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of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Monday 3 June 2013

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 3 juin 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 June 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 juin 2013

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's my pleasure to welcome back to the Legislature today my wife, Kate Bartz; her aunt and uncle from Sudbury, Veda and Carl Han-ninen; and my and Kate's brother-in-law from Toronto, a police officer right here in the city, Chris Armstrong.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's an honour to introduce His Highness Reza Pahlavi, the former crown prince of Iran, and his delegates—Ms. Zarrin Mohyeddin, Mr. Reza Pir-zadeh, Dr. Kevin Rod and Ms. Nazila Golestan—visiting the Ontario Legislature.

His Highness has been a strong advocate for democ-racy, human rights and rule of law in his homeland of Iran. Please join me in welcoming His Highness.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome, our special guest.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like everyone to welcome, in the members' gallery today, Jeff and Irene Smith, who currently reside in Richmond Hill but are moving to the beautiful riding of Simcoe North, near Washago. They're here with us to enjoy question period.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that today is—I think we're the only two members remaining from the class of 1999, when Mike Harris was elected with a second majority government.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I tried my best.

Hon. John Milloy: I'd like to welcome Dr. Katherine Bergman, president and vice-chancellor of St. Jerome's University, who is with us today, along with Heather Montgomery, director of advancement from the depart-ment of university advancement. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm pleased today—my page Edgar Martinez Chavez is here with his mom, Lud-mila; his father, Raul Martinez; his brother Raul Jr.; also with Indera Chavez and Esther Valiente. We welcome them this morning and this afternoon to the members' gallery.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to introduce a delegation from the Anatolian Heritage Federation: Saadettin Ozcan, Ahmet Tamirci and Fatih Yegul. Please welcome them. There will be a reception during lunch-time in committee room 228. I invite every member of this House to attend this celebration.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm very happy to welcome the grandparents of page Laura from the riding of Ottawa Centre. Her grandparents Susan and Harry Hughes are with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Joe Leroux, owner of Amadio's World Fam-ous Pizza—celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Along with him is Gord Lawrence, a liver transplant recipient just last October—considered by the transplant team at Toronto General Hospital as a poster boy for world-class success.

Congratulations to you. Thank you for being here at the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introduc-tions?

Today in the Speaker's gallery, we're joined by my oldest brother and his wife, Ida, along with their—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He looks younger.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That got me—along with their grandchildren, two of many, Jack and Jessie O'Donnell. Welcome to Queen's Park.

He does look older. Come on.

Final call for introductions?

AIR AMBULANCE CRASH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, on a point of order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to acknowledge the four people at Ornge who lost their lives. We will be recognizing Cap-tain Don Filliter, First Officer Jacques Dupuy, paramedic Dustin Dagenais, and paramedic Chris Snowball. They lost their lives in a crash last week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has sought unanimous con-sent for a moment of silence for these four people. Agreed? Agreed.

Please rise.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Please be seated.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker. Of course, our thoughts and prayers and support are with the families

and colleagues of the tragically deceased pilots and paramedics in the province of Ontario. I appreciate the moment of silence from the Minister of Health.

Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister: Do you have a plan to bring in a significant increase in user fees to help pay for your runaway spending?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, what we have as a plan is to reduce the deficit, to continue on our trend to continue investing in our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If we're going to start, I'll start right away.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: Tell him he should have read the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Right away—all members.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we have a plan to continue to invest in our youth, continue investing in infrastructure—and continuing to ensure that we have a competitive society and renewing our economy. We're going to control our spending, below 1% growth year over year, as we've been doing, and we look to the opposition to continue to support those initiatives which are going to make us competitive in the long term.

1040

It's critical that we take a holistic approach to the things that we're doing, one of which is providing confidence, and that is why our budget has been well received by the very markets that are looking at what we are doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't think the minister answered my pretty direct and simple question.

Minister, we're very concerned that we've seen decisions from the Wynne government basically to cave into the teachers' unions, which are spending hundreds of millions of dollars in more union contracts. You tossed out the wage freeze. There's no mention of arbitration reform in your budget. And you've increased spending with 20 brand new promises, including a billion dollars to buy the support of the NDP.

The minister says the deficit comes down. Actually, Minister, your deficit goes up in this fiscal year. I'm worried now that ordinary Ontario families, men and women, are going to have to pay the consequences of your decisions to throw more and more money at every problem under the sun.

I'll ask the minister again very clearly: Do you have a plan to increase user fees on families and businesses by almost \$300 million? Yes or no?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, our plan is working. We've beaten our targets year over year—\$5 billion last year alone—because of some of the very restraints that we've taken. And we're already ahead for next year. So we're taking steps to transform the way we provide public service.

Ontario is the lowest-per-capita cost government in Canada because of the steps that we've taken. We're on a path to balance by 2017-18, and that is what's critical.

We need all sides of the House working together for the benefit of the people of Ontario. Don't take extreme measures, Mr. Speaker. We're adopting a lot of measures to control our spending, but we're not going to jeopardize the sensitive recovery in this province. We're going to work in a balanced approach.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The minister has twice dodged a very straightforward question: Are you planning to increase user fees on average Ontario families and on businesses? I suspect it means that he does plan to do so.

Minister, we've already heard your musing about increasing the HST, increasing gas taxes. You've increased spending. The consequences of all this mean that taxes are going to go up under a Liberal-NDP coalition and the deficit actually gets larger. I want to know why the finance minister thinks that Ontario families need to keep tightening their belts when he refuses to tighten their belt one single notch.

So let me ask the minister again: I think that's a tacit admission you're going to ramp up user fees, so if that's the case, when were you planning to announce to Ontarians that you're increasing user fees by \$270 million?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We've put out a number of initiatives to support economic growth. We have over 400,000 net new jobs as a result of the programs we've put in place. We're continuing to invest in our youth. We're going to continue to invest in capital infrastructure and in public transit. And we'll do so for the benefit of our long-term success. This is not about election-cycle politics, Mr. Speaker. We can't think short-term. We've got to look at the long-term play.

That is exactly what this budget talks about. It talks about our future. Inasmuch as it talks about the fiscal constraints that we're taking now, we also have to look at where we're going to be in years to come. I would look to the member opposite to support that initiative, because it's imperative that we look for Ontario's long-term benefit.

During my couple of days that I've had with investors in other parts of the world, they appreciate the steps that we've taken in Ontario to look long-term, and we'll continue to do so.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Finance: The problem is that the long term means you've saddled our kids and our grandkids with \$270 billion of debt. The long term means that you've doomed our province to underperforming, to mediocrity, to steady decline, where the PC plan will see Ontario surge ahead to be a leader in North America in jobs, to actually restore hope to those who have lost hope.

The minister says that his plan is to actually create jobs in the province, but I ask you, Minister, how is

bringing in photo radar going to bring a single new job back to the province of Ontario? Is that actually part of your plan?

Hon. Charles Sousa: It appears to me that the member opposite didn't read the budget, because we didn't put tax increases in that budget. What we did do is continue to find ways to make our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think maybe I'll go to individuals now. The member from Kitchener—Conestoga.

Minister?

Hon. Charles Sousa: In fact, we've cut taxes over a number of years. We are one of the lowest-tax jurisdictions in North America when it comes to small business, when it comes to corporate and when it comes to consumers. We recognize how important it is to ensure that Ontario continue to be an attractive place to do business and to invest. We'll continue on that path. We'll continue to find ways to make Ontario even more competitive.

But what is imperative, once again, is that we work together for that end. We cannot take excessive measures. Across-the-board cuts that will hamper that growth are also problematic. We heard that loud and clear from the investors that we've been speaking to around the world who are looking to Ontario. Austerity measures, extreme measures—that is a reaction to the markets and we won't be—I'll answer more in supplementary, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Of course, we read through every detail of the budget. Nowhere in the budget was there mention of this new tax grab or user fees. Nowhere did the words "photo radar" appear, Minister. Hopefully, you read your own budget or you have some other document.

Maybe I do have that document. I'll ask one of the pages to come forward for a sec, if you could, and take this over to the Minister of Finance. It's called 2013-14 Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) Proposals, and I'll ask the minister to look at page 7. Page 7, Minister, refers to a new fee on our telephone bills, it refers to the expansion of red-light cameras, and it refers to the reintroduction of photo radar in the province of Ontario.

The minister says his goal is to create jobs in our province. I'll ask you again: How does photo radar bring any jobs to Ontario? And can you tell us today how much more money will you fleece from people's pockets with your photo radar proposal?

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Smile, Charles. You're on Candid Camera.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I promised and I will: The member from Renfrew, come to order, please.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we've made no commitments of the sort. These may be reactions, could be proposals, could be recommendations; they could be things that are being reviewed, but they are not commitments that we've made. The commitments that we've made are highlighted in that budget. The budget speaks to where we stand and where we're going. That is what we should be concerned about.

The member opposite wants to make things up and wants to suggest and muse about what possibilities may occur, but I can tell you those are the discussions that we should be having. This is what we want to discuss. We've made it clear that we will have discussions before we make any determination.

But what's important is that we continue to invest in our province. That commitment we've made, and that is what we'll continue to do.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Respectfully, Minister, we're not making this stuff up. That's your document; it's a treasury board document. You sit on that committee.

I have to say I'm a little concerned that you initially weren't admitting that you've seen this document or that these proposals were there, and you say that they're simply proposals. In fact, on page 3 of your own document, you've already agreed to increasing fees and taxes across the province, and you're looking further. So it's [*inaudible*] to tell, the Liberals are so hungry for more taxes and fees. So is this a proposal? Is it a given idea? Is it a dialogue? Is it a conversation?

Minister, if these are not real items, if this is some fictitious document, will you then rule out today—no photo radar, no expansion of red-light cameras and no new tax on our telephone and cell phone bills? Will you simply rule that out and say we can't afford it?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Just say no. Just say no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The next time I get advice on that side, I'll talk to you as well.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: These are in fact proposals, as the member opposite has reviewed—as a result, I presume, because of the justice committee's release of confidential reports. So be it.

But our budget is on plan, and this is exactly what we want to see happen. These are just documents that officials have been planning and have been suggesting. No determination has been made.

1050

So I would say to the member opposite, let's concentrate on what decisions have been agreed to and we have decided to do and that is in this budget. Let's stick to that

plan, a plan that is working and a plan that is being well received by world markets, I may add, because they see Ontario as having strong fundamentals. The member opposite should be proud of that, as are Ontarians. We'll continue to support that.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Minister of Health. In 2010 the government promised that every one of Ontario's 600 long-term-care homes would receive a thorough inspection. Can the minister tell us how many have been inspected?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, I can tell you that since 2010—since the proclamation—there have been more than 6,700 inspections of our 634 long-term-care homes. Last year there were 2,347 inspections. I can tell you that we demand nothing but the highest quality in our long-term-care homes. We owe it to the people who are residents there to provide the highest-quality care.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps the minister didn't hear the question. The question was about thorough inspections. The question was very specific to thorough inspections. Since 2010, only 123 of 600 homes have received the thorough inspection that the government promised would happen annually. That's less than 25%. That is not a passing grade. Does the minister think it's fair for residents and their families to leave three out of four homes without their annual thorough inspection?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I need to make this very, very clear: Every long-term-care home in the province has an inspector in that home at least every year. On average it's 3.7 times that an inspector is in a home. Our homes are thoroughly inspected. Our homes are carefully inspected. Yes, it is true that homes where there are complaints and where there are critical incidents get those inspections more quickly, but every home has an inspection at least once a year and on average far more often than that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm going to pass the minister over, through a page, a slide from a slide deck from her ministry that says very clearly that the resident quality inspection is "the new annual inspection methodology for Ontario. All homes are to receive their first annual inspection under the" Long-Term Care Homes Act "by December 31, 2011."

Now, I'm talking about proactive inspections. The ministry slide deck talks about proactive inspections. The minister tries to fool around with the numbers by talking about complaint-based inspections. That's not what the people of this province deserve.

The government says they plan to eventually conduct thorough inspections of all homes. I want to know from the minister today: Is she going to set a date when these actual thorough investigations are going to take place in every single long-term-care home in this province on a proactive basis?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me repeat: There is an inspection of every home at least every year. On average, a home is inspected 3.7 times per year. Our inspectors are in those homes, and they respond to complaints. I want to stress that it's very important that people understand that we have zero tolerance for abuse and neglect in our long-term-care homes, and we urge everyone who is in a long-term-care home, be they a resident, a family member, a staff member or a visitor, that if they have issues they think need to be inspected, they must report those and we will inspect those. We've increased the number of inspectors working in our long-term-care homes, and we will continue to provide very high-quality inspections in long-term care.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's pretty disappointing that the Liberals once again are proving the old adage that figures lie and liars figure. People are concerned about the lack of protection—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I understand what the member is trying to say, but I still think it's what you can't say directly that you try to say indirectly. So I'd ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw. My next—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who is your question to, please?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just said, to the Minister of Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I didn't hear it, because there were some people talking. Thank you very much.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People are concerned about the lack of protection for vulnerable seniors living in care, and the fact that the government is not providing the oversight that they promised to provide.

The London Free Press reports that the ministry is now urging homes to inspect themselves. Is this seriously the minister's plan, to simply let homes in this province inspect themselves?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm afraid that the member opposite is taking a very serious question and torquing it to her political advantage. I think that's wrong. I think that's disrespectful of the seniors and others who live in our long-term-care homes.

There are a range of initiatives under way to improve the quality in long-term-care homes. Many of our long-term-care homes are very deeply engaged in improving the quality of the care that they are delivering. I have personally met with front-line workers in long-term-care homes who are very excited to be part of the quality improvement process called Residents First that is under way in long-term-care homes.

We're all in this together. It's important that everybody is part of improving the quality of care. Yes, there is a role for government inspection, but there is far more

that must be and is being done to improve quality in long-term care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I'm doing is simply doing my job. Perhaps the minister should try doing her job.

The government was very clear. They were very clear when they promised seniors and their families a thorough annual inspection of every long-term-care home in this province. It was their promise. The ministry said, "All homes are to receive their first annual inspection under the" Long-Term Care Homes Act "by December 31, 2011."

This wasn't a commitment to let homes inspect themselves or to do a cursory review. Is the minister going to admit today that she broke her promise and that the government once again broke their promise to seniors and their loved ones? More importantly—most importantly—is she going to do something about it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said earlier, we have increased the number of inspectors who now have been trained, who are doing inspections in our long-term-care homes.

But that is only part of what we need to be doing. One of the most exciting things that is happening in our long-term-care homes is the addition of highly trained people, through Behavioural Supports Ontario, who are trained to look after people with dementia. We know that as people develop dementia, their needs change; the care that they need changes. It's vitally important that our staff are trained to deal with people with behavioural challenges, including dementia. We've added 500 new trained people, through Behavioural Supports Ontario, so they can provide the most appropriate care.

What we are finding, through BSO, is that the number of challenging events actually declines because staff know how to care for people with dementia.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here are the facts for seniors in long-term care and the families that love them: The government promised that every home would be subject to a thorough inspection by December 31, 2011. Speaker, it's now 2013, and only 123 of 600 homes have had that inspection occur.

Instead of admitting that they failed to deliver on a simple promise to vulnerable seniors and their families, the government says that the homes can inspect themselves. Does the minister really think that that's keeping a promise?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me go back to say that every home is inspected at least once a year. On average, there are 3.7 inspections per year.

We have added inspectors. When we were elected, we had 59 inspectors. There are now 80, including seven more who were hired last year.

We have zero tolerance in our homes for abuse and neglect. We passed a new long-term-care act that homes have to develop and implement a policy to promote zero tolerance of abuse and neglect of residents. Homes have

a duty to protect residents from abuse by anyone and to ensure that residents are not neglected. It is mandatory for homes to report abuse of a resident, and it is mandatory for the home to contact the police immediately when there is an alleged, suspected or witnessed incident of abuse or neglect in a home.

This is a serious issue, Speaker. We are dealing with it.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Peter Shurman: To the Minister of Finance: Minister, just because you bury the facts doesn't mean that they don't exist. In the 40 boxes of gas plant documents received on Wednesday, May 29, your government's appetite and plans to spend are evident on every single page. However, we have yet to uncover one document asking any ministries to reduce spending. There isn't one page devoted to any directive on saving money. Leadership starts at the top, and if the boss doesn't ask for restraint, it certainly isn't going to happen.

1100

In my two budgets as critic for finance, I have never seen any Liberal government actually look for ways to cut waste and excess spending. You only create new ways to fleece taxpayers and to cover up scandals and misadventures. What is in these documents proves that. You don't really have Ontario taxpayers' best interests at heart, do you?

Minister, is there a corresponding document listing potential places to save money?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Wow. So, Mr. Speaker, they're referring to documents that have no reference to the gas plants, and yet, now they're using those documents to uncover things that are only talking about a proportionate amount of what it is that we're doing.

The member opposite should know this: Our program spending has been below 1% year over year. It is why we have been able to exceed our targets by \$5 billion last year. We've been able to reduce \$21 billion over the last four years. We've adopted many of Don Drummond's recommendations. We dedicated a whole chapter of the budget around that, and we're well over 60% on those, as well.

The member opposite should also know this: 15 of the ministries actually spent less than they were budgeted for. They are doing their job. We're doing what's necessary to support the people of Ontario, and we look to you to also support us in trying to work for the benefit of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: With respect, Speaker, that just doesn't wash. The first line of the document I'm holding in my hands, which the minister has, says, "Ministries were asked to develop the following non-tax revenue components as part of their 2013-14 results-based plans," so it came from an ask.

Minister, your government shows every sign of being addicted to spending, and you need help. It's unbeliev-

able that, on the heels of a scandal costing taxpayers \$575 million and counting, you and your government have the audacity to look to taxpayers to cough up more. This government is abjectly incapable of cutting costs.

Last week, my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora proposed a select committee to help you find savings, and he was serious. I have an idea. Here's an idea: The clowns you have put in charge at Metrolinx could easily save \$100 million if they didn't drop a half-kilometre of Highway 7 down into Thornhill and create a new St. Clair disaster. If you really want to control costs, try the select committee and try eliminating the Highway 7—

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Well, my goodness. The member opposite just cited Highway 407. Really? Highway 407? You're the team that sold Highway 407—

Interjections.

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

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

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I'm going to remind members of two things. One, please refrain from calling people by their name; we have a tradition that you identify them either by their title or by their riding.

The second thing I'd like to remind you of is that anyone who makes any kind of statement that requires correcting can correct their own record, and we'll leave it at that.

Minister of Finance, please finish.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The members opposite gave away the 407, an annuity that today would have been a great revenue source for the province of Ontario. Furthermore, it should be noted that Ontario is the lowest-cost-per-capita government in Canada because of the steps and the initiatives that we've taken, and we'll continue to do that.

But, more distressing than that, the members opposite are receiving material to the justice committee, material that we've openly and transparently provided, because of the fact that they didn't want anything redacted. As a result, they're making reference to material that doesn't pertain—

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

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Before I start my question, I want to express my best thoughts and prayers to the families, friends and co-workers of Captain Don Filliter, from my riding, First Officer Jacques Dupuy, and paramedics Chris Snowball and Dustin Dagenais, who died on Friday.

To the Minister of Health: It is obvious that the idea of self-inspection of long-term-care homes won't be enough

to prevent future abuse from occurring. Families are seeing loved ones abused in our long-term-care homes. Ontarians are reading about a resident in a Scarborough long-term-care home who was killed in March of this year. There is no way the minister can say that her government's neglect of annual, thorough inspections is without consequences.

Does the minister agree that it is time for real oversight of our health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me repeat: Our long-term-care homes are heavily regulated and heavily inspected. On average, every home has an inspector in it 3.7 times a year.

