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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Monday 27 May 2013**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Lundi 27 mai 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 27 May 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 27 mai 2013

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise and welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park. In the members' gallery are Don Taylor, Bryan Van Geest and Jordan Kniaziew; as well as Rej Picard, the outgoing chair, who has done an outstanding job for the sector; and Jan VanderHout, the new chair, who we look forward to working with. I hope all members will join them after question period in room 228 for a great greenhouse-grown vegetable.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know everyone will want to join in welcoming the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park today: Dan Darling, the president; Dave Stewart, executive director; and Joe Hill, one of the directors. I know that we'll be joining them on the lawn at Queen's Park for the barbecue.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like everyone to welcome a young lady who's shadowing me today, Burgundy Weber, from the Orillia area. She's in the audience here in the members' gallery.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I'm happy to rise in my place today and recognize that in the east public gallery there are, I believe, four classes of grade 10 civics students from St. Joan of Arc high school in Maple in my riding. I'm happy that they're here today and happy I had the chance to meet them one the main staircase just a few minutes ago. I hope they thoroughly enjoy question period.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's a pleasure today to welcome Steve Eby to Queen's Park. Steve is a wonderful ambassador for the cattlemen's association and he's a proud cattleman from Bruce county.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to introduce Jessica del Rosso, who's shadowing me today. Jessica is a strong mentor for youth in care in Kitchener-Waterloo at our Family and Children's Services. This is her first time to Queen's Park, today.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Mrs. Sakineh and Mr. Ali Reza Mobasser, sitting in the east gallery.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to introduce Bill Herron, also from the Beef Farmers of Ontario, a long-time advocate for the beef industry.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of my New Democratic colleagues, I'd also like to welcome the cattlemen, soon to be the Beef Farmers of Ontario. I'd especially like to welcome Matt Bowman; I'm sure he'd rather be seeding today.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Please welcome to the Legislative Assembly Louis and Teresa Marie Sapi, the managing partner at HS & Partners chartered accountants. They're here, having support of Windfall Basics, a fantastic charity. Thank you for being here as part of your foundation, the Charger Foundation.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm proud to introduce a few guests today, Kim Nesbitt and Adam Nesbitt from Burlington; and also from my riding, Pauline Jell and her husband, Geoffrey Jell, who is a World War II veteran and celebrating his 91st birthday today. Welcome.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'd like to welcome the mother of my page from Burlington, Eric Orosz: Heather Weaver-Orosz. She's here this morning in the public gallery.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise to also welcome the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park and to recognize all those who are in the gallery, including President Dan Darling, Dave Stewart, the executive director, and Joe Hill. We were pleased to meet with them this morning, and I hope members will take time to speak to them at lunchtime and enjoy great Ontario corn-fed beef.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's my pleasure today to introduce the mother of our page Hannah Lacey from Sarnia-Lambton. Her mother, Birgit Lacey, is in the gallery with her grandparents John and Diane Lacey from Ajax, Ontario. We welcome them this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introductions? The first one is Dundas—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Yes, thank you.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Speaker. I have the pleasure to introduce Arden Schneckeburger from Morrisburg, a director of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the member from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh.

The member from Wellington-Halton Hills for an introduction.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'd like to introduce representatives from the Ontario Cattlemen's Association who are here today: Dave Stewart, Joe Hill and Dan Darling.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to welcome one of the directors of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to

Queen's Park today, Mr. Tom Wilson, from the riding of Sarnia-Lambton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of the member from York South-Weston: Page Jessica Pontarollo's mother, Julie, is here. She will be here this morning and this afternoon, and we welcome her on behalf of the member.

Also, on behalf of the member from Oak Ridges-Markham: Page Alex Hu's mother, Feng Shao, will be here this morning, and we welcome her on behalf of the member.

We have in the Speaker's gallery today, a delegation of Japanese educators from northern Japan, led by Mr. Shizuhiro Shibata. We welcome you and thank you for being here today.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Good morning, everyone. My question is for the Premier. You're not an elected Premier. You hold office because about 1,000 Liberal partisans voted for you. But you use that office to hold Ontarians hostage by buying union peace with one-off deals. Now—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. Order. I actually hear it coming from both sides, so we could bring it down, please, so the question can be put.

Member?

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Recently the LCBO and OPSEU's liquor board employee division reached an accord averting a strike right before the May long weekend. The LCBO had empty shelves and lineups out the door while racking up sales that topped \$28 million that day. The whole thing was a scare tactic used to boost revenues and manipulate your government because OPSEU knows your track record.

OPSEU's ratification vote is set for June 3, but a copy of the collective agreement's highlights is posted on their website. It says the four-year deal includes a so-called wage freeze. But Premier, it's smoke and mirrors because there are signing bonuses of \$9 million. Now, Premier, how can you call it a wage freeze while handing out \$9 million in signing bonuses?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I would just say that in terms of my status as an elected member and as the Premier, the people of Don Valley West certainly did elect me and it seems to me that there was a convention and that the party elected me, so I hold this position with pride and I'm doing everything in my power to work for the people of Ontario.

On the issues of the agreement with the employees at the LCBO, I'm not going to speak to the specifics; I understand that the ratification vote is going to happen. But we have worked very hard to make sure that all of

the settlements fall within the parameters that we outlined, and that is wage constraint. My understanding is that the agreement fell within those parameters.

1040

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** You refuse to admit, Premier, that you're in over your head and that you've lost control while Ontarians continue to pay for this nonsense.

The one thing I believe you are consistent about is deflection, so I say enough is enough. You and your government have been caving to union demands on the backs of Ontario taxpayers for the last nine and a half years. Here's what you said in this House on March 4: "We've been very clear that constraining public sector wages is part of what we are doing and will continue to do. That's why we're on target. The Drummond report said that if we didn't take those measures, if we didn't work to constrain costs, then we would not be able to balance the budget." Accurate quote, Premier, and accurate answer.

Premier, you are neither constraining costs nor on target to balance the budget. We both know that. Why don't taxpayers know about the full cost of your backroom union deals? Will the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals make these deals public today?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I just have to counter what the member opposite said, in terms of our being on track to balance the budget. We've overachieved on our deficit reduction targets every single year, so we are on track to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

With regard to public sector wages, let me just talk about some negotiated agreements that are in the public realm: with the English Catholic teachers and AFO, the French teachers, we realized a total savings of \$2 billion over three years; AMAPCEO, 10,000 public service employees, 1,000 hours of bargaining, the savings there, \$24.6 million in 2012-13 and \$30.4 million in 2013-14; OMA, the Ontario Medical Association, 25,000 doctors, net savings of almost \$400 million over two years.

We are constraining wages, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're on track—

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Premier, how can you stand here in the people's House and disregard facts and even your own words? You've always put union bosses and partisan interests ahead of taxpayers. With over 50% of the Ontario budget going to government worker salaries, you cannot achieve restraint without an across-the-board wage freeze, as I proposed in Bill 5, which has passed second reading.

According to OPSEU's website, your most recent deal also includes general wage increases for 2015 and 2016 at roughly 2% per year, and in case of privatization or closure of an establishment, part-time employees would now receive \$2,000 for employee transition, which is up from \$1,000 under the previous agreement.

Who but you could call this a wage freeze? The unions know what's in the agreements. The Liberals know what's in the agreements. Why don't the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm going to speak to the nub of this question, which I think is really, "Do you want to work with organized labour or not? Do you believe that working with people who are collectively bargaining is a good idea or not?" We think it's a good idea. We think it's a good idea to honour the collective bargaining process, to work with employees of government, to make sure that we set very clear parameters and that we work within those parameters, but that we do work in that collective bargaining process in good faith, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that the member opposite does not agree with that position. The member opposite would undermine labour in the province. The member opposite does not believe—if I can say, from their behaviour, they do not believe in working with employees who are in collective bargaining situations. We do, and that's the work that we've been doing.

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** "Working with" doesn't mean caving in.

Back to the Premier: Ontarians are left shaking their heads. Ontarians expect transparency and accountability from elected officials. They aren't getting that from you or from your cronies. You put union bosses and Liberal Party interests ahead of taxpayers—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Member from Timmins—James Bay, come to order.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** —and because you cannot control any of this, an arbitrator has raised hospital costs by awarding SEIU a 4% increase over two years, while you stand here and say that you're reining in spending. Your Liberal government has created a new elite workforce in the public sector, complete with gold-plated pensions, greater job security and higher wages than the rest of Ontarians—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** —who work to pay for those salaries and will never, never receive such luxurious benefits. Your only balancing act is to say one thing and do another, Premier.

How are you going to balance the budget when you keep spending beyond our means?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I find it very curious that the member opposite is talking about wage restraint, and yet when we were there to try to resolve issues with the doctors, to resolve issues with teachers, to resolve issues with regard to generic drugs, you stood idle. We had to take some tough decisions. We moved forward on moving that bar to control our spending. As a result, our spending is below 1% year-over-year growth.

When it comes to these wages and the dealings that we had with the LCBO, I'm very proud of the negotiations that our teams did to create a wage freeze over the next

two years. What matters here are results, and the results are that we are having a zero-zero wage freeze over the next two years, and we're creating co-operation and collaboration with all stakeholders because a collective agreement, a negotiated agreement, is the right way to go.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** If you guys take a tough decision, I'll eat my hat.

Look, fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. This morning alone, you've attempted to pull the wool over Ontarians' eyes twice. You cannot sugar-coat the facts. With over 50% of the budget going to government workers' salaries, this is a serious issue that your government has demonstrated it does not know how to handle. Instead, Ontarians keep learning about wasted tax dollars through the lack of transparency and accountability evident in eHealth, Ornge and, more recently, diluted cancer treatments.

Premier, Finance Minister, how many times do we have to ask? How are you going to balance the budget when you keep spending like drunken sailors just to keep up with your unions?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The Tea Party thrives over there. They're looking to bust unions at all costs.

What we need is a collaborative effort. We need to work closely for the benefit of taxpayers. That's what's resulting in our budget, and that is what has occurred over the last couple of years. Even arbitrated deals are coming in at zero-zero. We will continue to work with all partners, we will continue to respect the collective agreements, and we will continue to work towards the benefit of the province in the end, because ultimately that's what we want.

Respectfully, we don't need to have continuing fights on constitutional debates and issues that will polarize us even further. We need to co-operate. We need to work for the benefit of all of Ontario, and we'll work with you for that matter.

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

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** If the Tea Party's thriving over here, I'm going to say that socialism is thriving over there. You constantly kowtow to the unions. You just caved in to multiple NDP demands that will cost \$1 billion-plus annually. Finance Minister, your track record speaks for itself. You only know how to put party politics ahead of taxpayers' interests, and you're wrapped around far too many fingers. It's that simple.

The cost of doing business in backroom deals with the Liberal Party at the expense of taxpayers has been detrimental to Ontario's economy. With all of these backroom deals, now Ontario is facing the highest debt in history, and the finance minister knows it. Ontario taxpayers cannot continue to foot the bill for your party's political games and for your pandering. When will you and your party finally admit that you're in over your heads and you don't actually have a way out?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to say that our track record does speak for itself. That is

why we have a deficit that's \$5 billion lower than originally projected. That's why, next year, our projected deficit is another billion dollars down, and we will continue—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We will continue to be disciplined. We will continue to constrain our spending as necessary. We have made every effort to maintain it below 1% year over year, and that has been proven by our track record. In fact, even our negotiated settlements within the envelope that we've identified have also been met.

It would be nice if the official opposition would also work in a minority government as does the third party for the benefit of the people of Ontario. This budget reflects the entire scope of Ontario's issues. It's for the people of Ontario.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. The Premier has now received the report from Metrolinx calling for higher taxes and an increase in the gasoline tax. Is the Liberal government planning to proceed with these plans?

1050

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We all knew that the Metrolinx report was going to be coming out. I want to thank the Metrolinx folks, the board, for their work in putting together this report. We are committed to finding real solutions. I know that the congestion situation in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area cannot be allowed to continue, and so it is absolutely critical that we have a dedicated revenue stream. The Metrolinx investment strategy is one part of that conversation that is happening. There are other possibilities, but we will be taking the Metrolinx report under advisement and we'll be engaging with the people of the province about how we make sure that we have a dedicated revenue stream, particularly in the greater Toronto and Hamilton region.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier has argued that in difficult times people have to make sacrifices and may have to pay more to get Ontario moving. Can the Premier tell us how much the Liberal government has spent cutting taxes for the corporate sector over the last five years or so?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just stay on the transit issue for a moment because I know that the leader of the third party is concerned about how this process will roll out. She knows that we have been clear that the Legislature will have a say as we make a final decision on those revenue tools because it is extremely important that we have a debate outside of this House and within this House about the future of infrastructure, particularly transit infrastructure, in the next 20 years in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, because the state of transit

and the reduction of congestion in this region are paramount in terms of the possibilities for economic growth for the region and for the province. It's paramount in terms of improving people's quality of life. That's why it's so important that we get this right, and there will be an opportunity for the Legislature to have a say on this.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** One calculation—in fact, several calculations—put the amount of money that this government has given to corporations in cuts into the billions since they became government, and the government insists that as soon as the books are balanced they plan to cut corporate taxes even more here in the province of Ontario.

The Liberals used the word “fair” in the budget. Does the Premier think it's fair to ask people to pay more out of household budgets while the Liberal government tells Ontario's largest corporations that they're due for yet another break?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Here's what I think is fair: I think what is fair is to be honest with the people of Ontario about the complexity of our situation, to recognize that government has to do more than one thing at a time, that government has to create the conditions for businesses to be able to thrive so that those businesses can create jobs.

At the same time, government has to understand that people are spending too much time on the road trying to get to work, trying to get to their kids and bringing them home from school or taking them to day care, and that those—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Carry on. Finish.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Those issues and challenges coexist, and so we have to deal with all of that at the same time. We have worked to try to put conditions in place so that business can thrive, and at the same time we need to deal with congestion in the GTHA.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is to the Premier. The day before the budget, the government wrote to Ottawa asking them to delay a plan to open new corporate tax loopholes. This new loophole will allow Ontario's largest corporations to get the HST off of their expenses—expenses like gasoline. Has the Premier received a response yet?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** As the member opposite knows, I presume, it's not a tax loophole. It's not something new. It's not a tax break. It is part of a negotiated agreement that we made when we did the HST and we made the transformation. It applies not only to entertainment and meals; it applies to equipment purchases, automobiles and a number of other equipment—telecommunications and so forth—and it expires over a period of time.

We've now asked the federal government to allow that expiration to continue so that we also benefit from those revenues, but it is something that we have to do in cooperation with the federal government, as do other provinces that have negotiated the same thing.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's usually a duck. It's a tax loophole and it's a tax break; that's exactly what it is.

The government signed an agreement. The minister's right; he signed an agreement that said that Ontario's largest corporations don't have to pay HST on expenses like gasoline, and that new tax loophole is going to open very shortly. Jim Flaherty is making it clear that he's going to hold the government to their agreement that they signed. The government's public estimates—the government's public estimates—peg this new loophole at a cost of \$1.3 billion a year.

Does the Premier think it's fair to ask families who are already paying the new HST on gasoline to now pay an additional fee every time they have to fill up, while Ontario's largest corporations get a tax break when they roll up to the pumps?

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Minister—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Excuse me. Minister of Finance has to pass it back, if that's going to happen.

Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, over to the Premier.

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I thought it was a new question. Sorry.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** So we agree. I've made it clear that we are bringing it forward to the federal minister. We've asked for this to be reviewed. We recognize the concerns raised by the third party. We've had this discussion, and we're continuing to do so.

I should clarify, though, that the number brought forward is not to that extent, because if you're dealing with just meals and entertainment, it's much less. It's around two to three or—it doesn't matter what it is; what matters is that we want to consider doing the extension. But it's not \$1.3 billion, as is being brought forward by the member opposite.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, it matters to Ontarians. It matters to Ontarians, I have to say.

New Democrats have been very clear: Ontarians deserve transportation infrastructure and transit that is accessible and gets people where they need to go, when they need to be there. But we've also been clear that we will need a fair and balanced way to pay for it.

This Premier put the word "fair" in the name of her budget. Talk is easy; action is tougher, Speaker. The Liberal government is handing tax breaks worth billions of dollars to Ontario's wealthiest corporations, while fam-

ilies who have already been whacked with an unfair HST are being told that they have to pony up yet again. Does the Premier really think that that's fair?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The exemption continues. That hasn't expired as yet. We're trying to negotiate and work with the federal government to extend it. Those are the discussions that we're having.

But we have taken other measures in order to be balanced and fair. We've taken a number of measures to invest in our young people, to invest in health care and education, and we're continuing to do what's necessary to support those most vulnerable by not penalizing them when they go to work.

What we want to do is be fair to all Ontarians. We also want to stimulate growth. We want to ensure businesses are investing in Ontario, and we will continue to do that as well.

## POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** My question is for the Premier. Last week at the justice committee, we saw more damning documents, as your hand-picked finance minister testified.

Finance ministry estimates from last February show the Liberals were setting aside \$900 million for the Mississauga and Oakville power plant cancellations. The documents prove it was well known within the Liberal government that the cancellation costs would be higher than the \$40 million and \$190 million that you claim.

Premier, you were at the cabinet table when cancellations were discussed, and you knew the costs would be higher. Will you admit today the exact date when you knew the Oakville cancellation was higher than the \$40 million you continue to claim?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have answered these questions at committee. The OPA provided varying costs. The costs changed. The complexity and changing OPA estimates, I think, justify my asking the Auditor General to look at both situations.

I've been very clear that we wanted to open up this process and make it possible for all of these questions to be asked, but the reality is, there was no firm number. No one had access to a specific number. The numbers changed, the estimates changed, and I answered that at committee.

1100

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes, the questions are being asked, but we're still not getting the answers.

At committee, we saw that the Liberal strategy of ditching, diverting and destroying documents continues; it's alive and well, Speaker. The same \$900-million document had a key piece of information missing: It was missing the critical footnote that explained the \$900-million risk. We found it in another document. We found it in another version; that's how we knew it existed. Obviously, somebody forgot to white out all of the documents. It's the same old tricks from the same old Liberal government.

Then again, every other Liberal who has come before the justice committee has failed to be forthright. I'll ask you again, Premier: Will you pledge today to return to the justice committee and tell us when you knew the Oakville cancellation cost was more than \$40 million?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** This is absolutely outrageous. The honourable member is standing up and saying that we redacted a document that he had. The fact of the matter is, the footnote—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order. I may just jump right to a warning if he wants to continue.

Carry on.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The committee requested all drafts of a document. They received various drafts of the document. He had many copies of the same document. The footnote he's referring to was in the document that we gave to him, and the fact of the matter is that what it was was a cost estimate, a worst-case scenario from a finance official months and months before negotiations were wrapped up.

The real question is, why would the Leader of the Opposition not tell us his estimates when he made the exact same commitment?

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** My question is to the Premier. At committee last week, we had a document that indicated that, in fact, when it came to the Oakville gas plant, the TransCanada credit—the TransCanada pipeline, I should say—was in force majeure, which meant to say that you could have cancelled that gas plant without costing a nickel to the taxpayers of Ontario if you would have only taken your time and done what your ministry officials were encouraging you to do. Why didn't you do that, and why instead did you choose to do something that cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I think it's important that we go through the situation here. The city of Oakville had been trying to block the creation of this gas plant, but we knew that TransCanada was going to fight any attempts to block it and that it was much better for us to sit down and negotiate.

I'd remind, Mr. Speaker, of the testimony of Chris Breen of TransCanada Energy, who had this to say to the committee: "We were already before two different courts with what looks like about four actions, and we were before the OMB, the Ontario Municipal Board, with two appeals. We had a contractual obligation. It was very cleanly spelled out in black and white that that was our responsibility: 'You have to go through every possible channel to deliver on your obligations in this contract.' And we would have done that."

We took the prudent course in negotiating with TCE in order to find an agreement on this issue.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're right; the municipality of Oakville was not giving the permits necessary to allow that project to go forward, and they were in force majeure. All you had to do to save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars was to in fact not do what you ended up doing in regard to this negotiation. It seems to me and it seems to most people that what you did is what Liberals are really good at: You took the interests of the Liberal Party first instead of taking the interests of the people of Ontario.

I ask you again: Why would you choose an option that cost us hundreds of millions of dollars when you could have gotten out of this a heck of a lot cheaper, if not having to spend anything at all?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I know that the honourable member would never want to leave the impression with this House that if those bylaws had been overturned—and I just produced a quote of the number of legal cases that were going—construction of the plant would have been undertaken and the government at that point would have been in negotiations that would have cost a lot more than sitting down at the beginning of the process.

The fact of the matter was that TCE was going to pursue every avenue in order to start construction on that plant, and the prudent course, which has been confirmed by numerous witnesses in front of the committee, was for us to sit down and negotiate. We took the prudent course. We looked at what was going to be happening with the bylaws in Oakville, and as I say, had they been overturned, construction would have begun.

#### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Speaker, May is Asian Heritage Month. This month, we acknowledge the long and rich history of Asian Canadians and their contributions to Canada. It also provides an opportunity for Canadians across the country to reflect on and celebrate the contributions of Canadians of Asian heritage to the growth and prosperity of Canada.

This month is important because Canada's cultural diversity strengthens the country socially, politically and economically in innumerable ways.

My riding of Scarborough–Rouge River is the home of many Asians, coming from all across the continent for numerous reasons. I'm proud to represent each and every one of them.

During this month, there are many local events to mark Asian Heritage Month. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please update us on the ways our government is highlighting Asian Heritage Month here in Ontario?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for asking.

Last week, I had the pleasure to meet the vice-governor of Jiangsu province from China and discussed with him the screening of a Chinese film showcase at this



year's Toronto International Film Festival. It will feature 80 films tracing the connections between the cinemas of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

It also speaks to the significant investment our government has made for the film industry, which contributes \$2.5 billion annually to our economy. Since 2003, we've invested over \$81 million to support screen-based industries, including more than \$58 million in funding to TIFF.

Our government is proud of these investments and the cultural films that celebrate Asian heritage and support Ontario's screen-based industry.

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

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** It is interesting to hear of these initiatives from the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport regarding the ways our government is highlighting Asian Heritage Month.

It is important to recognize that our connection to Asia should not be limited to the events during this special month only. Asia is quickly becoming the world's economic engine, and more and more of our province's trade and immigration come from countries such as Vietnam, the Philippines and China.

Ontario's relationship with China is of particular interest to my constituents. Many of them enjoy hearing about our government's partnership with China on new economic ties. Speaker, could the minister please update the House on the status of Ontario's relationship with China?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** Ontario and China have for many years enjoyed a close friendship and growing economic relationship. China is our second-largest trading partner in the world, and two-way trade between Ontario and China stands at nearly \$30 billion a year. Our exports to China have increased by 233% since 2003. We've also had significant cultural connection, with nearly 650,000 Chinese Canadians calling Ontario home.

To build on these ties, just as one example, Ontario has been working very closely with the Chinese province of Jiangsu, our sister province in China. Last week, I too had the privilege of meeting a delegation from Jiangsu province that included the vice-governor, Mr. Fan Jinlong.

This visit and the Ontario visit to China earlier this year have strengthened our friendship and improved business collaboration in key sectors such as clean technology, agriculture and scientific research. We look forward to that continued friendship and more trade.

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My question is for the finance minister. The cost of your gas plant cancellations was listed in public accounts at close to \$200 million, yet the very real possibility of a \$900-million price tag—passed on to all Ontarians—was nowhere to be found in the estimates.

Someone in the government, God love them, had the foresight to realize that this could cost \$900 million. Leading energy experts testifying before the justice committee under oath, along with the documents reluctantly handed over, confirm that number too—which raises a very important but simple question for the finance minister: Is there a public budget and a secret budget? If so, was the secret budget deal made available to the leader of the third party when she decided to prop up your scandal-plagued government?

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**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, the answer is no. To the member opposite, you've just clarified your answer by saying that it was a provision; it was an estimate; it was appropriate to look at the worst-case scenario. Negotiations were had, resolutions were made, and public accounts were accounted for.

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

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Actually, Minister, it wasn't in the estimates—that's what I said—and you haven't clarified a thing, actually.

On Thursday, in justice committee, I asked the finance minister where the money came from with respect to the cancellations of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. His response: "Oh, it probably came through our contingency funds."

The Premier of the province called this gas plant scandal a political decision. I don't think the people of Ontario had a seat-saver program in mind when the contingency fund was implemented. What the minister is telling us is that he has no problem pulling money from a contingency fund that exists in cases of unforeseen emergencies and natural disasters and using it to hide line items for his own sordid political scandals. He has no problem using that fund, even if it means hiding \$900 million from the people of Ontario for as long as possible in order to save his own seat.

Your government talks a good game about being open and transparent. Can you tell us why you hid this scandal in your contingency fund?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, the PCs have presented—they're deliberately misleading documents from the Ministry of Finance—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd ask the minister to withdraw.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I withdraw.

They've presented information that inappropriately reflects what's going on. Projected costs from the Ministry of Finance are part of a due diligence process in which officials plan for a worst-case scenario. The figures discussed by the opposition are several years old and are related to an assessment of potential liabilities, not projected costs.

A complete cancellation of the plant, as promised by the Conservatives and their candidates in Mississauga, may have also resulted in these liabilities becoming a reality. Successful negotiations by the government to relocate these plants ensured that these potential liabilities did not come to fruition.

Citing these figures from the Ministry of Finance of a risk assessment of several years past is unconstructive.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** My question is to the Premier. Just a few weeks ago, this government finally committed to our NDP proposal to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. But recently I've heard from a number of people that they're seeing their insurance premiums increase by 15% to 20% upon renewal. These are people with absolutely clean records and no claims whatsoever. Why would this government, through FSCO, allow insurance companies to increase premiums for people across Ontario when we know that a 15% reduction should be implemented?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, let me say that I'm very pleased that we were able to work with the NDP on this proposal. We were committed to reducing premiums for auto insurance, Mr. Speaker. It's something that, over a year ago, I talked about in my own riding. It's something that we are working on, and we're doing it in a way that I think will be prudent.

The member opposite has highlighted why it's so important that we get the budget passed: because, in order to be able to implement the budget, it needs to pass through the process in this Legislature. I appreciate the concern from the member opposite, but we really do need to get on with getting the budget passed so we can implement it.

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

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Again to the Premier: People in my community and across Ontario are paying some of the highest premiums in Canada. These are tough times. Families are struggling to make ends meet.

This government said that they will take our NDP proposal to reduce auto insurance rates by 15% to make life more affordable. How many times will this government allow insurance companies to increase premiums before they actually implement that 15% reduction?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the work being done by the member opposite in facilitating us to get this passed so that we can work towards reducing auto insurance rates for the benefit of all Ontarians. It should be noted that in the recent year, actually, auto insurance has been reduced by 0.3% as a result of the efforts we've done with the task force, and we'll continue to do so.

It's important that we have FSCO, which is reviewing all of the submissions that are being made to date, avoid the variation that the member opposite has cited. We will work together. Let's get this budget passed. Let's move on this quickly.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Our government recognizes that Ontario's capacity to compete in the

global economy depends on how well we can harness our research strengths, our ability to encourage innovation and the support we provide our entrepreneurs. Our government's budget reiterates our commitment to research, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Our commitments are strong. We have invested \$50 million in the Ontario Venture Capital Fund to help support start-up companies. We have committed \$100 million to the Ontario Brain Institute, which will help make discoveries that tackle brain disease possible. And we will invest \$295 million in the youth jobs strategy to encourage entrepreneurship amongst our youth.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation: What other programs has the government invested in to support entrepreneurship and innovation in our province?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank the member from Vaughan for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government has a strong track record of supporting entrepreneurship and innovation in this province. We have invested in three networks that have served entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises. These networks include the Ontario Network of Excellence, which supports the success of entrepreneurs; the Ontario network of Small Business Enterprise Centres, which works with municipal governments to accelerate the start-up and growth of local economies; and Business Advisory Services, which help entrepreneurs' businesses to grow both at home and abroad.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud of the investments our government has made to support entrepreneurship and innovation in order to grow our economy and create jobs.

