will be a second opportunity to look at some additional amendments to make this bill even stronger—a product of the good work on all sides of this Legislature.

I just have a few more points to make. Bill 51—after the great work from people on all sides, we now have a new, broad definition of a “public work,” which includes railways and other transportation infrastructure, public buildings, electricity generating facilities and the ability to designate additional works as public works, if need be; the ability to appoint guards with powers of a peace officer for the purpose of protecting a public work; additional powers for guards and peace officers to demand identification, conduct warrantless searches and refuse permission to enter a public work; and for the use of force to exclude a person from a public work etc.

These changes were brought about through the good work of the Ombudsman in the province of Ontario, the Honourable André Marin, and of course the work of a former Chief Justice of the province of Ontario, the Honourable Roy McMurtry, who I think we recognize now has been a leader not only as an MPP in this Legislature but as a former Attorney General in the province of Ontario, and has been called upon from time to time over the last number of years to provide insight and advice on a number of issues. Of course we asked His Honour Roy McMurtry to do a bit of review of the Public Works Protection Act. His recommendations and indeed the recommendations from the Ombudsman found their way into Bill 34 and subsequently into the new version of Bill 34, which is Bill 51.

As I said, when we conclude debate from all sides of the House, this bill will make its way to committee. There will be the opportunity to make some additional amendments and bring this bill back to the House for third reading and then finally royal assent. I think there is indeed a consensus that we want to get this bill passed and allow all individuals across the province of Ontario to see the increased accountability and transparency that Bill 51 has to offer.

When you look at section 2 of this bill and its amendments to the Police Services Act, this will fundamentally help, as I said previously, those brave men and women who put on the uniform each and every day, and through schedule 2, sections (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e), provides great clarity for those brave men and women doing their job each and every day. That's what they're asking of us. Police officers ask us to provide clarity for the job that they do each and every day.

Part (a) talks about “requiring a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted, or who is on such premises, to identify himself or herself and to provide information related to

assessing whether the person poses a security risk”—a very reasonable proposition.

Part (b): “searching a person who is entering or attempting to enter premises where court proceedings are conducted, or who is on such premises, as well as the vehicle in which the person is driving and any property in the person’s custody or care”—again, a very reasonable section.

Part (c): “searching, using reasonable force if necessary, a person in custody who is on premises where court proceedings are conducted or is being transported to or from such premises and any property in the person’s custody or care”—again, a very reasonable proposition.

I think when this gets third reading and royal assent after, again, it has been looked at by committee—and of course, committee work is so very important in a minority government, to have all sides call upon some expert witnesses to come forward, to make sure at the end of the day that we got this right. Getting this right is so important, providing clarity for police forces across the province of Ontario: the OPP, the RCMP detachments that are located here in Ontario, and indeed all of our municipal police forces that all of us here in the Legislature develop great working relationships with. We work with them each and every day, and the tremendous contributions that they make in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I’m very proud to have this opportunity to make a few comments this afternoon.

Indeed, I think one of the members opposite talked about the security challenges of the Pan Am/Parapan games, which we are so happy to be hosting in Ontario in 2015. That will be a challenge. Let’s be frank. It will be a challenge for our police forces to make sure that there’s going to be adequate security at that event and to make sure that all of the world that will be coming to Ontario gets to enjoy the Pan Am Games.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. Let’s get Bill 51 passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 6 o’clock, this debate will pick up where it left off.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House now be adjourned is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the Premier will have five minutes to reply.

Member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Yesterday, I asked the Premier a very important question. I asked her what steps this province is willing to take to ensure that First Nation communities no longer have to declare states of emergency to ensure they receive essential services that every other community in this province takes for granted.

I would like to start off by saying that I believe we have common ground in agreeing that the situation in Ontario’s Far North is not acceptable. While this debate was sparked by a declaration of emergency in Neskantaga First Nation, I believe it’s fair to say that, in reality, all communities in the Far North face very similar positions.

Last year, it was Attawapiskat who declared a state of emergency as a result of a housing crisis, a crisis that exists across the entire Far North. At the same time, children in Cat Lake wrote open letters to their family members asking them to end the cycle of dependency and drug use that exists in their community. First Nation communities across the Far North are reporting addiction rates of 50% to 85%. This is an epidemic.

In 2011, it was Pikangikum who declared a state of emergency, as a result of a lack of safe drinking water in their community.

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In 2010, Fort Hope asked the government for assistance with their prescription drug abuse.

In 2009, it was Payukotayno First Nation seeking support for a suicide crisis of their own.

There are many more. Despite the alarming similarities, each state of emergency has been treated as a singular crisis, but I know—as the former Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, the Premier, knows—that this is not the case.

This is not a partisan issue. This is an issue of respect, fairness and human decency. We all know that a large part of the blame lies with the federal government. I recognize and I understand that. But, that said, I believe that we as legislators in the province of Ontario need to look at what is occurring within our borders and say that we will not accept these conditions regardless of jurisdiction.

I cannot look at the conditions that exist in these communities and condone a jurisdictional fight, because that’s how nothing gets done. While the province and the federal government fight over who is responsible, the residents become victims of neglect and indifference.

Yesterday the Premier stated that the problem is complex, and I will admit that the cause of the current suicide crisis in Neskantaga is multifaceted. This includes a high rate of prescription drug abuse, sexual abuse, lack of access to clean drinking water, inadequate policing, no access to mental health and addictions counselling, and more.