It is true that where there are complaints, the inspectors go; where there are critical incidents reported, the inspectors go in, but they do get into every home at least once a year and, on average, far more than that.

We are all committed to doing everything we can to improve the quality of care, and I think it is especially important that long-term-care homes now are very much engaged in the improvement of quality in their long-term-care homes. They're measuring quality and they're working to improve quality. That's exactly what should be happening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ontarians are worried and they are fearful. They want to see real oversight of the health care system. We suggested that the province ask the Ombudsman to oversee health care, but rather than give people an advocate who would be on their side, the Premier dug in her heels. Now Ontarians are learning that the government is failing to conduct their annual required oversight of long-term-care homes—the oversight that they promised. If the minister refuses to provide Ombudsman oversight of our health care system, what is our solution to guarantee seniors' safety in our long-term-care homes?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our loved ones in long-term care deserve nothing but the highest-quality care, and that is a commitment that I make and that our government makes to every resident of long-term care and to their loved ones. We are working very hard to make our homes as safe as possible, and there is a Long-Term Care Task Force on Resident Care and Safety. They report back every six months on the recommendations that have been made and the action in response to those recommendations.

Our Long-Term Care Homes Act includes whistleblower protection for employees who are coming forward with concerns about the level of care in those homes. We passed legislation to allow for stronger enforcement and better inspections of long-term-care homes, and under this legislation we are seeing an improvement in the care that is being delivered in our long-term-care homes.

COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. As Ontarians, we have much

to be proud of. For instance, when it comes to the economy, we are one of the few jurisdictions that dominates not one sector, not two sectors, but several sectors. The auto sector, information technology, aerospace and pharma are just a few examples of the sectors that we actually dominate worldwide. But it's really important that we leverage this great strength that we have by making sure that these sectors collaborate with each other.

My question to the minister: What is this government doing to foster collaboration across sectors to ensure that we continue to be the best jurisdiction in the world?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I would like to thank the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for that question.

Our government recognizes the importance of fostering collaboration among our researchers and also our industry partners. Our Commercialization and Innovation Voucher program will help give entrepreneurs and their businesses access to innovation and also the productivity and commercialization services available to them in our research institutions.

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With our \$493-million investment in Ontario Centres of Excellence we are helping to connect industry to Ontario's research and innovation institutions.

Last week, I had the opportunity to participate in the Ontario Centres of Excellence Discovery conference. This conference was hugely successful, with more than 2,500 attendees and the largest show floor to date, with 350 exhibitors.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister. Speaker, it's great to hear that our government is investing and using best practices for sharing ideas and resources across sectors.

One example is our government's \$100-million investment in the Ontario Brain Institute, one that shows how we can make gains through collaboration. This investment is supporting a network of data on brain diseases across disciplines. Researchers will be able to turn information into clinical application and commercialization opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation: What other collaborative initiatives is the government taking part in?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank again the member for that question. During the Discovery conference last week, we announced a joint Ontario Centres of Excellence and Ontario Brain Institute fellowship program. Under this program, we will be investing \$400,000 to provide awards to eight postgraduate students and also early-stage entrepreneurs with \$50,000 each. This award will promote the commercialization of discoveries that help diagnose and treat or cure brain diseases.

Ontario is home to hundreds of top-notch neuroscientists, and it's important for us to support collaboration among them. The research and innovation that is being done in this area in this province is recognized as among the very best in the world.

DRIVE CLEAN

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. In December, the Auditor General said, "Vehicle emissions have declined so significantly ... that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario." You, on the other hand, told the Toronto Sun last week, "Automobiles are the single largest domestic source of smog pollution in Ontario...."

Minister, who is telling the truth, you or Ontario's respected Auditor General, whose 10 years of service to our province have been marked by honesty and integrity?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I think a previous member of this House, Mr. Norm Sterling—I can call him by name now; he's no longer a member—understood this when he introduced the Drive Clean program in the province of Ontario. It reduces unhealthy emissions of cars by up to 36%. Drive Clean reduces automobile pollution in Ontario by more than one third—

Interjections.

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

Carry on.

Hon. James J. Bradley:—just by making certain that cars drive as cleanly as possible. To put it in a bigger context, Drive Clean cuts smog pollutants by nearly 35,000 tonnes per year.

In fact, the Environmental Commissioner says that he has a report before him—"The Drive Clean program has undergone a number of independent program reviews that concluded significant reductions in smog-causing pollutants were being achieved, but that further reductions could result from program improvements, including the implementation of on-board diagnostics emissions testing which is currently under way." That's the Environmental Commissioner.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the minister. Minister, that simply proves your Liberal government will stop at nothing to justify Drive Clean, even if it's introducing a test with a computer glitch to make more cars fail or inventing stories about the state of our environment to make the program seem necessary.

Minister, let's be honest: If you invested that much effort into telling the truth, we wouldn't have the Drive Clean program, and you know it. Perhaps that's why we haven't seen the detailed cost-benefit assessment of this program that the Auditor General told you to conduct last December.

Minister, can we expect to see a report tabled in this House soon, or will you continue to spend your time dreaming up new fabrications to justify this \$30-million government cash grab?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm going to offer a warning as opposed to an ask. You can't say indirectly what you are trying to say directly. I'm going to offer the member—please, it's getting too edgy here with this kind of stuff.

Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, it's really interesting that this question is asked this week. Wednesday is Clean Air Day. Pollution Probe will be launching its annual Clean Air Commute, and the Conservatives have launched their war against clean air. They scorn green energy and want to fire up the dirty, smog-belching coal-fired plants. They want to scrap the Drive Clean program that cuts smog-causing vehicle emissions by more than a third. It's as though they don't know that smog happens to kill.

The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment had this to say: "Our doctors are extremely concerned about air pollution. In Ontario, nearly 10,000 people die prematurely each year because of smog. Programs like Drive Clean—which reduce smog components and poisons such as carbon monoxide—are very important to public health. Our doctors believe that, far from being eliminated, these programs should be strengthened."

The Conservatives need to rethink—

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

TRANSIT FUNDING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, New Democrats have been clear that we believe in a fair and balanced approach to funding badly needed public transit, but imposing a \$1.3-billion province-wide HST hike on hard-working Ontarians is not our idea of fair and balanced. Why is this government so intent on increasing the HST province-wide on hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, recommendations have been brought forward by Metrolinx. Recommendations have been brought forward by municipal leaders. Recommendations have been brought forward by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and by the Toronto Board of Trade. These recommendations are going to be reviewed. We're going to have an engagement; we'll have our discussions. Let us, all of us, recognize the importance of what's at stake here. That is what is before us now.

We have made no commitments, and we have asked for nothing. What we're suggesting is that we need to invest. We need to invest in our infrastructure; we need to invest in public transit. It's a competitive imperative, it's a social and economic imperative, and we'll work together with the opposition to determine what best next steps we should take.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Federal New Democrats such as Olivia Chow have been clear that the federal government has an important role to play in funding public transit, but taking over a billion dollars in sales tax out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians is not a fair and balanced approach. Why is this government so determined to impose a billion-dollar-plus province-wide increase of HST on hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Charles Sousa: So with that, we agree: We agree that the federal government should be at the table. This is

a national imperative. It is a priority that speaks to the competitiveness of Canada inasmuch and as much as for the benefit of Ontario. So we agree that the federal government should be at the table. As the member opposite should probably know, we also responded to the Minister of Finance federally, to his question and his determination of how to best proceed with our transit gridlock.

So I welcome their input—I welcome the third party's input, for that matter—to find ways to resolve the issues, eliminate the gridlock, protect our competitiveness, and protect the health and safety of our people as well.

AQUATIC BIODIVERSITY

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, Ontario is fortunate to have a wonderful, diverse natural landscape full of thriving and independent ecosystems which host a range of biodiversity. One of the greatest aspects of this biodiversity is our abundance and variety of fish and aquatic life. This rich biodiversity can be found in the streams, lakes and rivers across our great province.

It is important for Ontario to protect this resource not only for the economic benefits that sustainable recreational fishing brings, at \$2.4 billion a year; it is also important for the environmental benefits that Ontarians enjoy from lakes and rivers teeming with strong and thriving fish species. Can the minister please explain what is being done to protect aquatic biodiversity and preserve this valuable resource?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans for asking this important question.

Ontario is indeed fortunate to have an abundance and diverse variety of plants, fish and wildlife. In our ministry, there are numerous initiatives that are designed to help protect aquatic biodiversity.

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Recently, I was in the Port Dover area for the opening of the modernized Normandale Fish Culture Station. This is the oldest operating facility in Ontario, and our government invested \$18.5 million for its reconstruction. The facility will now be producing all of the Atlantic salmon for the Lake Ontario Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program, a program that those who fish in Lake Ontario and its tributaries will certainly enjoy.

This restoration project is strengthening the biodiversity of our Great Lakes system by restoring a population of fish that had disappeared from Lake Ontario in the 1890s due to overfishing.

Speaker, we are continuing to invest \$5.5 million a year in fish culture and stocking activities in Ontario, and in working in conservation efforts to support fisheries.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister, for informing the members of this House of what the government is doing to protect and enhance local biodiversity. I'm pleased to hear about the new facility and the conservation efforts, particularly the restoration program for Atlantic salmon and how it will benefit the biodiversity of Lake Ontario.

This province boasts a thriving community of anglers, even from more urban ridings like my own, who are committed advocates of environmental stewardship and aquatic biodiversity. Each year about 1.3 million anglers participate in recreational and sport fishing in Ontario, and I'm aware that this government prides itself on our sustainable fishing practices.

Protection of aquatic biodiversity, specifically fish and fish habitat, is important to many Ontarians, and I know that it is particularly important to the recreational fishing community.

Can the minister share with the members of this House what initiatives this government is undertaking to support local efforts to protect aquatic biodiversity and conservation?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Our government is working to ensure sustainable fishing practices to preserve biodiversity in Ontario and encourage local conservation efforts. The prime example of this is the partnership the ministry has with the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters to create the Community Hatchery Program. The program will help strengthen community-based fish hatchery operations by providing funding to help local groups operate and maintain these hatcheries. The executive director of the OFAH has endorsed this approach, stating that, "Community-based volunteerism remains a key part of fish and wildlife conservation in Ontario." The OFAH has also recognized MNR's efforts to enhance community-based fish and wildlife conservation.

Community groups with enthusiastic volunteers spending their time, energy and money to operate local hatcheries that help to stock lakes and rivers throughout the province contribute greatly to our biodiversity. Speaker, we're pleased to support Ontarians who take an active part in local conservation, which is one of our ministry's highest priorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Nepean–Carleton.

TEACHERS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to ask a question to the Minister of Education.

Last week, I asked you why you handed over the reins of hiring power to the teachers' unions at the expense of quality in the classroom. You have effectively handcuffed boards from hiring the best teachers as a result of regulation 274, but don't take my word for it. Howard Goodman, a trustee from the Toronto District School Board, says this regulation is "harmful to student achievement and well-being," and Cindy, a teacher with Peel District School Board, wrote to you and I and said regulation 274 "forces principals to hire candidates based on seniority over qualifications."

Minister, for our support of Bill 115, we demanded that this provision be pulled, yet you snuck it back in. Given how you had no trouble rescinding Bill 115 mere months after you had put it in place, won't you please

rescind this objectionable regulation too, so that school boards and principals can get back to hiring the best teachers?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think one of the places where we differ from the official opposition in our approach is that we believe that it's very important that we collaborate with our education partners. That includes collaborating with all of our education partners, both the teachers but also the school boards. We believe everybody needs to work together.

That's exactly what we're doing on this file. Number one, we're looking at how do we move forward in the future with a new collective bargaining structure that will work for everybody, a structure that will work for the government, a structure that will work for school boards, and a structure that will work for our employees. That's our number one priority, looking at how can we establish a better working relationship—

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On May 27, you would have received a letter from the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. On the second page it says, "We now face a further erosion of our ability to hire the best teachers for our students due to the modifications to regulation 274." That's the Catholic board.

The public board president, Michael Barrett, said this: "These changes" that you "are making do not rectify any issues that school boards put on the table. It compounds them even further."

Janet McDougald of the Peel District School Board said flat out, "I just think it's an incredible waste of resources."

I guess everybody else just agrees with us because you simply are not doing your job and getting it done. In fact, your own constituents who are teachers are writing to you and asking you to rescind this regulation and go back to a merit-based hiring system that our PC leader, Tim Hudak, is calling for.

You are forcing professional and young teachers out of their jobs in favour of union leaders, who will give their own jobs to their own friends. Don't you think this will affect quality in our classroom and don't you think hiring based on merit will be—

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

Minister of Education?

Hon. Liz Sandals: We recognize that there are some concerns with this particular regulation, which is exactly why we have set up a working table. We have set up a working table in our memorandum of understanding with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, with OSSTF; and with OPSBA, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. So in fact, there are ongoing meetings. That working table has been set up.

My offer to those groups, and my offer to all the other school board and union groups, is if you can come up with a better version of the regulation, we are willing to

amend the regulation. That offer has also been made to the Catholic boards, and I fully look forward to the parties resolving the issue.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. Last month in Thunder Bay, the Premier avoided answering direct questions about northwestern Ontario's electricity needs.

Mining companies in the northwest need electricity security in order to invest and create much-needed jobs for northerners and First Nations communities. The cancellation of the gas plant conversion yet again in Thunder Bay shows that the Liberal government just doesn't have a long-term plan for job creation and electricity security in the northwest.

My question is a simple one: Where will northern Ontario's electricity come from if the gas conversion is no longer needed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. It is an important issue for northwestern Ontario. I did meet with the mayors from the north several weeks ago. I also met with the task force that is engaged in the community to deal with this particular issue.

I particularly gave the people of Thunder Bay and the north a commitment that they will have the energy that they need when they need it. They know we are working on a solution; they know we're looking at alternatives. We've shared those alternatives with them. We have not made a choice yet, but we will in the very near future, and the people in Thunder Bay will be extremely pleased with the answer that we have for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier said that she's interested in economic development for the north, but mining development won't get off the ground without a ready, reliable and local source of electricity.

Northerners don't need rhetoric, they need action. In southern Ontario, the Liberal government wasted well over half a billion dollars on cancelling gas plants. Instead of making policy on the fly and leaving northerners to pay the price of government mismanagement, when will this government keep their promise to northerners and ensure their energy needs are met?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we thank and applaud the north for what they're doing in the area of mining and everything related to the mining industry. The people from the task force include people from the mining industry. I took the occasion to thank them for the work that they're doing. The second-largest contribution to our GDP in Ontario is coming from the mining sector.

The mining industry will have the energy they need when they need it. The people in the north will have the commitment that they will be able to go out and sell the mining industry with the knowledge that they'll have the energy that they need and the mining industry needs.

HEALTH CARDS

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is to the Minister of Government Services. The former Conservative government never had a plan to implement the photo health card in Ontario. The expansion of ServiceOntario across the province, especially in northern and rural areas, has made access to photo health cards available in nearly 300 centres. Many people still have the old red-and-white health card. They and many health care providers were relieved to know that people can convert to the new photo health card at their local ServiceOntario location.

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The budget before this Legislature proposed investing \$15 million during the next three years to speed up conversion from the red-and-white health card to the safer and more secure photo health card. Minister, how will this expenditure help Ontarians make that change, and what difference will it make?

Hon. John Milloy: As members may know, my ministry is responsible for health card registration and related support services. I think members are aware of the need to convert the old red-and-white cards to eliminate fraud, keep Ontarians' information current and create a more secure and transparent system.

As the member mentioned in his question, and I thank him for it, the proposed budget before this Legislature provides funding for a more efficient health card transition process. Presently, although 76% of all Ontarians have converted their cards, that still leaves a significant number that need to convert it.

I want to assure those with the old red-and-white cards that they will still be eligible to be used, but over the next number of years, we will be aggressively converting them to the photo cards. In fact, by our current estimates, based on the proposed budget, all health cards in the province are expected to be converted before the end of 2018—

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, people have told me that the old red-and-white card does not offer sufficient protection from misuse and abuse. Even with a rudimentary background in information technology, one can see many ways in which a careless or negligent patient can lose control of his or her health card number, or how a rogue health care provider could use the old red-and-white health card to treat patients who are not eligible for OHIP coverage.

At this past weekend's Bread and Honey Festival in Streetsville, someone asked how they might convert to the new health card and whether that might mean an interruption in their coverage.

Minister, what is the province doing to make the conversion from the red-and-white health card easy and convenient for Ontarians? And just one more time, can Ontarians still use the old red-and-white health card?

Hon. John Milloy: I want to assure all members and all Ontarians that until the conversion takes place to the

photo card, people can still use their old red-and-white card.

In terms of accessing the service, the ministry and ServiceOntario have made it easy and convenient for Ontarians to convert their health cards. ServiceOntario reaches out to individuals by mail, asking them to visit a location in order to re-register their old cards. Our government has expanded access to routine health card services from 27 permanent issuing offices to almost 300. As an example, in northern Ontario, we only had six centres offering the service in the past; now you will find almost 70 ServiceOntario centres in that part of the province. I think this is a significant improvement for families in rural and northern communities who, in the past, had to drive long distances. Now 95% of Ontarians are within 10 kilometres of a ServiceOntario—

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

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Last week, Minister, you belittled the hard-working correctional officers at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. You continue to say that the safety of correctional officers and inmates is your top priority. However, you knew overcrowding was an issue, yet many cells are still occupied beyond capacity. You knew that meal hatches were a problem last year, and you haven't done anything about it. You knew that staff didn't have adequate fire-related equipment, but you did not procure anything better. You say safety is your top priority. Why should we believe you now?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Indeed, the member of the official opposition is right: Ensuring the safety and security of our staff and our inmates is my number one priority. Last week, I met with many representatives of OPSEU, including the leadership at EMDC, and the meeting was very productive. I was happy to hear first-hand from the union about their concerns. We have expedited some security features for the end of June, and we will continue the dialogue with the union and meet regularly with the staff of my ministry. We're all very engaged in finding a great solution for EMDC.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: That meeting should have occurred two years ago when I first told you about these problems.

Last Thursday, the jail was locked down while staff tried to recover metal pieces that went missing following the fires last Tuesday night. Every time the jail is locked down, it creates residual problems. Lawyers can't consult with inmates and, as a result, must delay court proceedings. This creates costs to taxpayers, burdens an already overburdened, backlogged court system and delays sentences for offenders.

Minister, the problems you've ignored at EMDC are now spilling over into other ministries. Will you admit you're not up to the task to do the job and resign?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, Mr. Speaker, the health and safety and the security of both the inmates and the workers, the correctional officers, at EMDC are my number one priority. One thing was clear when I met with the union. They said, "You know what? You're stuck with a problem which they, on the other side, have started." So it's not coming from me; it's coming from the union. They were very, very clear.

The overcrowding is because there was no plan to expand the facilities and to have more facilities built. What they have done is they took every space that was used for programming and put cells in them.

We have a solution. We are building two new facilities. One will open pretty soon, and the other one is in Windsor. We will continue to renew our infrastructure in that ministry.

ARTS EDUCATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Minister of Education. Students and parents are here at Queen's Park today to lobby against the proposed cuts to itinerant music teachers and music instruction in Toronto schools, and they're not alone.

According to People for Education, students at one in three elementary schools across the province do not have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument or participate in band, orchestra or choir.

Why are students in Ontario being forced to go without music arts education when it is part of the province's compulsory curriculum?