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

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the Minister of Research and Innovation for the outstanding job that he's doing on behalf of all Ontarians.

Speaker, I am glad to hear that our government is investing in services and programs to assist our entrepreneurs. As you know, Speaker, entrepreneurs have the potential to bring Ontario's most promising ideas and research to the market. Through research, innovation and entrepreneurship, we can find the answers to our questions, generate economic growth and create jobs. Given the challenges in the global economy, it is more important than ever that we take action that helps turn great ideas into thriving companies and new jobs.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the government doing to ensure that entrepreneurs are getting the support they need and that the programs are easily accessible?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** I would again like to thank the member from Vaughan for that question. Entrepreneurship and innovation are at the heart of our efforts to create jobs and grow our economy. We want to help more Ontarians start up businesses and help their businesses prosper.

In order to ensure that entrepreneurs are able to access resources quickly, we have unified these three networks into the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs. Through the

Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs, we will be able to provide better services to Ontarians by an interactive portal, onebusiness.ca. Mr. Speaker, through this initiative, Ontario entrepreneurs will be able to find the most appropriate sources of support to help them grow their businesses and also help our economy.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, for the past 10 years, your Liberal government has failed northern Ontario. With an 11.3% unemployment rate, North Bay, like much of northern Ontario, is in crisis.

One industry that is managing to succeed is contact call centres. On page 262 of the recent McGuinty-Wynne-Horwath budget, you announce the elimination of the apprenticeship training tax credit for only contact centres.

How can northern Ontario residents have any confidence in your government when you are planning to kill up to 8,000 important jobs in northern Ontario with this single decision?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the concerns. I know in the budget of 2012, we announced the effectiveness of the apprenticeship training tax credits, promoting them to provide for those apprentices to have full completion when they're working and to provide for full-time employment. The intent, of course, is to help people have jobs and maintain those jobs.

1120

What we're finding, though, is the eligibility requirements through the call centres have not resulted in completion of the apprenticeship program or in full-time employment, as expected. It's actually averaging only 10%, and frankly, I think we all agree in this House that what we want to do is provide our stimulus and investments to help those individuals have full-time employment for a long period of time.

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

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Premier: Northern Ontario has a jobs crisis, but so does London and southwestern Ontario. For the second straight month, London has the highest big-city unemployment rate in Canada, and shamefully, Windsor is right there too—11.3% unemployment in North Bay, 10% in London and 9.2% in Windsor.

Premier, Ontario has 600,000 unemployed men and women. Your budget does nothing to help grow our economy and create jobs. In fact, for the 25,000 people province-wide working in the contact calling industry, you have put their jobs at risk.

Premier, the PC Party and our leader, Tim Hudak, have unveiled a firm vision to get Ontario back on track. Which of the items outlined does your coalition government plan to implement?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm happy to take the supplementary on this because—it was interesting, just a couple of months ago in Barrie, there was an announcement. I think the Barrie mayor said it was one of the best days that he had had as mayor, where they created 500 new jobs in a call centre that opened up there. I know they're also looking at Guelph as a possible additional area to expand.

But I want to talk about London—the London area, specifically—because I know that the member opposite is specifically interested in the London area—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex asked the question; I'm sure he wants to hear the answer, and he'll ask—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is warned.

Carry on, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** As part of the over 400,000 jobs that we've created since the—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon is not helping, either.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —the recession, I was in London and the London area. In fact, I was in the member opposite's own riding on Thursday, where I was announcing the government's \$300,000-support to our—

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

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Ontarians recently learned that during the Easter weekend, Mr. Joseph Cummins, an 80-year-old patient at London Health Sciences Centre, was told to clean his own toilet. This government insists that front-line staff cuts and hospital underfunding won't affect care.

Is letting people fend for themselves what the minister has in mind when she talks about transformation in health care?

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Ontarians have the right to expect the highest-quality care no matter where they get care in this province. We are undertaking a tremendous transformation in our health care sector right now, and we are seeing the results of focusing on the community sector.

We're also really focusing on improving the quality of care in our hospitals. In fact, the unanimous passage of the Excellent Care for All Act celebrates and put us on the right path to continue to get better value by improving the quality of care in our health care sectors. Now, hospitals across the province are publicly reporting on quality indicators, and we are seeing quality improvements. We're on the right path. We have more to do for

sure, but I will never stop to continue to improve quality in our hospitals.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, the minister says that people have the right to expect high quality of care; they're obviously not getting it. I guess they only have the right to expect it but not to actually get it.

Mr. Cummins happens to be a retired professor of genetics from Western University, but with the real threat of hospital-acquired infections, it doesn't take an expert to tell us that patients shouldn't be cleaning their own toilets. London Health Sciences is planning to lay off an additional 60 staff even as this government lets hospital CEO salaries skyrocket.

Can the minister assure the people of London that sick patients won't be cleaning their own toilets, or worse, as a result of her cuts in the hospital sector?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Just to be clear, as I was saying earlier and I've said many times in this House, there is a very important transformation going on in our health care sector. While hospital budgets—the base budgets—are being kept to zero, we are heavily investing in the community sector.

The Premier was in London on Friday. We actually visited a family that exemplified the transformation that is under way. Because of our investment in the community sector, and thanks to the Home First philosophy that was being applied, Peggy and Norm were able to be in their own home, where they want to be, comfortable in their community, instead of in hospital, instead of in long-term care, which is where they would have been had these investments not been made.

That transformation is under way. I acknowledge hospitals are dealing with challenging decisions, but there is no question: The system is stronger.

## HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Premier in her role as the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Minister, this Sunday was a significant day in my riding of Niagara Falls, in Niagara-on-the-Lake and particularly Fort Erie. The Fort Erie Race Track opened for the 116th time in the season of 2013. I was there. I saw the largest-ever crowd for an opening day of the Fort Erie Race Track. It was an exciting time.

Each year, thousands of families come to the track to enjoy the festivities and the excitement that racing provides. I know first-hand that our government has been working with the horse racing transition panel to build a strong, sustainable horse racing industry.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order. Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I, along with my constituents, know the importance of this industry, and we are inter-

ested in making sure that it remains healthy and strong for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier in her role as the Minister of Agriculture and Food, could the minister please provide an update on what our government is doing to support the horse racing industry?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member from Niagara Falls—I sincerely want to thank the member from Niagara Falls for his support and advocacy on this file. He has been terrific.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to a sustainable and long future for Ontario's horse racing industry. We know how important the industry is to communities like Niagara Falls, but across Ontario. So I've asked the transition panel to develop a long-term plan to implement recommendations from its report, and by that, I mean the integration of horse racing with the OLG strategy and the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will come to order—and while I'm at it, the member from Kawartha Lakes.

Carry on.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—and by that, Mr. Speaker, I mean that the Ministry of Finance and the OLG will work with stakeholders to work on the integration of horse racing within the modernization strategy.

I heard a voice from the other side saying, "Details," Mr. Speaker. That's the point. The point is that that integration strategy needs to be worked out, and that's what I've asked the panel to work on.

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

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** Thank you for your response, Minister. I'm glad to hear our government is committed to building a strong and sustainable horse racing industry.

I want to share with you that when I met with the transition panel, that was made up of three significant former members of Parliament, from each of the three parties, I sat with them, and they explained to me that the slots at the racetrack—they clearly said it was unaccountable, it was not transparent and it lacked a proper focus on customers. Their long-term plan will be very important, to look to the transition of the industry, to integrate horse racing with the modernization of Ontario's gaming strategy.

I'm thrilled that racing resumed this week in Fort Erie—so are the workers; so are the fans who came out. I know there are many other tracks in Ontario that have begun racing for 2013.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Premier in her role as the Minister of Agriculture and Food, could the minister please provide an update on the status of racing across tracks in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Niagara Falls for his excellent question.

Our government is actively working to ensure horse racing is sustainable and successful. Right now, the most important thing Ontarians could do is support this im-

portant industry and come out to the tracks on racing day. This week, there is racing at nine tracks across the province of Ontario.

1130

I was in attendance at Kawartha Downs for the opening of the 2013 season, and it was an excellent evening with a record crowd on Saturday, May 18. I must say, I made an investment; very little return, but that's okay. I encourage all members to visit their local track and to support this vibrant industry in rural Ontario.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITY EMPLOYEES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, this weekend a guard at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre was sent to the hospital after he was attacked by an inmate. This represents just one more instance of violence that has been all too common at EMDC on your watch.

I met with you last August and you told me that your staff was working on implementing a 12-point action plan intended to mitigate the problems at EMDC. Since that time, overcrowding remains an issue, weekend lockdowns are regular, a fire broke out and a near-riot occurred. Reports indicate that you've been slow to implement your promised changes. Minister, will a guard have to die before you take decisive action on EMDC?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I thank the member from the opposition for his advocacy to improve the situation in the EMDC. It's unfortunate when an incident like this happens. I'm not going to comment because there is a police investigation going on as we speak. As I told him in the past—and I also invited him to a briefing on what we are doing to improve the situation in the EMDC. Ministry officials continue to work with staff—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I tried one way. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** As I said, ministry officials continue to work with staff and their union to address their concerns through our action plan. The plan focuses on improving supervision and compliance with policy. These policies have been developed by corrections experts, and we are investing in 350 cameras at EMDC to better supervise and intervene when necessary. With the supplementary, I will continue to say what we are doing to improve the situation there.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the minister: A camera cannot intervene when they're beating up a guard.

Minister, the guards have their backs up against the wall and things continue to devolve. Broken metal from a light fixture that can be sharpened into a shank has not yet been totally recovered since the last near-riot at the jail, and I've been informed that the ministry has bought metal detectors, but they sit idle because they haven't provided any training to the staff on how to use them.

This is just one of the many examples that are going on with this gross mismanagement.

Any number of violent occurrences in the past year should have been a wake-up call for you, yet you're remaining asleep at the switch. Your inaction is putting guards' safety in jeopardy and lives at risk. Please, let's work together and stop a death from occurring at this jail.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Huron–Bruce—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Be seated, please. I'll finish my sentence. The member from Huron–Bruce, the member was asking a question from your own caucus.

Minister?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The health and safety of the correctional officers in our correctional facilities are of utmost importance, and I've been working very hard to make sure that they do improve.

Yes, there are drugs entering these facilities. There are other tools that should not enter facilities. So we are, as we speak, reviewing the process, reviewing who is doing and who is not doing their work there. That's why these situations occur. We'll continue to make sure that the 12-point plan is implemented, but the work cannot be done at all times, seven days a week, 24 hours a day—it takes longer, but we are determined that we will move forward. We have changed the direction, the leadership there, and we will implement a board of directors at this facility to make sure that things are improving.

#### BICYCLE SAFETY

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** My question is to the Premier. Today is the launch of Bike Month in cities like Toronto, and it's a good day to remember that 600,000 people in Ontario bike every day.

According to a new survey from Share the Road, the vast majority of people in Ontario think that the provincial government should be investing more in bike lanes and cycling infrastructure. Quebec has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in provincial bike networks, but Ontario's motto on cycling seems to be, "Go slow."

Why are Ontarians still waiting for a new provincial bicycling strategy more than three years after you, as Minister of Transportation, promised a new strategy?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I want to thank the member for his very sincere question. These things are tied together. The cycling strategy is in its final stages of development, and we'll be making announcements very, very shortly. I don't want it to be lost on people that the Big Move and the investment strategy that Metrolinx released today is one of the funding mechanisms for a cycling strategy. We do not see the issues of transit, automobiles, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians as separate parts; we see it as an integrated approach, and we are setting money aside for integrating that transit.

I was recently at the Mount Joy GO Station, where, as part of GO, we are promoting cycling as the connection between GO trains and residents in those areas. So cycling continues to be an integrated part of our overall transportation strategy.

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

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I send my message back to the Premier. The Liberal government has had 10 years now to make cycling a priority. In 2010, the government's draft bike strategy promised funding for municipal bike infrastructure. Now, the government has back-pedaled, and it has removed this from the strategy.

The government has rejected calls to invest a mere 1% of its highway budget on bike lanes, and this government has now allowed Toronto to remove bike lanes on Jarvis without the environmental assessment that we asked for. Now this government has opposed simple measures to update the Highway Traffic Act so that streets are safe for all users.

When will this government finally make Ontario a leader rather than a laggard when it comes to cycling?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** We are paving shoulders now on secondary highways. I am a cyclist, as we are a two-bicycle, no-car household. I cycle across Ontario from Toronto to Montreal most summers doing fundraisers.

We are developing, on the provincial portion, a very sophisticated, well-put-together cycling infrastructure. The cycling strategy, along with the Big Move, will address that.

The other issues that the honourable member raised are decisions of a municipal nature. We are not involved in discussions around whether Ottawa, Cornwall or Toronto allocate cycling lanes. Those are municipal. Most municipalities have their own cycling strategies and their own cycling capacities.

#### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. A lot of skilled tradespeople in my riding of Oakville are quite pleased with the way things are going with apprenticeship ratios these days and the progress that is being made. The Ontario College of Trades is a vital tool in promoting the importance of skilled trades.

Our government recognizes that Ontario's apprenticeship system is a key part of building the well-educated and the highly skilled workforce that this province needs to compete in the current and future economy. At the same time, we all hear about the shortage of skilled workers in our economy, and we believe the skilled trades are a tremendous career opportunity for young people. I still encourage many people in my riding of Oakville to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

As such, Speaker, through you to the minister: I ask if he is aware of actions being taken currently that promote skilled trades opportunities for young people in Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm pleased to respond to that very good question. The College of Trades is mandated

to promote the skilled trades to our young people, and I'm looking forward to seeing those efforts as they move forward in that area. A number of government programs and incentives are geared to promoting the skilled trades and apprenticeships as well.

But I'd really like to share with the House an exciting initiative that was recently visited by our Premier, the Ontario Technological Skills Competition, which was held in Kitchener. I want to thank Gail Smyth, executive director of Skills Canada-Ontario, and her team for organizing this annual competition that engaged close to 2,000 young skilled trades competitors, as well as tens of thousands of other young people. This competition provides young people with exposure to the skilled trades.

I want to thank and recognize Gail Smyth and her team for their incredible passion, commitment and contribution to opening up the skilled trades to our young people through this event.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, the love of my life, my wife, Deanna Clark.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don't know what it would have cost you if you didn't.

Further introductions? Last call for introductions.

It's now time for members' statements.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### CATTLE FARMERS

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and welcome the Ontario Cattlemen's Association to Queen's Park and extend a sincere thank you for the delicious Ontario corned beef barbecue lunch we had this afternoon.

There are over 19,000 beef farmers in Ontario. Ontario cattle farmers are an integral part of our agricultural sector and richly contribute to the provincial economy.

The Ontario Cattlemen identified an industry need for a beef nutritionist at the University of Guelph, a position that existed until 2010. During last summer's drought, the beef industry was in great need of advice on alternative feeding solutions, as well as guidance on the safe use of drought-stressed corn. I'm proud to say that the Ontario PC caucus was listening and fully supports the return of a beef nutritionist to the University of Guelph. We included the Ontario Cattlemen's suggestion in our agricultural white paper entitled Respect for Rural Ontario.

The PC caucus looks forward to continuing to work with the Ontario Cattlemen to grow the beef industry. We

understand the importance of agriculture in Ontario and the importance of having a government that truly understands and supports the agricultural sector.

Again, I want to thank the Ontario Cattlemen's Association for visiting Queen's Park. A friendly reminder to my colleagues that it's barbecue season and you need to pick up some Ontario corn-fed beef for the grill.

#### BEAR CONTROL

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On Saturday, May 12, Joe Azouguar was eating breakfast at his cabin near Cochrane. He had just moved from Toronto to escape the chaos of the city. A black bear approached, killed his dog, broke into his home and attacked him as he tried to escape. Two passersby drove the animal off, called 911 and took Joe to the hospital, saving his life.

While bear attacks are rare, bear encounters in the north are common and increasing. There are those who think that bears are cute and cuddly, but an attack provides a reality check. Parents in some areas drive their children to school because of bears. Children are forced to stay in school because of bears on the playground. Bear sightings are on the increase this spring; because of the unusually long winter, animals are hungry and bolder than usual.

There was a time when the Ministry of Natural Resources took an active role in black bear management, but this role has all but disappeared. Last year, the government gutted the program that trapped and moved problem bears to other areas, and responsibility to control problem bears was downloaded to the police, so now the cost falls to municipalities.

Northerners feel abandoned and are forced to protect themselves, and as a result, many no longer bother reporting the results to the MNR.

Northerners need more than a 1-800 bear advice line. We already know to clean our barbecues. We need the provincial government to take our safety seriously and reimplement measures that actually protect people. Bears deserve respect, and so do northerners.

#### MING PAO DAILY NEWS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** It is with great pleasure that I rise in this House to recognize the 20th anniversary of the Toronto edition of Ming Pao. Ming Pao is a daily Chinese newspaper that serves many Chinese Canadians in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt and throughout the greater Toronto area.

The original Hong Kong version of Ming Pao began print in May 1959 and was started by Louis Cha, and is well known for its social and intellectual content. In fact, Ming Pao was selected as the most credible local paper in a survey by the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2006.

The Toronto edition was started on May 28, 1993. Admirably, the Toronto Ming Pao was able to break even within the first year of operation and has become widely read by Hong Kong immigrants.

The paper covers local news as well as news stories from Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. There is no dispute that Ming Pao has brought brighter and higher standards of journalism to the Chinese community in Toronto, and Ming Pao has also played a significant role in bridging the East and West cultures.

Last, but not least, Ming Pao has helped newcomers integrate into Ontario society. It frequently reports on immigration policies and guidance on job postings, as well as promoting Canadian core values.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Ming Pao for their 20 successful years in Ontario, but more importantly for serving our community the best it can.

#### GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise to recognize the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance, who are here at Queen's Park today, and to recognize the hard work of all Ontario greenhouse growers.

Those who claim to support local food need to understand it doesn't start at the farm gate; it starts in the fields, barns and greenhouses across Ontario. It is the hard work of people like those who are here today that provides Ontario greenhouse vegetables and extends our growing season. It is the hard work these greenhouse growers do that makes the sector a significant economic driver in Ontario, with well over \$100 million in exports and investment of over \$2 billion in our rural economy.

Like many agriculture sectors, many of the challenges they're facing are created by this government, such as the increasing cost of hydro and red tape. I want to commend the greenhouse growers for coming to talk to the members about these issues and how we can help.

I want to recognize Rej Picard, who has been an outstanding chair. I appreciate that he has always provided us with information and ensured that we were aware of the challenges they are facing. He showed us the cogeneration facilities, where they were having trouble getting contracts. He showed us the innovation that the sector was doing to become more environmental and more competitive.

I'm pleased that the new chair, Jan VanderHout, is someone already known for his innovation, such as using biomass combustion as a heat source and implementing environmental innovations. We look forward to continuing to work with Jan and the greenhouse sector.

#### EDUCATION

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This afternoon, I am very happy to talk about the next generation of Ontarians with the Legislature. On Wednesday, May 22, Andrea Horwath and I had the pleasure of touring Clarke Road Secondary School in London, Ontario, and meeting with a number of students in a general question-and-answer session.

After a brief tour of the school with Mr. Panayi, the principal, we were introduced to a number of students

who had given up their lunch hour in order to meet with us. We discussed many issues facing students today, including the First Start program, which addresses youth employment, as well as auto insurance rates, economic stimulus and job creation.

I was pleasantly surprised at the depth of knowledge these students demonstrated regarding the current political landscape. They seemed particularly well informed, and I was pleased to see the interest they were taking in important issues.

One student was concerned about pursuing post-secondary education, the high cost of tuition and, more importantly, the job prospects once they graduate. Another wanted to know about the opportunities offered by pursuing education in the skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker, the students at Clarke Road showed us that the young people of Ontario are watching. They see their province is in trouble, they are concerned about where we are going and they wonder if there is more that can be done.

I am so thankful to the students and the staff at Clarke Road Secondary School for taking the time to meet with Andrea and myself, and look forward to having further discussions with them in the future.

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** On May 10 this year, I had the honour of attending the official opening of Birchmount Woods, in my riding of Scarborough Southwest. The government of Canada, the government of Ontario and the city of Toronto celebrated the official opening of a 152-unit affordable housing rental project for low-income families, persons with special needs and victims of domestic abuse.

Having access to a safe and stable home improves people's quality of life. Speaking to new residents of the building, I was able to appreciate first-hand the far-reaching impact this will have on their lives and neighbourhood. We've been able to provide people in need with affordable and accessible places to live. We've provided them with a home and a community where they can live with dignity and be active members of that community.

**1310**

This investment of more than \$10 million in provincial and federal funding for the new residence helped to stimulate the local economy and created approximately 380 local jobs. It is the latest step in our government's plan to improve access to affordable housing for Ontarians.

Since 2003, nearly \$3 billion has been committed by our government to affordable housing. This is more than any government before us has done.

Please join me in recognizing the official opening of Birchmount Woods. It is remarkable that we can accomplish this much when all levels of government, the private sector and not-for-profit sectors work together. Through projects like this, together we can continue to

improve access to affordable housing that is safe, sound, suitable and sustainable for households across Ontario.

#### RING OF FIRE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in the House today to speak to a very important issue, one that is of particular concern for northern Ontario.

Late last week, during her trip to Thunder Bay, the Premier made comments about the Ring of Fire, specifically pointing to the complex nature of the project. Mr. Speaker, I believe it is time that this House gets more specific information on this project.

There is a single page in this year's budget dedicated to the Ring of Fire, but it amounts to little more than lip service. It has been over a year since the former Minister of Northern Development and Mines announced, to great fanfare, that a deal was in place with Cliffs Natural Resources to get development in the Ring of Fire moving. In the time since this announcement, far more information has become available through the media than from the government or the ministry on what is being done to get the Ring of Fire moving.

While it is undoubtedly a complex file, there are many companies who have made significant investments in the region while waiting for the government to move forward on creating a physical link to the area.

Getting industry, First Nations and the federal and provincial governments working together is no easy task.

The current government has bragged about the Ring of Fire for years, dating back to Premier McGuinty's throne speech of 2007.

Developing the Ring of Fire is simply too important to push to the back burner on the government agenda, and this government needs to show that it is truly committed to making this great opportunity a job-creating reality that will benefit the entire province.

#### HELEN LU

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** On May 15, Helen Lu, known as the "mother of all charity," died at the age of 82 after an eight-month battle with cancer. A remarkable woman and a well-known pillar of the Chinese community, she will be sorely missed by many.

On behalf of the Legislature of Ontario, I want to offer our condolences to her husband, Yu-Che, her children, Henry and Shirley, and her niece Pey.

Born in Anhui, China, Helen and her family immigrated to Canada in 1969 from Taiwan. Affectionately known as Mama Lu, she worked tirelessly for many charities for over 30 years, including the Canadian Unrelated Bone Marrow Donor Registry, the United Way, the Daily Bread Food Bank, the Hospital for Sick Children, the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, and the Yee Hong Community Wellness Foundation, where she also served on the board of directors. She also helped establish the Chinese Canadian Council of the Heart and Stroke Foundation.



Helen worked on countless fundraising campaigns for natural disaster relief, from the tsunami in south Asia to the earthquake in Haiti and floods in China.

She received numerous awards, including the Order of Ontario in 2004 and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, for her tremendous work.

Even while she was ill, Helen continued to advocate for her charities.

We may have lost an exceptional community leader, but I believe her legacy will continue to inspire us for a long time to come.

#### CASINO THOUSAND ISLANDS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise on behalf of the people of the town of Gananoque and the township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, and more than 400 people who work at the Thousand Islands casino.

As the government scrambles to control the damage from the latest debacle—the chaos at OLG and the disastrous modernization plan—I have some good news for the Premier.

Amidst all the chaos, Premier, there is one easy decision to make: Leave the Thousand Islands casino right where it is. Any objective look at the situation would reach the same conclusion. There is simply no case to be made for closing the sixth-largest employer in Leeds–Grenville and moving it to Kingston. OLG made the right decision for the right reasons when it opened the casino's doors more than a decade ago. The numbers prove it. This is the second-highest-grossing charity casino without a racetrack in Ontario.

The Thousand Islands casino worked because it's located in a community that wanted it and has embraced it ever since. That's not the case in Kingston, where 60% of residents oppose a casino and more than three quarters don't want one without a referendum first.

There's overwhelming evidence that rolling the dice on a Kingston casino is an economic and social disaster waiting to happen. That's why I'm calling on the Premier to direct whoever she brings in to clean up the mess at OLG to make that one easy decision: Leave the Thousand Islands casino where it is.

#### RENÉ BRUNELLE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader on a point of order.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Mr. René Brunelle, a former member of this Legislature from Cochrane North from 1958 to 1981, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to have an up-to-five-minute tribute to René. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka on a point of order.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent for members to be able to wear the poppy, as Mr. Brunelle was a veteran and served in World War II.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka is asking for unanimous consent to wear the poppy as part of the tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

It is now time for those tributes. The member from—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Timmins–James Bay.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just wanted you to say it. The member from Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** We're gone a week and you forget our ridings. What's going on?

C'est avec plaisir que j'ai l'occasion de parler de quelqu'un qui était vu, comme on le dit, comme un des rois du Nord quand ça vient à être capable de travailler fort de la part du monde qui reste au nord-est de l'Ontario et au Nord en général.

J'ai eu l'occasion de connaître M. Brunelle—non en politique, parce qu'il est parti d'ici ça fait assez longtemps, avant que, moi, j'aie été élu. Il est parti d'ici en 1981. Mais j'ai eu l'occasion de parler à M. Brunelle à une couple d'occasions comme député provincial de Cochrane South, dans le temps, qui était le comté droit à côté de Cochrane-Nord, et éventuellement comme son député de Timmins–James Bay ou Timmins–Baie James, parce que, comme on le sait, les deux comtés ont été fusionnés.

Je vais vous dire, il n'y a personne que j'ai rencontré, au moins de cette place-ci, qui avait les habiletés de M. Brunelle « to be such a nice guy ». C'était un gars qui, quand tu le rencontrais, était toujours voulant de te parler. Il était toujours une personne qui regardait au positif. C'était toujours une personne qui essayait de trouver des solutions à comment travailler ensemble. Puis, si tu étais néo-démocrate, libéral ou conservateur dans une élection, watch-toi parce qu'il savait comment faire sa politique dans les élections. Mais quand ça venait à travailler entre les élections, même après qu'il est parti de la politique, pour lui, ce qui était important c'était le monde chez eux. Il comprenait que pour lui, sa job était l'élu de la région, d'être là pour parler de la part du monde de notre région sur les questions qui sont importantes pour nous. M. Brunelle, je peux vous dire, était une personne qui savait comment faire ça.

On a eu l'occasion de travailler ensemble dans notre région, non seulement avec M. Brunelle mais avec d'autres. L'affaire qui venait toujours à travers—quand René était impliqué dans un dossier, on était toujours content parce que c'était un gars qui connaissait bien du monde, qui savait comment rassembler les troupes ensemble, comme on dit, pour être capable d'avancer—qu'on était ensemble capable de trouver des solutions à un problème.