Last year I read in this House letters from children in another First Nation community outlining the sense of despair and hopelessness they felt because of the lack of proper educational facilities in their community. That sense of hopelessness changed when those same children found out they had been approved for a new school—

from despair to joy, simply by being told that their basic needs would be met. That's what I'm seeking from the province.

In Ontario, we need a strategy regardless of what the federal government does or does not do. People living in our province's Far North are citizens of Ontario, and the province needs to step up to ensure that these citizens have their most basic needs met. We can fight about who picks up the tab later.

We need to close the gap between First Nations and non-First Nations education funding; even Don Drummond recognized that.

We need to ensure that First Nations in the Far North have adequate housing. Nobody should be forced to live in an overcrowded shack with tarps instead of doors in a climate where temperatures frequently plummet as low as minus 50 for half of the year.

Communities need support for community policing initiatives.

They need proper access to health care and addiction services that do not currently exist.

Communities need access to infrastructure funding that will allow them to connect to the hydro grid, which will allow them to build housing and other facilities such as community centres that will improve the quality of life for the people who are living there.

People living in these communities also need access to clean and reliable drinking water, sewage and water treatment plants, and a strategy that will help them clean up contaminated sites left behind by mining companies.

I am under no illusions that these changes can happen overnight. Premier, what I'm looking to you for and your government for is a firm commitment to improve the lives of all citizens of Ontario, including the people living in First Nation communities. I want your personal commitment that this government will take immediate steps to treat First Nations people in a manner that is consistent with all other citizens of this province and to address these very serious issues in First Nation communities so we can prevent the declaration of future states of emergency. That is what I'm asking you to do, and I believe it is not an unfair request.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Premier, five minutes.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to commend the member for Kenora-Rainy River for her advocacy on this file because it's so important. It's important to the people of Ontario. It's important to the people in her riding. I think she knows that this is a very high priority for me. She and I have been in communities together. She knows that I have travelled the north in my capacity as Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, but in my capacity as Minister of Education, and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Minister of Transportation I have travelled to many of the communities in the north, many of the communities that she mentioned—Pikangikum; I've been to Webequie; I've been to Grassy Narrows, Wabigoon

and Attawapiskat, and I'm very aware of the complex needs of many of the communities in the north.

I want to talk to the specifics of Neskantaga for a moment and then I want to talk generally about our commitment. Before I begin to do that, I want to express my heartfelt condolences to the Neskantaga First Nation as they deal with the recent deaths of two young members of their community. No community in Ontario should have to deal with those high rates of suicide. There's no explanation for that. This is something that we have to address.

Both the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Minister Zimmer, and I have spoken with Chief Peter Moonias about ways that we can support the community going forward. Through our social emergency protocol and daily meetings of inter-ministerial and intergovernmental teams, we've responded quickly and we've taken decisive actions to support Neskantaga First Nation.

On April 19, Minister Zimmer informed Chief Moonias that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services will provide funding to Nodin Child and Family Intervention Services, which is a community mental health agency, to support Neskantaga First Nation with a mental health trauma team that will work with the community and its elders to provide support. What Chief Moonias said to me when I spoke to him is that they need people on the ground to actually interact with members of the community in an ongoing way, not flying in for a short period of time but actually being rooted in the community and dealing with issues and getting to know the people so that there is a relationship.

We've also committed to work with Neskantaga First Nation, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Health Canada, and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to support an emergency coordinator to coordinate crisis response activities for the next few months in the community. Again, I will just say that over my time in my previous ministries, I learned that often it was coordination of programs—because there are inter-jurisdictional issues, and so that coordination is very important.

So we continue to monitor this crisis, coordinating efforts across provincial ministries, working with the federal departments and the First Nation to explore other ways that we can provide support and assistance.

I want to get to the root of the member opposite's question, which is, what can we do to prevent emergencies like this from happening in other places? Whether it's First Nations education, First Nations health care or on-reserve infrastructure, I'm committed to working with my colleagues, with the federal government and our First Nation partners to make sure that we address these issues. That's why we work closely with First Nations and aboriginal agencies to support prevention and treatment programs that focus on First Nation youth.

I'm very concerned about the high level of youth suicide in these communities. We believe the best way to help reduce the high rate of suicide among First Nation youth is to adopt culturally appropriate prevention and

intervention services in Ontario's First Nation communities. The conditions that lead to this kind of despair need to be addressed, and our government takes that responsibility extremely seriously.

I know that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services is working closely with First Nations communities across Ontario to find meaningful ways of addressing this serious problem. Ontario's Child and Youth Mental Health and Addiction Strategy provides services and supports for vulnerable children and youth, including those from First Nations communities. In 2012, in fact, children and youth services hired 80 new aboriginal mental health and addiction workers in high-needs communities, which are expected to provide additional direct, culturally appropriate support to 4,000 more aboriginal children and youth each year.

Our comprehensive Child and Youth Mental Health and Addiction Strategy will also implement an aboriginal mental health worker training program to increase the supply of trained mental health workers in aboriginal

communities. It will expand and enhance tele-mental health services to provide specialized expertise to serve children in rural, remote and under-serviced communities.

As we move forward on these issues, we're going to need to continue to work with our partners: the federal government, the provincial government, First Nations communities.

Because of the member opposite's advocacy, I know we'll be able to continue to work on this issue. She knows how complex it is. She has a relationship with the communities, as we do. It's only by working together and not letting wedges be driven between us that we're going to be able to resolve the problems that are so acute in these communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.
The House adjourned at 1809.

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McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement 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	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Dipika Damerla, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day (pro tem.)

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
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Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Gilles Bisson
Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
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Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
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