Hon. Liz Sandals: As the member opposite just pointed out, music is actually part of the required curriculum, particularly in elementary schools and in every grade. So the primary way of funding elementary music programs is through the Foundation Grant to the schools. The Toronto District School Board actually receives \$1.2 billion in funding. However, we recognize that for some teachers, particularly as they get more up into grades 5, 6, 7 and 8, they may not have the musical background, so in fact we have provided funding for 4,800 specialist elementary teachers.

Toronto District School Board actually got funding for 626 specialist teachers, so it would be up to the board to decide whether or not to spend that on music.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, there was a time, in 2003, when the then trustee Kathleen Wynne and this current minister fought the then provincial supervisor, Mr. Paul Christie, who was trying to make the same cuts to itinerant teachers. How things have changed 10 years later when this government is attacking arts education. Last year, they eliminated the Program Enhancement Grant for arts programming. This year, provincial advisers—their advisers—are urging the Toronto District School Board to drastically cut music education.

At one in three Ontario schools, students receive no basic music education. When will the minister put in place a policy and funding to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn an instrument and perform in a choir, band or orchestra?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we need to sort out the information here.

Number one, there are lots of classes in which the classroom teacher does have a background in music, amongst other things, and the classroom teacher is totally qualified to deliver the music instruction.

However, if you look at the People for Education information, what you see is that as there has been declining enrolment in many schools throughout the province, many of the specialist music teachers are not located exclusively at one school but actually cover several schools. So if you look at the number of schools in Ontario where there's either a permanent specialist music teacher or an itinerant specialist music teacher, that has increased.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills, on a point of order.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: Last Thursday, the Minister of Energy made a substantive government announcement, announcing major changes to the FIT program, outside of this Legislature. I would like to seek unanimous consent of the House to revert to ministers' statements, to allow the Minister of Energy to explain to this House the changes that he has made, as well as giving us clarification on whether or not municipalities truly have the last word with respect to these kinds of applications. We need to know—

Interjections.

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

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills is—

Interjection.

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

The member from Wellington–Halton Hills is seeking unanimous consent to revert back to statements for the Minister of Energy to make comment. Do I hear agreement? I'm afraid I heard a no.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

AIR AMBULANCE CRASH

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise today with a heavy heart to pay tribute to four brave and courageous first responders who lost their lives in the service of our air ambulance service in the early hours of Friday, May 31.

What was expected to be a routine patient transfer turned out to be a tragedy that no one in this province will ever forget. Dedicated to saving the lives of others, these four men did what thousands of first responders do

every day throughout this province. They put themselves in harm's way to fulfill their calling in life: to protect, to rescue and to save others.

Speaker, on behalf of all Ontarians, I extend our heartfelt condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of these four brave men.

Captain Don Filliter of Skead, Ontario: Don was the chief rotary pilot for the Ministry of Natural Resources. In addition to his many qualifications, he was a certified flight instructor pilot. Over and above his role with the MNR, Don took on the life-saving responsibilities with Ornge as a medevac pilot. Our condolences to his wife, Suzanne, and his three children.

First Officer Jacques Dupuy of Otterburn Park, Quebec, joined Ornge in August 2012 after flying as a bush pilot in Quebec. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Josée Capuano, and their two children.

Primary care flight paramedic Dustin Dagenais of Moose Factory: He joined Ornge a year ago. He grew up in Kapuskasing, was married last summer to Josée, and was the father of a 10-month-old daughter, Nélia.

Primary care flight paramedic Chris Snowball of Burlington: He was a 41-year-old father of two. Chris had worked as a paramedic in Nova Scotia and with Wabusk air ambulance in northern Ontario. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Allie Scott, their children and family.

These brave men were truly heroes among us. Today, we pay tribute to them and their families, and we commit that we will never forget them and their colleagues who continue to selflessly serve us as first responders throughout this province.

CHRIS SNOWBALL

Mrs. Jane McKenna: On Friday, the people of Ontario woke to the terrible news that an Ornge air ambulance en route to pick up a patient had crashed just outside Moosonee, killing all on board. Four dedicated first responders were lost in this tragic crash. One of them, primary care flight paramedic Chris Snowball, called Burlington home.

From an early age, Chris knew he wanted to be a paramedic. He set out on that path right after high school, and in the course of his training at Niagara College, his passion only became more evident. Simply put, he loved helping others.

After graduation, he served on Cape Breton Island for more than a decade, returning to Burlington in 2008 to be closer to his family. His birthday would be tomorrow.

This terrible event leaves behind deep heartbreak but also inspires us to give thanks to all those who risk so much in order to aid and rescue others across our vast province.

I would like to extend heartfelt condolences to all those closest to the victims of Friday's crash but especially to the family, friends and colleagues of Chris Snowball. Chris will forever be remembered for having lived

heroically. May that memory inspire all of us to do the same.

EVENTS IN ALGOMA-MANITOULIN

ÉVÉNEMENTS DIVERS À ALGOMA-MANITOULIN

Mr. Michael Mantha: Back by popular demand, I would like to take this opportunity as we near the end of session to invite you all, and all Ontarians, to my beautiful riding of Algoma-Manitoulin. The summer months up north are some of the most exciting times. The Taste of Manitoulin is a celebration of local food, heritage and culture. So drive up on up or hop on the Chi-Cheemaun. Yes, the Chi-Cheemaun sails again. If you're looking for music, we've got it: Manitoulin Country Fest, or good old rock 'n' roll at Spanish Rock 'n' Roar.

Some of the most culturally rich events in my riding are the many powwows such as Aundeck-Omni-Kaning, Sheshegwaning, Sheguiandah, Sagamok, Zhiibaahaasing, Wikwemikong, Whitefish River, M'Chigeeng, Michipicoten, Fox Lake, Pic Mobert, Serpent River, Brunswick House, Mississagi, Thessalon, Garden River, Batchewana and more.

If you like fish, be sure to come to our many fish fries. The Killarney fire department and the Iron Bridge Lions Club fries are so tasty.

How about fish derbies—the Dubreuilville Father's Day Walleye Derby, Sagamok fishing derby or the Wawa Salmon Derby.

How about a pig roast in Wharncliffe?

If you are looking for community events, we have Massey Fair, Blind River, Manitouwadge and Hornepayne Days, and White River Winnie the Pooh Day; the Thessalon and Iron Bridge heritage community days; Hawewater Weekend in Little Current; the Chapleau Louis-Hémon celebration; the Providence Bay Fair; and the Tehkummah and Manitowaning plowing matches.

If you like muscle, then the Dubreuilville Strongman Challenge is the place to be.

Puis les petites poutines de la P'tite Patate sont simplement délicieuses.

Or if muscle cars and drag races are your preference, then Vettes for Vets in Desbarats; or the Bruce Mines, Espanola, Hilton Beach car shows; or the Elliot Lake and Wawa drag races are loud and proud events.

Boat races: We've got them, too—Blind River dragon boats, or the MacMan Challenge on Manitoulin Island.

Farmers' markets: We've got them all over the riding—including a rodeo.

Come to St. Joseph's Island for the island gatherings at the old fort. In addition, there are community parades and festivals in Hilton Beach, Richards Landing and Jocelyn township. And their maple syrup—mon Dieu.

Mr. Speaker: Come one; come all. Algoma-Manitoulin is yours to discover.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My sympathies to Hansard.

The member from Mississauga East-Cooksville.

THE BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker. That's a hard act to follow.

Twenty-four hundred or 2,500 years ago, a remarkable man named Siddhartha Gautama was born in India—so remarkable that his message resonates even today; so remarkable that 2,500 years later, thousands of people came together to pray and observe Buddha's birthday this past Saturday at Celebration Square in my riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville.

The celebration in Mississauga was just one of the countless celebrations that took place all over the world as millions of Buddhists observed this important day in the Buddhist calendar. For me it was a particularly emotional moment to see a sea of Buddhists from over 30 cultures gather in Mississauga. This was the largest single gathering of Buddhists that I've seen in Canada, a testimony to the growth of this ancient religion here in Canada.

Watching the ceremony unfold in the heart of Mississauga with thousands in attendance, it felt like Buddhism, one of the great religions of the world, was finally taking its rightful place here in Canada. I would like to thank the three Mississauga Buddhist temples—West End Buddhist Cultural Centre, Fo Guang Shan Temple and the Vietnamese Buddhist Cultural Centre of Ontario—for organizing the event, and the over 30 temples across the GTA that attended the event to make it a success.

May the timeless teachings of Buddha continue to bring comfort and peace to all.

NEW HAMBURG LIVE! FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS

Mr. Michael Harris: Last weekend, I was proud to attend the fifth annual New Hamburg Live! Festival. Over the years, this successful event has done so much to foster the local arts scene in our community and promote local talent as our young people move on to become professional musicians and performers.

This year, I had the pleasure of taking in the performance of Ashley MacIsaac on Saturday, where I was able to witness first-hand the dedication and hard work of the volunteers who give their time to make this great event possible each and every year. I was also happy to hear of the hospitality of the residents of Wilmot township, who opened their doors, welcoming musical guests and fans attending the festivals last weekend. This event truly does bring New Hamburg together and contribute to a unique sense of community spirit that residents continue to foster.

I would like to thank festival director Paul Knowles, as well as all the people who worked so hard to make this event this year a success. I would also like to thank the venue hosts who were involved: Steinmann Mennonite Church, St. George's church, Zion United Church, and the New Hamburg Community Centre.

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Again, I was truly pleased to be part of this vibrant and vital community event, and I look forward to an even

bigger and better event next year at the New Hamburg Live! Festival.

SKIN CANCER

Ms. Cindy Forster: I recently met with Brock student David Nguyen and grade 12 Notre Dame student Sarah Lukaszcyk regarding Bill 30, the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, originally brought to this House as Bill 74 by my colleague from Nickel Belt.

These students are part of a youth group in Niagara known as React, which focuses on peer-to-peer health promotion and education. Last summer, they created a postcard campaign known as TOAST, Teens Opposed to Artificial Skin Tanning. They collected 2,500 signatures entitled, “You Wouldn’t Burn Your Toast, So Why Burn Your Skin?”

Karen Babcock, a health promoter for Niagara Region Public Health, also worked with React on the postcard campaign. The postcard highlights three things: tanned skin is damaged skin; melanoma is a young person’s disease; and tanning beds increase your risk by 75%.

The World Health Organization now lists tanning beds in the same cancer-causing category as tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, skin cancer rates are increasing. If caught early, there’s a 90% cure rate for melanoma. Niagara Regional Chair Gary Burroughs noted to the health minister that there are over 80 tanning salons in Niagara alone that are unlicensed and unregulated.

In order to protect Ontario’s youth from this deadly form of cancer, I urge each and every member in this House to help pass this bill without delay.

I commend the youth of React and the partners in Niagara for all their hard work in raising awareness on this important issue, and the member from Nickel Belt as well.

BALA AVENUE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Mrs. Laura Albanese: On May 25, I was honoured to celebrate Bala Avenue Community School for achieving 100 years of service in my community of York South–Weston.

Bala is proud to be one of the original model schools for inner cities in the Toronto District School Board. As a model school, they work together with students, families, other schools, partners and the community to support students in all aspects of life and to help our students reach their full potential.

Bala brings together 290 students from many different cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Thanks to the hard-working teachers and staff of Bala, children have access to high-quality education that exposes them to different languages and cultural traditions. On June 21, for example, Bala will hold its second annual Medicine Wheel Many Hands for Peace Powwow, and we’re looking forward to that.

The school also provides programs to provide litterless lunches, to enhance family literacy, and to help students have positive relationships with their peers.

I would like to congratulate Bala Avenue Community School on their incredible contribution to our community of York South–Weston over the last 100 years and convey my best wishes for the next 100 years.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND RAILWAY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Since the shocking fire sale of Ontario Northland was announced, our party has been working on creative solutions for Ontario’s north. First, our team travelled 1,600 kilometres to meet with employees and stakeholders—something the Liberal government did not do. We then said that the sale should be halted and a strategic asset review be performed—again something the government did not do. Since day one, we’ve stated that the math of this fire sale simply does not add up.

Last Wednesday, Speaker, I revealed documents showing the finance ministry telling the northern ministry to defer selling Ontario Northland until they had all the financial data. Sadly, the minister went ahead with the sale, leaving 1,000 families with nothing but questions. On Friday I provided ironclad proof of what we’ve been saying all along. This Liberal cabinet document clearly states that instead of saving \$265 million, the fire sale of Ontario Northland will actually cost \$790 million.

This is now causing the Liberals to rethink the sale, but in order to move ahead with the positive ideas we’ve submitted to the Premier, we first need to drive a stake through the heart of this fire sale. Speaker, the Liberals’ own document should be the hammer to drive that stake.

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to stand today in recognition of the fourth annual South Asian Heritage Festival. This annual event was held this past Saturday at Stephen Leacock Collegiate Institute in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. I had the distinct privilege of attending this annual event and was delighted to help celebrate South Asian heritage with my constituents. This year, the festival included some fantastic presentations, displays and cultural performances.

The annual South Asian Heritage Festival also recognizes South Asian members of the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board and various community members who have made significant contributions toward promoting student success. Each year, the Excellence in Education Award is presented to those who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and excellence in education.

The earliest recorded arrival of South Asians occurred on May 5, 1838, and since then the South Asian community has grown into one of the largest ethnocultural populations in Toronto.

The theme of the South Asian Heritage Festival this year was “Celebrating Diversity,” a very appropriate theme. I also enjoyed learning more about the history of South Asian immigration to our city and our province,

and reflecting on the many cultural, political and economic contributions of the South Asian community to our province.

I would like to thank Toronto District School Board trustee Sam Sotiropoulos, acting director Donna Quan and all the volunteers, performers, teachers and community performers who made the fourth annual South Asian Heritage Festival a great success.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Harris assumes ballot item number 38 and Mr. Hudak assumes ballot item number 47.

BOB ELGIE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister responsible for seniors on a point of order.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Mr. Bob Elgie, former member of this Legislature from York East from 1977 to 1985, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member has asked for unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Speaker. On behalf of New Democrats and our leader, Andrea Horwath, I want to take the time to say a few words about the large contribution that was made in this Legislature and this province by Bob Elgie, otherwise known as Dr. Elgie. I note that both his wife and his son, Nancy and Peter, are here, and I want to say, first off, thank you for lending him to us for that time.

Who could not know of Bob Elgie? If you were somewhat interested in politics in the time that he served, you know who Bob Elgie was. Bob Elgie was an individual who was somewhat larger than life. Originally he decided to go into law, and then decided, "Well, maybe that's not such a good idea. Maybe I should become a neurosurgeon." So he decided to go to school and become a neurosurgeon. Then he said, "Well, what the heck. Maybe I should go and serve the public; I should run for office and try to give back to this province and this country what I have taken out."

Bob came from a family with means, as we say; it wasn't as if he had to do this. But Mr. Elgie decided to serve, because he really did think it was the responsibility of all citizens to give back to their society when they got something from it. Clearly, he and his family and his group of friends had been quite fortunate in this province

and this country as to what economic benefits they were able to get from this province, and he thought it was time for some of that to be given back. So Mr. Elgie decided to do what very few people do—what some of us aspire to all the time; some of us who are here hang on. He decided that he wanted to run for the office of member of provincial Parliament for his particular part of the world.

He came here and was, I think, almost immediately in cabinet. Bill Davis was one who saw good talent and knew when to use it—saw bad talent and knew when not to use it. In this particular case, he utilized—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, we're going to stop at that point. He knew when to utilize the good services of Dr. Elgie.

I'm going to talk particularly about his time at Labour. He was, I believe, at Community and Social Services for a while, and I may stand corrected on that—I'm strictly doing this by memory; this is not a written note. So if I'm a little bit wrong, please indulge. He was at Labour, and the reason I want to speak to that is because it was at a time when I was involved in labour, not as a member of provincial Parliament, but as a member of the United Steelworkers of America, Local 4440.

I remember many discussions we had within our local and within district 6, which is the district that represents all of Ontario. At that time, Stu Cooke was our district director, followed by Mr. Patterson. Plenty of times we had discussions about the good relationship that labour had with that Minister of Labour.

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We knew that Conservatives were not necessarily our friends, but we had one friend in that cabinet: It was Bob Elgie. We knew that we weren't going to get an easy going of it because, after all, he had to listen to his Premier, he had to listen to his cabinet and he had to listen to the rest of the Tory caucus. Certainly that caucus, I would argue, was not prepared to go as far on labour issues that we would have wanted, or New Democrats would have wanted, here in the House, but Mr. Elgie had this uncanny ability to be able to hear what people had said and to try to dissect it in some kind of a way so that you can find a win for his caucus and his government politically, but more importantly, do the right thing.

I remember some of those fights, especially around the Human Rights Code, where Mr. Elgie mended the Labour Relations Act in order to make sure that human rights became part of that act. As a result of that, this province has been greatly changed. It's allowed people to be able to step forward and to ensure that their rights are respected, not only when it comes to a collective agreement, but as a basic citizen of this province when it comes to the workplace. I think that is something that has served this province, and I think served all of us, rather well over the years that it was there.

He had a really good relationship with members on the other side. I know Elie Martel well. Those of you who know Elie Martel know that Mr. Martel is a very

passionate politician. A former member from Nickel Belt—he was followed by his daughter Shelley; we all know Shelley Martel; and then followed by our amiable and very esteemed colleague Madame Gélinas—he had an amazing relationship with Bob Elgie. I know in conversations I've had with Elie—because I probably speak with Elie more than most people; I have a lot of time for Elie, because he's a person who's quite learned and quite passionate about what he believes in. Over the years I've relied on his counsel on a number of issues, both when I was in the labour movement, under Local 4440 and eventually as staff with steel, but also later when I got elected. He would always talk about how the relationship with Bob Elgie was a really strong one. I think that says something that we should all maybe learn from, that, yes, we all come here with our party affiliation, but it is really about doing the people's work and it really is about trying to find the commonality on an issue so that it's not just New Democrats who have a virtue on labour and it's not just Conservatives who have a virtue on helping the big corporations and it's not just the Liberals on something else, but finding a way to reach across so that all of us can do the right thing. Mr. Elgie understood that it was important to have those relationships because he needed those relationships to be able to pilot those things that were important to him and important to other people in this province.

So what I would say is this: I think if we learned anything through the time of Mr. Elgie being with us, it's that integrity is number one. Always try to do the right thing. Reach across the aisle; try to find ways to work with people. Be partisan when you need to be; that's what elections are all about. In the meantime, while we're here, always try to do what's right by the people of Ontario because they're the ones who sent us here.

On behalf of my colleagues here in the New Democratic caucus and our leader, Andrea Horwath, we say both to Nancy, his wife, and Peter, his son, thank you for the time that we've had with your husband and your father. We say to you that we sure know that you miss him, but the fact that he has left so much behind of himself in this Legislature and in legislation warms the heart; it allows you to know your husband will always be with you, and so will your father.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from York Centre.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Humble; a giver; a sensitive and compassionate man; a big heart; big vision; a public servant extraordinaire—these are some of the words that people who knew and worked with Bob Elgie used to describe him.

I rise today on behalf of the Liberal caucus to pay tribute to Bob Elgie, a respected citizen, a distinguished doctor, lawyer, educator and a former member of this Legislature who passed away on April 3, 2013, at the age of 84.

It's my pleasure to recognize members of Bob's family who joined us today: his wife, Nancy, who was a school trustee and vice-chair of the York Region District

School Board, and her son, Peter. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Bob was born in Toronto in 1929. He received his BA from the University of Western Ontario in 1950, his LLB from Osgoode Hall Law School and medical degree from the University of Ottawa. Upon the completion of his studies, Bob entered the legal/medical field. He was on the medical teaching staff at the University of Toronto and Queen's University. In addition, he served as chief of staff at the Scarborough General Hospital.