Donc, je peux dire premièrement qu'il n'y a personne à qui je peux penser, qui vient de cette place-ci, qui avait la classe de M. René Brunelle. C'était un homme qui était excellent. C'était un humain qui avait une habileté excellente de travailler avec le monde et d'avoir du respect.

It's not often they talk nice about us in politics, but how can you say anything wrong about René? As I was just saying: just an amazing human being who understood what life was all about. Life was not just about the politics of what we do in this chamber; life was about how we leave this place a better place when we leave.

René understood that in northern Ontario we had challenges, as there are challenges in other parts of the province. He understood that our job as elected officials and our jobs as citizens is to try to find ways to advance those yardsticks forward so that when we leave this place, as unfortunately René had to do—as all of us will have to do at one time. He left this place a hell of a lot better.

**1320**

He has a family that was infinitely proud and still is infinitely proud of him—a loving father, a loving husband, a loving uncle, grandfather, neighbour—you name it. Everybody who came in contact with him understood that what René was doing at the end of the day really left us in a better place, and understood that that's what the call of service was all about. It wasn't about my ability to get a headline, my ability as a politician to be seen as doing something great, or about the grandeur of the office. It was really about trying to get things done.

It was fitting that when he retired from politics in 1981, then-Premier Bill Davis and then-Minister of Natural Resources Alan Pope named a park after him: René Brunelle park in Moonbeam. I think that was very fitting because, as the Minister of Natural Resources and as the advocate of people of Cochrane North and north-eastern and northern Ontario, he was one of those people who was instrumental in the Ministry of Natural Resources to understand that we need to make sure that there are parts of this province that are untouched, that are not developed, that are there and are protected for the generations to come. When he, as a young man and as a father—and eventually his grandchildren and their grandchildren, who are about to happen; congratulations, by the way—that in fact we're able to preserve parts of this province so that people can see what the natural environment is all about.

It was unfortunate last year that we were going to see a closure of that park. I know René would have been front and centre in the fight on that, but we had other people who rose to the occasion and understood that we needed to not only save René Brunelle park because it was his namesake but also because it was something that had to be saved. And as a result of people like Al Spacek in Kapuskasing, who is a good friend, as a result of Tom Laughren, as a result of many citizens—Gilbert Peters in Moonbeam and everybody else—we all banded together and we did what? We did what René taught us to do, and that is to work together and to say, “There has to be a way forward. Let's accept that the government has a problem here. The problem is, there's not as much money in the treasury as there used to be because the pressure for that money is much harder today than it was in the

past. So let's accept that they've got a problem and let's all work together in understanding that problem and trying to find a solution.”

In René's spirit—and it's kind of funny when you really think about it. In his spirit, the community did what René was doing very naturally all of his life and that is, trying to find ways to bring people together so that we can find solutions to our problems.

I have to say, I truly am saddened that he passed away some time ago. As we know, this tribute is much after the fact, but I'm really heartened in knowing that our region and this province is a better place today because René served in this place and he was able to bring something to this job that a lot of us could take example from, and most of all leaves a family that is so, so proud of what René did for his time here and can look at the future knowing that Ontario is really a better place because their father, their husband, their grandfather or their great-grandfather made it a better place to live.

Ensemble, on dit à la famille de M. Brunelle, merci de nous avoir prêté votre grand-père, votre père et votre arrière-grand-père. Ce sont seulement des mémoires chaleureuses qu'on a de lui. Merci.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member from Timmins—James Bay for his eloquent words.

The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** C'est un honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui au nom de mon parti et de notre chef, la première ministre Kathleen Wynne, pour rendre hommage à René Brunelle.

M. Brunelle a été mon prédécesseur de deux façons. Il a été ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires de 1972 à 1975, un poste que j'ai eu l'honneur d'occuper de 2006 à 2011.

M. Brunelle était un fier Franco-Ontarien ici à Queen's Park, et dans mon rôle de ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones, je célèbre aussi notre grande culture dans notre Assemblée législative et dans toutes les régions de l'Ontario.

J'aimerais ici rappeler la carrière de M. Brunelle, une carrière qui a débuté en 1958 comme député de Cochrane-Nord. Pendant 23 ans, il a servi les citoyens de sa communauté et de la province avec diligence et loyauté.

Chacun d'entre nous a le privilège de siéger dans cette Chambre; nous connaissons les multiples défis que présente ce travail et nous savons tous que nous ne pouvons pas garder ce poste sans avoir la confiance des gens dans notre communauté. Que M. Brunelle ait pu conserver son siège pendant 23 ans témoigne de son travail acharné et de la confiance que les électeurs de Cochrane-Nord avaient en lui.

Mr. Brunelle also had the trust of his party and his leader. He was the Minister of Lands and Forests, Minister of Social and Family Services, Minister of Community and Social Services and minister without portfolio. He was so well liked that a provincial park was named in his honour two years after he retired. When then-Premier

Bill Davis announced that the park would be named after Monsieur Brunelle, Premier Davis said, “René Brunelle is a man who has shown tremendous devotion to the north, his riding and its people. I can think of no one more deserving of this honour.”

Monsieur Brunelle was a remarkable man. He lived for 90 years, and he filled those years with public service. He served overseas in France and Belgium with the Canadian army during World War II. After the war, he served the public in a different way, as a tourist operator. It was 13 years after the end of World War II when Monsieur Brunelle joined the Ontario Legislature, sitting in the chamber from 1958 to 1981.

He was also a family man, married to Andrée, father to Louis, Suzanne, Kelly and Pierre, and grandfather to Chloé, Tessa and Christopher.

I also learned that he graduated from l'Université d'Ottawa Normal School in 1941. As the representative from the riding where l'Université d'Ottawa is, I feel a connection with Monsieur Brunelle and with his family. He also did a year at Khaki University in London, England, and graduated from institutional management at the University of Toronto in 1948. He was a very well-educated man.

I met his daughter Suzanne, who is here with us today. Thank you for being here.

I want to say to them that their father and grandfather deserves their pride and their admiration. We are grateful that you shared him with us. He dedicated his life to public service, and 23 of those years he dedicated to the Ontario government serving the province, the people of Cochrane North and Franco-Ontarians. We have a better province and a better country because of him.

Monsieur Brunelle passed away in Magog, Quebec, with his wife—because his wife, Andrée, was from Magog, Quebec.

Thank you very much for sharing your father and your grandfather with us. We will remember him because he was here for all these years and because of this event today. Thank you for being here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further tributes? The member from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm honoured to represent the PC Party today and have the opportunity to pay tribute to René Brunelle, a former MPP, veteran and a proud northerner. It's my pleasure to welcome members of René's family here to Queen's Park: René's daughter Suzanne Drover and granddaughter Tessa Brunelle, who are here in the members' west gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

René had a colourful background, and his story is an exciting one. It goes without saying that he had a great deal of experience before he chose to enter politics.

Born in 1920 in Penetanguishene but spending much of his life in Moonbeam, Ontario, René pursued his education at the University of Ottawa before returning to Ansonville, which is now part of Iroquois Falls, where he worked as a teacher.

René volunteered for service with the Canadian military in 1942 and was a Canadian officer on loan to

the British army; he was a second lieutenant. I'm very pleased that we got unanimous consent to wear poppies today, and to thank him for his time serving his country. He was wounded by shrapnel while in the infantry and he finished off his wartime service as a supply officer in Belgium and France until the end of the war. He left the military in 1946.

**1330**

Upon returning to northern Ontario, René bought a property on Remi Lake, near Kapuskasing, and went into the resort business. He had a vision for the business that would be known as Chalet Brunelle. He built cottages and a motel unit, and continually improved it to attract American clientele. This would be René's primary focus before making the call to enter politics in a by-election held in the spring of 1958.

But just before that important decision, he made probably a more important decision. He was in Toronto when he met the love of his life, Andrée, at a French social club and brought her home to Moonbeam where they worked in the resort business together and raised their family. They were married in 1956, so René was 36 years old at that time.

I must say, I see an awful lot of similarities, both for the kids growing up in this resort and for René; many similarities in that René married and he raised four kids—two boys, two girls—which is exactly what I did; he ran in a by-election, which is what I did; and I was in the resort business prior to getting in here. Also, of course, René was serving at the same time as my father, Frank Miller, in the Davis cabinet, so I have similar memories to Suzanne and her siblings about what it was like growing up in the days prior to a constituency office.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You could tell stories about that.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Yes.

During his long career as a parliamentarian, René had an impressive list of accomplishments. Serving on countless committees and working hard for his constituents, René was asked to join cabinet in 1966 by then-Premier John Robarts to serve as Minister of Lands and Forests. He would go on to serve in the cabinet of Premier Bill Davis as Minister of Mines, Minister of Community and Social Services, and finally as provincial secretary for resource development. René was also appointed commissioner of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission in June 1962.

As I mentioned, he served with my father, Frank; they overlapped from 1971 to 1981. In fact, I note from looking at press clippings that my father attended René's nomination meeting which was held in Hearst in 1975. This is one of many nomination meetings. Looking at the local newspaper, the Northern Times, they note: “Frank Miller, Minister of Health, was also on hand for the nomination and spoke highly of his cabinet partner....

“Do you know that in the last two provincial elections this riding of Cochrane North, one of 15 in northern Ontario, gave the highest percentage of Conservative votes in the north? In 1971 Cochrane North led all northern ridings with 64% of the votes.” Well, all I can say is we're a little envious of that now, on this side.

This obviously shows that René had tremendous respect, because this was after he'd served for a number of years, from the people he represented, and it was a pretty clear choice that he was their member.

I recently spoke with Claude Bennett, who served in the Davis cabinet with René. Claude was enthusiastic when he talked about René. He said many times what a great guy he was, but he described René as being reasonable, down-to-earth, sincere about the way he handled things and, as I say, generally a great fellow, was his language. Claude said that René particularly excelled as Minister of Community and Social Services. He knew his responsibilities and he was committed to getting the job done. He said that the world could be coming apart, but even in tense situations René's even temper, balance, his "way about him" would calm the situation down and get people to be realistic. Claude talked about going into meetings where they were quite anxious at the beginning of the meeting and René had this way about him of calming things down. He said he was genuine and believable.

I note he was also a pioneer. When I looked through various clippings, he came up in June 1972, with the *Globe and Mail* reporting that he had a \$3,000 income target supplement for the working poor that was a first of its kind. So it's obvious that the Ministry of Community and Social Services was very close and near and dear to his heart.

I had the pleasure of speaking with his son Pierre, to learn more about René, and as a side note, Pierre actually served as a page here at Queen's Park in 1972-73—he was a little unsure as to which year it was, but around 1972 or 1973.

He and others described how René would take the Ontario Northland train home on Friday nights—the overnight train—and I guess it went right to Moonbeam. Then, when he arrived in Moonbeam, he'd either be met by constituents at the train station or they would follow him home. He would spend most of Saturday holding constituency meetings at his home in Moonbeam. Then, on Sunday, he'd go to church and then have more meetings and then board the train to make the trip back. Obviously the family was giving up a lot because their dad would be so busy doing his job so well.

Pierre talked about how, to this day, he keeps bumping into people who want to give him memorabilia from his dad's time in office. In fact he said that just last week somebody dropped off a couple of cases of beer mugs with René's picture on them—probably from one election. That must have been an earlier election; I don't think we do too many beer mugs anymore.

René was famous for taking notes on envelopes. I can see him meeting people on the street. They'd have an issue, so then it would be, "Okay, where am I going to take this note?" He was also, as has been mentioned by other speakers, very approachable: at ease and not pompous. I think anyone felt they could just approach him.

There are many stories of René helping his constituents. For example, there was a welder who lived in

Hearst, which I believe is about 120 kilometres away from Moonbeam, and he was having WSIB problems. The welder hitchhiked to Moonbeam for a constituency meeting with René. René helped him with his problem and then he personally drove him back to the bus station and paid for his fare to get home. When René was a cabinet minister—back in those days, you had a dedicated car and driver—he would use his car and driver to help take constituents to medical appointments.

René chose to leave politics in 1981 after 23 years of service. He made a graceful exit, declining to contest the PC nomination for the spring election. Following his retirement from politics, René returned to northern Ontario.

As has been mentioned, a provincial park near Kapuskasing was renamed in his honour shortly after his leaving public life. It was dedicated in 1983. I certainly feel that this is an important gesture that highlights René's lifetime commitment to the north and lifetime passion for the outdoors. In the local newspaper—when that was going on, of course, Premier William Davis made the announcement. "René Brunelle is a man who has shown tremendous devotion to the north, this riding and its people," the Premier said. "I can think of no one more deserving of this honour."

Alan Pope, who was the Minister of Natural Resources at the time, said, "I must say that it is a difficult task to walk in the footsteps of someone who has earned such respect in the north over so many years. I'm proud that my ministry can take part in honouring René Brunelle."

I'd like to thank the family members for loaning us your husband, your dad and your granddad for his many years of service to Queen's Park. He absolutely made a difference in this province and was a member, I think, that we can all look up to and try to emulate as someone who truly served the people he represented. He really made a difference. I know that his wife and the love of his life, Andrée, was not able to join us today—she's in Magog, Quebec—but to his wife, Andrée; to his kids, Louis, Suzanne, Kelly and Pierre; and grandkids, Chloé, Tessa and Christopher, we thank you for René. We just want to say what a great job he did around here at Queen's Park and what a difference he made in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would like to thank all members for their tribute—very moving and heartwarming. I'd also echo the thank you to the family members for the gift of René. To them, we will provide you with a CD of today's tributes, along with copies of Hansard so that the family members can have them for their keepsakes.

**1340**

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I should just mention that anyone who wishes to meet the family: There's tea and coffee in the PC caucus room—room 348, I believe it is—and all members are welcome if they'd like to come.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Room 351.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Room 351. You'd think I'd know what room number it is.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for that clarification. All members are invited to PC caucus room 351 for tea with the family members, should they wish to talk to them.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, February 20, 2013, I beg leave to present an interim report on the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of privilege with respect to the production of documents and review of the matters relating to the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

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

*Report presented.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I would simply like to acknowledge the work of all members of this chamber to bring more transparency, accountability and light on this very important matter as we build and go forward with the energy infrastructure of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I just want to be clear: This is an interim report that has come back to the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The clarification is correct. It is an interim report.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, this week is Emergency Medical Services Week in Canada, a time when we have the opportunity to recognize and thank our dedicated paramedics and dispatch personnel across this province.

This year's theme is Health Care in Motion, and I think that is certainly a fitting description of our passionate EMS professionals in Ontario. No matter the setting in which they work—be it rural or urban, land or air—emergency medical professionals across the province stand ready to respond to emergencies every single day.

To all of Ontario's dedicated emergency medical personnel, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your enormous contributions to this province's health care system. Ontarians count on you to be there in our time of greatest need, and we're very grateful for your dedication to those whom you serve.

A paramedic's work isn't just important; often, it's a matter of life and death. Whether it's responding to a horrific car crash or attending at the scene of a crime, paramedics are required to maintain their composure under significant pressure. Knowing at times that lives hang in the balance, they remain professional and focused on the well-being of those they serve.

Paramedics are increasingly playing an important role in prevention and wellness. Speaker, you know that an important focus of my ministry's Action Plan for Health Care is keeping Ontario healthy by promoting healthy habits and behaviours and better management of chronic diseases. Through their first-hand interactions with Ontario patients, paramedics do a great deal to educate and inform patients about how to take critical preventive measures and avoid future complications.

While some health care professionals care for their patients in an office or a hospital setting, paramedics often assess patients in their own homes. This means that paramedics could determine how living arrangements potentially affect patients' overall wellness and how their arrangements may affect their eventual plan of care. Speaker, as you know, my ministry's transformation agenda is driven by the goal to provide better care to more people in the most appropriate setting at the best cost, and there's an exciting new opportunity to deliver better individualized care through community paramedicine. The goal of community paramedicine is to support the highest users of emergency medical services—often seniors—by helping them manage their chronic conditions, attending to their unaddressed health care needs and helping them connect to other services as necessary. For example, paramedics may proactively check in on those high users. This helps patients to avoid future emergency department visits, hospitalizations or admission to long-term-care homes.

I'm pleased to share that paramedics in some communities are already involved in community paramedicine programs. For example, here in Toronto, the Community Referrals by EMS program enables paramedics to connect patients with appropriate services and in-home supports by making referrals to the CCAC.

Community paramedicine is a great example of the type of preventive approach that will help us to improve health care in Ontario, but also to improve our collective wellness, because taking preventive measures now will lead to better health outcomes in the future.

I know that community paramedicine is something that paramedics across the province are excited about.

Today also gives me an opportunity to reflect on some of the work our government has done to improve emergency medical services across Ontario. The province now shares land ambulance costs on a 50-50 basis with municipalities. We're also committed to fully funding costs for ambulance services to all First Nations communities in Ontario.

We now provide 100% funding for nurses dedicated to providing care to patients arriving by ambulance to hospital emergency departments. These nurses help paramedics off-load their patients more quickly, so that

paramedics can get back on the road to respond to more emergency calls.

Over the past year, we've put our critical land and air ambulance service, Ornge, on the right track, strengthening it to provide the best possible services to the people of Ontario. Although it's been a difficult time, I'd like to say a special thank you to the hard-working front-line professionals at Ornge, who never lost sight of their number one goal: to provide the highest quality care to Ontario patients.

As we transform health care in Ontario and maintain our focus on prevention and wellness, I know that paramedics will continue to play an important role in improving health outcomes for more Ontarians.

Once again, I'd like to reiterate my heartfelt thanks to all EMS workers right across Ontario who work day in and day out to make sure that patients in our province receive the highest quality emergency services, and that they are connected with the supports they need. Thank you for your passion and dedication to make Ontario the healthiest place to grow up and grow old.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Statements by ministries? Last call for statements by ministries.

It's time for responses.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'm pleased to rise today and recognize Emergency Medical Services Week, on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and my PC caucus colleagues.

Every day, Ontario's 7,000 paramedics respond to emergency calls in each of our communities. It is because of the dedication and heroic actions of our local paramedics that thousands of citizens receive emergency medical treatment each and every year.

In addition to the life-saving skills paramedics are delivering, there is a growing number of jurisdictions involving paramedics in tactical teams, special rescue teams and disaster preparedness teams. Paramedics are equally involved in our remote and after-hours health centres, industrial sites and air medical teams. Paramedics can also be found in the field of injury prevention. Paramedics have a unique ability to share their experiences through their first aid and CPR classes, ACLS—advanced cardiac life support—PALS—pediatric advanced life support—and other training programs.

Paramedics in some jurisdictions are involved in other injury prevention programs such as car seat safety, fall prevention, public access to defibrillation programs and more. Such program partnerships show the leadership of paramedics but, more important, the care paramedics bring to our communities.

This year, the Paramedic Chiefs of Canada chose the theme Health Care in Motion. This couldn't be more fitting, as our paramedics are our first responders and provide critical medical services on the go. In light of this year's theme, paramedics are fostering new partnerships between first responders, emergency service groups and telecommunications experts to build on emergency health service delivery.

I hope all of my colleagues will take time to learn more about their local EMS and the important work they're engaging in. More importantly, please say thank

you for their day-to-day efforts and dedication, and also to their spouses and families.

I want to extend a special thank you to the dedicated EMS staff who keep the communities within Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound healthy and safe. Thank you for your continued dedication, and happy EMS Week.

**1350**

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party to acknowledge EMS Week. It's a national day of acknowledgement to pay tribute to our men and women who serve us in our emergency medical services field. What would we do without them, such a vital part of our overall health care system? So, obviously, it is an opportunity for us in this chamber to give our thanks and to give our acknowledgement of the vital work they do keeping us safe and keeping us healthy, and ensuring that they are there when we need them.

In Ontario, each municipality is required to maintain ambulance services that remain accessible, integrated, seamless, accountable and responsive. That provision of land ambulance services is a joint municipal-provincial responsibility, and currently 72 certified land ambulance services respond to over one million calls annually in this province. What a remarkable level of service. Those who are in emergent need, dire need of first responders to get to the scene of a tragedy, sometimes horrific scenes that we in this House couldn't imagine—we ask those men and women to see things we certainly wouldn't want to.

All the more reason that we should ensure, when it comes to providing the resources they need to do their job, and also compensating them—our emergency services are governed under special legislation that makes them an essential service, meaning we couldn't do anything without them in this province. We could not operate in a civil and cohesive way.

Through our labour negotiations, they are not given the same rights as other workers have. They have to go to binding interest arbitration when it comes to their collective agreements. It's a process that works. It's a process that's fair. It's a process that acknowledges that they are obviously essential, something we could not do without; all the more reason we need to acknowledge that vital component of their work and protect it, so that we obviously don't ever risk losing such an integral component of our overall safety in this province.

There isn't a day in this province when someone doesn't go without needing essential emergency services. Thankfully, they are there. They are responsive, they are professionals, they're trained, and they take pride in their work. Obviously, today is a day when we should take pride in them and commit ourselves—commit this body—to the resources they need and that our communities need to ensure that that service goes seamlessly throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise on this occasion to pay tribute to the men and women who provide that essential service and, obviously, to thank them every day for their professionalism and their level of commitment, and for keeping our communities safe.

## PETITIONS

### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“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.”

### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas servers and bartenders in Ontario earn \$8.90 an hour, far less than the minimum wage; and

“Whereas tips are given to servers and bartenders for good service and to supplement the lower wages they receive; and

“Whereas Ontario law allows for owners and managers to pocket a portion of servers’ and bartenders’ earned tips or total sales; and

“Whereas thousands of servers across the province have asked for this practice to stop;

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

“Support the swift passage of Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act with respect to tips and other gratuities and thereby end the practice of ‘tip-outs’ to management and owners.”

It is signed by many people of the Windsor area. I am in agreement and will affix my signature thereto and send it with page Alex.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I have the pleasure to present these petitions on behalf of the Port Perry Villa, West Shore Village and Community Nursing Home Port Perry, where I was last week. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health”—and she’s here—“is planning on eliminating OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas the Minister of Health has announced a total of \$33 million in physiotherapy funding, or \$550 per senior for 60,000 seniors, including those in retirement homes; and

“Whereas instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may receive now from their dedicated on-site ... physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide 5 to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury. All other ambulatory seniors would have to attend other community locations/clinics for physiotherapy and exercise off-site; and

“Whereas this change not only reduces the amount of money available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers—\$12.20 per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC—\$120 per treatment); and

“Whereas current OHIP physiotherapy providers, who have been providing seniors with individualized treatments for over 48 years, will be delisted from OHIP by the government;”—shameful—“and

“Whereas these services have been proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and fall risks;

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

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Just a moment, please.

“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes,

our most vulnerable population and most at risk for falls; and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP ... providers.”

I'm pleased to sign this in support of my constituents in the riding of Durham, in the plight of the Ministry of Health.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I was quite proud to receive these hundreds of petitions from people on Manitoulin Island, particularly in Gore Bay over at the Manitoulin Lodge, who have a grave concern and have voiced it through signing these petitions.

“Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 people in Ontario waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

“Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care—e.g. to be attended to for toileting needs; to be fed; to receive a bath; for pain medication. Since 2008, funding for 2.8 paid hours of care per resident per day has been provided. In that budget year, a promise was made to increase this funding to 4.0 hours per resident per day by 2012. This has not been done; and

**1400**

“Whereas the personal support worker program has no provincial governing body that would provide provincial standards and regulation to ensure the best care for residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and insufficient;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January 2015;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will provide registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers in the province.”

I fully support this petition and sign it on behalf of the residents of Algoma–Manitoulin.

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

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

“Whereas beginning April 26, 2013, the new five-year commercial fishing agreement that the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Ontario government have signed allowing commercial fishing to resume in Owen Sound and Colpoys Bay year-round over the term of the agreement; and

“Whereas the terms and conditions of the agreement were drafted and signed without full and proper consultations with all affected community groups, such as local sportsmen’s clubs who have and continue to do a tremendous amount of work in regard to stocking bays with fish to support the sports fishery; and

“Whereas the aforementioned groups were promised by the former MNR Minister Donna Cansfield that full and proper consultation would take place before any agreement would be signed; and

“Whereas the agreement provides no guarantees native fishermen won’t set their gill nets deep inside nor within a one-kilometre radius of the mouths of Gleason Brook, as well as the Bothwell, Waterton and Keefer Creeks to protect spawning salmon and rainbow trout; and

“Whereas the use of gill nets poses a safety risk to recreational angling and pleasure boating, and expansion of netting further into the bays threatens to destabilize fish stock and thus local sport fishing, tourism and the economy;

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

“To repeal the agreement created between the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Ontario government, effective immediately, and renegotiate a new agreement in consultation with all key stakeholders, including the sports fishing community.”

I support this petition, will sign my name and send it with page Simon.

#### GOVERNMENT SERVICES

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Once again, another petition from the members of Algoma–Manitoulin, particularly across northern Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 fully support this petition and sign it on behalf of residents of Algoma–Manitoulin.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning major changes to the provision of OHIP physiotherapy services as of August 1; and

“Whereas this will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments annually; and

“Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year; and

“Whereas ambulatory seniors in retirement homes would have to travel offsite for physiotherapy; and

“Whereas under the changes scheduled for August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

“Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

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

“That the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st not proceed and that the provincial government guarantee that there will be no reduction in services currently available for seniors, children and youths, people with disabilities and those who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy.”

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

### TAXATION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** We have a petition here. It’s titled “Reject subway taxes.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government’s Metrolinx transit report calls for a one-percentage-point increase to the harmonized sales tax, and a five-cents-per-litre regional fuel and gasoline tax, to fund transit expansion in the greater Toronto area; and

“Whereas most residents in rural, northern and eastern areas of the province from Cultus to Cornwall, Kenora to Cayuga, will neither see any benefits nor make use of this GTA-centric transportation network;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to reject the inappropriate and unfair tax proposals from the Ontario government’s Metrolinx report.”

I fully agree and affix my signature to this petition.

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Todd Smith:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on cutting physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes—from an estimated \$110 million to \$58.5 million; and

“Whereas with this change seniors will not receive the care they are currently entitled to through their current OHIP physiotherapy providers, who the government plans to delist from OHIP on August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas the government has announced that the funding level, the number of treatments a residents could receive, has not been specified and will be reduced from a maximum of 150 visits/year to some unknown level, which means the hours of care and number of staff providing seniors with physiotherapy will also be significantly reduced as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas our current OHIP physiotherapy providers have been providing seniors with individualized treatments for over 48 years, and these services have been proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and falls risk;

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

“To review and reverse this drastic cut of OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors, our most vulnerable population, and to continue with \$110 million physiotherapy funding for seniors in long-term-care homes.”

“I agree with the petition, will sign it and send it to the table with Simon.

### PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

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

“Whereas current community care access centre personal support worker guidelines do not provide a clear indication of whether PSWs are allowed to support patients’ activities outside the home; and

“Whereas patient health is best ensured through an active, healthy lifestyle that may involve activities outside the patient’s home; and

“Whereas the spirit of community care includes patient access to their community’s healthy lifestyle resources;

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

“To enact all necessary statutes that would allow personal support workers and other community care access centre staff to support their patients and clients both in the home and in necessary activities in their communities.”

I agree with the petition and will be signing it and passing it off to page Michael.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time we have this afternoon for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### 2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

#### BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2013, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** When we last debated the budget motion, the leader of the third party had the floor. I'm pleased to recognize again the leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate taking the opportunity to continue my debate on the budget motion.

I want to start by recalling the last election campaign. In the last election campaign, in 2011, I made it really clear during that campaign that I was seeking the job of Premier of the province of Ontario. But I also know that the result of that election campaign brought us a minority Parliament. The people of the province actually chose a minority government, and they gave that minority government, in my opinion, a particular mandate. And they gave me and my fantastic team of New Democrats, whom I have the honour to serve with here in this House day in and day out, a very important job to do: to deliver results for them.

**1410**

I'm proud to say that we've been able to deliver. Last year, we delivered support for working parents who were scrambling to find daycare. Last year, we delivered protection for families who were worried about cuts to their local hospitals. And we delivered a fiscal plan that balanced the books faster and made the budget a little more fair.

That was last year's budget. It wasn't easy; it took a lot of work. This year it took even more. We put forward some simple ideas that would make a difference in people's lives; ideas that would tackle their concerns about creating jobs and growing our economy while helping them in their everyday lives and balancing the books in balanced way. We've worked hard to put the issues that matter to people on the agenda. We worked even harder to deliver results.

People told us that they were worried about a lack of good jobs in this province, particularly for youth. The unemployment rate for young people just starting out is now upwards of 16%, and that number keeps climbing. For years now, Liberal and Conservative governments have insisted that corporate tax giveaways and schemes like the HST were going to create jobs. Well, Speaker, that hasn't worked.

People told us they wanted change. They want to see young people starting their careers and finding good jobs, not languishing in their parents' basements wondering if they're ever going to find work. So we put forward our First Start plan, a modest incentive to encourage companies that were ready to put young people to work.

That's change that will make a real difference for people in this province.

People told us they were worried about home care for their aging parents and loved ones. Some seniors are waiting as long as 262 days to get the home care they need, Speaker, and that's after they've been approved for it. We proposed a modest investment to ensure that anyone approved for home care would get a guarantee that they'd receive that home care within five days of being approved.

We also proposed a cap on CEOs' earnings in hospitals, so that the trend of salaries at the very top echelons of the health care system, pushing seven figures, was stopped in its tracks. The Liberals continue to refuse to cap CEO salaries, but New Democrats have ensured that wait times for home care will go down. For seniors and others waiting for home care, that's change that will make a real difference in their lives.

People told us they felt that they could barely keep up with the growing costs of everyday life, whether it's ever-climbing electricity bills or the growing number of regressive fees and taxes that are unfair—it looks like there's more to come, in that regard, if the Liberals have their way, Speaker. But people have been telling us that they are feeling that life is growing more and more unaffordable.

Despite reforms that took place in this province a couple of years ago that dramatically reduced benefits and dramatically increased profits for the insurance industry, Ontario drivers continue to pay the highest auto insurance rates in our country. To make matters worse, drivers in some lower-income neighbourhoods will pay literally twice what drivers in some of the richest neighbourhoods in Toronto are being asked to pay. Now, a system that asks the people in Rexdale to pay so that the people in Rosedale get a break is a broken system. We worked hard for change. We won a reduction of auto insurance rates of 15% over the next year, to put money back in people's pockets and fairness into a system that's been unfair for far too long. That's change that will make a real difference in people's lives.

People told us that they wanted the budget to be balanced and they wanted the budget to be fair. They're tired of seeing their money spent without any guidelines, without any outcomes, without any clear results. We proposed eliminating some tax measures that weren't clearly linked to creating jobs or increasing Ontario's productivity, so that we could focus on ones that were directly tied to those kinds of things. We proposed cost-saving measures like bulk purchasing to achieve efficiencies. Our budget proposals were designed to make life better for the people who make our province work, but they also aimed to rebuild the trust of the public.

We heard from Ontarians very loudly and clearly that they want to see better. They don't believe that Liberals have learned their lesson after their government's billion-dollar eHealth scandal, the \$700-million scandal at Ornge, or the half-a-billion-dollar gas plant scandal. They know that a Conservative government wouldn't be any different. In fact, all that they need to do is look at what's

happening in Ottawa to see that that bunch are really every bit just as bad.

People know that things can be different. They need to know that things can be different, that the government will invest public money wisely and well. They need to know that, in tough economic times, every single dollar is being put to use in the public's interest—not in the interests of the governing political party, but in the interests of the public.

New Democrats have some lessons to teach, actually. We have some lessons to teach the other parties about balancing the books and keeping a careful eye on the public purse. In fact, many people don't know this, but New Democrat governments across this country have a better track record than Liberal governments and have a better track record than Conservative governments when it comes to balancing the books. We've run fewer deficit budgets than the other parties, and when we have run deficit budgets, they have been lower in relationship, in ratio, to the GDP than the other parties' in those provinces.

We do have some lessons that we can teach when it comes to being prudent and balanced and wise and still achieving great things for the provinces where we've governed. We achieved this success by taking a balanced approach, by looking carefully at our respective provinces' revenues and expenditures and by ensuring that government is accountable and transparent.

That is why we propose a financial accountability office, modelled after the parliamentary budget office in Ottawa—the one that Stephen Harper hated so much that he tried to shut it down recently. That office will give people a chance to get independent verification about government spending claims, free from partisan spin, free from Enron accounting tricks. That's the kind of change that will make a real difference for Ontarians.

The results that we've delivered over the past 18 months show that New Democrats have our priorities straight. It's about people, Speaker; that's what it's about. That's what they put us here to do: to make life better for them, to keep them in the focus and to make sure that all of the work that we do around here is about making their lives better.

We didn't get everything we wanted in this budget process. We didn't get everything that the people needed in this budget process. But we got concrete results that put job creation ahead of corporate tax giveaways, that put the needs of patients ahead of the needs of hospital CEOs and that gave a break to families struggling to pay the bills instead of the company that's putting the bill in the mail.

I'm proud of what we've been able to achieve, but it hasn't been easy. We know what to expect from this Liberal government. We know that we are ready to work hard for the people. But we know that the Liberals, unfortunately, are always ready to work hard, but only for the power of the Liberal Party and for the good of the Liberal Party.

We saw it in the fall, when the Liberals moved heaven and earth to engineer a by-election and created a crisis in

our schools in a short-sighted attempt to win back their majority power. They lost, and of course, as a result, we were able to elect a fantastic MPP, Catherine Fife, for Kitchener–Waterloo.

We saw it when, after that by-election and the people of Kitchener–Waterloo made it clear that they, like the rest of Ontarians, were not going to hand the Liberals majority power, the Premier decided to shut the legislative chamber down and effectively throw out thousands—well, probably not thousands, but certainly hundreds—of hours of legislative work and many, many bills, into the garbage, for their own selfish political purposes. Time and again, we've seen the Liberal Party that doesn't understand that there's a difference between serving the public and being self-serving when it comes to helping their own party.

**1420**

So, Speaker, we're going to do what we told the people back in October 2011 that we were going to do. We're going to work hard, and we're going to keep working hard. We're going to keep working hard to improve health care. We're going to keep working hard to create jobs. We're going to keep working hard to make life affordable, and we're going to keep working hard to make government accountable and to deliver for the people who elected us to be here.

Speaker, I can tell you, the other opposition party on both counts, last budget and this budget, decided to sit on the sidelines. They don't think it's important to work hard to get results for people. They don't think that's what they were elected to do. New Democrats disagree seriously. We would rather roll up our sleeves and do the hard work that needs to be done to make a real difference for people, even if it means you have to take a little bit of criticism—because you know what? We know at the end of the day that we can stand proudly on our track record of improved health care, of jobs for young people, of lower auto insurance rates.

For us, that's the goal, to make life better for people. Unfortunately, for others, the goal is something else, but the people of Ontario can sleep well, knowing that there's one political party in opposition that's prepared to roll up its sleeves, put its nose to the grindstone and try to achieve things on their behalf, because that's exactly what they elected all of us to do in October 2011, and we are proud to be able to deliver on their behalf.

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

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I have the unusual opportunity of speaking for some 20 minutes. It doesn't happen very often in the House, but we are talking about the proposed budget document. I'm delighted to add to what's already been said by members of both sides of the House, and I'm very pleased to follow the leader of the third party, who has mentioned some of the benefits, the positive aspects that are included in the budget.

The budget is a document that received extensive consultation prior to being introduced in the House. It is not something that just came out of the blue. The Minis-

ter of Finance has consulted individual taxpayers, stakeholders, corporations, bankers and financial institutions, and they all have made contributions, as well as the members of the opposition and the leader of the third party. Through the encouragement and the persistence and the various conversations that our leader has had with both leaders, I have to say, of the two oppositions, we were able to proceed with the budget and we are here today, having seen some of the changes that have been incorporated, as suggested by the leader of the third party.

I think they are beneficial to our people, our consumers. They are ones that we can support because we believe they are an improvement to the budget, and this is part of the work that we do here. Let me say, Speaker, that we are blessed to live in a country where we can speak freely of what we see would be the best way of serving the people who have sent us to serve them in this House. It is one of those very rare things that we enjoy, being free to speak, and it is because of the freedoms that we enjoy and the contributions we make that we can do things better, and in the end we can bring legislation that will benefit in a positive way the people of Ontario. So we welcome all of that.

Other members have chosen not to make any contribution whatsoever, and that's fine. I think this reflects also the liberty that our people at large have to see how things are done in the House and to act accordingly.

What are some of the things that we feel good about sending this budget forward? By sending it forward, I mean that I hope that we can see it going through, being approved, so we can indeed start to implement some of those positive measures that the budget talks about.

Let me give you some of the main points. I will try, if I have time, to dwell on some of the individual benefits. Of course, I think the Premier has mentioned this many, many times before. I have to say that Premier Wynne understood very well the mood of the people, the times that economically we are going through, the pressure that we are facing externally from other jurisdictions, and therefore she has made a tremendous contribution in making sure that indeed the budget that has been presented and we are debating today addresses exactly that.

Jobs and growth: I think jobs and prosperity go well together, because we can't have prosperity unless our people are working.

She mentioned many times to have a fair society, to be fair with our people, especially in social assistance reform. And something that our Premier and we feel very strong about is investing in everyday life; not only in our own individual life but in the individual life of our taxpayers, our people.

The deficit reduction to the public service reform—we are well under way meeting that. As a matter of fact, I think it includes some of the recommendations from the Drummond report. We are well under way: We have already met some of those recommendations. So we're doing fine. We are now at \$9.8 billion, which is the fourth year in a row that we are hitting the target, and we are on the way of beating already the 50-year target.

Again, Speaker, I could say, "Line our bases." Let me say that this is a fair and balanced-approach budget, as has been presented. It is determined and well disciplined. It's presenting very strong fundamentals. It beats all the financial targets, and we have our own way—our own path—to balance, to accomplish that. Mainly, it is the economic plan for the long term. I don't think we can look at the next year or the next two years. I think it's important that every government take a long look at what we want to see in the next five, 10, 15 and 25 years.

Some of the highlights: For example, we have the gasoline tax fund, which is creating \$321 million, which is dedicated to fund municipal transit structures throughout municipalities throughout Ontario. Also, we are giving choices for families in need of the Ontario Trillium Benefit. Now, as we have heard, we have listened and we have acted, it is in the budget, and people who are eligible to receive all these benefits and these refunds can choose now if they wish to receive them on a lump-sum basis, if you will, or if they want to receive them on a monthly basis. I'm talking about the Ontario Sales Tax Credit and the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit as well. They can have that on a monthly basis or on a lump-sum basis.

On jobs and growth, this is something that we have to pay real attention to. When we say "long-term care" and we have long-term views, we're looking at creating jobs not now but down the road as well. One of the things in this so-called smart investment includes some \$35 billion to modernize infrastructure and create some 100,000 jobs per year. On top of that, we have allocated another \$100 million for small and urban municipalities to create jobs in their own local-area projects.

#### 1430

I heard very well the leader of the third party when, among other things, she said she was requesting of our Premier what she wanted to do: creating a job-training fund for young people. She wanted to see, I believe, some \$35 million for this job-creation project. I think this is something that was already working very well within the intent of the Premier while working on the budget delivery. We have multiplied this by eight times. Instead of \$30 million, the Premier decided that if we want to create a job strategy fund for youth on a long-term basis, we should have something like \$295 million to create some 30,000 jobs for youth. This, I think, would go a long way indeed in helping reduce the very high and frustrating number of unemployed youth in our province, so this will be well-received.

On the fair society aspect, we are allowing our people to keep more of their paycheques, especially those that are on social assistance. We are saying that the first couple of hundred dollars would be exempted. It's not huge, but it's something that has never been done, and again, it's to offer some assistance to our people on social assistance.

As well, we have increased funding for children in poverty through the Ontario Child Benefit, and it's in the budget. We have offered more support for people with

disabilities. We have put more money into programs. Again, it's because we understand that there is need, and that is one way to assist those.

Investing in everyday life: I mentioned that before, Speaker. One of the major components that I think is well supported by every member of the House—we had the big support of the third party, and their leader herself—was with respect to auto insurance: a reduction in rates of some 15%, on a gradual basis, if we may say that. We are going to reach this 15% on a gradual basis. This is good, Speaker. This is going to affect some nine million of our drivers and their families as well.

I will come back to that in a moment to explain and talk a bit more about auto insurance. But something that I'm also interested in myself, very deeply, when it comes to providing more care for our seniors, is that another 46,000 seniors will be receiving home care on, if you will, a target of five days, period.

Education, as well, has been one of our main fundamentals with respect to providing assistance to our people. Education and health care, I think, were our two main pillars. They continue to be two main pillars of the present Premier, Kathleen Wynne. We are pleased to see education for our kids and full-day kindergarten.

The 30% tuition grant continues. Even though we heard rumblings that we couldn't afford it, that we couldn't do it, that it's not the time to do it, we believe that those are two particular areas that we would do well to continue funding. The Premier understood that and wanted to make it a point that it indeed remains in the budget.

Debt reduction, I think I have mentioned: The reason we are able to accomplish that is that we have already paid over \$5 billion since we came into power. We are well on the way—I think it is important that we maintain bringing the deficit down so we are in line to eliminate it completely by 2017-18. We did that by controlling spending, and we also had to consider raising revenues.

We also brought in some tax reforms, which are now at work. We're stimulating the economy. If we cannot do that, we cannot create jobs. The people who are not working, money's not coming in—and therefore it's a must that we continue to do that, Speaker. We have indeed created 400,000 jobs since the recession, and we have 130,000 more jobs now than we had prior to the recession. Again, I have to commend that 60% of Drummond's recommendations with respect to the transformation of public service—we are on target and we are doing that.

Let me touch a bit on a longer basis, if you will, with the auto insurance, because it's been a very weak spot not only with me but I think with members of the House in general. It's an area that has been around for quite some time, and we wanted to do some real change. As a matter of fact, it started in 2010, when we introduced some legislation addressing this critical issue. It was the accountability, the transparency, the cost-saving, and we realized that something had to be done.

As a result of the reforms that we introduced in 2010, yes, the rates did come down somewhat, but not to the

level that was acceptable, because in my area I would get a lot of complaints, and I'm still getting complaints, Speaker, as to why: "I am a good driver. Why should I be penalized by the insurance companies because I happen to live in an M9L 1C4 zip code?" I think this is totally irrelevant. I believe that it's wrong. I believe that it discriminates against good drivers all over, whatever they may be, and I think its time has come, I have to say.

I'm pleased that we have support of the House. I hope we have the support of all the House, as this is an issue that affects drivers all over Ontario, not only within a particular ward or riding or jurisdiction, but it affects our people throughout Ontario. I hope that the budget comes to pass so we can work on the implementation of the reduction and the direction that will be legislated by this government, by this House to the regulatory authority.

Speaker, in 2010 we did introduce a reform, and what did our reform include? It included announcing also the reform to the insurance anti-fraud task force. This was in the 2011 budget. That was part of some 38 recommendations as well. In January 2013, we approved regulatory amendments to combat, indeed, fraud and protect consumers. We know that a big part of the premiums continuing to rise is because of the amount of fraud that goes on in the industry.

#### 1440

Speaker, this is the important point: How is the government going to make sure that indeed this will take place? To achieve the premium reduction, the government will be introducing legislation, by amending. Of course, the budget has to be approved first, and then the amendment will proceed to:

- legislate a premium reduction of 15%, on average, within a period of time to be prescribed by regulation;

- require insurers to offer lower insurance premiums for consumers with safe driving records. Speaker, we want to commend the people who have safe driving records;

- give the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, in short, FSCO, the authority to license and oversee the business practices of health clinics and practitioners who employ auto insurers; and

- provide, as well, the Superintendent of Financial Services with the authority to require insurers to file for rates.

On top of that, the government will intensify its existing cost and rate reduction strategy by transforming the current auto insurance dispute resolution system by appointing an expert to review the system and propose legislative amendments by the fall of 2013; and base auto insurance benefits on medical evidence, including directing the regulator to provide an interim report this year on the progress of the minor injury treatment protocol project.

Speaker, my time is quickly coming to an end. I will have a lot more to say because the budget contains a lot of information that I think would be of benefit for our people to know.

I'm very confident that the budget will proceed, will pass. Once that happens, the beneficial proposals will

indeed come out and we can start to implement them. The people will see that and we can move on, especially with the infrastructure that creates thousands and thousands of jobs.

Speaker, 20 minutes was great, but not enough. I look for work to doing some more some other time, but for today, I say thank you so much for the opportunity.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's a privilege to get up to respond to the minister responsible for seniors.

Last week, constituency week, I had a chance to meet with a number of seniors in Chesterville in a new home, Garden Villa. They were very concerned about changes we see in this budget over physiotherapy, major cuts to a group where those services can mean so much, can mean their retaining mobility—really meaning the difference between enjoying life and not enjoying life. It's too bad that we see some of these cuts.

These are just some of the cuts we're seeing. Not too long ago I met with some doctors, and they were talking about the cuts to cataract surgery last year. You can imagine important thing such as being able to see. It's the government that put quotas on.

More disturbing to me, these are things that they haven't talked about. They turn around and they talk about how we have the best health care system in the world. They've been chiselling away at this and reducing services so that not only seniors, but many people can't get these services that make a huge difference in life.

It's funny now; after a report on auto insurance was out in 2011, they're talking about looking at it, talking about getting rid of some of the categories that the auto insurance companies actually use to set rates. If you want to do that, there is a report talking about many of the issues that affect auto insurance. You can't just legislate a reduction; we'll be back next year legislating free flows so that they can come back up to look after their losses.

It's a government that's got no plan. I think it's time to change this government. We just can't support it through this budget.

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'd like to thank the minister responsible for seniors. He always has eloquent delivery and he's always calm, cool and collected when he delivers.

I listened intently to what he was saying, and he certainly made some points. However, I want to make it perfectly clear from the NDP perspective that we will be diligently watching what's going to unfold in the next few months. If this government does not follow through on their promises—with all due respect, there have been some Liberal promises broken in the past; I ran out of ink on the amount. If they do not follow through on what they're saying in this Parliament and they do not follow through on all the main things that we've accomplished, they certainly aren't going to last too long.

We are serious about this. We want this to happen. We don't want just to talk about it. We don't want more

consulting. We don't want more committees set up. We want actual things done. That's why we stood firm. That's why we fought hard to get some of the things we got from this governing Liberal Party.

I'll tell you what I am proud of, Mr. Speaker: It's the fact that we did at least listen. We worked. We tried to get what was good for the people we represent, as much as we could possibly do. We hung on to the last, fought to the last minute to get things, improvements. I think there's some really good stuff if they follow through on what they said they're going to do.

Believe me, all of Ontario is watching. We are watching. I'm sure the official opposition is watching. I'll be honest, Speaker; I hate to say that it's the last kick at the cat. If you don't follow through on what you said you're going to do, you will not be governing in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Ça me fait plaisir de me lever aujourd'hui pour parler du budget qui a été présenté, et je dois dire que je dois féliciter le troisième parti pour avoir donné des idées au gouvernement sur comment on peut améliorer la situation en Ontario. La chef des néo-démocrates est venue avec des suggestions importantes, des suggestions qui font que la qualité de vie des Ontariens va être bien améliorée.

Le parti d'opposition a décidé, même avant que le budget ne soit écrit, de ne pas l'appuyer. Alors, c'est étrange—même avant qu'on ne l'ait écrit. Ils ne l'ont pas lu. Avant qu'il ne soit écrit, ils ont dit : « Nous autres, on ne l'appuie pas. »

Il y a deux raisons pour ça. Une des raisons est qu'ils veulent avoir une élection le plus rapidement possible. Pourquoi? On ne sait pas. Peut-être parce qu'ils veulent changer de chef, puis ils voulaient se servir de nous autres et de vous autres. Mais on n'est pas tombé dans la trappe. Alors on a décidé d'écrire un budget qui serait très sensible aux besoins des Ontariens, avec l'apport du gouvernement néo-démocrate, et je les remercie aujourd'hui.

Je suis heureuse de voir qu'on met l'accent sur l'emploi des jeunes. Il y a trop de jeunes qui sont sans emploi—moins que dans les pays d'Europe, par exemple. On a de la famille en Europe, et le taux de chômage est très élevé chez les jeunes de moins de 30 ans—ici, non. Il y a plus d'emplois, mais on veut prévenir ce qui arrive en Europe, alors on va mettre l'accent sur aider les employeurs.

Aussi, la fonction publique—on doit, nous, mettre l'accent sur ce qu'on peut faire pour augmenter l'emploi chez les jeunes. Puis je pourrais parler aussi du domaine de la santé et du domaine des services sociaux dont j'ai été la ministre pendant cinq ans et demi.

Je vais m'arrêter ici, mais je voulais aujourd'hui remercier les néo-démocrates pour les bonnes idées qu'ils ont amenées au budget. Merci.

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'm pleased to rise today to say a few words in response to the minister responsible for

seniors. He made a lot of points that were really interesting when it comes to the budget and its implementation. In his particular role, dealing with seniors, he's got a lot of issues that he must be listening to from the general public. There's no question that there are some issues out there that need to be addressed, and they were kind of hidden in the budget in what I thought was an irresponsible way.

Definitely, physiotherapy services are something I'm hearing a lot about. I had a demonstration in my office last Friday. People are quite upset. My understanding is there's about a \$44-million reduction in the amount of physiotherapy services that will go to seniors in Ontario.

**1450**

I'm glad the minister has at least brought Mr. Miller's bill back out on sprinkler systems for retirement homes. There's no question that that is something we have to be very concerned about, the safety of our seniors because, again, that falls under—whether you call it retirement homes, seniors' housing or whatever it may be, we have to do the very best we can. These are the kinds of issues that I guess the government is trying their best to address.

Finally, I think most seniors would be interested in the kind of debt we leave for their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. That is the key thing that I'm most concerned about, that we really zero in on this. We're going into debt about \$1.9 million an hour, and I think we have to do better in how we spend our money provincially.

It looks like this budget will pass, and we'll be looking very carefully at both the government and the members of the third party who will be supporting the budget apparently.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'll return to the minister responsible for seniors for his two-minute response.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I'm very grateful for the generous comments by colleagues the members from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Hamilton—Stoney Creek—Hamilton East—Stoney Creek; Paul, my friend, would never forgive me if I didn't remember his riding correctly—the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and of course the member from Simcoe North, who addressed very nicely the seniors' portion.

Let me say with respect to the physiotherapy services and seniors, that actually that is a change that is much welcomed, Speaker. I can see some 218,000 seniors receiving physiotherapy. The eligibility has not changed. The format has not changed. They will continue to receive these services in retirement homes, nursing homes, community care centres and even on a one-to-one basis, if necessary, in their own home. So I think we have to take a good look at the changes that are being made and how they will be implemented; we'll keep an eye on that as well.

But I want to touch briefly on my colleague the member from Simcoe North, and he's quite right. We have to address seniors' issues, in the form of care and

safety, protection and living in a place that offers peace of mind not only for seniors themselves but for family members.

Let me just briefly say that the Retirement Homes Act came into force two years ago. The Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority came after that, and it's part and parcel of providing, indeed, the best safety for seniors living in retirement homes.

I thank all the members, and I thank you, Speaker, for your time.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I would like to address Bill 65, the budget measures act, in the context of the great province that we've inherited from the World War II generation, the great generation. I know there was a veteran in the members' gallery—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'd like to remind the House that we are debating the budget motion at present. So I'll return to the member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Further to this budget motion my question is, what have we inherited? We know what we inherited from that great generation, the World War II generation. There was a veteran in the members' gallery earlier today. I know John Fehr is sitting in the gallery right now. I hope he doesn't throw any tomatoes at me. I gave him about five tomatoes about an hour ago.

My concern is that we now see an Ontario that is in debt to the tune of \$281 billion. We know the projected debt for the fiscal year 2017-18 is \$411.4 billion. What right do we have as—and I myself, I'm in the baby boom generation. If our generation can't pay off this debt, how can we expect the next generation, our children and our grandchildren, to address this issue? I know my kids have had difficulty finding well-paying work. We had it pretty good, as the baby boom crowd; there always seemed to be work. The generation was always willing to work, certainly. We can't pay off this debt. What business have we got passing this on to the next generation coming along?

Again, \$281 billion in four years projected to be \$411.4 billion. Unfortunately, what we're debating this afternoon with respect to the budget continues a sad tale that I've certainly observed over the last 10 years, a tale of deficit spending and increased taxation. Stay tuned—we are now hearing there's more Liberal sales tax and gas tax hikes being proposed to fund subways. Again, we know this from a government-sponsored study that's been done.

You know, this tax-and-spend legacy of the past 10 years, it puts me in mind of a prediction that was made 10 years ago. It was a prediction made by Mark Mullins, the Fraser Institute's director of policy studies, a prediction that pointed to a costly future for the people of Ontario. This is what Mark Mullins had to say 10 years ago: "The government has been floating trial policy balloons for months.... We examined them all and priced their impact on the deficit...."

“The result is a stunning surprise: all of the proposed deficit reduction comes from new revenues ... and spending is actually set to rise.” I’ll continue with the quote: “This is basically pickpocket economics, a tax-and-spend approach that can only diminish Ontario’s future prosperity.” That’s a prediction of 10 years ago.

Fast-forward to today, this year’s budget: We look back on a decade that more than doubled the debt. At that time it was \$139 billion and, as I’ve recently indicated, it’s presently sitting at \$281 billion. It’s really no wonder—certainly down in my riding people for several years now have referred to Mr. McGuinty as “Dalton the Debt-Doubler.” The numbers are here; the numbers don’t lie.

It gets worse. As I mentioned, the government’s appointed economist, Don Drummond, has brought in a prediction: Four years from now we will be staring down the barrel of a \$411.4-billion debt. In the past 10 years, they did call for action—they called for significant action—and yet instead of reducing government spending and reducing taxes, which would spur the economy and create some jobs, we saw a series of tax hikes. We saw spending hikes empty our wallets, essentially.

This 2013 budget continues the trend that’s now calling for \$3.6 billion in new spending this year alone. So we’ve seen 10 years of taxing, 10 years of spending that have gone a long way to eliminate Ontario’s competitive advantage and driven business, investment and jobs into neighbouring jurisdictions.

As we all know, Ontario’s got something like 600,000 people out of work. Jobs are literally fleeing the province. Look at London: 9.9% unemployment. Caterpillar closed Electro-Motive and moved to Indiana. More recently, Caterpillar made an announcement they’re moving a Toronto operation to the state of Michigan. And we’re witnessing, down in my riding, our third Steelworker US Steel lockout in three years. Two lockouts now at Nanticoke’s Lake Erie Works—a lockout that’s been going for a number of weeks. Hopefully, it won’t go for a number of months.