People don't normally give up this kind of career to run for office, but Bob had politics in his blood. The senior Elgie was an opposition member during Mitch Hepburn's government and later spent two years on the government benches behind George Drew. As an only child, Bob was caught up early in his father's passion for politics. He came to believe that by influencing public policy he could continue to improve people's lives. He listened to politics over dinner, campaigned alongside his father during elections, and gave speeches on his dad's behalf while still in his teens. Bob said, "I did what I swore to my father I would never do, and that was to run for politics." It was natural that Bob ran, and won his seat during the 1977 election.

Bob earned the respect and confidence of members of the Legislature from all parties. He was an intelligent, exceptionally thoughtful and articulate public servant who put his partisan interests aside and acted in the public interest. He was always characterized as a red Tory.

Bob became a prominent cabinet minister in the governments of Bill Davis and the very short Frank Miller government. He held a number of ministry portfolios that included labour, consumer and commercial relations, and, for a brief period of time, community and social services. When I got elected in 1985, my first portfolio was as Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, so I was actually the successor to Bob Elgie. I'll tell you in a minute what happened to him, but he used to call me and we used to talk about the issues that were there; we had 83 different pieces of legislation that we had to deal with.

Bob was an active minister. The revamping of occupational health and safety, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Workers' Compensation Board were some of his primary concerns as labour minister. Change at the Workers' Compensation Board was not easy, as the public agency had increasingly become the target of angry attacks from both its clients and its political bosses. Some of these changes included empowering human rights officers with the ability to investigate and arbitrate reports of workplace discrimination as well as making the Workers' Compensation Board more responsive to injured workers' needs.

Bob was also well liked by unions. Any labour minister would envy the great working relationship and mutual respect that he enjoyed with unions and the working people. Bob enjoyed that respect so much that the Ontario Federation of Labour honoured him at a farewell party when he retired from politics.

In 1985, Premier David Peterson made his first political appointment by naming Bob Elgie to head the Ontario Workers' Compensation Board, where he served from 1985 to 1991. Bob was a compassionate individual, extremely sensitive of others' feelings, with a keen sense of justice. These qualities served him well in his new role at the WCB.

In 1991, Bob embarked on a new adventure and moved to Nova Scotia. He became chair of the Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Board, serving from 1992 to 1996. Bob is credited with making significant improvements to the board's activities.

Bob's interests in bringing the concerns of law and medicine together became evident when he founded and became the first director of Dalhousie University's Health Law Institute. His areas of research and interest included medical malpractice, living wills legislation, adult protection legislation, and confidentiality of health records, to name a few.

Bob returned to Ontario in the mid-1990s. He served as chair of the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board, and was appointed chair of the Ontario Greenbelt Council by the provincial government in the summer of 2005. He was paid \$1 a year.

The fact that Bob chose not to practise law or medicine for most of his career, which could have easily provided lucrative incomes, is a testament that he was not motivated by money and greed. His primary motivation was to leave the world a better place. I understand that the joke among his family was that if he was offered a job that paid less money, he'd take it.

From 2001 until his death, Bob was a member of the Ontario Press Council, which he chaired from 2006. He received the Order of Canada in 2003.

Bob's passions were good food, junky western movies, whodunits and golf. However, his real relaxation was spending time with his family: his beloved wife, Nancy, and their five children—Stewart, Allyson, Peter, Catherine and Bill. Nancy, a child psychologist by training, shared his love of public life and passion for golf. She was his best friend and lifelong love.

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His attitude toward his children's upbringing provides the best clue to the man himself. His wife says they were raised with the attitude: "From those to whom much is given, much is expected," and, "If you're capable of learning, you have a responsibility to do so." And Bob had added, "And that's what I believe."

On behalf of the members of the Legislature, I wish to sincerely thank Bob's family for sharing him with the people of Toronto and the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for York-Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: On behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC Party, I'm very proud to speak today to recognize the life and accomplishments of Robert Goldwin Elgie, a man who served the people of Ontario honourably, both in this House and outside, and a man I was proud to call a friend. Watching us today in the

gallery is Bob Elgie's wife, Nancy, and son Peter, and we welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

Bob and Nancy spent 56 happy years together, with five children and 13 grandchildren. I was proud to join with his family only a few weeks ago as we celebrated Bob's life at Timothy Eaton Memorial Church here in Toronto. Former Premiers included Bill Davis, Bob Rae, Mike Harris and Ernie Eves, and they were joined by people of all parties and backgrounds to honour Bob Elgie; friends such as NDP member Elie Martel, who spoke about Bob's career. And an impressive career it was.

Bob Elgie served in this House as MPP for York East from 1977 to 1985. A cabinet minister for most of that time, he held the portfolios of Minister of Labour, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and Minister of Community and Social Services under Premiers Bill Davis and Frank Miller. As minister, he made sweeping changes to Ontario's Human Rights Code and to labour legislation. Bob came, as we have already heard, from a family steeped in politics, with his father sitting in this House as MPP for the old riding of Woodbine.

Bob trained as both a lawyer and a neurosurgeon, rising to chief of medical staff at Scarborough General Hospital, but left these two careers behind to run for office. It's well worth pointing out, as others certainly just have, that Bob Elgie could have made a lot more money if he had stayed in one of his previous careers. But clearly, money wasn't Bob's priority. Helping people was his priority. I too heard the family joke that every job he took seemed to be for successively less money. Given that his recent job as chair of the Greenbelt Council paid only \$1 a year, this may be true.

After leaving office, Bob served as head of the Ontario Workers' Compensation Board and the Nova Scotia Workers' Compensation Board. He founded the Dalhousie University Health Law Institute. He was chair of the Ontario Press Council from 2006 until his death.

With all of Bob's accomplishments and the mark he left on Ontario, it's hard to believe he was in office for only eight years. His success and the great esteem in which he is held by people across politics testify to his character and to his values and how he lived them.

One of Bob Elgie's great legislative accomplishments was reforming the Ontario Human Rights Code to make it illegal for the first time in Ontario to discriminate against people with disabilities. Here's a section of what David Lepofsky and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance had to say about Bob's reforms:

"Dr. Elgie didn't do what he did for Ontarians with disabilities because it would win his party more seats or bump them up in the polls. He didn't do it for a personal or political legacy. He did it simply because it was the right thing to do. He was a man of great conscience and integrity. For what he achieved for Ontarians with disabilities we will be eternally grateful."

It brings to mind a story that Nancy shared with me a short time ago. Some years before, when the family was

a much younger group of children, the family was visiting in the Carolinas at a restaurant where Freddy Cole was entertaining. Freddy Cole was the brother of Nat King Cole. The family, and the children particularly, were very interested in the music and the drumming and so forth, and as a result, a relationship developed between the Elgie family and Freddy Cole.

Well, he happened to be in Toronto sometime later, exactly at the time when the human rights legislation was being debated in an evening session, so Bob invited Freddy to come and listen to the debate that evening. Of course, Mr. Freddy Cole saw something he didn't believe he could see in his own country, and he was so impressed with what was happening here under Bob Elgie's leadership.

Bob Elgie's dedication to increasing human rights came from his own character. At Bob's memorial at Timothy Eaton church, his son told of being raised in a house without biases. The family once had a guest who made a disparaging comment, and the guest was then walked by Bob Elgie to the door—tossed out, actually, and in a gentlemanly way, I'm certain, but tossed out nonetheless.

Bob refused to join the Granite Club in the days when it refused to admit Jewish members. It's easy to see where his strong advocacy for human rights came from. He was a man who treated all others as equals, with respect and dignity. I think this was the core of Bob's character: respect for others and a true caring for other people.

Nancy told me that, as a trained neurosurgeon, Bob was always on the watch for people with back problems, getting them help whenever he could. In medical practice, he regularly billed far less than other neurosurgeons. A provincial study into doctors' salaries revealed why: It was because he spent more time with his patients. Bob was always able to connect with people, no matter what their background. The trust in which he was held by those who knew them was legendary.

Steve Paikin recounted a story about Bob Rae, then leader of the NDP, being called in to meet with Bob Elgie and Premier Davis when some trust company scandals erupted. He told Bob Rae that criminals were trying to take over a trust company, and that they had to pass legislation in a single day to stop it. When told it was absolutely necessary, Rae responded, "If it's good enough for you two, it's good enough for me." Bob Rae and the entire Legislature trusted the integrity of Bob Elgie, and the bill passed the House in one day.

Bob Elgie's personal integrity was matched by his knowledge and skill, traits that made others heed his views and accept his leadership and ideas. Norm Sterling told me that the cabinet once had to decide whether or not to legalize kick-boxing in Ontario. When the subject came up for debate, Bob Elgie pointed out that a kick carries a force five or more times greater than a punch and that, as a neurosurgeon, he could not condone a sport that could cause brain injury. After he spoke up, kick-boxing was not legalized.

I got to know Bob Elgie well after he retired and moved to Georgina permanently—although Bob Elgie's idea of retirement would be busier than many people's working lives. Bob and Nancy were active in our community, and Nancy is today our local public school trustee.

I've always been grateful to Bob and Nancy for the support and friendship they have given me locally. At one point, shortly after I had been nominated, Bob was asked to introduce me to the guests of the neighbourhood, so he told them that he had scouted out a bit to find out if I had any skeletons in my closet. He knew people who knew me, so he explained to the audience that he had done his research, and he felt quite confident in introducing me as a straight shooter. I always regarded that as one of the best compliments that I could receive from Dr. Bob Elgie.

We will miss Bob in Georgina. We are very lucky to have shared in the wisdom, generosity and leadership he offered to Ontario. Bob Elgie truly loved this province and its people, and his life and work made it a better place. We have all heard the words from the gospel of Luke: "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required..."

Bob Elgie knew that he had received a great share of success, intelligence, education and happiness in life, and he put in the work to help others to achieve their dreams. He told his children, "There's no such thing as a great person. There are only people who do great things."

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I think for Bob it was not just a duty to give to others; it was a joy. At the end of the order of service for Bob's memorial is a poem, part of which goes:

I sit beside the fire and think
of people long ago,
and people who will see a world
that I shall never know.
But all the while I sit and think
of times there were before,
I listen for returning feet
and voices at the door.

These are the words of that great philosopher Bilbo Baggins, as recorded by J.R.R. Tolkien. We can only imagine the happiness of a family that honours their husband, father and grandfather with words from one of the great happy travellers and adventurers of fiction.

Thank you, Bob Elgie. We are all the better for having known you. You did do great things.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all members for their very thoughtful and heart-warming comments for this tribute.

I'd also like to thank the family for the gift of Bob Elgie, not just in this place but in the province of Ontario. We will be providing you with a CD of the tributes and a copy of Hansard.

We think that we are better for having known him. Thank you very much.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES**

**JUNE CALLWOOD CHILDREN'S DAY
JOURNÉE DES ENFANTS
EN HOMMAGE À JUNE CALLWOOD**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? The Minister of Agriculture and Food—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Or Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Or Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm here speaking as Premier today.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise today to recognize June Callwood Children's Day. I'd like to introduce a couple of individuals before I do so, Anita Khanna and Olivia Aiello from Campaign 2000, and Brian MacLean, Nik Manojlovich—if I got that pronunciation wrong, I apologize—Todd Ross, and former member of the House Walter Pitman, who are with us. They're from the June Callwood committee to end child poverty in Canada. Welcome.

This is a day when we are talking about two wonderful people: Bob Elgie and now June Callwood. It's a day when we should all consider the legacy of a great woman, I believe, and strive to emulate her hard work and outstanding values.

The late June Callwood was a journalist. She was an author and social activist, fondly known as "Canada's conscience." She was rightly referred to by many as St. June. Her childhood was marked by hardships, including poverty and adversity, but she took this early life experience and focused on improving the lives of others. The causes she championed included poverty reduction, health and wellness, and freedom of expression, among others. She was drawn to social justice and focused special attention on issues affecting vulnerable children and women.

As a journalist, she wrote about these topics, but her work did not end when she put down her pen. She took action and helped establish more than 50 social action organizations. Everything June Callwood touched was indelibly marked by her love and compassion. She believed that showing kindness was the truest demonstration of strength.

Tout ce que June Callwood touchait était à jamais marqué de façon indélébile de son amour et de sa compassion. Elle croyait que faire preuve de bonté était la véritable façon d'exprimer sa force.

In March 2007, the province's Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism was renamed the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of her many contributions to Ontario.

In 2009, the province named a day in her honour. Every June 2 is now recognized as June Callwood Children's Day in Ontario. This celebration of her life adds to June's collection of distinctions and awards, including the Order of Ontario and all three ranks in the

Order of Canada. June Callwood displayed a deep love of humanity in everything she took on, and June 2 is a reminder that the biggest impact can be made by those who work together.

In a 2006 radio interview, June said, "Most people will do anything to help a child, and that's the way the human race is meant to be.

"We're meant to be a tribe. And when it works, it just makes your heart leap."

Mr. Speaker, June championed an all-hands-on-deck approach to reducing child poverty. Thanks in part to her tireless efforts, our government announced in 2008 a five-year poverty reduction strategy focused on combating child poverty. I would say "tireless efforts and prodding," because she did push us, and that was a good thing. A year later, after its introduction, this strategy was enshrined in legislation.

Our government also committed to the Ontario Child Benefit, a social support that was championed by June. This benefit is the cornerstone of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and has helped to lift over 40,000 children and families out of poverty. It provides support to over 950,000 children in 510,000 families, and we have proposed to increase the maximum annual amount per child, to \$1,210 this July and \$1,310 in July 2014.

Mr. Speaker, we're proud of our investments, which are helping to break the cycle of poverty, and so this year we'll be engaging Ontarians in the development of the next phase of our Poverty Reduction Strategy.

We still have a long way to go, and we owe it to June to see the job through. I would say that June Callwood would be the very first to tell us that there is much, much more to be done. In her last interview, she said that great consideration for one another is going to save the world.

June left an indelible mark on all those she touched and on Ontario as a whole. On this day, people across Ontario recognize this remarkable woman, her hard work and unshakable values.

June a laissé à jamais sa marque sur ceux et celles qui l'ont connue de même que sur tout l'Ontario. En ce jour, les gens de l'ensemble de l'Ontario reconnaissent cette femme remarquable pour son dur labeur et ses valeurs indéfectibles.

I invite the House to join me in celebrating a champion of the disadvantaged and a day when we recommit ourselves to her cause. We continue to learn from her compassion and commitment to others, and we thank her for helping us to build strong communities across our province.

SENIORS' MONTH

Hon. Mario Sergio: June is Seniors' Month in Ontario, a time to recognize the many ways seniors contribute to the province and learn more about the benefits of living well at any age.

This year's theme, "The Art of Living," honours seniors' unique approach to living. It recognizes that seniors, regardless of health conditions, social or eco-

conomic status, have developed their own individual work of art, their lives.

By 2017, for the first time in our history, Ontario will be home to more people over 65 than under the age of 15. That is why our government is working hard to support seniors and help make Ontario the best place in Canada to grow older.

Through Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors, our government is ensuring that seniors and their families have access to quality services that support them in leading healthy and independent lives. Our plan is helping seniors stay healthy and get better access to health care, stay active and engaged in all aspects of community life, and live safely, independently and with dignity.

Since announcing the action plan in January, we have made progress on a number of fronts. In partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, we launched Finding Your Way, a new wandering prevention program that helps prevent people with dementia from going missing. We are the first province in Canada to make automatic sprinklers mandatory in care homes for seniors, people with disabilities and vulnerable Ontarians. Starting August 1, we are expanding access to publicly funded physiotherapy and exercise and fall prevention, classes benefiting 218,000 more people, mostly seniors.

1350

We have also introduced new measures to assist seniors making the transition to their homes from the hospital sooner, while also enhancing care for long-term-care residents with complex needs.

Through our new Health Link, we are working to match older Ontarians with a primary care provider to make it easier for them to navigate the health care system. And we are increasing the number of personal support workers for low-needs patients in the community.

Our 2013 budget reaffirmed our government's commitment to ensure seniors receive timely access to home and community care. Additional investments in the community care sector would help reduce wait times and give approximately 46,000 patients the help they need quickly and in the comfort of their own homes.

We are also giving caregivers a helping hand. The proposed Employment Standards Amendment Act would allow more families to take time off work to care for their loved ones, allowing more elderly Ontarians to recover from injury or illness at home.

We continue to take many more steps to improve the quality of life for seniors in our communities, including holding information sessions for seniors on active living at community fairs and other events, encouraging municipalities and other organizations to plan for age-friendly communities and enhancing tax credits available to seniors, such as the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit that is helping more seniors live independently at home longer.

We are also launching a new guide to programs and services—this one here, Speaker; it's much more digested and contains a lot of information for our

seniors—that provides guidance on active living, caregiving, finances, health and wellness, housing, long-term-care homes, safety and security, and transportation. The guide is available in English and French and in 14 other languages as well.

I encourage people of all ages to join your local Seniors' Month celebrations happening in communities across the province this month. Let's celebrate and honour the knowledge and experience of seniors and the contributions they make every day in communities across our wonderful province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's now time for responses.

JUNE CALLWOOD CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus to recognize the extraordinary community service of the late June Callwood. I want to thank the Premier for leading off this tribute and acknowledge her thoughtful and sincere sentiments. I also wish to welcome the guests who are here with us today.

If my arithmetic is correct, Ms. Callwood would have been 89 years old yesterday had she still been living. It's hard to believe that it has been six years that have passed since she left us. But what an enduring legacy she left behind. It is altogether fitting and appropriate that the provincial government chose to celebrate her life by declaring June 2, her birthday, as June Callwood Children's Day.

I'm sorry to say that I never met Ms. Callwood. I do recall, however, the last time I saw her in person. I think it was around the time I heard of her cancer diagnosis. It was at Bistro 990, and she was just across the room having lunch with a friend. I regret now that I didn't go over to her table just to say hello and thank you.

Reading last night about her passion, her caring, her perseverance and her ability to get things done, it struck me that most people would conclude that she earned her Order of Canada and her Order of Ontario over and over and over again, and 16 honorary university degrees—the most I've ever heard of anyone receiving.

Clearly her accomplishments were generously acknowledged in her lifetime, even though she never seemed to seek public recognition for herself, only for the causes she identified, embraced and then worked so hard to address.

She was fearless. She spoke her mind and voiced the truth as she saw it, without caring too much about the consequences. No wonder she was such an effective and provocative journalist, writer and broadcaster.

But it was her community activism that distinguished her most of all. Casey House, Nellie's hostel for women, Jessie's Centre for Teenagers, the Civil Liberties Association, The Issue Is Choice, Maggie's, the Polish Journalists Aid Committee, Connecting Seniors of Canada, the Canadian Campaign for Prison System Improvements, the city of Toronto's Children's Network, Women for

Political Action—the list goes on and on—all of these organizations bearing her indelible fingerprints and strengthened by her involvement and participation.

We in this House join her surviving family and her legions of friends and colleagues in remembering June Callwood. No matter what your political philosophy might be, on the occasion of this year's June Callwood Children's Day, we can all be inspired by one of Canada's greatest community activists.

SENIORS' MONTH

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to mark Seniors' Month in Ontario on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus. Seniors' Month is the time when we recognize the millions of seniors in our province who built the society we live in and who continue to make a contribution every day.

Just yesterday, we celebrated D-Day at the Sutton Legion. Again, this is an opportunity for people to have that sense of the continuity of our society, of those who have gone before us and those who have made sacrifices—in many cases the ultimate sacrifice. Seniors are the people, then, who reflect who we are. And they make a difference in the lives of their families and communities.