I had an opportunity to address a rally this weekend down at the plant gate at US Steel. I had an opportunity to explain what we’ve been talking about in the Legislature with respect to that particular lockout. I’ve raised it in question period. We had, as you would know, a late show debate. I asked the same questions that I asked during the previous lockout; I got the same answers. Nothing has really changed. We’re dealing with, obviously, a global corporation, an international union that is able to match that corporation, and we have a province of Ontario that seems to be paralyzed by these kinds of things.

**1500**

Of course, there’s a provincial mediator. Back and forth a bit, we’ve asked what is the broader role for this mediator? I was told by the ministry that that information cannot be divulged. Questions I asked of the labour minister here, Yasir Naqvi—I asked him to at minimum talk to the company, talk to the union, come down to the

area, try and pull sides together, talk to the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—there’s someone who has a career in the steel industry. There’s a breadth of knowledge there. I’ve asked the minister to go down to Pittsburgh, go to Washington, perhaps go to Gary, Indiana; unfortunately that’s where the steel will be coming from. US Steel will continue to market steel in Canada, but they are definitely not making it down at the Lake Erie Works right now.

Again, I guess my question is—we’ve gone through a number of lockouts now, and I’m just not sure what this ministry or what this government has learned about that. One thousand Steelworkers locked out directly impacts 4,000 jobs. Indirectly, that can impact up to 9,000 jobs. You go up and down the value chain. You go back to the iron ore industry, the scrap industry and the coal industry, for example. Going forward, the trucking industry, value-added, the engineering—all of these jobs are dramatically impacted, not to mention car dealerships or restaurants. You can imagine the dramatic impact it has on a rural riding that knows how to make steel. We know how to produce electricity. Regrettably, this government has shut down the gigantic OPG coal-fired station at Nanticoke. We have Imperial Oil, which is still cooking along. We know how to produce this product.

I see no action, no change in direction from this government to deal with some of these new realities of globalization and consolidation, in this case particularly with the steel industry. We see the same in the forest industry, obviously, and so much of our manufacturing.

A week ago, actually during constituency week, I attended our annual meeting of the United Way, with much discussion, of course, about the fact that there are 1,000 Steelworkers locked out. It can be measured, the impact that’s going to have on contributions to the United Way, ever bearing in mind the generosity of Steelworkers for United Way and the agencies that are funded by it.

I’ve explained to the Steelworkers—for decades they’ve supported United Way. They’re going to be in trouble now. We’re going to see trouble with families, and oftentimes you see the marital, the legal and social problems. It’s a two-way street, and I do ask those who are locked out to make use of those services that you’ve been funding for so many years. Don’t be afraid to pick up the phone. I spent a number of years developing employee assistance programs. We would never go forward without labour and management at the table. It’s something I feel this government could learn a bit about as well. US Steel, at that time Stelco, had an excellent program, probably one of the best programs that you would find in Ontario, and again I ask those families, I ask the leadership of Steelworkers 8782 to spread the word: Don’t be afraid to pick up the phone and ask for help, because we’re going through a very, very tough time down at the Lake Erie Works.

I certainly talked to an awful lot of people on the weekend. I was copied on a letter to the union leader, Bill Ferguson. I’ll just quote it in part: “I attended the rally on Saturday with my husband who works at the Nanticoke



plant. I appreciated the support provided by other unions and the comments from politicians and union leaders. I may have missed it, but I did not hear any specific plans of action to end this dispute.

“It is obvious picketing will not do any harm to US Steel, as they have simply moved operations to the” United States. This we know.

In this email they go on to say, “This fight needs to go to Queen’s Park and Ottawa,” because we have a government that—unless it’s right in somebody’s backyard—are themselves more than willing to turn a blind eye.

Also during my time, just on Saturday, a very young family, a couple, approached me; they had a very small child with them. Of course, the young fellow has been locked out. He would be on strike pay, which isn’t that significant, really. His wife let me know she had just been laid off by children’s aid. This is something we’re seeing across the province of Ontario: layoffs in children’s aid, certainly in Hamilton. There would be other children’s aids—I think Windsor—other situations where they’re going through some tough times. These other children’s aids haven’t been in the media.

I had an opportunity to write a letter to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, just to first of all raise the issue in a more formal way. We all know how that works now: It opens the door for emails and telephone conversations. I’ve had an awful lot of conversations, again, with both management and the union—members of the board of our local Haldimand-Norfolk children’s aid. And my question is, what are the reasons for these cuts in transfer payments? Has this particular government been transparent in explaining the new funding formula to the various children’s aid societies across the province? Again, as with Steelworkers, is this government sitting down with the children’s aid, sitting down with the associations, the unions that are connected?

We were told—and the minister would be aware—the historic concern over the funding system, a system that rewarded volume and volume increases over results, and that was making it more difficult for our children’s aid societies to adapt. There was hope locally that the new funding formula would help remedy some of these shortcomings. However, unfortunately, locally we see a budget dropping from \$21.5 million down to \$17.8 million over the next five years. The layoffs are happening. I’m concerned about any threat to the core services, and I just challenge this government, how are you implementing this? What kind of advice are you giving to our children’s aid societies? What happened to the proposal in this formula to bring stability to this sector? That’s certainly not the reality down in Haldimand-Norfolk. What advice are they giving with respect to finding efficiencies, finding cost-effective measures? Where’s the encouragement on that front?

Layoffs are—that’s a bit of a blunt instrument. There are other options. We have certainly proposed a wage freeze, which is—I would say that for most a wage freeze is preferable to a layoff. I introduced a private member’s bill a year ago, Speaker, recommending furlough, the concept of furlough, furlough Friday, something that’s

done to a great extent in various states across the United States.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** What’s the option? I didn’t hear the interjection, but locally the option is cutting programs and laying off. I would vote for a wage freeze and I would vote for furlough.

Now, Speaker, I really am finding difficulty in any approaches from this government to get my steelworkers back to work, to get some steel produced again, or how better to deal with these layoffs at children’s aid. One thing I do know: This government’s hands have really become so tied over the past 10 years with the constant overspending, the wasteful spending of money—something we’re going to be seeing again to the tune of something like \$3.6 billion in this present government.

**1510**

To date, it seems Premier Wynne has been more interested in spending more, not spending less, and yet insists the budget will be balanced—though mathematically, I feel that would be impossible, certainly at this rate of spending. Ontario—this government—has a serious fiscal problem. This government is not being honest about it. They certainly don’t want to let us know what the plan is to balance the books. I don’t see a plan at all. I see some numbers that don’t add up—they do add up; they add up to more deficit. Of course, accumulated deficits translate into debt.

Government debt, like the debt being increased in this budget, as I said, is no more than accumulated deficits. This year’s budget calls for a provincial deficit of \$11.7 billion. Many will recall the Don Drummond report—what’s that, gosh, a number of months ago now? The Don Drummond report predicted that in four years this government’s deficit will be \$30.2 billion. This year, it’s \$11.7 billion. I see no evidence of this government changing its ways, and I do feel that it’s very important to continue to analyze the Don Drummond projections. His projection is, for the fiscal year 2017-18, a \$30.2-billion deficit.

Even with the projected deficit this year of \$11.7 billion and no indication of where they’ll find the savings to balance the books—the present government claims they’ll balance the books in four years, but their own hand-picked economist, Don Drummond, puts the lie to that promise, again, with his projection of a \$30.2-billion deficit. Add that \$30.2-billion deficit, four years down the road—that is added to, as I recall, the \$411.4-billion deficit coming up in 2017.

That gets put on our children and that gets put on our grandchildren, crushing any dreams and any hopes that they may have of a half-decent job or a good job, any hope they may have of accessing world-class health care, and any hope they would have of living in an environment where business and entrepreneurs can thrive, let alone survive. In fact, our party leader aptly pointed out in his response to the budget that every child born today will have \$20,000 of provincial debt on their back. I find that unconscionable.

In 2001, Spain had a debt level of just over 25%. They did nothing. Today, Spain has a debt level of 56% of the gross domestic product. Not too long ago, Greece was just like Ontario, with a debt level of 40%—that's the debt level right now. That's what Greece had, not that long ago. Before long, it reached 100%. Today, it sits at a whopping 153%. Very clearly, if we continue down this path, that's where we are going to end up. We cannot continue to cruise along in a climate of comfortable complacency when we see the kind of deficit and debt levels that this government has presented to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I listened quite closely to the comments my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk made, and I wanted to express a little bit of solidarity with him. I met up with some of his steelworkers over the weekend, and I just thought I'd let him know that they had some very gratifying words to express towards our leader, Andrea Horwath, and the work that our caucus actually delivered on this budget. Did it have all the answers that labour was looking for? Absolutely not, but it did reflect a lot of the needs that labour, along with our party, stands for in order to make life more affordable for people across this province.

It baffles me sometimes. We still are expecting Ontarians to pay more and do with less, where governments are saying, through austerity measures, "We're not going to be able to provide for you. You're going to have to pay more. You're going to have to pay more tolls in order to get roads. You're going to have to accept less service to receive in your communities."

I just can't understand why we continue going down that road. I believe that's one of the biggest things that make us different from the other two parties that are in this House.

I hear the member when he talked about the job losses across this province; I agree with you. I'm one of those statistics, if you want to use that, that went through job losses. But if you really look at why those jobs are gone, it didn't just happen overnight; these decisions, these policies, were created a long time ago. You just have to look at the energy decisions that were made a long time ago by the privatization of our energy. That was one of the instrumental, biggest problems that have happened throughout this province. Until we grasp our minds of how we're going to change that—even now, recently, people in Algoma–Manitoulin have received a notice that their energy bills are going to go up higher. So, if you want to look at reality, that's reality.

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I'm pleased to be given an opportunity to speak about the budget bill. I want to remind the member from Haldimand–Norfolk about his comment about the concerns about the debt but, more importantly, about his party opposing the southwestern economic development fund, which helps industry, businesses in

southwestern Ontario and what have you. It is the opposition party who was against this development fund ensuring opportunity for the local businesses in his community.

The other piece is, as we know, government creates an environment that could provide opportunities, stimulate growth and, more importantly, promote investment, especially in the small business sector. I know in the budget the Minister of Finance talked about that, in terms of how to create an environment that promotes business in Ontario but also attracts international investment. Ontario is recognized as a top destination for foreign investment in North America, third only to California and New York State, in 2011. On a per capita basis, it is ranked the first of all major jurisdictions in North America. So I would challenge the member opposite, with respect to his comments about the government not doing enough to do jobs—all of us in this House are concerned when there's unemployment, especially dealing with young people.

That's why the government is putting aside \$295 million for two years to address the youth unemployment rate across Ontario. It's not just about finding jobs for those who have lost a job but also to ensure that young people are given an opportunity.

I also want to remind the member opposite—because at the end of the day we're here to work together, not to attack each other. Yes, yes, the member from Thornhill: Yes, we're working together.

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

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I very much appreciate to make some comments. As we go back, the member from Scarborough–Agincourt spoke about the southwest developmental fund and the impacts there. Quite frankly, the community in Oshawa was looking for the same sort of support that was taking place when you deal with issues like that. What has taken place is that the government chose certain sectors of the province that will be winners and losers. What needs to take place, quite frankly, is we need policies that will attract businesses.

The member from Algoma–Manitoulin, in his comments, spoke about the cost of energy going up in the province of Ontario and the impact there. You only need to look at the wind turbines in Algoma, on the island of Manitoulin, and see what has happened there, the energy costs. When you're dealing with these issues as pertains to the budget—our party member speaking about the debt and the deficit—only look at what has taken place in Greece and the impact on that community there. Now, the funds are no longer available.

The member from Algoma–Manitoulin mentioned that their party was different in looking at the way the budget was dealing with issues. Quite frankly, you need to move forward; I mean, just think of all the money that's being spent to service the debt at this particular time. If you're talking \$11 billion on an annual basis just to service a debt and the costs per hour, that certainly would go a long way in providing new programs and ensuring strong

municipalities and making sure that the future of Ontario creates those businesses by creating an environment that will attract business to the province of Ontario.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk spoke about the steelworkers and the jobs there, as what's taking place in regards to the budget and creating an environment that brings those businesses in and encourages them to foster. We see it's not happening in the way of the auto sector. Quite frankly, Oshawa at one time had over 22,000 workers working at General Motors; now we have about 2,200. Recently, though, we lost the Camaro and the impact on that. We need to create the environment to bring businesses to the province to make it strong once again.

1520

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment. I recognize the member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I guess we're having a general discussion here today, not specifically on any set aspects of the budget, and I think that's a good exercise to undertake. It has been focused on some of the jobs losses at US Steel. I would argue that these job losses are as a result of capitalism, the free market and ultimately free trade. I know that; I speak from experience, Mr. Speaker. I come from Windsor, which undoubtedly has been at the epicentre of the massive loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario and in Canada.

We currently live in a province that has absolutely no—zero—direction, zero policy on manufacturing. It's a massive gap, vacuum, in direction and in focus. And I would say we should be starting with that as soon as possible to ensure that our research and development dollars are being used adequately, to ensure that we are competing with other jurisdictions that are doing the right things in terms of leveraging their public infrastructure and their public dollars, their universities and so on and so forth, also adding value to their resources, something that we don't do here; that we don't even want to do. It's not a policy that has been embarked on at the provincial level nor at the federal level.

We can talk about the foreign investment review, a process that would put a stop to companies like US Steel and Caterpillar coming in, absolutely hollowing out these historic companies that have provided good, tangible jobs and bringing them to the lowest wage jurisdictions on the planet. If we're not going to do anything about that, then they can't stand in good conscience and proclaim to defend good-paying jobs. You have to actually look at the root causes, and the root causes are, as I said, a focus on globalization and a capitalist free market society that doesn't really care about rules and regulations or protecting those valued industries.

Mr. Speaker, I can't wait to have 20 minutes on the subject, because there's certainly lots more to talk about.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. That concludes our time for questions and comments. I

return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his response.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Thank you, Speaker—valuable comments from members.

The member for Algoma–Manitoulin made reference to the joblessness. I know I made reference to London, with a 9.9% unemployment rate. I think of so many towns across the north, and I really don't want to think about the unemployment rate in so many of those communities. As was mentioned, much of it relates to the price of energy.

I made mention of the Nanticoke coal-fired plant. This coming December will be the end of that plant, thank you to Mr. McGuinty. Sarnia–Lambton—my colleague next door—is another one that's being shut down. In the north now, there have been some adjustments to Atikokan, and the threat to Thunder Bay.

The member for Scarborough–Agincourt threw out a challenge. Again, I refer—I actually throw the challenge back. It is incumbent on this government to implement so many ideas. There are hundreds of ideas that can be implemented to, at minimum, help ameliorate or help release the province of Ontario not only from deficit but from debt, rather than, as I see in this government, a string of unaffordable commitments that only continue to exacerbate the problems. Indeed, rather than meeting our fiscal challenges from a position of strength, I see a government meeting them from a position of weakness.

The member for Oshawa has an admirable 18-year track record in this House in working with the autoworkers. He made mention of—what was it there?—22,000 autoworkers down to 2,200. We've seen the same trend with our steelworkers. It's a trend that is not sustainable if we're to maintain the standard of living we wish to aspire to in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise in this debate and to speak for about 20 minutes on what I think of this budget and how it's unfolded.

The budget process is not just May 2, when the minister stands in his seat and delivers a budget speech. Much goes into the preparation of a budget, and I just want to talk a little bit about the members of the finance committee.

Well, let's start even earlier than that. We had a period here in Ontario, starting in October until February, in which the House did not sit. We were prorogued; there was no business going on whatsoever. In that period, which is normally the period when the finance committee starts its deliberations, when we start hearing from the people of the province, when we start finding out what they in fact want to see in the budget, we were all at home in our ridings unable to do so. There were no committees, and there was no work going on in the Legislature.

When the government saw fit to call the House back on February 19, the process finally began. It began very

slowly. It took a couple of days in order to set up the finance committee, to hear the throne speech, to get things moving. In a very short period of time—shorter, I think, than the finance committee has ever taken, at least in the last 10 years, to travel the province, to try to find out what people were saying, what they wanted—we were able to hear only about 100 deputations. We were able to go to some four cities, we were able to hear people here in Toronto and we were able to get some background details.

As a result of those deliberations, we had some very difficult choices to make, as did, I'm sure, the finance minister and the government and the cabinet. They had difficult choices to make, too. With a finite amount of money, and people asking for areas in the budget that they wanted to be improved or changed, we had a lot to look at.

It was the New Democrats' decision to table seven demands during the budget process. It was a little unusual. My colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and I put forward those seven demands in the finance committee itself, and it was very strange. If you read the Hansard, you will see that the vote was 2 to 0 in order of those demands, with all of the government members sitting on their hands and the official opposition sitting on their hands. It was just the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and I who raised our hands in support of what the NDP wanted to see in the budget.

The reason we did this is because last year's budget was so contentious. The NDP was seeking a great number of things within the body of the budget and made detailed recommendations of what we wanted to see and didn't want to see. When the budget process saw itself through to the end, we found people like former member Greg Sorbara standing in his seat and accusing the NDP of all kinds of things and that we were renegeing on some kind of deal which we hadn't made. So we wanted it very clear and very transparent, on the face of the record, what New Democrats were seeking in this budget and what we thought would take place to improve whatever the Liberals were going to bring forward.

We are somewhat satisfied, I would think, with what has come forward, but there are a whole bunch of difficulties that are inherent in this budget, and in fact any budget. One only has to look at how it's unfolding since May 2. People watching on television may not realize, but we're only a couple of hours into the budget debate. The finance minister has spoken. The leader of the official opposition has spoken. The leader of the third party has spoken. This is the first through of the 20-minute rotations.

The budget cannot be called for a vote until one of a couple of things happens: either there's eight hours of debate or 10 sessional days have passed. The tenth sessional day is tomorrow, and I doubt very much at that point that we will have reached the eight hours of debate, unless we come back and do it all day again tomorrow, which I think will be a bit of an impossibility. So when government members stand up and say, "All you have to

do is pass the budget. Pass the budget now, and we can do the things that are contained in the budget," it is they who have the responsibility, it is the government House leader who has the responsibility, to call the budget for debate, and they have not seen fit over these first nine days to call it any more than a couple of hours.

So what we're talking about as it unfolds is in the knowledge that this vote may or may not take place within the next few days, because I have no idea what the government is going to be doing, whether they're going to allow those additional hours of debate, which will allow for a vote to take place.

**1530**

In the meantime, the universe, of course, is unfolding as it should. When you open up the newspaper this morning, you see that the Metrolinx report has been leaked. Like almost every government document, it's leaked in advance. I never expect to hear it in this House, although that's the way it's supposed to happen. It is a very rare day when a minister stands up these days and actually says something to the whole world from his or her seat. Usually, I read about it in the Toronto Star or the Globe and Mail or some other newspaper, because it is leaked on purpose in order that the government can get the spin they want before the actual announcement is made.

Well, this morning I read the spin on Metrolinx. If you wonder, Mr. Speaker, how that is contained within the budget, it is, in fact, because the budget talked at some considerable length about how we were going to need additional revenues, some \$2 billion a year, in order to end the gridlock in the greater Toronto–Hamilton area. I say "Hamilton" and turn to my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, because the mayor of Mississauga is wondering how Hamilton is now in the mix. I think Hamilton needs to be in the mix.

What I read today—what Metrolinx is recommending to this government—is that they find an increase of some \$2 billion, to be taken out of the pockets of ordinary people. What I read today in the newspapers is that Metrolinx is saying that we need to increase the sales tax by 1%, which will bring in approximately \$1.4 billion in new revenues. What they're saying today is that there needs to be a parking levy imposed, at some 25 cents per space, which will bring in \$350 million; a five-cents gas tax, an additional five cents on top of the \$1.36 which I spent for gas yesterday here in Toronto, for an additional \$330 million; the Lexus lanes, which they've left out but which are contained within the body of the budget; and then charges to developers, which will get some \$100 million—for a total of \$2 billion.

What Metrolinx—which is an arm of the government, reports to the government, is funded by the government and is leaked by the government—hasn't said anything about are the corporate tax loopholes and rates.

When a question was asked today by the leader of the third party, Andrea Horwath, when she stood here in her place and asked a question of the Premier and the finance minister—"Can you tell us how much corporate tax giveaways you've given away in the last five years, and

is this fair when you juxtapose that against asking an extra \$2 billion from ordinary citizens, who are having a very difficult time paying their bills?"—there was no answer whatsoever. There was just the blah, blah, blah of this place when it's question period and you feel uncomfortable because you have no answer to give to a direct question.

The reality is that there is some money from corporate taxes if the government only wanted to take it. We also asked a follow-up question: What about the \$1.3 billion of HST money that is going to be lost to this government next year, 2014-15, when the loophole goes back in, when corporations can then not pay their HST that they're supposed to pay on ordinary things like hockey games and restaurant meals and gas taxes and buying automobiles, and a hundred things?

I wish, as a consumer, that I didn't have to pay the HST on all those things too, but we do. Each and every person in this room, each and every person in the whole breadth of Ontario, all 13 million of us have to pay that. But who doesn't have to pay it? The biggest corporations and the banks; they're going to be exempt. If they had to pay what all of us have to pay, there would be another \$1.3 billion in the treasury. That's \$1.3 billion—we wouldn't have to increase the sales tax, which would raise exactly the same amount. That means everybody would save 1% on their sales taxes in order to pay for the infrastructure that we so desperately need.

But oh, no, that's not the Liberal way. The Liberal way is to say we're going to make them exempt so they can create jobs. But we all know what a fallacy that is. We all know there are no jobs. We all know what the unemployment rate is in London and Windsor. We all know what the unemployment rate is in North Bay and in whole swaths across this country and across this province. And they refuse to answer the questions.

It's been very troubling from the beginning that it's not in the budget speech and it's not in any of the projections the government is making. This \$1.3 billion would certainly assuage my fears of where we're going and, I think, would make the people of Ontario feel a good deal more comfortable in where we're going to find the \$2 billion a year to get out of gridlock.

I have not in my entire political career met a single person who likes gridlock, nor do I expect to meet one. I have not met a single person who does not think there are some solutions. But what I think is lacking in this whole exercise to date is fairness. Is it only the consumer who is going to have to pay? If that's true, why do we allow trucks on the road? If that's true, why do we allow all these people in commerce to be using these roads to make money? I think they have an obligation, just as we ordinary drivers have an obligation, to make sure our roads are unclogged, that there is public transit available for those who do not use their cars and to make public transit more affordable and easier to take, so that people are willing to get out of their cars.

If you travel around the world, you will see that in those places that have good public transportation, where

governments pay for it and where governments do not make riders pay the majority of the costs of running a public transportation system, they work far better than what we have here in Ontario, where the government got out of the business many years ago and continues to stay out of the business, even just a couple of years ago taking \$4 billion out of the budget for that year and pushing it back. If that \$4 billion had been left in that budget, we would be a long way toward ending gridlock at this point and actually building the infrastructure that we need.

I looked this morning as well, in question period, because New Democrats asked a lot about fairness for ordinary people. We asked about auto insurance. We know that the rates are the highest in Ontario, and we know that insurance companies are continuing to make a fairly hefty profit. I know that after I spoke the last time on insurance companies, I got a very nice letter from the Insurance Bureau telling me of the little errors they felt I had made in my speech.

Of course, it was the errors that I think they made in their presentation as well, because they do make a 9% profit. You know, a 9% profit to somebody in the manufacturing sector is a lot of money. In their sector, they said it wasn't all from auto insurance. Yes, I know that. One who is diversified in any kind of industry or commerce knows that you make money in certain areas at certain times and in others you don't, but they make 9% overall.

If you can make 9% profit and you can be given a windfall, as they were given with the changes to the legislation so that catastrophic injuries have been moved way down the list, and where they have been given a whole bunch of other benefits in terms of the arbitration process and how monies are meted out, then of course they are going to be making some money. We in the New Democratic Party only think it's fair that some of that money comes back to consumers, and we suggested 15%. The government says they're going to go along somehow, in some way, with the 15%—

**Interjection:** And hope that we support them on it.

**Mr. Michael Prue:**—and hope that we support them on it, although it's caged in very strange language, I must say.

But a question was asked today by my colleague from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, who is here with us today. He asked a very good question in the House, and I have to state—I hope he asked for a late show—that he got the most unsatisfactory answer in terms of what he was asking, because in his constituency, people are complaining that their insurance rates are going up 15%, not down 15%.

Now, if I was a person who was a conspiracist or something, I would think this was the insurance industry saying, "Let's knock 'em all up 15% now, because in a couple of months, we're going to have to knock 'em all down 15%, and we're going to end up exactly where we were." I'm hoping that the government is watching this. I don't know whether they're watching this or not, but they should be watching this, because this is not what we in

the New Democratic Party are expecting. We are expecting that an industry which has a near-monopoly, and I know there are many insurance companies—because you are forced, if you are a driver, to have insurance; you cannot drive without it—then we think that people should have some kind of safeguard that they're not going to be gouged.

**1540**

We think the answer that was given by the minister was very unsatisfactory. We started out with no time frame in terms of the 15%, and now we have no real answer in terms of what is happening out there when people are getting increases in their insurance at a time when they should be getting decreases. The minister ended off by saying that, "If you just pass the budget, we can start all this now." How can we in the opposition party, whether we're going to vote for it or against it, do that when the government has refused to call this for the first—this is the ninth legislative day following the budget. We haven't had eight hours of debate. It's up to the government to call it. It's up to the government to act on it, and the government has seen fit to sit on its hands for these entire nine days. So don't be blaming the opposition about passing or not passing your budget if you haven't even called it. It's up to you to do it, and do it with some dispatch if you're going to do it, in order to save those poor people some money.

I'd like to talk a bit about social assistance rates and poverty. There was 1% contained within the body of the budget. If you are unfortunate enough to be on Ontario Works and get 500-and-some dollars a month, you're going to get an extra \$14 raise. This is so far below the poverty rate that it is unbelievable.

I have to state that this government has not been fair to the poor. When the Harris government, and Mike Harris himself in his first budget, brought down and then slashed welfare rates by some 21%—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Twenty-two per cent.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Twenty-two per cent, I'm being reminded here—that was a dark day. But that day is not near so dark as what the Liberals have done for the last 10 years. Because of inflation, they are actually worse off today than they were in the deepest and darkest days of Mike Harris. I don't know how any Liberal over there, any government member, can be proud of the 1%. I don't know how you can be proud of what you have done to the poorest of the poor people in this province, and I don't know what you can be proud of for those people who are on ODSP benefits. It's pretty sad when the government stands up and talks about 1% as being something good in the budget. It's not good at all.

It's not good what you have done in terms of the special diet. It's not very good in terms of—a slight benefit, I guess, in terms of increased assets and the Trillium benefit. That was a hard-fought battle by New Democrats, and I guess by me asking all those questions over all those years, asking questions about why people who are poor, people who don't have a lot of money, people on fixed incomes, seniors, couldn't choose how to

take their money. They had to be doled out little amounts each month. Many of them wanted to take a lump sum. So if there was one good thing in the budget, I have to say that negotiating finally with the federal government to allow people to spend their own money and obtain it in their own way is at least one small thing that came forward.

I want to talk about the Ontario Child Benefit. It is a year behind schedule, and those people who were from 25 in 5 who were here watching the budget left with tears in their eyes. They didn't come here full of praise or leave here full of praise. They are one year behind, and this government cannot and will not meet its 25-in-5 commitment. So there's another thing in terms of poverty.