Our government should be honouring their service but instead is cutting many of the important programs we have to help our seniors. I have received dozens of telephone calls, emails, letters and visits from senior citizens and their caregivers, asking why the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is cutting funding for physiotherapy programs for seniors. They are also asking why the government will be delisting physio for seniors on August 1.

This means seniors living in retirement homes will have to get in line for care at CCACs instead of receiving treatment from a visiting physiotherapist, and it will be much more expensive. The Designated Physiotherapy Clinics Association estimates that CCACs have a cost per home treatment of approximately \$120, whereas the designated physiotherapy clinic members have a cost of \$12.20 per treatment billed to OHIP.

Overall, the association estimates that of the approximately \$200 million spent for OHIP-funded physio in the year ended March 31, some \$110 million was dedicated to long-term care. Under the government's new plan, it will be reduced to \$58.5 million. We think there should be better respect.

SENIORS' MONTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am pleased to rise to celebrate the month of June as Seniors' Month in Ontario. I am a firm believer that we are judged as a society by how we treat our seniors. Through their lifetime of contributions, they have earned our respect. Ontario's seniors have built the foundations for our way of

life, and we have a responsibility to show our gratitude, not just during Seniors' Month, but every month.

If we are judged by our treatment of our seniors, then I urge this government to take heed. Ontario's seniors have never faced greater challenges than they do today. Our record has never been worse, and many seniors are facing levels of indignity that are both heartbreaking and alarming.

In my riding of London, seniors have been told their access to a medically-necessary hydrotherapy pool is being taken away. In the news today, it was announced that, three years after Ontario's health ministry promised annual inspections, only 123 of the province's 600-plus nursing homes had been thoroughly inspected and reviewed. In fact, on the government's website listing of events for Seniors' Month, there isn't a single event listed for my riding of London—Fanshawe.

Recently, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced her Seniors Strategy to much fanfare. She also announced the changes to physiotherapy funding, calling these changes an enhancement. The minister did not announce that her changes, in fact, represent a cut in funding for physiotherapy in long-term-care homes, where the most frail and elderly live, from \$110 million to \$58.5 million.

My own recent announcement asked this Legislature to prioritize home care services for seniors, to help them stay in their homes longer.

1400

I'd further ask for a commitment that would see the elimination of a 6,100-person backlog for home care services. I proposed a private member's motion that placed respect and dignity for seniors front and centre. I would urge the minister and the government to rethink their approach during Seniors' Month and restore the dignity and respect Ontario's seniors deserve and have spent a lifetime earning.

JUNE CALLWOOD CHILDREN'S DAY JOURNÉE DES ENFANTS EN HOMMAGE À JUNE CALLWOOD

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add my voice to June Callwood Children's Day, which was yesterday, June 2.

June Callwood was a journalist. She was an activist. She wrote 30 books, nearly 2,000 articles, and co-founded or founded over 50 organizations. She would become known as Canada's conscience, because she fought for social justice her whole life, even after she was afflicted with cancer, which eventually took her life in 2007.

In the 1950s, she defended day care when it was attacked by politicians—all male—as causing juvenile delinquency. Hard to believe, eh?

Then in the 1960s, she was arrested with street kids, to protest the way that they were treated by police. Things haven't changed that much, have they?

In 1970, she founded Nellie's Hostel for women, a place of refuge for women fleeing domestic violence.

In the 1980s, she founded Jessie's Centre for Teen-agers, to help teen mothers develop the skills to care for their infants, and Casey House, the first hospice in Canada for people living with AIDS.

She was to become known as St. June, although she didn't like that name very much because she felt herself to be far from perfect. More so, she believed neither in God nor the afterlife. Instead, she said, she believed in kindness. She said: "I am missing a formal religion, but I am not without a theology, and my theology is that kindness is a divinity in motion."

In 1998 she became co-chair of Campaign Against Child Poverty, or CACP, a group of faith leaders and community service providers, and helped to raise awareness about child poverty, which she had become very well known for.

June was born on June 2, 1924. Elle est née la même date que ma mère. She was born in Chatham, and she grew up in poverty in a French-speaking community called Belle River, just outside of Windsor. J'en profite pour dire bonjour à tous les résidents de La Chaumière, qui demeurent à Belle River.

Life wasn't easy for June. At 11 years old, during the Depression, she once went without food for three days. By the time she was 13, her father deserted her family. By age 16, she was at work as a cub reporter for the Brantford Expositor and then found a job at the Globe and Mail.

Une femme vraiment remarquable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At the risk of Speaker's prerogative—I got to know June Callwood, and there is a Brantford connection, as was just mentioned. She used to love to ride that little red car that she had and drove. I did deal with her with a couple of projects, so I do thank the members for their comments.

Another piece of prerogative: I have with me Alfred Hauk in the visitors' gallery, who is a doctor of naturopathic medicine, and they were here at noon hour today. Welcome, to my constituent. I'm glad you're here.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To make sure that the member from Durham doesn't get a complex, I will go to the member from Durham for petitions.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was wondering if you still cared.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Always.

Mr. John O'Toole: "Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning major changes to services provided by OHIP for physiotherapy as of August 1st, 2013; 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"—shameful—"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"—and long-term care—"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;

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

I'm pleased to sign this and anticipate the breakfast with physiotherapy tomorrow morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): From here is a reminder that we do not make any editorials when reading petitions, and I'd appreciate if everyone would stay with that.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I present this petition on behalf of residents of Manitoulin Island: Evansville, Little Current, Spring Bay, Gore Bay and Kagawong. The petition is addressed:

"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 agree with this petition and present it to page Jeffrey.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning to delist OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st, 2013, which represents cuts in physiotherapy services to seniors, children and people with disabilities who currently receive care at designated OHIP physiotherapy clinics; and

“Whereas people who are currently eligible for OHIP physiotherapy treatments can receive 100 treatments per year plus an additional 50 treatments annually if medically necessary. The proposed change will reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year; while enhancing geographical access is positive, the actual physiotherapy that any individual receives will be greatly reduced; and

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

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

“To review and reverse the decision to drastically cut OHIP physiotherapy services to our most vulnerable population—seniors, children and people with disabilities; and to maintain the policy that seniors, children and people with disabilities continue to receive up to 100 treatments per year at eligible clinics, with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments when medically necessary.”

I affix my signature in support.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved a new funding formula to provide funding to the children’s aid societies which are mandated by legislation to provide child protection services to Ontario’s most vulnerable;

“Whereas, due to this new formula, the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton will be underfunded approximately \$4 million over the next three years, with no changes to mandated child protection responsibilities;

“Whereas chronic underfunding to the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton will result in dismantling of support services and a loss of staff, thereby jeopardizing the ability of the children’s aid society to provide relevant services and protect Hamilton’s children;

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

“That the Ontario government look critically at the funding provided to the child welfare sector and restore funding to the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton.”

I agree with this petition. I’ll affix my name to it and give it to page Hooriya to bring to the Clerk.

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 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 Kiefers 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....”

Speaker, there are 1,657 signatures. I support this petition and will sign it and send it with page Eric.

1410

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health 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 OHIP 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 treat-

ments for over 48 years, will be delisted from OHIP by the government; 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:

“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 physiotherapy providers.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Simon to deliver.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have 902 signatures collected by Shirley Robinson, chair of the NorthEast Family Council Network, region 13.

“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 Ontarians 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 ... 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

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and” unregulated;

“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 develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I sign this and give it to page Melanie.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

“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 resident 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 this petition, will affix my name and send it off with Lamih.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jim McDonell: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since” 2003; “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

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and under-regulated;

“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” per day “by January 2015;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I agree with the petition and will be passing it on to page Jimmy.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: When you hear one good petition, you read your own. After a grand tour of the island, along with our critic for health care, Mrs. France Gélinas, the member for Nickel Belt, we as well were presented with this petition from members from various long-term-care facilities:

“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

“Whereas the personal support worker program has no provincial governing body that would provide provincial standards and regulation to assure 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” per day “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 present it to my friend Carlo to bring it down to the table.

1420

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Unfortunately, that concludes the time that we have available for petitions, and I apologize to the members I couldn't recognize.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 30, 2013, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we were last debating this government order, the member for York-Simcoe had the floor. I return to the member for York-Simcoe and recognize her.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be able to conclude my comments today regarding the programming motion. There are two issues that I will take the last few minutes to concentrate on in my remarks.

The first one is that when you look at the details of the programming motion, which outlines two hours of debate, today we have two hours of debate, or at least are doing a rotation, but there are no comments and questions because of the nature of this programming debate. When we're looking at doing this, this motion also captures the time which can be spent in hearings and the time for clause-by-clause, and at the end of that process, anything that hasn't been taken care of within the context of the motion is deemed to have been done.

I think it's important to contrast that process, which is very much a lockstep, “Now you do it. This is it. End of story,” with a piece of legislation such as the one we debated on the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit. This was a bill that would have a benefit to a relatively small group of people, and we had the occasion to be able to spend hours and hours and hours debating it. It was, I think, about a page and a half long. It just gives you a sense of the priorities. When we have something that requires and should allow every single member to have a comment on it, debate is limited.

The second part that I want to deal with that I find rather troubling is the fact that the government has joined with the NDP in the budget, and part of that deal was the creation of a financial officer. The creation of a new officer of the Parliament should be something that, again, provides the opportunity for lengthy discussion, for debate in the House, for deliberation, for opportunities to look at other officers and other Legislatures and so forth. This is built into the programming motion so that none of that normal process is being recognized and being allowed for.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Speedy passage.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Yes. It's called speedy passage, my friend says, and speedy passage is exactly what it means. It means that any kind of due diligence, any kind of debate, any kind of opportunity for input is swept away under the rug of timeliness. We know, as parliamentarians, that it is through debate that public interest is voiced. That's the democratic process. So right from the very beginning this motion diminishes and prevents debate.

I want to speak to the question of the financial accountability, because here we are talking about the

creation of an officer of the assembly. We already have five officers, if I remember correctly, and this would be the creation of the sixth. One of the things about the creation of an officer is that obviously it's at arm's length, as the government will quickly tell us. It is that independent voice that they say is part of this process. You have people like the Integrity Commissioner, the Auditor General, the Ombudsman, the Environmental Commissioner, the privacy commissioner, and yes, for sure they do have that independent voice. But when you look at the details of that voice, they are primarily in the area of data collection. They can do research. They can procure reviews. They can do all of those kinds of things, but they cannot make a decision which is a cover for ministerial responsibility. Ministerial responsibility is what this form of government depends on. It doesn't matter how many of those voices of the assembly are created; they are not a substitute for ministerial responsibility.

The Liberals and the NDP have agreed on the creation of this new independent commissioner. Obviously I don't have a problem with the notion of having someone look at the books, but when you take a look at the scandals that have beleaguered this government, when you're talking about eHealth and Ornge and the decision around the gas plants, all of those are at the doorstep of a particular minister. You can have as many people as you want being the "I see, I see" all the way down the bureaucratic line; if they are all turned in the same direction, guess what? They come out with the same answer.

When we look at those scandals and our work at trying to shed light on decision-making, it becomes very clear that there's an entire industry being created to be able to make it murky and difficult and, frankly, avoid the real issue, which is ministerial accountability. So this motion is really about political power. The Liberals want to stay in power and have bent over backwards to accommodate the NDP, so long as they will prop up the government as long as possible.

As I've said, Ontario does not need another independent commissioner to do the work of an election, but what it does need is people to assume their ministerial responsibility and accountability. I made reference at some length to that in my previous opportunity to speak on this bill, because of the fact that it is the cornerstone of responsible government and it's what people are looking for, that kind of leadership. What we're really saying here is that until we have, I would say, some better-demonstrated ministerial accountability in this government, the creation of a Financial Accountability Office will do nothing to solve the current problems. We already have systems in place to ensure that the government spends tax dollars wisely. What we don't have is people who stand up to be accountable. We have seen these systems ignored, and the Liberal government has demonstrated that they are not up to this challenge of ministerial accountability and therefore are unfit to govern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the

proceedings and announce that there have been more than six and one half hours of debate on the motion. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader, or his designate, specifies otherwise.

I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Community Safety and francophone affairs.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, we would like debate to continue.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It is a pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to this programming motion, which of course has been brought forward to facilitate the passage of the budget bill and to establish the Financial Accountability Office. This is, of course, going to happen, as we know now, because of the many concessions that were made by the Wynne Liberals to the third party in order to get the budget passed, quite to the disappointment of many people across Ontario. It certainly is a matter of concern economically.

1430

I think, to set the context for this discussion, I'd like to raise a few points, just to let people who may be watching know where we stand as a province right now. Right now we have a debt standing at \$273 billion—unprecedented in Ontario's history. The amount that we have as our debt now requires the third-largest payment; after health and education is interest payments on borrowed money. It's going to go up to about \$11 billion this year. Imagine what we could do with \$11 billion: hospitals, health care, building transit—we could do a lot with that.

The deficit is now at \$9.8 billion. We've heard a lot from the Liberals talking about how great that is, that it's under \$10 billion. It's shocking that we're there in the first place but, of course, that's only for this year, too. It's going to go up to \$11.7 billion, so the deficit is not being reduced this year; it's actually going up, and I think that's an important factor for people to know about.

We have an unemployment rate right now in Ontario of 7.7%, which has been higher than the national average for over five years in a row. It shows no sign of going down and, of course, for youth, the unemployment rate is almost double that; it hovers at around 15%, which means that many recent college and university graduates are having a really, really tough time finding work out there. It's putting a whole generation at risk, because the longer they're without work, the more difficult it is, and they're starting to lose hope.

In short, Ontario is in a financial mess, and that's bad enough both internally and externally, because what's happening now is that the international bond-rating agencies are really looking over our shoulder. They're looking at Ontario with concern, and that's important for us to realize, because every time they downgrade Ontario as a credit risk, that means that interest rates will go up, and every percentage point that interest rates go up means about \$500 million more that we have to pay out in interest.

So it's critical that we get this under control. We are facing serious issues here in Ontario, yet this budget does nothing to substantively address them. It doesn't address the spending problem that the McGuinty—now Wynne—government has, nor the unprecedented levels of waste and mismanagement that have seen billions of taxpayers' dollars wasted, largely for partisan purposes. Until these issues are dealt with, Ontario is going to continue to languish economically.

I'd just like to speak about a couple of the issues that we've been faced with in the last few years, speaking about waste and mismanagement. Let's start with eHealth. The eHealth program has now spent over \$2 billion, and although some Liberal insiders received some nice payouts as a result of this, we have yet to see a fully operational electronic records system here in the province of Ontario, which we badly need in many respects. We need it in order to cut down on unnecessary duplication of tests, saving money, but it also means saving lives. We have a very high number of toxic drug interactions each year that cost patients' lives. If we had a functioning electronic health records system, we could cut down on those dramatically. We saw the Ornge scandal waste hundreds of millions of dollars—again, taxpayers' money—and also putting patients' safety at risk in the process. And of course the most recent Liberal scandal: the decision to cancel two gas plants, at a cost of \$600 million to Ontario taxpayers, purely for partisan purposes—it's shocking. The Auditor General's report on the cancellation of the Mississauga power plant made it clear that this government spends tax dollars without any respect for the hard-working people who earn them, and the auditor, in his report, pointed out some very specific examples of that: \$4.2 million was spent to purchase land and a warehouse that Ontarians never actually got back, \$41 million was spent on undocumented labour costs, and the list goes on and on.

Case after case demonstrates that the Liberals have always put partisan purposes first before the interests of the people of Ontario. Unlike the NDP, we believe that when the government has wasted all this money, it's time to hold this government to account. That's why we're taking the position we have taken with respect to this budget.

While the people of Ontario feel the brunt of these decisions every day, the province didn't have to wait long to see what the credit rating agencies had to say about this government. On May 30, Standard and Poor's announced that it was cutting Ontario's outlook from stable to negative, with a possible downgrade coming. Of course, this is just over one month after the introduction of the budget. I think it speaks to what I talked about earlier: If we do get downgraded, interest rates go up and costs for interest payments skyrocket even higher.

But I think what is most troubling about all of this is the government's desire to introduce a suite of new taxes for Ontarians in order to fund transit initiatives. The government—despite protestations, but wait for it—are now likely to push for a 1% hike to the HST and a 5-

cent-per-litre gas tax, among many other so-called revenue tools.

I find it unbelievable that a government that spends over \$130 billion in the budget can't find less than 2% of revenues to dedicate to a so-called priority. If transit is a priority, then why isn't the 2% considered in their budget?

Ontarians have paid enough. Hard-working taxpayers have given enough. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in my riding this weekend, I heard from constituent after constituent saying, "Don't let them raise the HST. We've had it. We're fed up to here with taxes. Don't let them do it."

The people of Ontario have held up their part of the bargain, and now it's up to this government to hold up theirs. If transit is a priority, then you make it a priority in the current budget envelope. You eliminate waste and the nice-to-have programs. Focus on the priorities, the things we actually need to have. And no question: We need to have transit to get Ontario moving. These are the tough decisions that this Liberal government refuses to make.

You know, I find it really interesting that after cutting the GST by 2%, the federal government is making the largest and longest infrastructure investment in Canadian history, totalling \$70 billion over 10 years, and yet this provincial government can't find \$2 billion in their current budget without raising taxes. It's about setting priorities.

Interjections.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I repeat to the members opposite who are heckling me: It's about setting priorities. And that's what we, as the PC Party, have been talking about in this Legislature. We've been talking about ideas, priorities, things we need to invest in in order to get Ontario moving again.

We have put out a series of 12 white papers setting out possible policies and priorities that we think would get Ontario moving again. We believe it's fair to implement an across-the-board wage freeze for public sector workers. This would save \$2 billion annually just alone. We've also talked about other issues—about health care priorities, my issue of responsibility as a critic—things we need to be spending money on and not wasting taxpayers' dollars.

We talk, in one of our health care white papers, about mental health reform. Granted, we've taken some steps, and that's great. But there's still a lot more work to be done. We need to cut the number of hospitalizations that people with mental health problems have.

I had the opportunity over the course of the weekend to go on a ride-along with the emergency medical services in downtown Toronto. I heard from the front-line care workers: the EMS workers, whom I thank very much for giving me the opportunity to accompany them, firefighters and also police officers as we went out on calls, many of which were related to mental health and addictions issues. I heard from them about the need for mental health reform, because the reality is that people

are not getting the help they need. They're going through—it's like a revolving door through emergency departments. We need to do better for them.

We need to make home care investments. We've heard this government talk about it: talking, first of all, about a five-day home care guarantee; now it's a five-day home care target. The time that people wait for home care in this province is ridiculous. Many people are back in hospital before they even get connected with home care.

We need to focus more on health prevention and health promotion so that we don't have a whole generation of young people growing up with chronic disease. Of course, chronic disease management is one of the important issues of our time. We have an epidemic of diabetes in society—not just adults; with children, too. So we need to talk about all of these things in order to make Ontarians healthy and to get them healthy and productive in our economy.

1440

So far I've spent time speaking about the spending problems and the mismanagement in this government. That's of course only half the equation. The other problem with this budget is the fact that it really doesn't address economic growth and job creation. Again we don't see any real plan here. Other than having a \$45-million subsidy for music producers, there really isn't anything in this budget that speaks to kick-starting the economy and creating new jobs in any very substantive way.

We keep hearing from this government about how they're doing their best; there's been this huge world economic downturn. But the reality is, what we're facing in Ontario is very different than what is happening in other provinces. Many of the western provinces are doing extremely well, and it's not just the ones that have resources. Certainly Alberta and Saskatchewan are doing well. They're booming, in fact. But even Manitoba, which doesn't have a huge resource base, is doing a lot better than Ontario in terms of unemployment rates and other indices.

We are not doing well on many fronts, and there are lots of things that we need to be addressing in order to move forward. One is we don't have businesses coming to Ontario. We can see that we're losing businesses and we've got some that are bypassing Ontario for some of those other provinces, as I've said. The reasons are many and varied.

One is—and this relates particularly to manufacturing—that we do not have a coherent energy policy in this province. We have a real disconnect between what's going on in the traditional energy sources like nuclear production, hydroelectric power and other power sources, and the green energy renewables—solar, wind, biogas and other types of energy production. We're paying enormous subsidies. There's some speculation that that's going to be stopping, but we'll wait and see what happens with that. But we need to make sure that we have an energy policy that makes sense and is going to be

affordable for both residential and commercial consumers for the foreseeable future. We know that hydro bills are going to skyrocket because of the disastrous decisions this government has made, but that's also a big deterrent for other manufacturing businesses to not even take a look at Ontario in the first place.

We have mountains of bureaucracy and red tape that is really stifling the ability of small businesses that are here already. It's keeping them from growing and prospering and expanding their operations, but it's also preventing other businesses from even looking at Ontario in the first place.

We have a huge mismatch between the job openings and the job skills that Ontarians have. We've heard a lot about People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People. It's a serious issue. We're bringing in people from other countries, which is great. We want to encourage immigration into this country, but we also have a whole generation of young people that are graduating and not able to find jobs. All of this points to the need for us to work more closely with business to make sure that we can speak to them, have them speak to each other about the jobs that we need and the jobs that people are graduating with, and create those new programs in our community colleges and in our universities in order to foster that kind of growth.

We also have a situation where we don't really have a culture of entrepreneurship here in Ontario. If you visit other jurisdictions—I've had the opportunity to visit Israel, where they are doing amazing work at commercializing products and creating that culture of entrepreneurship where people come up with those new ideas when people graduate from universities. They want to graduate with both a diploma or a degree and a job that they can—both for themselves, because they're starting their own business, and that they can employ other people. Ontario universities are now starting that process. We have some great examples with the DMZ, the Digital Media Zone, at Ryerson University, as well as the unit at the University of Toronto, which is investing in the commercialization of health sciences projects. This needs to grow and expand across the province so that young people are given that sense of entrepreneurship, that they feel that they can take the risk to start their own businesses and that they're going to have a chance to compete.

The other issue that we really need to think about in Ontario is apprenticeship reform. We certainly have talked about that extensively, the point that we need to adjust the ratios to a 1-to-1 ratio for most positions, because we need to give those young people the opportunity to get into the skilled trades, to be able to have the opportunity to be apprentices. Right now, the ratios that we have discourage that and prevent many young people from getting into a good job that we actually need here in the province of Ontario. That's one thing that we continue to urge this government to deal with.

But there are other things that we need to deal with in terms of apprenticeship reform as well. Again, that

involves, I believe, a large public education program to speak to young people and also to their parents about the merits of going into a skilled trade, as opposed to perhaps getting a university degree, because it's not for everybody. If you get into a skilled trade, you can make a very good living for yourself and your family and also help grow the Ontario economy as well.

I think that right now, what we have is a lot of young people who don't really know about how to become an apprentice, and they really only get into it if maybe they have a family member or a friend that's already involved in a skilled trade. I think we really need to advance that with high school guidance counsellors and, again, with parents and young people themselves. I think there's a lot of work that we have to do, but none of it is addressed in this budget.

The final thing that I'd just like to touch on, as did my colleague the member for York-Simcoe, is talking about the Financial Accountability Office that this budget will set up. As she mentioned, there are already five levels of Financial Accountability Officers here in Ontario, and I'll name them again. We've got the Auditor General; we have the Ombudsman; we have the Integrity Commissioner, the Environmental Commissioner, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner—five offices that are already mandated to oversee virtually everything that happens in this place.

But what we don't have, and what we need to have, is cabinet responsibility. We need this cabinet to step up to the plate and make sure that they do their jobs, make sure that they don't let things like Ornge happen right under their noses, make sure that they don't have eHealth happen. I keep mentioning health issues because they have been scandals and they are my critic's area of responsibility, but there are many others.

We need to make sure that the infrastructure minister finds the tools that he needs in order to be able to make those investments in our infrastructure, in our economy, without continuing to tax Ontarians. At the end of the day, there's only one taxpayer. You can call them revenue tools if you want to, but a tax is a tax is a tax. Again, we've heard enough from people that they don't want to be taxed any more.

We've had opportunities to talk to this government about what we think their priorities should be. They haven't been listening, but I can assure the people of Ontario that we are going to continue to talk about them. We would urge the people of Ontario to take a look at what we've put forward. Again, we've issued 12 white papers on various topics. We've got more to do. There are other issues that we want to be speaking about and that we think that Ontarians are going to be interested in. We've got ideas on everything from growing jobs in the economy to agriculture to health care and everything else in between.

I really appreciate the opportunity to have been able to speak to these issues today. I would urge the people of Ontario to tune in. We're going to continue to hold this government accountable for the waste and mismanage-

ment and their failure to deliver on growing Ontario's economy.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'll also be speaking to this bill—this motion. My goodness, it's an important motion. I can't understand why the Liberals wouldn't want to be part and parcel of this.

Ontario is on a very difficult path, and our 10-year outlook in Ontario is downright scary. You know, our current fiscal situation—and I would like to point out today some of the fiscal problems that Ontario is faced with.

1450

Sure, being in debt is not a good thing, but what are the ultimate consequences of it? I'd like to look down the road as to where those consequences are going to bring us as a province, and some of the factors from outside the province that are going to affect us.

That being the case, the future of Ontario stands—we're standing on a fiscal cliff. Let me begin with my prophecies, and the prophecy has to start from the current situation. Currently we're looking at a debt, a debt that is currently \$253 billion; that's this year that has just ended. It's projected to be \$273 billion.

These are huge numbers. People's eyes just kind of glaze over when you talk about \$1 billion or \$2 billion or even \$10 million. People just don't equate those huge numbers with anything in their lives.

Suffice it to say that when the Liberals were elected in 2003, up until that time—throughout Confederation, from 1867—Ontario had managed to accumulate \$138 billion in debt. This year, that debt will more than double. Over 10 years of this government's tenure in this province, the debt of Ontario has doubled. That alone is a very serious trend that we were on, and this government is doing precious little to fix that.

They have a plan to balance that budget. That plan looks at revenue growth; it doesn't look at expense declines. It looks at revenue growth, and the revenue climbs in 2017-18 to \$134 billion from the current level of \$127.6 billion.

The program spending is interesting, because the program spending in their projections to balance the budget—from 2014-18, the program spending is flat, at \$118.3 billion. For the fiscal year 2014-15, it's \$118 billion. In 2015-16, it's \$118 billion. In 2016-17, it's \$118 billion. No one in Ontario could possibly hold the program expenses of this province to zero. Some 55% of the money raised in taxes in this province goes to pay salaries. We can't hold salaries flat for four straight years, and that's what their plan calls for. It's a ridiculous plan. It can't come to pass. They're not serious about it.

They've made no real effort to balance the budget. They're continuing to spend money, and that debt that they're putting us into will continue to loom in front of us. The deficit is currently at \$11.7 billion, and it's going to float around that level for the foreseeable future.

The interest on the debt is currently standing at \$11 billion—\$11 billion. You could build 11 hospitals a year,

with 275 beds in them, each year for \$11 billion. It's a huge amount of money, and that is only the interest on the debt. If interest levels in this country or across the world ever increase, that number will escalate very, very rapidly. In fact, the interest on the debt is now the third-largest expenditure in the provincial budget, after health and education. Ontario could do so much more if that interest on the debt wasn't such a significant number.

The other thing that concerns me, and should concern everyone, is the growth of the budget. Remember that all of the expenditures that the government makes come from individuals through taxes—taxes of one sort or another—whether it be a gasoline tax, whether it be an income tax, whether it be a business tax. Ultimately, individuals always pay for that budget.

Budget revenue only comes from one source, and that's from the people of Ontario. In 2003, the budget was \$68 billion. Today, it stands at \$127.6 billion—almost double what it was 10 years ago. Nothing else in our society has almost doubled in price; only the Ontario budget has doubled in price. That gives me huge concern, because there are factors across Ontario which we don't control, one of them being our exchange rate. When we moved from 72 cents US to close to parity, it had a tremendous impact on our ability to export Ontario goods. If our exchange rate were to move into positive territory, to \$1.10, \$1.20—people say, “Oh, no, it would never move up that high.” Well, let me give you a scenario.

Right now, Alberta is pumping about four million barrels of oil a day. That puts them on a par with the minor states in the Persian Gulf; Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are pumping in that range. Saudi Arabia pumps somewhere between eight million and 12 million barrels a day; they're the world's largest producer. But Canada and Alberta are beginning to play in that field. Alberta is continuing to expand its ability to produce in the oil sands, and they have 100 years' supply. They have one of the world's largest supplies of oil. As this continues and Alberta continues to grow the amount of oil that we're pumping on a daily basis—standing at four million barrels a day today; they have plans to expand that to at least seven million in the next 10 years, and perhaps they'll get more than seven million barrels a day—it will make them one of the major oil producers in the world, and the exchange rate of the Canadian dollar will follow that oil production.

If our exchange rate grows to that \$1.10, \$1.15, Ontario—which is the producer in Canada; we're the manufacturer in Canada—will have to have its fiscal house in order, in order to have what's left of our manufacturing and the jobs that we currently enjoy in this province. If we don't start today to get our fiscal house in order, 10 years from now it will be too late. Ten years from now, we'll be facing an exchange rate of \$1.15, \$1.20, and Ontario will be in a devastating situation. That's a reality. That's a reality that anyone in the business of looking at the economy can see. Companies will be preparing themselves for that eventuality in

Ontario, and Ontario will not do well out of that situation because we are not putting our fiscal house in order. That will create some very, very difficult times for Ontario and its citizens in the future.

1500

Ontario could suffer from a lack of manufacturing. We could watch our car industry be moved out of this province. We're already seeing General Motors moving the Camaro line out of Oshawa, moving it into Detroit. At one point in time, Oshawa—the three plants down there were the largest automobile assembly facility in the world. It is no longer. It used to produce the best cars in the world, and still does. Its record of producing high-quality cars is phenomenal—it has never been touched by other jurisdictions around the world—but that is not enough for that complex to survive. We have to be competitive. Our exchange rate is becoming more and more difficult to equate to that competitiveness, especially with the government ignoring the fiscal realities that we're facing today and in the very near term, the 10-year future. There's nothing about that in this year's budget. There's nothing about looking at the realities of the situation that Ontario faces in that medium-term future.

All is not lost. Ontario is a great province. It has great people. It has well-educated people. One of the highest levels of education in North America exists right here in Ontario, and that will serve us well for the future.

There are also economic opportunities for Ontario, not the least of which is the Ring of Fire. The Ring of Fire, of course, is a large deposit of natural resources that has been located in northern Ontario. It's remote. There are no railways to it. There are no roads to it. It sits on aboriginal lands. I understand that there are nine aboriginal tribes that have to be negotiated with, and this government hasn't even begun that process. It hasn't begun the process of putting railways or roads—two different access points, I would hope—into this remote location.

When the Ring of Fire, which has the world's largest reserve supply of chromium ore—chromium is an essential part of making stainless steel, something that is not going away in the immediate future. The current supplies of chromium come from South Africa and Russia, and this deposit is the world's largest known reserve of that material. It also has copper, gold, silver and nickel. I understand that the nickel deposits in that area could keep Vale, or Inco, in Sudbury going for 50 years. It's a hugely wealthy deposit, and yet not one word about this deposit and its potential for Ontario was mentioned in the fiscal plan going forward in Ontario, wasn't mentioned in this year's budget—and that's a shame.

I understand that when this deposit is fully developed it could add up to 20% to Ontario's GDP. It could be the source of almost one million jobs—900,000 jobs could be added to Ontario's workforce from the development of this Ring of Fire. Those are direct jobs and downstream jobs. And yet not one word was mentioned in the budget. Not one minister in the government was made responsible for this tremendous opportunity—almost a

million jobs, almost 20% added to the gross domestic product of this province. The revenues from this find could pay off the provincial debt. It could mean to Ontario what the oil sands mean to the province of Alberta—and not one word in our budget.

Seven of the nine tribes have had discussions; two of them have not yet been contacted.

This government isn't serious about the kinds of economic opportunities that are going to make Ontario the place where people rely on public services. We rely on good health care. We rely on a strong social safety net. We rely on good education. Those things all cost money, and they can't be sustained if Ontario's economy doesn't continue to grow. This government is ignoring those opportunities that would create the environment in which that growth could continue, to ensure that our seniors have a safe, good place to live, and to ensure that those who are less fortunate than those sitting in this Legislature, or the vast majority of Ontarians—that we will have the resources to give those people who need our help to make sure that the poorest and weakest among us live at as high a standard of living as they can find anywhere in the world.

We can't continue down the path we're going, with higher debt, higher deficits and deficit financing, and expect to supply those kinds of opportunities to our future generations. Debt in government is equally bad as it is in our individual lives. It restricts us, it confines us and it makes our lives difficult.

I would like to see this government take a much more active role in developing the Ring of Fire—in developing the opportunities Ontario will have—and begin planning for an Ontario where our exchange rate for our dollar is much higher than it is today. Without that planning, Ontario will be headed in a very dangerous direction. We will be headed to a fiscal cliff, and that's not where any of us want Ontario to go. But it's sitting there in front of us. The reality of Alberta pumping seven million barrels of oil a day in the next 10 years—I don't think many people would argue with that. I think that will be a reality, and they—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The Minister of Correctional Services says there's no way they can ship it anywhere. Well, you're talking about the XL pipeline. Believe me: That oil is already going to Tulsa. It's already going there. It's going by rail car. Yes, it would be nice to have a pipeline down there. But believe me: People in business will find a way to deliver something to a customer who wants to buy it. It's already travelling by rail car.

The oil going to the Far East—the pipeline through Alberta—that too. When the infrastructure is in place in Vancouver and in the ports along the west coast, that oil also will travel to the Far East, and it will travel from Alberta to the coast by rail car. It's not rocket science; it's how the oil industry was built. That's just the reality.

In Ontario, we're heading down this road without planning, with deficit financing and with no plan for our future—our five-year future, our 10-year future. Govern-

ments that think from election to election drive their provinces into a place where no one wants to be. That's what is happening to Ontario, and I don't see anything in this budget that's going to fix that.

Unfortunately, Ontario is hurtling toward the fiscal cliff, and there is nothing that the government is doing to stop the impending problem we're going to have. It's a great province. It's a great, great province, and we could remain that way far into the future, but not in the direction we're currently headed.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I know this is a programming motion, a substantive motion to facilitate the speedy passage of the budget. But if I may, I'd like to actually speak about the budget, the hopes and aspirations of the people that I represent.

1510

I enjoy this every year. Despite the fact that I have not yet supported a Liberal budget, and I probably won't in my foreseeable future or in the long term, I do like to take the opportunity to talk about the people whom I represent and what they do for a living, what their values are, why they sent me to this place and the feedback that I get from them. I think that each year MPPs would be missing a wonderful opportunity if they didn't look at the budget as an opportunity to come to the floor and speak with pride about the people who sent us here.

I would also first like to say congratulations to my good friend Charles Sousa. Although he and I don't agree on very much, particularly with respect to this budget, I was here when he delivered his first budget, and I saw the pride in his family's eyes when he was sitting there to deliver his first budget. For that, I congratulate him. I cannot support his budget, but I do understand how important family is, and that day I wanted to make that remark about how important that must have been for his family.

I was sent here six years ago—seven years ago, Speaker; I'm getting older. I was sent here in a by-election after I replaced John Baird. My friend Christine Elliott also came here that same day, replacing her husband, the now federal finance minister, Jim Flaherty. Peter Tabuns joined us on that day as well. I believe he replaced Marilyn Churley.

When I came here, it was two years into a mandate by the current government. At the time, they were led by Dalton McGuinty. I decided I would run for a couple of reasons. One is that they had decided to bring in the health tax—I thought a greedy tax grab. At the time, I felt that, Speaker, because although they said it was a health tax, it was never going to go into any other revenue pot other than the general revenues. That meant that they could not accept that money from the taxpayers of this province, from the parents and the patients and the seniors and all of those people who rely on our health care system; they couldn't accept that money and then at the same time say there would be any accountability for it to go toward the health budget.

At the time, I remember it coming in, and I didn't have a family physician when I first was expecting my own daughter. That is what actually drove me to decide to run for politics. Full disclosure: I've always been involved in politics, but it takes a special person—and I think there are 107 special people in this assembly—to put their name on a ballot and actually deal with the slings and arrows that we get from time to time. But I did decide to put my neck out there in order to talk about the issues.

What I learned when I first decided to seek the nomination and then, obviously, become the MPP for Nepean–Carleton was that I came from a very proud riding, Nepean–Carleton, one where Sir John A. Macdonald actually had his campaign headquarters, in Moss Kent Dickinson's house, for the first two elections that he ran. Of course, Speaker, I took you once to Watson's Mill and to see Sir John A. Macdonald's wonderful campaign headquarters.

We were talking about that this past weekend at the Dickinson Days in Manotick. Of course, as everyone knows, Sir John A. Macdonald liked to have a drink or two—maybe even several more than that—and one evening he was sitting down in his chair, and he went to get up to speak but the chair fell out from under him. He stood up and he said, "I thought my seat in Carleton county was safer than that"—never one to miss an opportunity to have a good conversation.

But the people I represent have been represented by Sir John A. Macdonald. They were also represented by other legends, people I admire, some of whom I met, others whom I haven't. For example, Dr. Bill Tupper, who was the member of Parliament for 1984-88 under Brian Mulroney's government, is probably one of the most fine gentlemen that I have ever come to know: a decent human being, a professor, someone who was so steadfast in his desire to see that our monarchy was adequately respected on Parliament Hill that he actually became the person whose private member's bill created the statue for Queen Elizabeth II during that period. I was proud this year to have given him—or last year—a Diamond Jubilee Medal for his contribution to Canada.

We were also represented by Walter Baker. Some of you may have remembered his name. He was part of the short-lived Joe Clark government—Joe Clark, whom I was very proud to have worked for at one time. Walter Baker was known, I think first and foremost, as a constituency man. I can still go to a door in my riding, on any street in my riding, and people will talk about what a great gentleman Walter Baker was. He knew what it meant to be a parliamentarian, but he also knew what it meant to be a constituency politician. I can tell you something: Walter Baker valued not only the vote that got him to Parliament Hill but he also valued the dollar that was sent there to do his work. Some of the scandals that we see, whether it's here, at various city halls or even in our federal Parliament, would not have been acceptable to Walter Baker.

In Nepean–Carleton, we've also had some very strong municipal leaders. When I tell you the stories of these

individuals, I think, Speaker, you'll understand where I'm coming from when I speak about this budget.

First, the founder of the old township of Nepean was the late D. Aubrey Moodie. D. Aubrey Moodie died when he was 99 years old, but before he died, he was a supporter of mine, and he talked to me about the ways and means of politics in rural Carleton county, which is now in the big city of Ottawa. Aubrey was a builder. Aubrey was somebody who worked with the late Jean Pigott to make sure that we had wonderful green space and a greenbelt that Nepean–Carleton so much loves. Aubrey Moodie was somebody who was first to be finding a way to build the Queensway Carleton Hospital. Aubrey Moodie was a farmer. Aubrey Moodie knew that every dollar earned was a dollar that should be protected for the taxpayer. He was a fundamental founder of what is now the old city of Nepean and the new city of Ottawa, and many of the bedroom communities and rural communities that I represent.