With 36 seconds left, I just want to say that I was pleased when the Minister of Health in this week's paper said that she is finally going to look at having some form of Ombudsman control over health. It needs to be there. We asked for that. And the budget officer will do a great thing for Ontario once it is instituted.

I am proud of the work New Democrats have done. Is this a New Democrat budget, as my friends in the Conservatives often say? No, it is not; it is a Liberal budget that has been tweaked as much as we could possibly tweak it in the months that we've had. We need to do better. We can do better, and with a New Democratic government in the future, we will do better.

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** After 20 minutes of covering all the issues, I don't know how to respond to the member from Beaches–East York.

I think that just looking at what we've done with poverty, and to just read from the act: "The government is committed to helping the people of Ontario share the benefits of this great province. Building a prosperous and fair Ontario means addressing poverty.

"In 2008, the government introduced a comprehensive five-year Poverty Reduction Strategy that set a target to reduce child poverty by 25%." It was at just the beginning of a major recession—the worst recession since the Great Depression—but we stuck to that.

"The strategy included the Ontario Child Benefit ... for low- to moderate-income families"—and that, again, is going to be increased by \$100 in the next two years.

"The strategy has lifted about 40,000 children out of poverty. Without the Poverty Reduction Strategy, an estimated 16.7% of Ontario children would have been living in low-income families in 2010. As a result of the strategy, the actual child poverty rate was 13.8%." So even in the worst recession that the western world has seen—it's not specific to Ontario—we stuck with the Poverty Reduction Strategy and we've made headway. That is very important.

The other thing that we have to look at is education. One of the statistics I like to come back to when you're looking at what has been done over these last few years is that "115,500 more students have graduated than

otherwise would have, had the rate remained at the 2003-04 level"—115,500, almost a riding's worth of kids who have graduated from high school and have that hope for a job.

Speaker, I think this is a great budget, and I hope that we can pass it in due course before the summer's out.

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

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments on the member from Beaches–East York. The member had mentioned the changes that took place with the Conservative government in 1995, but you have to go back to prior to that to what took place at that particular time. If you look at what happened with the NDP, they were spending \$12 billion more annually in the province of Ontario than they were taking in. Quite frankly, yes, there were some changes in the province of Ontario, but there were a million people who came off the dependency rolls at that particular time. There was a number of programs that were available for individuals in the province of Ontario.

If you look at the amount of employment that took place, it was second to none. I mean governors in Florida and Michigan once upon a time stated that they were concerned. Ontario used to be the number one job provider when the third party was in power, but when that government came in, they were concerned because they were losing a lot of jobs.

Some of the things I want to talk about as well, in the time that's allowing, the member mentioned insurance rates. Well, if you look at what happened with the government in the past: The insurance company will file for the insurance rates with the understanding that, quite frankly, they're not going to get everything they ask for. So the government of the day stated that it was a 10% drop. What happened was they put in for a 20% increase and were only given a 10% increase. So from the government's perspective, the political words that were used were: "We saved everybody 10%." From the industry perspective: We all paid 10% more. Those are some of the things that we have to watch out for in how these things unfold.

There are a significant number of ways that we can make some substantial changes within that industry, and I think that my colleague and I will be introducing some legislation, probably within the next two weeks, that will start to address some of those things in ways that we can actually come out with some concrete ways to fiscally address the concerns of the high insurance costs in the province of Ontario. I think that all are going to benefit from it.

We need to hear the whole story, from all perspectives, on what took place on all these issues.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on the comments from the member from Beaches–East York, who quite rightly points out that there's a huge amount of work that still needs to be done. But what New Demo-

crats quite rightly did—and we had the mandate from the people of the province of Ontario—was try to make this budget work for the people of this province. So we did.

We pursued the home care initiative, a huge issue in the province of Ontario: 6,200 people are on wait-lists waiting for home care. The PCs chose not to do anything in that regard. Youth employment is twice the national average in the province of Ontario. We need to do something to get these youth back into the workplace so they can have the experience, so that they can move forward with their lives. The PCs chose not to do anything.

**1550**

What did we do? We actually took a stand on affordability for the people of this province. Auto insurance—this is a new issue, with auto insurance companies raising the rates prior to this ever-so-important budget coming to pass. We're going to be following this very carefully and we're not going to let the Liberals turn a blind eye on this issue. We are watching very carefully because this is a condition of the budget. What did the PCs do? Nothing, and this is what we have.

Now, I was knocking on doors on Friday morning, and the financial accountability office has great traction in the province of Ontario. You know what people want? They want that measure of accountability for any government that goes forward, NDP, Liberal or PCs—well, they don't want a PC government. They're very clear about that. If there's one thing on the doorstep, it's the fear factor with regard to the PCs. There is no room for negotiation on that issue, I can assure you.

So what have we done? We are trying to hold the government to account. That is our job. The people of this province appreciate the fact that we are trying to do our job. You are doing nothing, and you're proud of it. Good for you. We are staying focused on the people of this province.

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm really delighted to be able to speak for a couple of minutes on this budget. I think this is a brilliant budget. I think it touches many people and provides a little more help in everyday lives. It's also done within the context of fiscal responsibility.

One item that I really do want to comment on is the additional investment in home care and care in the community. It's true that the NDP have been supportive of this additional investment, but I do have to point out that their request was for \$30 million, and we're adding an additional \$185 million. So from \$30 million to \$185 million dollars, I think, demonstrates our real commitment to shifting health care to the community so people can get the support they need in their homes for as long as possible.

I had the honour of visiting a family on Friday with the Premier in London. On Thursday, I shadowed a personal support worker as she did her work in visiting a home. We met with a wonderful woman named Eva, who's well into her 80s, doing a fantastic—the personal support worker, Juliette Chestney, is doing a wonderful

job supporting that woman and her family. We then went to visit a young man, Ilish, who is just 20 years old and suffers from Duchenne dystrophy. He has required intensive personal support, but he's a university student. He's a student at the University of Guelph, studying geography. He's able to get on with his life because of the support available to him in the community.

These are stories that are inspiring, and these are stories that drive our commitment to deliver more care in the community.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Beaches–East York has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank my colleagues, the member from Ottawa–Orléans, the member from Oshawa, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, for their comments.

Just a couple of things I'd like to—I don't know whether "rebut" is the right word—talk about. The member from Ottawa–Orléans talked about the Ontario Child Benefit. There is no one in this House who would deny that this Ontario Child Benefit is helping people out of poverty. The problem we have on this side of the House is that you're a year late. You're not going to make the commitment that you made to the people of Ontario to decrease poverty by 25% in five years. If the monies were forthcoming, as were promised, you would have been on target. Because the monies were not forthcoming, those people in the 25 in 5 who were here in the galleries on budget day are quite concerned, and rightly so, that the money is not going to be there. The government is not going to meet its target and poverty is going to continue, albeit at a slightly better level than it was four years ago. But you're not doing what you promised, and that's the difficulty they have.

For the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, sure, you raised the ante. We asked for \$30 million, which was for a five-day guarantee. You're spending \$185 million with no guarantee, and that's the problem that we have. We want to have a five-day guarantee so that if you live in New Liskeard or Timiskaming or if you live in the furthest-flung areas of this province, you can have the same kind of service and guarantee that you can have in a big city like Toronto. That's what we're looking for, so that all of the people of Ontario can share in the wealth and the bounty and the opportunity that they should all have. A five-day guarantee would do it, and it would only cost \$30 million.

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this very important motion dealing with the 2013 Ontario budget. I'm sure it will not come as any surprise that I'm very proud of this budget. I'm very proud of this budget as to its values and what it stands for and what it means for the people of Ontario.

In my 20 minutes, Speaker, I'm going to focus on a few key things I think that are important to my

community in Ottawa Centre, and also will share with you what the good people of Ottawa Centre are talking about when it comes to this budget as I'm out at different community events day after day, when I'm at home, when I'm knocking on doors, and the feedback I'm receiving.

My urging, starting right off the bat, is that I hope that all members in the House will be voting in support of this budget. The way I see it, this is a fair, balanced and a Liberal budget. It really speaks to fairness to Ontarians. It really brings that very critical ingredient, that we need a measurement by which we make decisions—that fairness to the people. I think this budget really strikes at the right core when it comes to ensuring that we are building a fair Ontario.

It also balances the needs in terms of growing our economy and helping create jobs in our economy and also ensuring that we are looking after the vulnerable, be it through youth unemployment issues or by transforming social assistance so those who may be on Ontario Works or the Ontario Disability Support Program have the necessary support they need to be able to live in our society.

Of course, Speaker, I'm really proud that this is a Liberal budget. This is a budget that very much reflects the priorities of the Liberal Party, the priorities that the Premier has been speaking about before she became the Premier and during her leadership race. I think that really well encapsulates the Liberal values. So I stand here, Speaker, with pride that this is a fair and a Liberal budget.

In my view, I think the budget really focuses on three important things. The very number one focus is ensuring that we eliminate the deficit. We have talked about the deficit, which is now at \$9.8 billion; it's \$5 billion ahead of where it was projected to be. We are the only government in Canada, and I think we should be very proud of the fact, that is on target, in fact ahead of target.

You know, we often hear about the federal government and how well they may be doing. In fact, Speaker, every year the federal government deficit has grown. They've got the same target. They don't want to talk the truth to the people, perhaps, but their deficit has grown this year by \$6 billion.

Our deficit has gone down by \$5 billion because of the discipline and the hard work of this government in ensuring that we are reducing our expenses in a smart way, ensuring that we're bringing down the deficit so that we can balance the books by 2017-18. That is a very important priority of this budget. We will continue to remain focused on that, but we'll do it in a smart way. We'll do it in an intelligent fashion. We will do it in a way that does not take support away from Ontarians, but also ensures that we pay down the deficit.

Just if you look at, for example, the expenditure of the last two years, we've been able to bring it down significantly, raising the expenses less than 1%. People doubted us, but the numbers don't lie. The numbers are there, and you can see that in terms of our deficit, which is under \$10 billion ahead of projection.



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The second very important aspect of this budget is around growing our economy and helping our businesses to create jobs. We know that we have lived through a very serious recession. The recession of 2008 and 2009 is called the great recession for a reason, the reason being that it was one of the largest downturns in an economy since the Great Depression that took place—not only just in Ontario, not only just in Canada, but around the globe. Of course, Canada and Ontario were hit by that recession as well.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** But we fought through it.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** But we fought through it because we made investments in our communities. Every single community that is represented in this Legislature benefited from the stimulus of dollars that were invested in our economies to ensure that we create jobs in local economies.

Again, that's not something that the Ontario government did by themselves; the federal government did the same thing. In fact, all governments across the country, including the federal government, borrowed money in order to stimulate our economy. It was the right decision to make in order to ensure that we fight that recession.

The effects of the recession—even though, technically, we're no longer in recession—are still there. You can see how global economies are vulnerable. You can see how political leaders around the world are still talking about the economy. We can see how slowly the US economy is going. We, of course, in Ontario—Ontario's economy relies on what happens in the US. We need to make sure that our economy continues to grow.

We have a lot to be proud of because we have actually recovered all the jobs that were lost during the recession in Ontario. In fact, we have created more jobs than we had lost in that recession. That's something we collectively should all be very proud of. But there is more work to do.

So what is this budget doing? Well, first of all, there are no new taxes in this budget, both on the personal income tax level or at a corporate tax level. That is very important because that's a significant boost to our businesses, and they are very happy about that. But further to that, what we have done in this budget is outlined very targeted business cuts that will help small businesses, that will help our manufacturing businesses—two in particular.

One is around the employer health tax, where we have increased the limit for employer health tax from \$400,000 to \$450,000, and then beyond that it will be indexed. That is a benefit to small businesses in my community, in Ottawa Centre. When I'm out in, for example, Hintonburg, as I was last weekend, visiting the 10th anniversary of ArtsPark at the Parkdale Park, which is a beautiful park in my riding—ArtsPark is a great festival of crafts, art, music and food—there was that recognition that that type of measure is going to help our economy.

ArtsPark just celebrated its 10th anniversary, and I do want to quickly give a shout-out to the Hintonburg

Community Association for organizing that very successful festival: a big thanks to Anthony Bruni, Barbara Long, Cheryl Parrott, Dickson Davidson, Eddie Fu, Thomas Williams, James Valcke, Jeff Leiper, Jay Baltz, Kerry Millican, Linda Hoad, Matt Whitehead, Nicholas Olmstead, Pat O'Brien, Paulette Dozois, Robert McLean, Sharon Fernandez, Stefan Matiation and Wayne Rodney for the excellent work they do in the community. Thank you very much.

Further to growing our economy, Speaker, by extending the threshold or limit on employer health tax, we've also brought in something that the manufacturers have been asking for, and that is an accelerated depreciation in the capital cost lines for the manufacturing sector. Associations like Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters are very happy with that move in this budget, because it's going to allow for our manufacturing sector to thrive.

The third significant element, in my view, is around the notion of creating a prosperous and fair Ontario, where we have made sure that we focus on the vulnerable population within our communities. For instance, I want to really thank the Minister of Community and Social Services for the emphasis around the transformation of social assistance on the basis of the Lankin-Sheikh report. The social assistance reform commission's report is very significant. The earning exemption, the increase in ODSP and OW rates, the better integration to employment—all of those steps are a great start to start implementing the Lankin-Sheikh recommendations.

What we're doing is we're really helping the most vulnerable in our communities, and I really hope that all members in this Legislature will support that. We all talk about how we need to ensure that people on disability or who are on Ontario Works need assistance, but here's a real way we can really help. This is a great start in terms of building that prosperous, fair society.

I'm also very proud, in this budget, around the investment in youth employment. I spend a lot of time working with youth in my community. That strategy, the youth employment strategy that we have put forward, is extremely exciting. Just this past week, in my community, I had the opportunity to attend the Spirit Awards, which is held by Youth Ottawa. It's a celebration of young people in our community who do amazing work. Many youth were celebrated for many, many achievements, and I congratulate them all.

There, I was having conversations with these young people. These are 16-, 17- and 18-year-old, extremely engaged young entrepreneurs, innovators and thinkers who said, "This is the right step. This is the right direction in having this dedicated \$295 million over a few years for a youth employment strategy, because it's going to really help our youth get the experiences they need." It really will provide them with the encouragement, the young entrepreneur or the innovator who has got these great ideas, and we want to get them out.

I thank all the volunteers at Youth Ottawa and the organizers of the Spirit Awards for their hard work and

for their encouragement for us to do the right thing in bringing such a youth employment strategy. It's going to help a lot of young people.

This is, of course, when you add it onto the kinds of things we are doing for early vaccination for our children, smaller class sizes in elementary school, the full-day kindergarten program, which is a huge success—the Waterloo region just actually came out with a report talking about how full-day kindergarten is making a difference. It's really giving the kids the kind of education that they need. That's where we need to continue investing. I'm really proud of all of the schools in my riding, in Ottawa Centre, which are bringing on full-day kindergarten, and those which are to come.

It's the same thing with 30% off for our post-secondary students. Carleton University students in my riding tell me how beneficial the 30% off has been for them. Now you add on the youth employment strategy, and you've got a really good picture for support from early years to adulthood in our province. I think that's something we should be proud of and passing in this budget.

In the limited time I've got left, I wanted to talk up two key issues that are also in this budget as they relate to my ministry, the Ministry of Labour. One is the creation of a minimum-wage advisory panel. If the budget is passed, the government is committing to create a minimum-wage advisory panel to ensure that we have a panel made up of an independent expert along with representatives from both businesses and employee groups, both unionized and non-unionized, and also, of course, with youth representation, so that they can consult over the next six months and give advice to the government as to what next steps the government should be taking in terms of minimum wage. That is important work that we need to do to ensure that we protect vulnerable workers, that we protect those workers who rely on minimum wage. I very much look forward to passage of this budget so that that panel can start its work.

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The other thing which is very important that is outlined in this budget, which is dependent on the passage of the budget, is an additional \$3 million for employment standards enforcement, making sure that we are protecting those employees who may not be treated fairly or whose rights under the Employment Standards Act are not protected. That is important, proactive enforcement work that our employment standards officers do in the Ministry of Labour. This \$3 million is in addition to the \$5.5 million that the government announced back in 2009, bringing the total to \$8.5 million per year. That could result in 1,400 more proactive inspections. It's something that a lot of groups such as United Way Toronto, which has done significant work along with McMaster and PEPSCO on precarious employment, have been asking for, and they're very happy to see that the government is moving on with that commitment. That is very much part and parcel of this budget, something that I encourage members opposite to approve.

Another thing I want to talk about, something personally that I worked with along with the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, is schedule 5 in the budget act. That is related to changes in the e-commerce act for our realtors. There was an exception in the e-commerce act that took away e-signatures from purchase and sales agreements in realty matters. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings and I worked on a bill together—co-sponsored—to take that exception away. I'm really happy to see that that bill has made its way into the budget bill as schedule 5. I'm sure the member from Prince Edward–Hastings will be voting for this budget because that important work that he did is in there.

It was a pleasure to work with him. I think it really shows that when members work together on issues that are important to their communities, good things can happen. This is a very good example of it. I know that the realtors in my community and the Ontario Real Estate Association are very happy. They want this budget to pass because this is something that existed for a long time and they want to make sure that this becomes law.

Speaker, there are a few minutes left. I think I just want to bring it back home, which is always very important for me, and that's in Ottawa Centre. I was again, just this past weekend, out knocking on doors in the community in Glebe Annex. Before that I was at the Great Glebe Garage Sale, which is a great activity in the community. Thousands of dollars get raised for both Ecology Ottawa and the Ottawa Food Bank, whom I do a lot of work with—not to mention allows all of us to connect with community. Again, very good feedback on this budget.

One issue that came up again and again: People were happy to see that this budget, hopefully, will get passed. They don't want to see an election. They want the things that are outlined, and a few of the things that I mentioned in my comments today, coming into effect, which is extremely important for my community.

I was recently at Nepean High School, which is located in my riding in Westboro, which has now celebrated its 90th anniversary. I had the chance to meet with a lot of folks who were coming back for the 90th anniversary of Nepean High School. Great leaders have been produced out of that school. We talked about the importance of growing our economy, the importance of building a fair and prosperous society.

I want to give a big shout-out to the principal, Patrick McCarthy, for organizing that 90th anniversary; he did a fantastic job; his vice-principals, Kimberly Elmer and Peter Wilson, for their excellent work; the grad-year contacts for the event, Dave Slessor, the class of 1963, and Sharon Beauvais, class of 1972, in really organizing a marvellous celebration of Nepean High School and its 90th anniversary.

I think it was really inspiring for current students to see the great people who have come out of that high school and how they are doing so well in our community. I think we owe it to our students to pass this budget, because it is going to create more opportunities for them.

It is going to ensure that our children, starting from junior kindergarten all the way to a PhD, have those opportunities available to them to be successful in this highly competitive, globalized and engaged economy.

It wasn't that long ago that I was in school, but when I now spend time with young people, I marvel to see how differently they think now, what kinds of tools are available to them. The kinds of things that are available in this budget—for example, the youth employment strategy—will create that opportunity to really help our students to grow. There is that excitement. There is that demand out there, and I really mean a demand out there for this legislative body to pass this budget to make sure that we get on with the business of the people, that we all work together. The manner in which the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and I did in finding those common issues and work together and further the agenda of the people—I'm really proud that this budget does that. I hope everybody will vote in favour of it.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm happy to rise to talk to some of the comments made by the Minister of Labour. It's interesting, when he talks about this government being ahead of its deficit goals—a goal that they put in place and can't even meet. It's an artificial goal that's stated—that I guess would be easy to meet, especially when you're spending the amount of money they are. They must have trouble spending that amount of money. That deficit is higher than all the other provinces combined in this country, so I don't know how you can be proud of that.

It's hard to believe that Ontario—frankly, it's a third of the population—all the other provinces combined is less than what this deficit is. Just last month, or a couple of months ago, Maclean's magazine picked Ontario as the most likely to default on its loan, or on its deficit and debt. That's what we're looking forward to with this government.

He talked about help for manufacturers. We look back at the results of this government. We're looking at the highest hydro rates on this continent, the highest property taxes on this continent. WSIB rates are the highest in the country. TSSA roadblocks—companies are leaving because this province is no longer competitive. We can look at Caterpillar. We can look at Xstrata going to Quebec because the price of power is so much less. We have to start doing things in this province that actually encourage jobs.

When you talk about a task force looking at the minimum wage, I believe it's time that we stopped looking at providing more people on minimum wage and we start looking at creating jobs, to give people good jobs with good salaries. It's the wrong attitude to be looking at how we pay people who don't have a job.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It's a pleasure to stand here today on behalf of London–Fanshawe constituents and contribute to the budget.

We seem to lose sight of why we're here and how we got here. We got here from the people in our ridings. They elected a minority government, and that's a very clear message that the Conservatives really haven't heeded. When it's a minority government, they're saying all three parties need to work together to come up with solutions to get things done for Ontario, to help the people of Ontario, and that's what we did. We don't want to hear the criticism about how this is a Liberal-NDP budget. This is not an NDP budget. It's called "democracy." We spoke up and gave our suggestions. The government listened. We worked to find solutions and get results.

I just want to comment on the member saying that we shouldn't be having a task force to look at minimum wage jobs; we need to create jobs. We certainly need to create jobs, and we came up with plans for that. We came up with the First Start program for youth to create good-paying jobs. However, the reality of what's going on in Ontario is that minimum-wage jobs are people who can't find real jobs. Again, I'm not saying—I have to correct that. Every job has value, but when you have somebody who is trying to put food on the table, and it's a \$10.75-minimum-wage job, they're a single mother and they're struggling, I think it's very beneficial to have a minimum-wage panel so that we can make sure people have jobs that are going to actually help them put food on the table and a roof over their heads, and not struggle and live below the poverty line or on the poverty line. It's not the way we want to see Ontario move forward.

I hope the Conservatives will, if that comes to committee, support a minimum-wage review panel.

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

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** It's a pleasure again to stand in my place here in this chamber and speak to the issue that's at hand today.

I want to begin by commending the Minister of Labour, the member from Ottawa Centre, for his very eloquent and articulate comments with respect to this year's budget. It's no mistake, I suppose, that this particular member spends so much of his time and focus on the people who have sent him to this place, the wonderful residents of Ottawa Centre. He is perhaps the hardest-working member in the Legislature, both in his riding and beyond. I think the comments that he made today were right on the money with respect to what's in this year's budget.

Of course, as a former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance, he would understand the process, the balance, the reasonableness and the fairness that are embedded in this year's document with respect to making sure that we pay off the deficit and we bring our books back to balance, on target, by 2017-18 and make sure that we restore some more fairness into the system for those at the lowest end of the economic scale.

I would also comment, having just taken a moment to listen to some of the members opposite, on the member

from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and his comments. I was a little bit surprised with respect to some of the stuff that he talked about, but it's fairly symptomatic of what we've heard from the folks in the official opposition over the last number of weeks and months. I'll say again today what I've said in the past: Instead of taking the more constructive approach of the members of the third party—I sincerely wish that the members of the official opposition would reconsider their irresponsible position of weeks, if not months, ago, take a look again at what's in this year's budget, recognize that the comments made by the Minister of Labour are right on the money, and find a way, for the sake of all of Ontario—for the sake of our economy, for the sake of building that more fair society—to listen closely to what the Minister of Labour said today, to reconsider that ill-advised move and to support this budget to keep moving our province forward.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to bring comments to the Minister of Labour. He spent most of his time talking about how proud he was of the accomplishments. To my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry's credit, he brought up a very poignant point: an \$11.9-billion deficit and they're proud of it. How can you be proud of that when you've had record revenues your whole term in office? For nine years they've been doing this. How can they be proud of a \$1.9-billion fee per hour being added to our debt clock? How can they be proud of a \$21,000 debt for every single child brought into this beautiful province? How can they be proud of doubling the debt in their eight years? How can they be proud of wasting a billion dollars on eHealth and another billion dollars on gas plants that have produced not one kilowatt per hour of power?

Despite all of this, they're proud about doubling the energy rates that have chased most of our industry out of the province—

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Tripling.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Tripling energy rates, and it's going to get worse.

Some 500,000 to 600,000 people are unemployed, and what are they doing about that? They've decimated the horse racing industry, 30,000 to 60,000 jobs, particularly in rural Ontario. They've tripled the skilled trades tax. It used to be \$60 for three years; now it's a hundred bucks plus taxes—HST that they promised not to implement, by the way, to those people.

Every time you turn around, they're spending and taxing and taxing and spending. It's the Liberal way. The NDP are more than happy to step right up there and say, "You are corrupt, Mr. Bad Government Over There in the House." Every morning we hear, "You're corrupt, you're horrible, you're decimating our province. However, if you give us enough baubles in this next budget, we'll be there and there won't be an election."

No, we're going to stand on our principles and we're going to talk about what we won't do. What we won't do

is we won't sit over here and sit on our hands during a vote. We'll make sure we stand up for the people who sent us here. We'll make sure we hold this government to account every day that we're here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Labour has two minutes to reply.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Again I want to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Vaughan and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their kind and at times colourful commentary to my remarks on the budget.

Speaker, I'm very proud of my government. I'm very proud of what our government has accomplished over the last 10 years. I think anybody who follows provincial politics knows the kind of mess the previous Conservative government left us: a \$5.6-billion deficit when they claimed there was none. We took two years to get that deficit cleaned up. After that, we had three back-to-back balanced budgets, and then came the recession of 2008 and 2009. Not just Ontario, but across this country—including the federal government, which by the way had a surplus of \$13 billion or \$14 billion—we have massive deficits. Why? Because they borrowed money in order to stimulate our economy.

As a result, we were able to save hundreds of thousands of auto manufacturing jobs that have an impact in all our communities, we were able to build critical infrastructure in all our communities and we were able to do so by helping the vulnerable in our communities as well.

From the beginning—I know the opposition doesn't like to hear this—we've been honest with people. We've laid out the date of 2017-18 as a time to balance the deficit. Everybody mocked, because the federal government apparently had a shorter timeline. The record is that their deficit continues to go up. They are nowhere close to meeting their timeline, whereas we are ahead of our projection. We're down to \$9.8 billion, and sooner than later we will have the deficit erased and ensure that our economy is growing.

Let's support this budget and get to the work of the people.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Now listen to this one.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'd like to thank the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for welcoming me so graciously and with such passion.

I'm always pleased to stand in this House to debate bills and legislation and motions that are before this Legislature, and perhaps none is more important than the budget—the budget that the NDP are poised to support. In the course of my 20 minutes here today, I will certainly talk about that.

I do want to touch upon something the member from Beaches–East York talked about earlier today with respect to the time and the rules around talking about the very motion we're speaking to today and the potential

that the debate be limited on something that's pretty important to the people of Ontario. I echo those concerns that he made, and I congratulate him for making them far more elaborately, and perhaps even more eloquently, than I have.

We entered this chamber today on the heels of a constituency week. Obviously, during a constituency week, we have an opportunity to connect with the people in our riding, see our families a bit more and hear their concerns. On the Friday—constituency week for me started before the long weekend—I was doing a high school civics class in Cambridge; it was a good opportunity. I like doing those, because I think we need to do more to encourage youth to be interested in the proceedings of politics, whatever they construe that to be, and certainly they want to know a bit more about a day in the life of an MPP. I hoped to provide them with such an illustration of what it looks like in terms of the daily grind, so to speak, of the Legislature. I showed them, of course, how busy we could be in the Legislature and how long our days are. That's obviously part of what we do; we're here in the Legislature.