Secondly, we were governed by Andy Haydon, who is a friend of mine. He still lives in Barrhaven. He was also one of those pay-as-you-go types. So if Aubrey Moodie started it, it was entrenched by my friend Andy Haydon. Andy Haydon, of course, was strong on fiscal conservatism and didn't want to spend money that he didn't have.

If he was the one who entrenched it, the next person, the late Ben Franklin, actually perfected the pay-as-you-go strategy that made sure that, when Nepean had to be amalgamated into the city of Ottawa in the year 2000, they were the only municipality to come into the new city of Ottawa with a substantial amount of reserves.

So, when I talk to you today, I speak as a member of provincial Parliament for a riding which has strong agrarian roots, one which is now the fastest-growing in Canada and one which has a fundamental value of self-reliance, strong families and safe streets.

It brings me to this budget and the budgets that I have had the opportunity to speak on in previous years. This budget doesn't speak to the values of the people that I represent. Pay-as-you-go is a prime example of what the people that have been elected before me and the people who will be elected after me will bring to various chambers, either here or on Parliament Hill or even at city hall in the years to come.

The people that I represent—Speaker, I think you know I probably go to about a dozen events a weekend. I'm quite busy. I often take my daughter and my husband. We're often seen in my minivan going from Bells Corners to Burritts Rapids to Edwards. It's the largest riding in the city of Ottawa, also by population, not just geography. We'll often be seen doing a number of events. This past weekend, I had the opportunity to go to Food Aid, which raised \$161,000 for the Ottawa Food Bank, while at the same time celebrating the agricultural advantages that the city of Ottawa has to offer. This was downtown at city hall.

These are events where I get to see literally hundreds or thousands of people. What I hear from time to time

from these folks is that they can't afford any more money to come to Queen's Park.

What angers them is what my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa had to talk about a little bit earlier. It's the scandals. You can't ask people for a 1% increase in the HST or a 5% increase in their gas tax or another \$300 million for photo radar and extra taxes on your cellphone bill and your home phone and 911 if you're going to waste \$1.2 billion on cancellation fees for two gas plants because somebody wanted to win an election. You can't look at people and ask them for more money if you're going to mismanage a health care system the way this government has with respect to Ornge or with eHealth. You can't continue to ask people for more money when their neighbours are losing jobs. The people who sent me to Queen's Park, who I owe everything to because they have given me this seat in this Legislature, do not approve of that waste.

1520

Not only is there waste, Speaker; they seem to be spending more money in taxes to Queen's Park without real value being seen in their communities. As I said, there are a lot of men and women in this province out of work: 600,000 people. Some 300,000 of those jobs are gone because of our manufacturing crisis. That has taken a significant toll.

I talked about doing a fundraiser with the Ottawa Food Bank last Friday, which raised \$161,000, with the support of our local farmers.

On Saturday, I had the opportunity to go to Mayfair, which is a wonderful community event hosted by the Farley Mowat Public School. While I was there, I got to talk with my friend Ken Lee, who is the head of the Barrhaven Food Cupboard. My community is quite affluent, but do you know what Ken told me at that event? He told me that in Barrhaven, our demand for food at our food bank has dramatically increased by 40% from last year. In fact, his order for food has gone in six weeks earlier this year than it did last year. That tells me that people who used to live quite comfortably are not so comfortable anymore. It's possible that one or more of them in the family household have lost their job. It's also possible that their bill payments are getting to be so hard, becoming a burden on the family income. It tells me that if this government is going to continue to tax them more, they will have less. This is a time when my constituents in Nepean–Carleton can't afford that.

I look at my constituents in North Gower. They've been fighting the invasion of a wind turbine development for years now. I promise them each and every time we meet that I will continue to stand up for them and I will continue to oppose it for three reasons. One, they should have local say on whether or not that wind turbine development goes into their community. That is something that this Liberal government has taken away from them. That's another value that is not being respected: local say, autonomy, by my community. Secondly, we know, for example, that the costs of these wind turbines are soaking all of us locally, whether it's in our own

community or it's a local business or it's in our own home. It is unaffordable. Finally, I think it needs to be said that only about 20% of the wind turbine development actually gives us energy, and I think that it's not exactly prudent to put all our eggs in that one basket.

So to the folks of North Gower, I want them to know that I'll continue to stand up for them and I will continue to be their spokesperson here and I'll continue to support them.

I also wanted to briefly touch on the horse racing community. I have a wonderful racetrack, the Rideau Carleton racetrack. It employs about 1,000 people in the city of Ottawa. There are a lot of rural jobs there, whether directly at the track or people who work and support the track throughout the rest of rural Ottawa. It concerns me that in the last budget, this Liberal government destroyed that viable economic job creator in our rural communities. At a time when we need more jobs, this is a government that has destroyed 1,000. I can't stand here and support this budget, because they didn't reverse some of the big mistakes that they had made in the past for my community.

So to the people at the Rideau Carleton Raceway, to those veterinarians, to those breeders, to those who are selling hay in order to keep their family farms, to the students who are putting themselves through Carleton University, Algonquin College or the University of Ottawa working at the track, either with the slots or in the dining room, I want them to know that I will continue to stand here in my place and I will support them.

Speaker, my colleague from Whitby is, I think, the champion of mental health and addictions in this chamber, and she spoke a little bit about that. I've had my opportunity to speak about anti-bullying; I've had my opportunity to speak on fentanyl abuse in my community, which probably goes up as a result of the economy; and I've had the opportunity to talk about autism—three issues that have been very dear to my heart.

But in order for us to properly fund these programs that we need, we need to ensure that our budget is balanced, as my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa said. When you have a \$9-billion deficit that's projected to go up to \$11.7 billion, you're going to see a lot of money being taken from core priorities to service the debt and the deficit. Remember, the third-highest spending priority of our government, outside of health care and education, is servicing the debt and the deficit. We've got to get that under control in order for us to spend on those priorities that we need. That's not happening.

As my Whitby–Oshawa colleague also pointed out, if we are to see an increase in interest rates—which is likely because right now the credit rating companies are seriously considering downgrading our credit—we're going to see even more payments go that way. I can't emphasize this enough. I speak directly to the pages here who are so young, that effectively those interest rates, when they go up, you're going to be paying more. Every time you pay more for something that you're not getting, it's money that's taken away from another priority,

whether that's health care or education or transit, roads and bridges.

Again, I don't see an overall plan here that is in keeping with the values of my constituents or the people who sent me here. I don't see any movement on accountability. I don't see any movement on supporting horse racing. I don't see any movement on supporting communities that are being assaulted by wind turbine development. I don't see a job creation strategy here. I don't see any plan whatsoever that will move the people who are right now relying on food banks into a place in their lives where they'll get into more firm financial footing.

I hear it all the time at events that it is time for a change. They are looking for hope; they are looking for optimism; they are looking for a new leader. I heard it all weekend when I was out at a dozen or so community events. I hear it wherever I go. People would like to see a change in government. They would like to see a change in how business is done in this province. That is why I stand here before you, to share that. I believe that this government has run its course. They are really, at the moment, not trusted by the people that I represent, and that is why I'll stand in my place and not only oppose this programming motion but also this Liberal budget.

I say to you as I get ready to make my concluding remarks that as this province decides it wants to embark on some very ambitious transit and transportation initiatives, it is not appropriate for them to look at my constituents and ask for 1% more on the HST. It is not appropriate for them to take more taxes off of their gasoline. It is not appropriate for them to take more taxes off of their cellphone bills. Instead, I think my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora as well as my colleague from Thornhill, have put forward a very sensible plan for a select committee that would find those efficiencies in government to pay for that new priority.

This is a government that is long on priorities, short on money and up to its eyeballs in debt. My daughter can't afford it; those pages can't afford it; and my constituency doesn't want it anymore.

So I stand here very confidently knowing that I have brought their views to the floor, the views that they shared with me at Dickinson Days this past weekend and at the Mayfair and at Food Aid, thousands of people that I was able to speak to or shake hands with or give a wave to. The one thing that they said to me this weekend that was very consistent is, "Lisa, give 'em hell." I'm prepared to do that. That is why I took this opportunity today to speak to the 2013 provincial budget on behalf of the residents of Nepean–Carleton.

I want to say thank you very much and I want to congratulate my friend and colleague from Thornhill, our finance critic, for doing an outstanding job. I also want to say in the short moments I have left that I want to thank my leader, Tim Hudak, for providing hope to the people that I represent.

1530

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

Mr. Michael Harris: It's my pleasure to take this opportunity to speak to this motion on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. Do you know what? We all know that living off a line of credit cannot last forever. Sure, you can renovate the house, buy a new car, get that big-screen TV you've always dreamed of, but eventually the credit runs out. And when that happens, there are only two options: You either pay down that debt or you go bankrupt.

Now, most people understand this reality and do their very best to keep their finances in order. It takes discipline, but they save money and plan their spending in order to provide for their family and prepare for a comfortable retirement. If individual Ontarians work hard to manage their finances responsibly, then they expect their government to do the same. Unfortunately, though, under the Liberals this hasn't happened.

In Ontario today, there's no saving—only debt. In fact, there's so much debt that the province's third-largest expenditure each year is its interest payments. And the cost just keeps going up. In fact, next year we'll hand over nearly \$11 billion to Ontario's domestic and international lenders. That's money that could have been used to build better hospitals, schools, roads or even the \$2-billion-a-year plan to fund Metrolinx's Big Move. Instead, that interest goes to other governments, who use our money to invest in roads, bridges and public buildings for themselves. You'd think we would try to reduce spending and pay down our debts so we could keep more of our own tax money here in the province in order to invest in creating jobs and providing first-class services for Ontarians today and into the future. But the Liberals have done the opposite yet again and increased the deficit to \$11.7 billion, which is laid out in their new budget.

Over the last two years, the Liberals have made it quite clear to Ontarians that they are primarily concerned with using taxpayers' money on protecting their own political power. We've witnessed that the Liberals would stop at nothing to win seats in the GTA by cancelling the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. On top of that, the Auditor General reported that the Liberals covered up \$85 million of the cost to build, tear down and relocate the Mississauga plant. In addition, the Auditor General confirmed that the government knew all along that the cost would be higher than the \$190 million they repeatedly claimed it was. But again, this government continues to stretch and bend the truth to keep their support in the polls. With the combined cost of both Mississauga and Oakville, the Liberal Party wasted \$585 million of our tax money to maintain power over this province.

Although we finally know the cost of the Mississauga plant, the investigation is far from over as we continue to unveil the Oakville plant cancellation, with half a million uncovered already, deleted emails about the issue between staff and party headquarters could unveil more wasted money to simply serve their own interest.

Recently, the Premier testified before the gas plant hearings, and her response was far from what Ontarians

wanted to hear. Apologizing to Ontarians and members of this Legislature by saying “Sorry” doesn’t mean anything when the Liberals continue to refuse to take responsibility. Seniors in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga who rely on physiotherapy in long-term care homes don’t accept “Sorry” when \$44 million has been cut from a service they rely on to prevent falls and fractures, leading to more hospitalizations. That’s \$45 million that could have been salvaged from the \$585 million that they wasted on those two plants.

These essential services for our seniors would not have been taken away if this government could spend taxpayers’ money wisely. Under these changes, the number of visits covered by OHIP for seniors in clinics will be reduced to 12 from a needed 50 visits. Bedridden seniors in retirement homes who currently qualify for 100 OHIP coverage visits will now only get six. These short-sighted cuts will lead to decreased mobility and lead to more risk of serious falls, which will move more seniors to hospitals or from the retirement home to the nursing home. With our grandparents and parents, who helped build this province, having the essential services they paid into getting taken away because of the wasteful and politically motivated spending practices, it is no wonder that Ontarians are losing faith in this Liberal government.

When I was a kid, I was taught that you say “sorry” for your actions when you actually mean it and will make a concerted effort to not make the same mistake again. Now, I didn’t have that told to me that often, but when I did, I meant it. But the Liberals’ self-interested spending policies continue. In the face of all of these scandals and cuts to important services, we’ve spent the last month watching the two parties broker a deal that will pile more debt on this province and cost us more needed jobs, simply to protect their own jobs at the expense of Ontario’s taxpayer. Now we see another billion spent to satisfy the NDP, but after almost a decade of twisted truths and countless times of the Liberals going back on their word, you would think that the NDP would learn, especially now that Ontario car insurance rates rose, in fact, despite the promised deal of a 15% cut.

The lesson must be recognized today that on-the-fly policy to appease voters and to maintain political power is not effective law-making. The truth is, Ontario simply can’t afford to have a government that spends more time and money on protecting its own partisan interests than actually carrying out true reforms that will balance our province’s books and stimulate economic growth.

The people of this province, investors, credit-rating agencies, manufacturers, young families, recent graduates and job creators all want a government that has the courage and the leadership to balance the budget and grow our economy. Unfortunately, the issues I just laid out are not what taxpayers elect their governments to do. To get our fiscal house in order, the government needs a plan. When 600,000 people woke up this morning with the stress of not having a job, the government has a responsibility to make the necessary changes to help those people get one.

Time after time, we hear from people that government’s top priority should be to reduce the deficit and pay down the debt. I hear from constituents and people across this province that our money needs to go towards the services we rely on, like health care and education, but on top of that, I hear almost every day—from emails, phone calls—or read in the headlines that the lack of employment and good paying jobs is putting stress on families, seniors and, yes, even our young graduates.

These priorities were, unfortunately, not tackled in this Liberal budget. Instead of reducing the size and cost of government to get spending under control, the Liberals chose to boost spending by increasing the size of cabinet from 23 to 27 ministries, or by 23%. They did this at a time when we already spend more money on interest payments rather than investing in a job-growth strategy plan for Ontarians.

Unlike Ontario, governments across the world, like Greece, Italy and Spain, are struggling to balance their books before ever-increasing interest payments on their countries’ enormous debts plunge them into bankruptcy. What is Ontario doing to address this unsustainable debt problem? They’re spending more. Despite repeated warnings from credit agencies, economists and, in fact, the loyal opposition, led by our leader, Tim Hudak, the Liberals and NDP passed a budget motion last week that increases spending.

Now, I know many of my constituents would like to see some of that money go towards correcting the health care funding inequity in our community of Waterloo region. For years, our region has received considerably less provincial funding for local hospital services when compared with other jurisdictions. In fact, the region receives \$255 less per resident in provincial funding than the rest of Ontario. So how can the Liberals defend sitting on their hands while spending \$10 billion a year on interest when these types of gross inequities exist?

1540

Do you know what \$10 billion could be used for? How about 5,000 MRI machines or hiring 50,000 doctors? With funding shortfalls like the one I’ve mentioned, I think it’s clear that the government can no longer continue business as usual. We need to chart a new course; one that takes us away from more debt, more spending and more taxes. To do this, we must focus the province’s resources on real priorities like jobs, the economy, education and world-class health care.

But to move forward, we must first get our own fiscal house in order. If we don’t and interest rates rise, we could face hundreds of millions of dollars in new interest payment expenses. Even a former parliamentarian admitted that the interest on the province’s debt is “a ticking time bomb.” Speaker, guess who said that? You didn’t answer me, but I know that you know whom I was thinking about and talking about: the former finance minister, Dwight Duncan himself.

I think it’s fair to say that he knows the situation is actually much more serious than the governing Liberals will admit. He knows. Everyone I talk to understands that

Ontario must deal with its spending problem. Unfortunately, we know this issue is not on the Premier's priority list. The Premier remains committed to continuing in the same failed direction of her predecessor, who, for a decade, did nothing but grow the size of government through excessive public sector hiring and pay increases.

As a result, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has found that public sector workers earn 27% more in wages, pensions and benefits than their counterparts in the private sector for the very same job. That's certainly not affordable, but it's also not fair. Unfortunately, though, this story is a reality for too many Ontarians. Over the past decade, the province has lost 300,000 good-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector that helped to strengthen middle-class communities in places like Hamilton and the Waterloo region, where I am from.

In order to improve conditions for economic growth, leaders in the private sector have repeatedly told government for years to lower business taxes, make energy more affordable and invest in infrastructure. The Liberals didn't listen. Instead, they reneged on their promised tax cuts, they caused the price of hydro to skyrocket with their failed green energy social experiment, and they failed to adequately invest in our roads, bridges and public facilities, leaving municipalities with a \$60-billion infrastructure deficit. We've seen this story too many times. It's a bad rerun.

The Liberals remain incapable of confronting the challenges we face with real leadership. On virtually every issue, their only solution is more spending, more red tape and more bureaucracy. Take public sector hiring: When the private sector lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs, the Liberals' only solution was to add 300,000 public sector jobs to an already bloated and unaffordable government payroll.

If we want to see real change, priorities must be made. That starts with developing a comprehensive plan, which I'm proud to say the PC party has put forward. We have presented a positive vision to make Ontario a leader in Canada once again. That starts with getting government out of areas it has no business being in, so that we can focus on the things that really matter, like job creation.

When job creators are worried about our credit rating and the instability of this government, their confidence in doing business in the province goes down, and when we lose that confidence, we lose jobs. It's obvious that our local businesses are struggling. With restrictive labour laws and skyrocketing energy rates, job creators are investing elsewhere. Just last month, a company that employs 1,000 people in my riding announced it was moving south. Knap and Vogt, a manufacturer of ergonomic office supplies, publicized that it would relocate its operations to Michigan, costing 230 people their jobs. This comes just six months after the company purchased the Kitchener furniture company CompX in Waterloo. The company's vice-president, Peter Ross, said that it was not a reflection of the performance of his employees but the business marketplace here in Ontario.

Imagine, after working for the company for 25 years, a manufacturing corporation from the States comes in to take over your business, and then six months later, you lose your job, not because of the work you did or didn't do but because the company can't make a profit here in Ontario. Uncertainty continues for the hundreds of employees remaining as they see equipment sold off, weeks shortened and hours taken away. Even though the company would probably never admit it, local critics question whether the move to Michigan was related to the new right-to-work legislation which makes union membership voluntary.

Sadly, this story repeats itself in towns and cities across this province, putting thousands of people out of work here in Ontario. Take Niagara, for example. According to job site adzuna.ca, there are 100 people that compete for a job opening in that region. In Kitchener-Waterloo, approximately 73 applicants send in their resumes with only one lucky person hired, according to the same site. Finding a job is just about as hard as working in one, some would say.

So it's sad to see that this government is continuing down the same road under the unfortunate leadership of Dalton McGuinty. Being in government for 10 years, you would think the Liberal members would take the proper steps when constructing a budget, like organizing in-depth budget consultations with industry and businesses to fix our deficit in order to get Ontario working again. As a Conservative, I meet with many groups when creating legislation and making important decisions.

When developing my private member's bill on fair and open tendering, I invited CUPE to meet with me to discuss their recommendations, which actually went extremely well. I also had a round table with many local construction contractors who raised several concerns. In addition to these groups, I consulted with school boards, the federal government and the Waterloo regional council. In doing so, I heard from all perspectives what their different concerns were.

Going through the budget, I feel like the government did, in fact, not go through the same process. So I would encourage government to take a similar route, as we have done.

In fact, we have done a series of discussion white papers in the past year which would improve our economy, tackle the debt and rein in spending while providing the services Ontarians rely on. Take for example the paper entitled Affordable Energy, authored by my great colleague from Nipissing, the great Vic Fedeli. This fresh approach to Ontario's power sector recognizes that affordable energy is a fundamental element to Ontario's future economic success.