One student asked me at one point, "So are you sitting at Queen's Park all year round?" I answered the question as anyone would, of course, telling the truth and saying that the answer is no, we don't. There's a reason we don't sit at Queen's Park year-round, and it's because we have an ancient parliamentary tradition that states that we as MPPs—as commoners—are subject to the laws, the policies we create, and we have to live by them. That's why we go back to our homes. That's why we do things with our families as ordinary families do, because we have to live by the laws that we create. I think that's an important understanding of why we have constituency week, and we shouldn't lose the underlying meaning of that because it gives us an opportunity as members of this Legislature to actually connect with people in very important ways.

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I want to go over some of the events and proceedings that I took part in during my constituency week and tell this Legislature what I heard. I think it's important to bring those concerns that are brought up by our constituents to the floor of this Legislature, particularly in matters that are of great importance such as a budget speech. Certainly, when I woke up on the Tuesday of that week to learn that the NDP were going to support the budget that was presented by the Liberal Party and the Liberal government, that started off the week in a very interesting way. In many ways, it set the pattern for the kinds of things that I would hear over the course of the week. I've been on record as saying that I don't believe that decision was a particularly wise one for the third party, but they're free to make their own minds up and make their own strategies together. They're certainly reciting some of the same talking points today that Liberal members across the way are, so as far as those things go, the coalition is alive and well.

I think that we should look at the way this unfolded. One of the reasons why I believe that we should vote

against this budget is because I no longer have confidence, and I believe the people of Cambridge no longer have confidence, in this government's ability to manage the economy, this government's ability to manage the finances of this province, especially when you have scandal after scandal costing billions upon billions of dollars, dollars that could go to a variety of different projects, could go to a variety of different services for people, could go to a variety of important things, like perhaps even reducing the debt in this province. There are many things we could use the money for, all of which are lost on the basis of a vote of confidence in this government, a complicit vote of confidence saying, "It's okay to mismanage our economy; it's okay to mismanage our finances."

We have a jobs and fiscal crisis in the province of Ontario that we haven't seen before. I don't think my constituents would support a scenario where, after crisis after crisis, this government continues to survive. Mr. Speaker, all people may not agree with me, but at least they'd have an opportunity to voice their opinion in an election. That's why I think that this government should not have the confidence of this Legislature, and we should decide as a whole community, what we should do.

I can't, as a member of this Legislature, divorce my role as an opposition MPP between holding the government accountable and getting results for people. Sometimes when you do something, you actually make things worse for the people of this province. You dig a hole deeper. You spend more money you don't have. The deficit projection for next year is higher than the deficit in the fiscal year that just ended. This is getting worse. It's not getting better. Yet we're selling this, potentially—or they're trying to sell this—as a benefit. I don't see the benefit there when you still have a jobs crisis where 600,000 men and women woke up this morning without a job. We have millions of people in the province of Ontario who wake up every morning going to their job, not knowing if, at the end of the week, they're going to still have their job.

These are the kinds of concerns that people started bringing forward to me during this constituency week. I attended a Catholic school board meeting on Tuesday this week as well, during constituency week, and heard the concerns of what they were talking about. Certainly, Catholic education and the future funding of Catholic education was of particular importance to them. But one of the things that we discussed in that meeting was the changes in the way third-party child care facilities at schools are funded based on the new capital expenses that school boards are facing with full-day kindergarten. Previously, these non-profit child care providers were able to leverage the school board to basically build the facilities that they could rent back at a later date. That program is no longer operating, potentially threatening new child care spaces in my city, in my community of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries. These are some of the things that we're hearing on a daily basis that this budget does not address.

I met with my mayor during the week as well, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that he never holds back on sharing his opinion with anybody, and certainly, if you were to talk to him, I'm sure he would be as forthright with you as he was with me. He wonders why the province of Ontario does not live within its means, much like municipalities in this province; why we are allowed to run billion-dollar deficits—not just billion-dollar deficits, deficits to the tens of billions of dollars—without regard to balancing books. This frustrates a mayor of a municipality, of a medium-sized city in the province of Ontario, to a large degree. He has to make sure that the books are balanced at the end of the year. If he can't account for it, he knows he's going to face the flak of voters. He wonders why people in the province of Ontario and their government in the province of Ontario are not held to the same standard.

He then starts to talk about the things that the cancellation of the gas plants could buy, could purchase for our city. He notes three new hospital expansions, three new wings that could be used for our city. He also notes that we could buy a variety of things—get a GO line to the city of Cambridge, something that's very important to him and to myself. But we squandered money. This government has squandered money. We are trying to hold them accountable, so you can't divorce our accountability function with getting results, particularly if you think you can do a better job than they are doing today. If you think you can do a better job, let's just get on with the process of letting the people decide who should govern this province.

Mr. Speaker, 180 new recreation and community centres could be built with the cancellation costs of the gas plants, 90,000-plus students could have their college or university tuition paid for as a result of or on account of cancellation costs associated with the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants, yet we spend \$900 million, \$1 billion—I know the number fluctuates because we still don't know from them exactly how much this thing is going to cost the people of Ontario. We could have done so many things with that money, but it has essentially been wasted to build not even one megawatt of power. That is something that certainly frightens the people of Cambridge, and they should be frightened, because it's their hard-earned tax dollars that are being squandered by a government that's more concerned about keeping themselves in office than concerned about the very people they seek to represent. And when that happens, when partisan interests are ahead of public interests, it's time to change government. I think that is true very much.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday of last week—a very busy day and lots of meetings in my constituency office and off-site—I arrived at my constituency office, after an off-site meeting, to a group of women who were standing in my office. I hadn't been expecting them. I didn't know that they wanted to see me. There were probably about six or eight of them. They were in my office and they were coming to talk to me about the budget.

**1640**

They showed up and they said, “We heard you were on your constituency week and we figured we'd find you at the constituency office.” Well, as luck would have it, I was there almost when they arrived, shortly after they arrived, but I was there nonetheless and I agreed to sit down with them to talk about what their concern might be. They started the conversation like this: “I've never done this before. I've never called my MPP. I've never visited my MPP's office. I didn't really know what to do.” Mr. Speaker, you never know how to handle when some group of people comes to your office and start the conversation with “I've never done this before. I've never visited my MPP.” You never know how that conversation is going to go.

This was a group of women who were recently laid off of their work. They were laid off because of the changes that are under way in our health care system, particularly with respect to physiotherapy services in our long-term-care facilities and our retirement homes. Now, this is something that I think is particularly serious. We have this group of women who are tasked with making sure that our seniors are healthy, that they're gaining strength, that they're continually moving, and that if they are trying to walk again or be mobile again, we have physiotherapists that are certainly working toward getting them the services they need and the exercises they require to get back on their feet or to become as mobile and as strong as possible.

Now, what they told me was very frightening. They suggested that—of course, they were upset they were not going to keep their job, but what was worse for them was the fact that they had to confront their clients, their customers and their patients with the reality that the services that they currently receive are services they're no longer going to be able to have past July 31. That's something they fear greatly. Seniors' health care in the province of Ontario, according to this group of women, is going to be seriously impacted by changes to the funding structures of physiotherapists in the province of Ontario.

Now, I was very shocked by this revelation. But what they told me next was, I think, even more shocking. What they told me next was that they believed that the government was not being forthright with seniors about the kinds of service cuts that are going to be incurred as a result of what has happened to this group of women. They've actually produced and provided me—I'm not going to share; I can share, if anyone wants to see—the itemization of myths versus facts that they've created as a result. I don't know—it was written in Word, so I'm not sure if it was done by this group of women or by a greater body of people who are more skilled at doing these things, but they provided a table essentially outlining and enumerating the myths and the facts associated with physiotherapy cuts in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I know that when it comes to seniors, they really rely on their health care. One of the things that they rely upon is to have those kinds of services that allow them to be mobile, that allow them to function in a

way that they are used to in many ways. Sadly, what this budget does, particularly with physiotherapist services, is it changes the kinds of services seniors are going to receive, and services that they require may no longer be there for them.

I find that quite troubling, in light of the fact that we sit here debating whether we should support a budget or not. We have a group of people—our seniors, the folks that have worked so hard to build this province—that are going to be seriously impacted by this devastating cut.

I struggle with the fact that this group of women believes that the people of Ontario are being misled by the program changes that are forthcoming.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this speaks to one of the overall reasons why this budget should not be supported: It's the very credibility of the government that is, and has been, called into question. It's that credibility that, obviously, every day in this Legislature and every day in our communities, we seek to try to hold this government accountable to, to be honest with the people of Ontario about what's truly transpiring here—not some PR stunt, not some flashy flyer or commercial or some smoke-screen or deflection tactic to hide from the real impact on people's lives. You're better to be forthright.

If you're going to make changes to programs, be honest about the impact of those changes. I think that's all people are asking for. If you are going to cut something, tell them that. Be honest with them. Don't just say, "Oh, it's going to be great. You're going to have all these sorts of things," when it's actually not going to happen at the end of the day.

The NDP can support this budget, as they are free to do, but they should do that knowing the full realm of consequences about doing that. To have confidence in this scandal-plagued government is something I simply don't share.

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

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'm going to preface my remarks and my questions by saying that I have the utmost respect for the member from Cambridge and much of the work that he has done in this House, and I think he should be commended on it. But I disagree with some of the thrust of his arguments.

One of my biggest concerns, and one of the biggest questions that always comes to my mind—I'm always troubled with this, and I need to maybe spend some time and sit down with some Conservatives and talk to them about it—is that the last time I checked, and as far as I understand, cutting services and privatizing essential services, like services within health care, is something that the Conservatives want to do and will do and are hoping to do if they're in power. So while I commend the member from Cambridge for raising this issue about troubling—and concerns around the cuts to services when it comes to physiotherapists—I've also met with them—my understanding is that that's what this party wants to do. They want to cut more services. They want people to fend for themselves. They want people to have

a private health care system. That's what I thought, so I'm curious to hear what my friend has to say about that.

When it comes to credibility—I think that's one of the most important things we can do as parliamentarians and as people who represent people in our community. There's a lot of lost trust in government, and there's a lot of lost trust in politicians. I think one of the shining beacons of hope to restore that trust in government, to restore that trust in politicians, is what's happening federally in the parliamentary budget office and what we'd like to bring here in Ontario with a financial accountability office. That is a shining beacon of hope. The work that Kevin Page and that office have done federally to expose many of the incorrect or partial pictures that the federal government was trying to put forward in their budgets—the fact that they went to the Supreme Court to obtain documents, to expose the realities of the cuts and the costs and that this Conservative government readily would like you to believe that they're managing money so well when it turns out that they were mismanaging money immensely—this accountability office in Ontario, which was our idea as the NDP, will be a step forward in making our government more reliable and will hold it to account and is a step forward for all of us.

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

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I'm here again, having the opportunity—and quite happy to do so—to provide some comments and some questions with respect to the member from Cambridge's discussion points, talking points, regurgitation of what we've kind of heard from that caucus pretty much since day one on this issue. I did listen closely, and I did pick up at one point in his remarks that there was a discussion around something with respect to this year's budget that he found shocking.

As I've said many times in this House since May 2, since the budget was tabled, this is a budget that helps move Ontario's economy forward. It means that we're going to make sure that we keep recovering, we keep building a stronger province, we keep creating jobs, we keep making sure that our province is prosperous and that we have the fair society that Ontarians in my riding of Vaughan, and Ontarians right across this province, definitely want to see.

**1650**

But what I find particularly shocking—because the official opposition talks a great deal both in question period and elsewhere about the importance of job creation—is that when members like the member from Cambridge stand in their place and complain and act shocked about things that they're hearing or seeing in the budget—what shocks me is that a member, like that member from Cambridge, would have taken the opportunity to vote against the creation of the southwest economic development fund. That's a program—a fund—that was created with respect to helping to create 25,000 jobs across southwestern Ontario, including in his community of Cambridge. I find it shocking that he

wouldn't see fit to supporting this budget and supporting our direction with respect to things like that particular economic development fund and a lot of the other things that are contained in the budget.

What the people of my community find shocking perhaps more than anything else is the decision, as I've said many times before, of people in that particular caucus—in the official opposition caucus—to sort of throw away their responsibility, to ignore their responsibility as Her Majesty's loyal opposition, and to have decided weeks ago—notwithstanding what they're making it sound like in the House in the last couple of days or couple of weeks—to have decided weeks and weeks ago—

**Interjection:** Months.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** —months ago—that they didn't want to review the budget, didn't want to know what was in it. They simply decided, right away, months ago, that they were going to vote against it—unacceptable to the people of Vaughan and unacceptable to the people of Ontario.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm happy to rise to speak to comments made by my colleague from Cambridge. It was interesting; he talked about a conversation with the mayor of his municipality. I was the mayor of South Glengarry, and in talking to the mayor back home, he talked about the same issues: about a government that doesn't want to live within its means, that collects a large amount of taxes but does not give money back to the rural municipalities. We've seen numbers that are less than what they were when this government took over, although their revenues are up drastically.

Their infrastructure program—we have the Kraft Road bridge that was in serious shape. They weren't even allowed to apply for it—the grant—because they were considered in too good of financial shape. We had a modest reserve at home that allowed us not to have to borrow money every year, that allowed us to save on interest. It allowed us to reinvest into projects like our Lancaster water project. It helped the people who had committed to it as well, and we're told that we're not allowed to apply for a major infrastructure program that they very much bragged about.

This goes to speak about the attitude of this government. The fact that, “Well, if you can borrow more money, go to the bank and borrow until you can't borrow anymore.” The interest is not—make it a major line item.

You wonder why we said some time ago, “We can't support this government”? We can't support this government. We've seen the waste that this government's gone—they've got us into a mess. They've driven up our costs so high, our businesses are leaving. They talk about trying to get people working, but it comes down to being competitive. We are no longer competitive in this province.

How could anybody support this government? Just because you come out with a new budget—they do that

every year, but they've done that for nine years and we have nine years of waste and corruption.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I think that there are some things—some ideas and some feelings—that we may have in common with the PC Party. I certainly share the member from Cambridge's concern around physiotherapy. I think that we have different ideas, actually, on how to deal with the issue around how physiotherapy services are delivered. We would like to entrench and support those services through the health care system, whereas I think that they may lean towards more privatization of those services.

So there are fundamental differences, and you know what? That's okay, because that's the way democracy works. The other way democracy works is that the people who are elected to this House show up to work. You work on the budget. You bring the ideas forward. You listen to people around the province. You gather best practices, and you try to inform.

The most important job that we have in this Legislature is the confidence motion on the budget. The budget is, in many ways, a moral document which informs the priorities of this House and the priorities of the people of this province. I tell you, when I consulted with people in my riding of Kitchener–Waterloo, they told me very clearly, when we indicated that we were willing to put our ideas forward and to support those ideas going forward, they felt relief, because they are afraid; there is a genuine fear factor about some of the ideas that are being brought forward by the PC Party. Those are the white papers or discussion papers, those ideas that people of that party have put forward.

We would rather be open, we would rather be transparent, which is what we did in informing the priorities in this budget. We can go back to the electorate and say, “We fought for that financial accountability office that will keep every future government accountable to the people who supported us and sent us here.” That's an important step in securing support for this budget. It's a tangible result and we can take it back to the people.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Cambridge has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Speaker, I'm not sure two minutes is going to do justice to all of that, but I would like to thank the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the member from Vaughan, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for contributing to the debate of the bill, and having questions and comments.

Again, I guess for the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, we're not saying privatization of services, so I'll answer your question very straight up, but I'll still have a coffee with you.

With respect to the economy, I think we've talked a lot about the economy. My problem is that the government simply hasn't listened.

I do want to share a little bit of a story, because I was at Bitmaker Labs today doing a tour—very close to



Queen's Park—just looking at how youth can get together to think about an innovative way to learn a skill, to get a skill and market that skill, and get a good job at the end of the day. Even though the government isn't listening to us, we continue to listen to the people and I think we're on the right side of the issues with respect to that.

At the insinuation from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo that we've checked out of the process—far from that. These white papers have been a very determined, methodical way of talking about policy in a way that that party simply doesn't want to—

**Interjection:** They don't have policy.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** They don't have policy. They say, "Well, let's spend some more money, let's tax some more people, let's drive this province further into the hole"—and they've found a partner who's willing to dance with them. It's the party right across the way here.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** This is the mimosa coalition, as my friend sitting across from me—not really right in front of me right now, but from Lanark, Lennox, Addington, Frontenac—I can't quite remember his riding name today.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, this is about holding the government to account. I'm voting against this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on the budget motion? I'm pleased to recognize the member for—Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Kenora–Rainy River.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Kenora–Rainy River.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise to speak to today's budget motion.

I spent the last two months gathering feedback from my constituents using a variety of methods, including a budget survey that I sent out to all 28,000 homes in my riding. I've spoken to hundreds of people at trade shows, meetings and constituency appointments, as well as hearing from those who shared their thoughts with me through emails and letters. After all of this consultation, I believe allowing the budget to pass is the right decision.

Was it an easy choice to make? No, it was not. But I am confident that I am making the responsible decision.

That's what it really boils down to. Making the right decision is never easy. It takes work, it takes a willingness to listen to viewpoints that are different from your own and it takes time. I believe my caucus colleagues and I were absolutely right in taking our time and talking with people before we made a decision, because there's not one single member of my caucus who thinks that they know better than the people they represent.

That's a fundamental part of democracy that some individuals have lost sight of. We were not sent here to represent our own views or our caucus's views; we were sent here to speak on behalf of each and every constituent, regardless of whether they voted for us or not. We have an obligation to listen to each and every one of

those voices and do our best to arrive at a consensus that best represents their views.

We strongly believe that we are here to represent the people in our ridings and that we are not so arrogant as to believe that we know better than the people we represent. I think it's unfortunate that there are individuals in this Legislature who believe otherwise. In fact, I find it very disturbing that there is an entire caucus that has no interest in listening not only to their constituents but to anybody in this province, and that they are so arrogant about their "we know better" approach that they even put it in black and white.

**1700**

Just over a month and a half ago, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs held pre-budget consultations. After a strong fight, the people living in the northwest were able to share their thoughts on the upcoming budget, including what should be in it and what shouldn't be in it.

We heard feedback from groups like Hoshizaki House, in Dryden; First Step Women's Shelter, in Thunder Bay; the municipality of Ignace, the municipality of Pickle Lake, the Experimental Lakes support group, and Shoal Lake No. 39 First Nation—and that's mostly just from my riding.

The pre-budget hearing process gave us feedback from people, groups and organizations in this province who wanted input on the direction this government is taking. I believe very strongly that these groups and organizations have this right, because this government isn't the NDP government, it's not the Conservatives' government and it's not the Liberals' government. It's the people's government.

Each and every time we have an election, MPPs from each riding are sent here to represent their ridings and govern in the interests of the people. We in the opposition have an obligation to ensure that the government does not stray from this task. It's pretty cut and dried. So when the people of this province take the time to provide feedback, I believe we should listen, and I know that my caucus colleagues share this opinion.

Unfortunately, that view—that we're here to represent the people who elected us—isn't shared by the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus. Not only do they believe that they know better; they took time to put it in writing. That took the form of the dissenting opinion in the report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, and I'd like to take a moment to share a few quotes.

This is what the Progressive Conservative caucus wrote in response to the submissions that the people brought forward: "Ontario simply has no money to continue funding everything. These are representative of our sincere belief that our approach, not that of these unrealistic requests"—again, referring to the presentations that people made—"would better inform the process ... we have formed recommendations to respond on an array of issues. Our party has a comprehensive and concrete plan to create jobs, control spending and get our

economy back on track. That should inform the budget process—not unworthy public relations initiatives by the Liberal Party.”

That is shameful. There we have it in black and white, straight from the PC caucus: “Don’t share your thoughts, because we know better than you.”

Despite having 12 sections to supplement that statement, including one on rural Ontario, they can’t be bothered to cobble together a plan for northern Ontario. They’re telling us that they have a comprehensive plan, but their plan does not even include northern Ontario, and that’s because they know better.

It’s shameful that they hold this view, because I believe that the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre in Ignace needs a new facility and rent certainty from this government. I believe that women’s shelters in our region need support to combat crumbling infrastructure.

I believe that northwestern Ontario municipalities need support from this government for vital infrastructure that will allow them to attract economic opportunities to create jobs for people in northwestern Ontario. I believe that we need an east-west road corridor to the Ring of Fire, to help communities in the northwest to maximize the benefits of our natural resources.

I believe this government needs to enter into a respectful dialogue with First Nations to ensure that projects such as the twinning of Highway 17 near Kenora move forward without unnecessary delays. And I believe the government should intervene—fortunately, it has taken some steps, after the hearings—to save the Experimental Lakes Area in my riding.

Unfortunately, the Progressive Conservatives do not support these initiatives.

Speaker, this isn’t an isolated incident. Last year, when the PCs brought forward a bill to repeal the Far North Act, they mentioned how groups like the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, known as NAN, and the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, known as NOMA, were opposed to the original act. They even went so far as to read parts of letters from these organizations that said as much. Unfortunately, rather than read the whole letter, the member who brought forward this bill ignored paragraphs that clearly stated that these organizations were opposed to scrapping the bill altogether without first creating a replacement. But once again, who cares what the people think, because the PCs know better.

They say they know better and, unfortunately, we’re left in the dark as to what they really want, because rather than be part of the process, they said, “We’re not the government, so we’re going home” for both minority budgets. Rather than respecting the wishes of the voters of this province and working together in a minority situation, they chose to sit this one out and instead accomplish nothing—absolutely nothing.

I can tell you from that same feedback that I heard from Conservatives living across the northwest that they are furious that members of the Progressive Conservative caucus rejected the budget months before it was even

written—again, for a second time—and that is not responsible.

There’s a very powerful and meaningful quote that came from the 2011 federal leaders’ debate, and I think it’s very relevant to the situation we’re having in Ontario right now. That’s when the late Jack Layton asked Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff how he expected to get a promotion to Prime Minister if he didn’t show up for work. I think that same question could be asked of the official opposition right now. We were sent here to do a job and, instead, they have been pouting for over a year and a half.

I’ve spent a lot of time focusing on what’s not responsible. I’d like, if I could, to shift focus to speak about what is responsible. Being responsible is living up to your obligations. It’s about making a commitment to do the right thing. As I said earlier in this speech, it’s not always easy. It involves hard work, compromise and a willingness to work with people whom you may not necessarily agree with all the time, and that’s what we’ve been doing with this budget. We’ve been compromising.

We knew going in that we would not come out with an NDP budget. We were under no illusions that we were going to get everything we wanted, but we resolved to work in the best interests of the hard-working people of this province and roll up our sleeves and enter into a constructive and meaningful dialogue with the government.

You see, Speaker, leadership isn’t dictating to people what you’re going to do. Leadership is working with others to accomplish goals, expressing a willingness to make difficult decisions and having a desire to effect positive change without worrying about who’s going to take credit or get the accolades. Leadership is understanding that it’s getting results that matter, and what the Progressive Conservatives wouldn’t do, the NDP did do. That’s because we have respect for the voters who sent us here.

We rolled up our sleeves, and after listening to people from across this province, we came up with five reasonable requests for the budget. This included a five-day home care guarantee; a 15% reduction in auto insurance premiums; a First Start jobs program that’ll help young people enter the workforce and stay there; steps that would allow people on social assistance to keep a small amount of their employment earnings that would help them to escape the cycle of dependency that our system creates; and closing unnecessary corporate tax loopholes to make it easier for the province to balance its budget. Three of these—home care, auto insurance and youth jobs—are important northern priorities.

Since I participated in the debate on the budget just over two weeks ago, I’m not going to rehash all of the statistics that came out of the more than 28,000 budget surveys I sent out, but I will reiterate that more than 90% of the respondents indicated a high to very high support of reduced auto insurance premiums, while there was also very high support for increased access to home care, closing tax loopholes and youth jobs.

While it is disappointing the government wasn't too interested in closing corporate tax loopholes, such as the ability to write off luxury boxes for sporting events and expensive dinners, they did meet us halfway on a number of these priorities, including committing to home care which will, in turn, also reduce costs and enhance health care services.

In fact, on May 10, I participated in the RAO's Take Your MPP to Work day in Sioux Lookout where I spent a great deal of time learning exactly how our push to improve access to home care will improve service and reduce costs at their hospital, the Meno Ya Win hospital.

During that visit it was pointed out that at any given time one third to one half of the patients who are admitted to the hospital are not there because they need to be in the hospital, but because the waiting lists for other services, such as long-term care and home care, are so long that they cannot be discharged. Instead of being able to receive treatment in the comfort of their homes or being transferred to a long-term-care facility that's better suited to their needs and more cost-efficient, these patients are costing the system \$2,000 per day because the correct investments have not been made.

1710

In fact, I met one gentleman who had been in the hospital since October because the home care services he needs in the Sioux Lookout area are not presently available. Since October, his stay in the hospital has cost the health care system \$2,000 a day because small, front-line investments weren't made. What's worse is that while receiving the treatment that home care could have provided, he developed a highly contagious infection, which meant that he has been living in virtual isolation since that time.

Home care is a huge issue in the north, with people relying on emergency rooms, being admitted to the hospital or being denied service altogether because the waiting list is up to six months in my region. That is just not acceptable. While this government has stopped short of making the five-day guarantee that we had requested, I can assure those of you who are watching and those of you on the government side that we will be on you each and every day to make sure that the investment pays off and that the people who live not only in the north but all across Ontario are receiving the care they deserve.

But approving this budget isn't only about the commitments that we have received from the government. It's about delivering results and ensuring that those results are done in a timely and cost-effective manner. That's why we asked this government to create a financial accountability office, which will review government spending proposals before the money is spent. This is basically the creation of a taxpayer watchdog to ensure that not only are the results people expect delivered, but that they're done so in a responsible, cost-effective manner.

This new office will safeguard taxpayer dollars from future scandals such as Ornge and eHealth. It will ensure that monies budgeted will be spent effectively. For

instance, with home care the NDP believes the results that we need, the five-day home care guarantee, can be accomplished with a \$30-million investment, not the Liberals' proposed \$260-million investment that comes without a service guarantee. Once in place, this new office will ensure that only the money that is required is invested, no more. I think that will help to determine whether we actually need the \$30 million or if we need the \$260 million. It's about more value for the money.

The new financial accountability office will ensure that not only will the problem go away, but that the extra cash is caught in a safety net to be there for other priorities and projects.

As many say, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. That really is the situation that we've been faced with in Ontario. One government comes into power, wastes a bunch of money, gets caught in a scandal, and so we replace it with another one that promises that it won't do the same thing. They won't do the thing that the other guy did, and then it turns around and it does the same thing. It sort of reminds me of the old Tommy Douglas story of Mouseland: The electorate throws them out and the cycle repeats itself again. What we're saying right now is instead of repeating the cycle, let's fix the problem. Let's bring someone in who can plug the leak before the dam breaks, and that's the financial accountability office.

We need this oversight in Ontario now. We need it because far too often we have parties in governments that propose things that sound great, such as the legislated wage freezes that the party to my right keeps touting, but which end up costing taxpayers tens of millions or even hundreds of millions of dollars more, essentially throwing money out of the window because it makes them look good or it's a good sound bite.

By approving this office, we're giving the taxpayers of this province the extra oversight, a voice that can say, "Wait a minute, what about British Columbia? What about this situation or that situation where the wage freezes cost taxpayers more?" That's what we need.

I think it's shameful that my Progressive Conservative colleagues do not support the financial safeguards, and I can't seem to figure out why. They claim to want to save taxpayers money, so why not do something that actually accomplishes that end? Because as Tommy Douglas stated, rather than going from the black cats to the white cats and then back again, why not actually do something about the problem? Why not create a system of accountability that will be there for this government and the next government and the one after that? It seems reasonable.

Instead of saying, "We don't like the government, so we're going to take our ball and we're going to go home," why not say, "While we may not agree with the voters' choice, we respect their decision, and now it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work"? Because there's so much more to worry about in this province than passing the budget. The pressing issue isn't who's sitting in the Premier's chair; it's what we can do as a

collective group of elected officials and individuals to create jobs, to help seniors, to help families and to move this province forward. It's about working with the person beside you, the member across from you and each and every member who you need to work with to deliver results.

Two weeks ago, when this House last sat, I raised an issue about a mining company that was having approval for its environmental assessment terms of reference unnecessarily delayed. After I asked the question in question period, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines came up and said, "We need to work together on this issue," and by working together, that approval was granted within two hours.

For months, I've been talking with the Minister of Infrastructure to resolve a situation facing the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre. This issue is pressing, and it needs to be resolved. Throwing \$100 million out the window for an election just to come back with the same result is not fixing the problem; it's irresponsible. The responsible thing to do is to continue to work, continue to fight and continue to respect the people who sent us here to do a job, a very important job.

I am committed to the people who sent me here and to doing this job to the very best of my ability. I hope that all of you, everyone in this House, will join me in putting the best interests of our constituents first.

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

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to respond to the comments from the member from Kenora–Rainy River and thank her for her comments on what we need to be doing here in this House, because, absolutely, we need to be thinking about how we work together. Where are areas where we can find consensus? Because I too find that when I talk to people in my riding of Guelph, they share the same point of view: that we don't need to have an election, that a government has been elected and that all of us have been elected. Their expectation is that we will find a way to work together and to make this Legislature work.

I just wanted to comment on—the member mentioned that she'd been participating in the RAO Take Your MPP to Work day, and I did the same thing. It fit in with the theme of home and community care. I do want to point out that sometimes community care is a little bit bigger than just specifically home care, but one of the things that we're doing in the budget is committing an additional \$260 million to home and community care.

I was able to visit the diabetes clinic in Guelph, which in Guelph is actually run by the family health team. The family health team has done a wonderful job of integrating a whole lot of different services into that community service; in fact, the diabetes clinic there includes exercise facilities, dietitians and social workers, along with the nursing services and the doctor that you would expect. It's a great example of when we have everybody co-operating and delivering a great community service.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I rise to comment on the member from Kenora–Rainy River. I was somewhat surprised that she was commenting that we were a party without a plan. I think that we've done a very good job of developing our white papers. They're on the websites; maybe they should do a little more listening and watching themselves and find these plans. We have something around 10 plans that cover most of the items, and we have more to come out. Certainly we've put a plan forth, and we're doing some of the things that will bring this province back and make it competitive again.

They're talking about how we refused to support this budget. Damn right; we can't support this budget. You're talking about a government that's gone back and wasted \$1 billion on gas plants, \$1 billion on Ornge helicopters, \$1 billion on the Green Energy Act, \$2 billion on eHealth, and now they've wasted \$1 billion buying NDP support.

**1720**

We hear today that they're looking for almost \$500 from every household in this province to pay for transit in Toronto. I mean, when is enough enough? They believe that if they get an accountability officer who will be trained to catch these people wasting money, that will solve all the problems. If you're so worried about waste on the other side that you have to get another ministry that's going to spend millions looking at this government, it's time they listen to the people in my riding. They're saying they're fed up with the government. Enough is enough. They've seen the corruption. They see the results of this party—where it has taken us. We're almost bankrupt. It's time to get rid of the rascals on the other side and time to go to an election. At over a million dollars an hour, just in borrowing, we've borrowed all we can borrow. The banks are telling us so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Mr. Speaker, first of all I'd like to compliment the member from Kenora–Rainy River. A new, young member, she was very in-depth and did a lot of research, which some other people might want to do more of.

You know, I sit here and listen to the official opposition go after the government on their scandals. Yes, the scandals happened. Yes, they made a big mistake. Finally, they admitted it. We finally got an apology on The Agenda, Steve Paikin's show. We did get an apology.

Now, to make a long story short, if you were to listen to this party, with all due respect, they want a right-to-work state where everyone can work for nine bucks an hour. They want to change the apprentice ratio so that the poor craftsmen and tradesmen have to watch more apprentices and can't keep them safe. They want to do that. They want to raise corporate breaks, so that the working guy will have to bear the brunt of that. There are all kinds of things they want to do.

You know, they call this new thing the white paper. I've got a different name for it. It's not "white," and I'll

leave up to your imagination what I would like to call it. It's two-ply—maybe three-ply. All I can say is that if these guys get in, we'll all be working for \$9 an hour. Unemployment will go up.

It's just absolutely unconscionable that they cannot read a budget, they won't read the budget and they say no to everything. They never say yea to anything. The bottom line here is that you've got a party that just says no. They don't read it, they won't do anything about it and if you expect any better—if you went to that group and expected better, believe me, we'll all be in bigger trouble.

The bottom line is that we in the NDP do our research; you might want to do yours.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The minister of corrections and francophone affairs.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to commend the member from Kenora–Rainy River for her presentation. She did her work. She consulted with her residents and got their input. I want to congratulate her.

I know that your neighbours on your right don't need to read or consult, because even prior to the discussion on the budget, they already told us they want an election. They don't want to read the budget, give their opinion on the budget or give their input on the budget. They want an election. We know why they want an election.

One more reason why I'm going to support this budget is because of the physiotherapy transformation that will go on, starting in August. Ontario will provide more than 200,000 additional seniors and patients with improved access to high-quality physiotherapy, exercise and fall-prevention classes. I'm very concerned about the publicity that is being provided by those organizations that used to have control of physiotherapy clinics in Ontario. The minister has added more money into the budget. If the budget is approved, more seniors will receive physiotherapy services on a timely basis and where they should receive them—not only those who receive services at these DPC clinics. Four organizations have control in Ontario. This is going to end, and the distribution of services will be more equitable in Ontario. More seniors will be served.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Kenora–Rainy River has two minutes to reply.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I'd like to thank the Minister of Education, the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for their comments.

I just wanted to clarify a statement that was made by the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry who said that I said that the PCs don't have a plan. I didn't say the PCs don't have a plan—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** No, no, no. What I said was that when it comes to their very comprehensive version of the budget that they would put forward, it says nothing

about northern Ontario; that despite all of their bluster about caring about the development of the Ring of Fire and the high cost of hydro prices for residential users in northern Ontario, when the rubber hits the road, like I said, there are 12 sections in here that cover absolutely everything under the sun, including rural Ontario, but there's nothing about northern Ontario. That is shameful.

The other thing I also said is that there's something that is profoundly disrespectful and frankly, quite anti-democratic, about saying quite literally that we should just listen to what they have to say because they know best and we shouldn't engage in these unworthy political relations initiatives like pre-budget consultations. That is shameful. That is so disrespectful for everybody who has supported them to say, "We only care about you when it comes to election time. Your views and values aren't important to us between such times." I was hoping that when we were elected to a minority government it would cause people to maybe leave aside the partisanship and work together, talk about some ideas and where we can go, and that just isn't happening with this party.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate on the budget motion?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'll be sharing my time with the member for Oakville.

I'm happy to speak to the budget motion today, a bill that has laid the groundwork for a prosperous and fair Ontario. This budget successfully addresses issues and strengthens services that matter most to all Ontarians. At the same time, it enables Ontario's economy to be more productive and competitive through a six-point economic action plan. It's an action plan that seeks to invest more than \$35 billion over the next three years in modern infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, roads and public transit. Accessible and efficient public transit is an important priority for my riding of Ottawa–Orléans, and it is critical that municipalities have all the support they require when it comes to building public transit.

We in Orléans would certainly like to see the light rail transit come out to Trim Road. By permanently dedicating two cents per litre of gas tax each year to municipalities, our government has shown that it will help build public transit. This means improved access to services, education and employment opportunities. It means cutting gridlock, which costs the economy \$6 billion a year in lost wages. It means job creation and improved household income. It also means reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which is an environmental necessity, especially for the future generations of Ontarians.

Our government also wants to ensure a highly skilled workforce, something that can only be achieved by investing in skills and education, and by implementing a forward-looking strategy for youth employment. That's why our government will be investing \$295 million in a two-year Youth Job Strategy that would promote youth employment and training opportunities as well as entrepreneurship and innovation. This investment would especially help strengthen the role that industry-specific training institutions can play in generating youth employ-

ment. This means that places like La Cité collégiale, Centre de métiers Minto in Orléans could even better prepare youth for careers in trades, engineering and technology.

Just as we have to invest in the future generations of Ontarians, we must also invest in those who have brought us to where we are today: our seniors. Increased investment in home and community care—a total increase of more than \$700 million by 2015-16—will increase options available to seniors to help them stay longer in the comfort of their own homes. Launching Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors would also further provide better access to health care, quality resources and improved safety and security for seniors.

**1730**

My staff and I have received overwhelming positive feedback on this proposed budget from our community in Orléans. This budget will support the well-being of my community, the poster child for linguistic minority communities in Canada, with 35,000 francophones living together with 75,000 anglophones and other minority groups in harmony, supporting each other and building a great community.

Le budget de 2013 dévoilé par notre gouvernement est un plan d'action positif pour l'Ontario. La stratégie de notre gouvernement est basée, entre autres, sur l'emploi et la croissance, une société équitable, un gouvernement responsable et garant des deniers publics, et l'atteinte de l'équilibre budgétaire.

Il est impératif de s'assurer de protéger les différentes collectivités de notre province et de l'ensemble de notre pays. Notre pays s'est d'ailleurs doté de lois afin de protéger les diverses collectivités qui le composent. En tant que représentant, mais surtout en tant que résidant de la merveilleuse communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans, je partage cette responsabilité de protéger ma communauté que je respecte et aime profondément.

C'est précisément pour cette raison que j'ai posé un geste positif afin de soulever cette situation pressante et j'ai déposé, le 8 avril dernier, une plainte officielle au commissaire aux langues officielles du Canada, M. Graham Fraser. Il ne fait aucun doute que la région d'Orléans est une tête d'affiche des collectivités bilingues au Canada. Des francophones et anglophones y travaillent ensemble pour construire une communauté forte où le respect d'autrui et l'harmonie règnent.

La Loi sur les langues officielles est claire. Le gouvernement fédéral «s'est engagé à favoriser l'épanouissement des minorités francophones et anglophones, au titre de leur appartenance aux deux collectivités de langue officielle, et à appuyer leur développement et à promouvoir la pleine reconnaissance et l'usage du français et de l'anglais dans la société canadienne». Toute action contraire constitue une violation de la loi.

Les recherches sont claires : les francophones qui ne vivent pas à l'intérieur d'une forte communauté française font rapidement face à l'assimilation. Si le gouvernement du Canada, par son action de déplacer 10 000 emplois du

secteur public du centre-ville vers l'extrémité ouest, entrave sa responsabilité de protéger les communautés vivant en situation linguistique minoritaire, il incombe à d'autres de le décrier et de contester la constitutionnalité de ces décisions. C'est exactement ce que j'ai fait en déposant une plainte.

We had a great budget breakfast in Orléans, and we had over 20 people who came out. We had general agreement with the improvements we were making in education, in health care and in job creation. The job creation one is very important.

As we discussed that, one of the questions came out—because we do have a large First Nation population in Vanier, probably the largest Inuit population outside of their homeland. One of the things I wanted to read from the budget is, “Ontario is committed to ensuring all students have the same opportunities. The government will continue to invest in projects that help close the student achievement gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students, including support for the implementation of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education policy framework. The government will provide an additional \$5 million per year to improve student achievement for aboriginal students.”

That is an important part. That is something we don't mention in the budget very much, but it's extremely important that we do have that fairness across our great province and that we bring the First Nations into it in a better way.

Much like we need to work together in my community, in our communities in Orléans, we as elected members must also work together for all of our communities across the province. That's why we need to support this budget. The prosperity and future of our province, of Ontarians of today and tomorrow, depend on our ability to get things done. Let's do the right thing. Let's work together and support this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pleased to recognize the member for Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to follow the member from Ottawa-Orléans. Let me say from the outset that obviously, as a member of the government, I'll be supporting this budget.

I've heard a lot of comments on the conduct of either party—the third party and the opposition party. Quite frankly, I'm not overly upset that the official opposition has chosen to take the tack that it has; it has every right to do that. I think that the voters, the people of Ontario, will form their own opinions as to whether it was the correct way to approach this or not.

I much, however, personally prefer the approach that has been taken by the third party. Obviously we have disagreements; we're separate political parties. We're expected to not agree on things. We're expected to bring forward our best ideas, and people will judge us based on those ideas. I do have to compliment—I think it was a strategic choice. I think that, politically, it was a very smart strategic choice on the part of the third party to

take the approach they've taken. I think they brought forward some good ideas. They've seen them integrated into the budget. Certainly, for two of the parties—for the government and for the third party—I see this as a process that has led to a positive outcome for both of those parties.

The official opposition has chosen, before even seeing the budget, to go down the road of, "We're not supporting it." That, certainly, is a right, and I would not argue with that right one bit. I come from a riding where, generally, a Liberal or a Conservative is elected. The NDP usually runs fantastic candidates, but they usually run third. This is the puzzling part. In a riding like Oakville, which is very similar to some of the ridings that I know exist in the official opposition—and perhaps even yours, Speaker—people are always around the centre. Sometimes they're a little bit to the right, sometimes a little bit to the left. I have a sense that they would much rather see the government working with the official opposition on a budget than the government working with the NDP on a budget. It's a personal opinion; it relates to my specific riding. But I think that's true of a lot of ridings as well, that they would much rather see us working on it as opposed to just, "We're not supporting it." That seems to me to be the wrong approach.

What we've been able to do, for example—we're going to be able to proceed with a number of projects. What was really exciting news in the town of Oakville recently was that the GO trains, which have run in and out of Oakville at least since the 1970s, have now gone to a 30-minute all-day schedule. That's starting to approach the times that you get from a subway system, where you can show up at the station and chances are that there's going to be a train there shortly—unless the train left 30 seconds ago, in which case you've got 29 minutes to wait. If you're a little late, if you're stuck in traffic, if it's bad weather or any of those things, you know that you can show up at the Bronte GO station or you can show up at the Oakville GO station—some people in Oakville even use the Clarkson GO station—and a train will be coming along to bring you downtown, and it runs every 30 minutes.

A lot of people complained about the evening schedule of the GO train; certainly, I find it difficult from time to time, because if you weren't on the train by 6:30 or 6:45, you were waiting another hour between trains. That could get you home pretty late, and you started to think, "Perhaps the drive home, as rotten as it is, isn't such a bad thing." Those are the sorts of improvements that we're likely to see as a result of the passage of this budget. The service is being implemented on June 29, as I understand it, but it's the sort of thing that's included in it.

I know, coming from the town of Oakville and from a municipal perspective, having spent 18 years on local and regional council, that one of the things that has really helped in the funding of municipal services has been the implementation of a gas tax that was dedicated to municipalities. It was always up in the air as to whether

that would continue; with the economic downturn in 2008-09, I think there were a lot of programs that were up in the air. I like how we've managed this, because now we're able to make that gas tax permanent so people like Mayor Burton and people like the members of council in the town of Oakville now can rely on that funding on an ongoing basis, on a regular basis.

**1740**

I really like the idea of the budgetary officer of the House that the NDP brought forward—something I'm very supportive of, something that I would have thought that at this level of government we would have had in place some time ago. So the fact that it came from an opposition party and is being implemented, being included in a government budget that's being supported by the third party, I think speaks to the seriousness that people take accountability on this in this House—on both sides of the House as well.

I spend a lot of time working with people at Community Living, talking to a lot of people in my community who rely on ODSP for their funding. A lot of those people have found the ability and the opportunity to secure employment. The old system, as much as it was better than previous systems, still penalized those people when they were working. They would work, they would show some initiative, they would get the dignity of work and then the government would take some of that money back, and that seemed to me to be really counterintuitive to the whole idea of trying to advance the notion that everybody in an inclusive society has a role to play. I think it speaks volumes in this budget that we're able to increase the amount of money that people who are receiving ODSP are able to keep as a result of a part-time job or whatever type of job they have.

I'm also very, very pleased to see the continued funding of mental health services in my community. I think all over the province of Ontario people have been trying to get the government's attention on this very, very important issue. As a result of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions that had excellent participation from all three parties, we were able, as a committee, to come together, prepare what I thought was a good report, bring it to the government's attention and the government said, "Obviously we can't deal with this report in one year"—no level of government could and no party could—"but what we can do is bring in the youth part of that. We can bring in a mental health strategy that looks specifically at young people."

I can only tell you that in the region of Halton, and I'm assuming throughout the province of Ontario and certainly in my riding of Oakville, that has been a tremendous success. We've integrated and implemented programs, primarily through the school system, that speak to what young people have been dealing with for some time and often didn't have the ability to explain themselves or didn't have the wherewithal to go to somebody and say, "I think I need some help here." Even if they did go to their parents, often their parents didn't know where to turn for help. That was clear in the report.

So the youth mental health strategy that's been implemented in the province of Ontario has paid dividends.

We've got a public school system that will continue to be funded as a result of the passage of this budget. When I came to this place in 2003, having run once in 1999, kids were dropping out of the public education system. Test scores were down. Kids just weren't graduating. I think we had about a 60% graduation rate—62%, 63% maybe. We've built that up over the years by continued investments through good times and bad times. We've invested in that system so that now it ranks as the best school system in the English-speaking world. That's something we should be especially proud of. Our graduation rates are up. Our test scores are way up, and obviously when graduation rates go up, it stands to reason that dropout rates go way down.

Last week, I was able to talk to a number of mayors in rural Ontario. I was just speaking to them about some of the projects they'd applied for through the MIII funding for some very, very much-needed infrastructure in some of the rural communities in the province of Ontario. I was able to have a brief conversation with these people about how things were going in general, what they were going to do with this money when they received it and which project they were working on. To a person, they were very pleased with the way we're approaching this. Certainly you could just tell by the tone of their voice—I was meeting with them on the phone—that this is something that was very, very important to their community and something they'd like to see continued. That is the sort of thing that is going to continue as a result of the passage of this budget.

As I said at the start, Speaker, I'm not opposed to the official opposition doing what it's doing. But it certainly seems to me that there could be a more positive effect to having participated in a budget process and trying to get some of those things included in the budget, as the NDP was able to get things that they thought were very important included in the budget.

I know all about party discipline, but I also know some of the people on that side of the House in the official opposition, Speaker. I suspect that some of them, if they had had their druthers, would have preferred to have taken a more co-operative and participatory route in this budget process.

I'm not trying to stimulate a revolt within the PC caucus. I'm saying that the people in the province of Ontario sent us down here in a minority government. They said to the Liberal Party, basically, "We're not giving you as many seats as you had before." To the Conservative Party, they said, "We're giving you more, but we don't want to make you the government." To the NDP, they actually said, "We're giving you some more seats." But the anticipation was that somehow we would take the wisdom of the province of Ontario and we would make that work; that somehow we'd pull that all together, we'd all sit down around a table, we'd hash it out, and we'd bring forward a budget that we thought reflected the wishes of the people in the province of

Ontario. That, unfortunately, isn't happening this time, and I think that's a shame.

If two parties in the House support the budget, obviously, that budget is going to pass—some changes along the way, perhaps, some amendments, some tweaks, to make it even better. I think it speaks to the democratic process we have, in that at least two parties have found some common ground here. As a government, to survive, we needed the support of either one of the parties, preferably of both parties.

Probably, looking at opinion polls and other signs and indicators that were out there, as much as it was the right thing to do, I think that strategically and politically, the decision that was made by the third party had a little bit of self-interest in it. That's fine; there's nothing wrong with that. We each stand up for our own parties the way we stand up for our constituents.

As much as I would have preferred to see this go down a different road, it appears that we have a budget before us that's fair and balanced. It has got some strong fundamentals underpinning it, and is worthy of the support, I think, of all parties in this House. As it stands today, Speaker, it looks like it's going to get the support of the government, obviously, and it looks like at this point in time, certainly, it's going to get the support of the third party, and I thank them for that.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak to the colleagues from Ottawa—Orléans and Oakville.

One of the things I wanted to start off with here today is, we've heard a lot of things and a lot of rhetoric. People continue to espouse that I have not read the budget. Well, unless they've sat beside me for every day that we're in this Legislature—and when I'm not in the Legislature—to know what I'm doing, I think it's very disingenuous and in fact disrespectful for them to use these talking points.

They keep talking rhetoric about "we want to work together," and "we want to make a difference." How can you say those types of things and expect people to truly believe that you're sincere with what you're believing?

Each of our members in our PC caucus makes their own decisions based on their principles and on what they believe is right and what is wrong. What we do not do is sit on our hands and let a government that is corrupt and going down the wrong path have another year. What we do not do is call them corrupt in the morning, and then make deals in backrooms that are going to look good in the public media, and then prop them up and give them life again. You can't call someone corrupt and say they're horrible and they're doing the wrong things for this province, and, on the very same day, stand in the afternoon and vote with them, which they have done in this House on things like the wind turbine issue, that we've had in this House four times. They propped them up and supported them.

You either think a government is credible or you don't. We do not believe the Liberal government, after



the last nine years, is running this province the way they should. We believe there's a ton of waste and things that we are not getting, as a result of their lack of management, or mismanagement.

We have health care that could be better. We have education that could be better. We have infrastructure that could be better. Propping them up and giving them more life, when they continue down the same path of overspending and waste, would be disrespectful to me, to my taxpayers and, most importantly, to my sons, Zach and Ben. That's the reason why I'm here: so that they have a future to look forward to, and those pages in front of you have a future to look forward to, Speaker.

We will not support when we see a government continue to overspend and not live within their means. We will not support a government that does not have a jobs plan and some accountability built in, to make sure they achieve those goals. We will not support a government that continues to run up a deficit so that those kids who are sitting in front of you will never have a future to look forward to. I will not support this budget, based on my principles.

1750

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Listening to the Conservatives and the Liberals, we seem to lose sight—and I've said this again: This is a minority government. The mandate of a minority government is that all parties work together to get results for the people of Ontario—not for the Conservative Party, not for the Liberal Party, but for the people of Ontario. That's what we're doing when we stand up here and we speak about the debate: We're giving our ideas to make life better for the people of Ontario and to make sure that their voices are heard.

Every person in this Legislature has a responsibility to come back to this Legislature and speak on behalf of their constituents. What I have heard—and it's not rhetoric; it's what I've heard—is my constituents have said, "You know, Teresa, I'm glad that you have worked hard for us. We didn't want an election. We know this government needs to be held responsible for their actions, and the financial accountability officer is a measure that is something we're happy with, and we can live with that. We didn't want an election." I've heard people say, "We don't want another election. It's costly. We want parties to work together. That's how we voted less than two years ago." So we need to respect those results.

We need to respect our constituents and take the time to look at legislation, give thoughtful debate and make up our minds in the end and not just sit there—the member from Kenora–Rainy River actually put it very nicely—pout in the corner, cross your arms and pout and say, "I don't like the rules to the game, so I'm not going to play."

In the Legislative Assembly, this is the rules to the game. We're in a minority government. The people of Ontario set the rules for you, and they've told you, "Get results for us."

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

**Hon. Teresa Piruzza:** It's a pleasure to stand to respond to the comments made by the members from Oakville, Ottawa–Orléans—in response, I have to echo what was just said by the member from London–Fanshawe in terms of what I'm hearing in my community as well, and that is that people expect us to work together. People want us to govern. This is a minority government. We are to work together. It's unfortunate that the opposition has refused to do so through this period of time. Though the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound indicates that he's voting on this budget based on his principles, I think we need to point out that they had already decided not to support the budget before it was even written. So I'm not quite sure how that was based on principles when they didn't know what was going to come out.

However, notwithstanding that, what am I hearing in my community? I'm hearing, "Has that budget been passed yet? Can we just get on to govern with the other elements that we need to move forward with?" Why are they saying that? They're saying that because they recognize that this budget has a balanced focus. Yes, we're focusing on ensuring that Ontario remains a prosperous province, but we're also looking at the other side to ensure that we have a fair society.

So we have investments in our communities. We have investments in home care, children's treatment centres, transformation of social assistance on the one side. But on the other side, we also have a venture capital fund, increases to our research funds. We have a very competitive tax regime here in Ontario, an accelerated capital cost allowance.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Teresa Piruzza:** I know the member opposite doesn't like hearing all the good things that are in the budget, but it is a budget that has received support from across the area in my riding and in my region as well. You know why? Because it reflects the priorities. It reflects priorities that I hear in my office of our communities, our families, our children. When we do that, when we support our—when our constituents succeed, our communities succeed and our province succeeds.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question and/or comment.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** The member for Oakville made mention of ODSP, and they are allowed to keep a bit more of their own money that they're earning, and that's a good thing. I'm disappointed the asset limits have been raised for those on Ontario Works but they weren't raised for those who are on disability. I think that's unfortunate.

There is no question that this government has to realize it has to focus on core services—core services like children's aid, for example; core services like the Disability Support Program—services very important to taxpayers but obviously to the people who need those services themselves. To do that, you can still run a leaner type of government. You can do more with less. You can reduce spending. You have to do it appropriately—a little less heavy-handed than what we have been seeing with what's being done with our children's aid societies.

You have to cut spending. You can't just slow it down if you're going to be serious about dealing with the debt that you have created.

We all want to protect these kinds of things that we care about, like ODSP and children's aid. At the same time, we must reduce the size, the cost and the role of government. Anyone who tells you they can eliminate a \$11-billion deficit, let alone a projected \$411.4-billion debt, without reducing spending, in my view, is either naive or they think that you are naive.

The member from Oakville paid a visit to Simcoe a number of years ago for the opening of the Toyotetsu parts plant down there. I think you were PA for economic development. We really appreciated you coming down. Members of this party don't come down to my riding. We appreciate you coming down.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** You got a shovel?

We could learn a lot from companies like Toyotetsu. The government can learn a lot on how they run their business.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Oakville has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to respond to the comments from the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, London-Fanshawe, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. Yes, I do recall visiting your riding and, yes, it was good to work with you. I think that was good for the area, as well. I think they're a super employer, and we need more of them.

But I'd like to focus on a few things that, in supporting this budget, will happen as a result of that, what we've decided are some of the more strategic initiatives that we

should place as priorities within this budget. One of them that I haven't heard a lot of talk about, and I think we should talk about it more, is youth unemployment in the province of Ontario, because it sticks out like a sore thumb. It's not just related to Ontario. This seems to be a phenomenon in almost all of North America. The unemployment rate hovers between 7% and 8% across the province, but it gets into the high teens for those between 18 and 25. It seems to me that we need to do something about that. We need to match up the skills that the young people are receiving training in to the skills that are needed by industry and allow these young people to set off on a course of fruitful employment for the rest of their lives.

Two other things I think stand out in the process that's taken place—and once again, without being overly generous to the third party, I think they've got a lot out of this budget, and that certainly is the auto insurance reduction. The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, I think, brought that issue forward, along with others from all parties. But I think he really drove that issue. It was picked up by the government, and the government decided, "Yes, there's something we can do here, there's some good that can come of this."

Home care for 46,000 seniors, and we're trying to get that five-day wait target that all parties support.

I think everybody benefits as a result of the support of this budget. I think all three parties, if they could find a way to do it, should be supporting it.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. It being extremely close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
<b>Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

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Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro  
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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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**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best  
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo  
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short









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