Or our other paper by Toby Barrett, Welfare to Work, which helps people on welfare rebuild their lives and develop employable skills. It advances them from the welfare system to new opportunities and stable work. Unlike the current system, which gets people stuck in the system, this new proposition gives hope in finding a job that people can be proud of.

Another white paper that focuses on unemployment is written by my great fan and colleague the member from Cambridge, Rob Leone. In his white paper, Higher Learning for Better Jobs, he tackles the problems students constantly face with finding jobs that match their postgraduate programs. Instead, we must take a different approach that gears learning towards the demands of the job market, ensuring students receive the highest quality of schooling at a sustainable cost, with the confidence of finding a good job afterwards.

The time has come. The PCs have presented a positive vision to make Ontario a leader in Canada once again. That starts with government getting out of areas it has no business being in so that we can focus on things that really matter, like job creation. We need a new approach in Ontario, which is why I'm proud to be standing here, on behalf of my constituents from Kitchener–Conestoga, opposing this budget. With reckless spending due to political motivations on cancelled gas plants and the sense of entitlements over at Ornge and eHealth, Ontarians deserve accountability for their tax dollars, a government that is accountable and transparent, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to that today.

1550

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

Mr. Norm Miller: This is the first time I've had an opportunity to speak since the tragic crash of the Ornge S-76 air ambulance helicopter at Moosonee on the weekend, so I wanted to say that my thoughts are with the family and friends of the pilot, Captain Don Filliter, First Officer Jacques Dupuy, paramedic Chris Snowball and paramedic Dustin Dagenais.

Mr. Speaker, we're debating a programming motion this afternoon which—essentially, the budget motion has passed with the government and support of the NDP, the alliance. Now we're debating a programming motion which would pass the government budget bill if it receives support again from the NDP and the government, either this week or next week.

Our party does not support that programming motion because it continues the spending trend that the government has been on for the last 10 years, which is, as the member from Kitchener–Conestoga described, the government living on a credit card and racking up unsustainable debt. We see that the McGuinty-now-Wynne government has doubled the debt of the province and, as has been pointed out, that means for a new child being born in the province, their share of the credit card debt is \$20,000 right off the bat. We just think that government needs to live within its means.

From the government's own budget document, we see that the deficit is actually going up this year from what it was in 2012-13—\$9.8 billion, \$10 billion, going up to \$11.7 billion next year—and spending continues to increase despite the government talking about restraint.

All the while, the government continues to look for more ways to find more revenue. They're talking about a number of different revenue tools, as they call them, to

fund transit. In the past number of years, we've seen all kinds of other increases, like the health tax that they brought in.

They're planning on continuing their irresponsible spending.

The interest on the debt this year is \$10.6 billion, which, as has been pointed out, would be number three, if it was a ministry, in spending after health and education.

The scary part is, looking forward to 2017, that interest on the debt is forecast to be \$14.5 billion, and that's at historically low interest rates. Every time the interest rate goes up, I believe it's one point, it adds \$500 million to that interest bill.

The government needs to be responsible and get its house in order, and this budget does not do that.

This being a budget bill, it allows me a fair amount of freedom—I'm sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker—to talk about some issues in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, so I'm going to do that in no particular order.

I'll start off with how I'm always amazed at the way this government is able to spin things. They made a big announcement, did a news release on physiotherapy, and it sounds like it's a great, positive initiative. The news release says:

“More Seniors to Benefit from Physiotherapy and Exercise: New Ontario Government Expanding Access to Care for Seniors.

“Ontario will provide more than 200,000 additional seniors and patients with improved access to high-quality physiotherapy, exercise, and falls prevention classes.”

That sounds fantastic, Mr. Speaker, except that when you start looking at the details—and I only need to look at my local paper from last week, and what is on the cover? A demonstration in front of my office, with seniors and signs reading, “Physio for seniors’ wellness”; “Seniors rally for physiotherapy access.” It seems the government's great-news story has a rally in front of my office. I must admit, I have to say, why are they rallying in front of my office, as an opposition member? They should be lobbying in front of the government members' offices. However, I think they rightly felt that if they protested in front of the MPP's office, that would garner attention, and it did: Witness the cover of the Bracebridge Examiner.

Prior to this happening, I had actually already met up in Parry Sound with a concerned physiotherapist, and that was Fatemeh Khateri, who works in the Parry Sound area in long-term care. We had a good, long meeting. She was very concerned with these supposed good-news changes. She wrote me post our meeting, and I will get on the record her letter, where she says, “With a budget of \$156 million, the government says it has ‘invested’ in physiotherapy in Ontario, allowing thousands more seniors to access services, while MOH”—the Ministry of Health—“acknowledged that the OHIP spend on physiotherapy in 2012 was roughly \$200 million, which means the MOH announcement is actually a 22% cut to overall services (by \$44 million).” That was point 1 in her letter.

“(2) Long-term-care homes will receive \$68.5 million for their physiotherapy programming (\$58.5 million for

physiotherapy and \$10 [million] for activation exercise classes for convalescent care) ... the MOH spent approximately \$110 million” on long-term-care physiotherapy “in 2012. Their announcement is a cut of nearly 50%.

“(3) Ambulatory seniors, patients on ODSP, and children were able to access 50 to 100 treatments, depending on their medical condition, at a designated (OHIP) clinic. Now, instead of 50 or 100 treatments, patients will have access to just 12 treatments.

“(4) The government intends to earmark \$10 million” of the long-term-care budget “for exercise classes to all 75,000 LTC residents, three times per week. No allocation for equipment is included.

“If this ‘group exercise budget’ is divided across 633 LTC homes, it means approx. \$15,800 will be provided to the average home. It will be impossible to hire enough staff to provide classes (in a safe 1:4 ratio) to service all 75,000 residents three times per week. In addition, who will screen residents to participate in the activation programs to ensure safety?

“(5) Currently residents in LTC receive group exercise classes. Exercise classes and physiotherapy are different services and address different needs.

“As you know, your residents are receiving much more than simply group exercise classes. Each resident is assessed by a PT, current functional ability is determined and an individualized care plan is developed. This treatment plan usually includes customized 1:1 treatment, group exercise for specific impairments, or a combination of both....

“Thank you for your support of the seniors of Parry Sound.

“Best regards,

“Fatemeh Khateri.”

We have forwarded her letter on to the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews.

I note that our critic has raised many concerns on this supposedly good-news story. Christine Elliott has, in fact, written to the Minister of Health. I’ll get to that at the end of my time, Mr. Speaker, if I have time. I just want to allow time for some other issues, so I won’t go through that. But I note that our background on this says, “The government has framed the issue as a good-news story announcing that it will provide 200,000 additional seniors and patients with better access to physiotherapy, exercise and fall prevention classes in long-term-care homes and in communities across Ontario.

“In fact, the ministry has removed service provision from the lowest-cost provider—designated physiotherapy clinics, which have a successful track record of providing quality care—to instead give funding to the highest-cost providers, LHINs and CCACs.”

Well, that doesn’t seem to make a whole bunch of sense when you have limited resources that you want to go the farthest: taking it from the lowest-cost provider and shifting it over to the highest-cost provider so the result is that seniors get less care. You can see why there are a lot of questions that come out of that physiotherapy announcement, which the government paints as being a

good-news story. If I have time at the end of my speaking comments, I’ll get back to our critic’s detailed letter on that.

But I did want to speak about a number of other issues that are important to the people of Parry Sound—Muskoka, starting with high water levels. This spring, in April, we had what I would call a 100-year event. I’ve lived on Lake Muskoka for most of my life, for 45 years, right on the water in an area that’s actually on the flood plain, so I’m pretty conscious of water levels. Certainly this year in April, with the speed of the thaw and very heavy rains, we saw levels that had never been seen before. There was a lot of damage in a few different water systems, but certainly in the Huntsville area and in the Bracebridge area there were entire subdivisions that were affected. Mayor Claude Doughty in Huntsville and Mayor Graydon Smith in Bracebridge did an excellent job managing the crisis, but this high-water event, if you look around the province, wasn’t simply one watershed.

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Certainly, the Muskoka one that I’m familiar with was greatly affected. As we were in the midst of that, I was daily calling up my friend Peter Holsgrove, who lives at the mouth of the Muskoka River, in a low area, and as he watched the water come closer and closer to his house—I think he got within six inches of it being inside his house, but his whole front yard was covered with water. I would start off every day and call him to find out if it was still going up or had stabilized. Finally, it did eventually stabilize and started going down, but it wasn’t just the Muskoka water system.

Muskoka saw record highs. I live on the Black River system in the village of Vankoughnet, and have lived there for the past eight years. Well, I arrived home on a Thursday night when the torrential downpours happened, and I do have to cross the river to get to my home. In the morning, as I left at about seven in the morning, the water was over the banks of the river, but it wasn’t blocking the bridge.

Well, I was gone for the day, and on that Friday, that was the day that it hit records that locals in Vankoughnet had never seen before. It went well over the bridge, and the river cut a new channel around the bridge. It meant that I didn’t get back to my home for five days—on a different water system, though, than the Muskoka, heading into Lake Couchiching—and levels that locals had never seen into their lifetime, some that have lived there many, many decades.

Not in my riding, but in the Minden area, there was a couple of weeks where, in the village of Minden—again, another water system managed by the Trent-Severn organization—again saw record levels. Recently, just this past week, I’ve been receiving a lot of emails to do with the Pickerel River system. I want to thank Joe Whitmell, who sent me a collection of emails with stories of various people in the Port Loring area—Speaker, you’d be familiar with that—in the Pickerel River system, both in April, and then also in May, where they had some heavy rain. They’ve seen extremely high levels, and it’s caused a lot of damage.

Depending on what's going on around this place and whether we're still in session next week, I hope to be able to attend a public meeting that's going to be at Wright Point marina in Port Loring—the marina and housekeeping resort—on the 12th, if I'm able to be there. I have spoken with Dan Feasby, who owns that business, to get information from him, and I've spoken to some of the other local folks.

I would simply say that people look to blame someone, and MNR has taken their share of blame. I have also spoken with Steve Taylor, who's their water management coordinator in the Muskoka area, and I think, generally, that they've done a pretty good job. There are questions in the Pickerel River system, though; the locals are raising some good questions that I hope will be answered—that they'll take the advice of the local people about how to better manage the system and lessen the damage.

You can't manage for 100-year events, but hopefully you can manage as best as possible. Their concern is that upstream on the Pickerel River, you have the North Bay MNR office managing the system, and downstream, the Dollars Lake dam is managed by the Parry Sound district, I believe out of the Bracebridge office. You have two different offices, and the complaint from some of the local people is that they remove logs upstream, but then the Dollars Lake dam is very difficult to access, and they don't tend to remove the logs on that one until quite a bit after.

I have a letter from Dan Feasby pointing out that concern, and obviously they want to see the system managed so they have less damage. I look forward to hopefully being able to attend that June 12 meeting. If I'm not able to attend that meeting, then I will attend another meeting up there to deal with that issue.

Another very important issue: As we have flooding around Parry Sound–Muskoka, we also have, on the Georgian Bay side, historic low-water levels. It's kind of interesting that that's the big issue on Georgian Bay, Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. On that issue, I have met with marina operators from the Honey Harbour area whose immediate concern in the past few months has been being able to have dredging permits expedited, and I'm pleased to say that MNR did come up with a process to speed up the dredging permit process that they are involved with to help some of these marina operators who would find, in many cases, a third of a marina unusable for the coming season if they weren't able to dredge, and there are certain times when you can dredge.

That's the short-term problem. Longer term, it's the water level on the two middle lakes, being Huron and Michigan. Recently, there was the FONOM—Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities—meeting in Parry Sound. I was pleased to attend that. I have attended meetings with mayors around the Georgian Bay communities who have drafted a resolution that many of the communities have been passing. If I get a chance, I'll read that into the record.

At FONOM, I was pleased to sit down with Premier Wynne, a representative of Archipelago township and a

number of the marina operators, who put a very good presentation with lots of photos showing historic water levels and pointing out the need for dredging just to be able to stay in business, and also looking at the long term.

I'm also pleased—because this isn't just a provincial issue, and not even just a federal issue; it's an international issue—that, for the first time, the International Joint Commission has actually recognized and recommended that there needs to be some control on the outflow of Lake Huron, because you have controls on all parts of the Great Lakes, but not on those middle lakes. So the St. Clair River is the drain of Lake Huron and Lake Michigan, and it has historically been dredged. That might be part of the reason why we've had this now 14-year downward trend in water levels. It may not be. But it certainly makes sense to me that if you want to have some sort of minimum, there needs to be a restriction on the outflow of Lake Huron. So I'm glad to see that the IJC is recommending that. I believe they suggest some sort of inflatable device to slow down the flow so you could have a minimum level maintained on Lake Huron.

You may not think that's a big issue, but it's worth billions of dollars to the people on those middle Great Lakes: businesses that depend on water levels, people who own waterfront property and can't get access. It's important for the environment too—maintaining wetlands. So it is a really important issue and one that I certainly hear about from the municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, somehow I'm only at item number three of the long list of issues I wanted to talk about, and I only have a couple of minutes left in my time. So I will just briefly say, as the northern critic, that it seems like the north is just not getting a fair shake with this government. If you look at the record of the government, they continue their trend of making Toronto-centric decisions. They passed the Far North Act, which puts half of the far north off bounds. That's something that I, in a private member's bill, would like to repeal. I think we certainly need land use planning in the north, but land use planning means using the land primarily for the benefit of northerners and First Nation communities, but for all Ontario.

As northern critic, I have to say there has been so little activity on the Ring of Fire. The McGuinty government was talking about how important this was four or five years ago. Now, here we are, five years later, and nothing has happened. It's fairly straightforward—you need a road or rail connection to the Ring of Fire—and precious little has happened.

They announced a deal with Cliffs Natural Resources a year ago, with a smelter in Sudbury and a north-south road. Well, now it's silence; nothing has happened. We need those jobs. The First Nation communities, the northern communities, all Ontario needs those jobs, and yet we see no activity.

You look at the things this government has done with the north. It seems that whenever they want to save money—one of the things that struck me when I did the finance committee hearings in Thunder Bay was that one

of the programs where they decided to save money was the Junior Ranger Program. It's been going on for 68 years. They saved \$1.6 million, I believe. People came and talked about how it was a life-changing experience for them, how they had been in the program and it had formed what they did for the rest of their lives. This government can blow \$600 million on a couple of gas plants, and they want to save \$1.6 million shutting down a program that's been very valuable for many people, especially in the north.

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When they close parks, they close most of them in the north—10 of the provincial parks in the north. They shut visitor information centres down—they shut them down in the north. So it seems like when they look to money, the first place they try to save any money is in the north, and not necessarily in a smart way.

I can see, Mr. Speaker, that I'm out of time. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I rise today to speak to the programming motion for the 2013-14 budget that allowed New Democrats to continue what we have been doing since 2011: getting results for families.

I would like to use my time today to speak specifically to one aspect of the programming motion, one which I and every New Democrat are proud of. I am speaking, of course, about the Financial Accountability Office. I'd like to take the opportunity to provide a bit of a lesson to my colleagues in the official opposition about this office; just a few facts and a bit of clarification on what the objective of this office is.

I know their caucus is on the record as having opposed the budget—opposed the very budget process, in fact, even prior to reading the budget—so they might not have been playing close attention to the portion of the programming motion that explains the Financial Accountability Office. What led me to believe that my colleagues from the PC caucus might not have been paying attention was something the member from Barrie said in the House last Thursday. On May 30, regarding the Financial Accountability Office and the effect it would have on MPPs right here in this House, he said that “nobody could argue against having more accountability in our system, and certainly not Progressive Conservatives. The trouble with this establishment of the FAO is that the mechanism for accountability is taken out of the hands of the members of this very Legislature.” Quite the contrary, Mr. Speaker.

I think that a little bit of fact will enhance the fictional story that we are hearing from this side of the House on the existence and creation of the FAO. Just the facts, Mr. Speaker. What will actually happen is that members in this House—their powers will be enhanced, giving them the authority to request, formally, assessments from the FAO on proposed government spending. I think that it's important to acknowledge that this is not something that we currently have as MPPs. This is not a power that we

have within the grasp. I think that a lot of MPPs in this House would appreciate having the ability to gain specific financial information as we move forward.

Even the Auditor General—and it's quite curious for me—requires a committee to request its attention. I'll read this from the standing orders to prevent any confusion. The Auditor General, pursuant to section 17 of the Auditor General Act, “shall perform such special assignments....” It goes on to say what those special assignments must be. Accountability, though, in our estimation is not a special assignment. It certainly is not just “interesting,” which is how the Liberals have described it. We actually regard accountability as indeed necessary for any government going forward.

I know that the members from the NDP have actually been out and talking to people in their constituencies, and the Financial Accountability Office has traction. People understand what we are trying to do. I think that they recognize that it's very much needed.

The Financial Accountability Office may also undertake an assignment by any member of the Legislature. So my newfound friend from Thornhill would not have been able to twist himself into a pretzel just to get the information from the government. He would have a clear avenue, a clear venue, to seek that information. It would be within his rights as a member. It would give him increased oversight and power to represent the financial needs of the people who are in his constituency, and together we could ensure that this government is truly accountable.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that he's already said he's going to vote for it; that's awesome.

I also want to point out that this Financial Accountability Office is unprecedented. It is historical. There is no other office like it anywhere in Canada—not in another province; not in Ottawa. The FAO is modelled after the Parliamentary Budget Officer but it is, in fact, stronger, more independent and of greater utility to individual members of the Legislature than the Parliamentary Budget Officer at the federal level.

The federal parliamentary budget office, you may be interested to know, is a member of the Library of Parliament; they are not an independent office. The Financial Accountability Office would truly be independent so that they could conduct unbiased financial analysis, and while the parliamentary budget office can request the release of information from the government, it cannot order the release of information. The Financial Accountability Office would be able to order the release of documents, much like the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

This office of financial accountability is exactly what traditional PC supporters want. It appeals to the base of traditional Progressive Conservatives—increased financial oversight, increased power. Why there is such resistance to this office—quite honestly, we're struggling with it. If you had participated in the budget process, you probably would have injected this idea into the office going forward, because you know what? It's a good idea.

Feel free to put it on whatever literature you want and just give us a little thank you note at the bottom of the brochure, because everyone in this province wants greater financial accountability from Queen's Park.

We often hear from members of the official opposition on those issues they have with the Financial Accountability Office, and they also decry the province's spending crisis, the fiscal crisis, the amount of red ink on the province's books, yet they didn't do anything about it going forward with the budget. They have been hounding the government, to their credit—and we've actually participated in some of that hounding, for the most part—about the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga, about Ornge, about eHealth, about the chemotherapy drugs. These are cases in point as to why we need this financial officer, and yet they lament the existence of oversight groups. They say it would cost too much. They say we have too much oversight already. How can that possibly be? They say the FAO would be just another roadblock to getting information, and yet the cost is what often comes up in this House as a roadblock to this progressive idea.

I just want to review some of the cost savings. The savings achieved by enhancing fiscal scrutiny across the government are expected to far exceed the estimated costs of the proposed office. I'll give you an example of some of these other offices and commissions that we actually have in the province: the Environmental Commissioner, \$3.7 million; the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, \$15 million; the Ombudsman of Ontario, \$11 million. Imagine if the Ombudsman actually had oversight over health care. Think of the money that we would save if we had a Financial Accountability Officer who could actually oversee what's happening in our long-term-care facilities and in our hospitals and how we haven't even addressed the need for early intervention and prevention in the health care portfolio to save millions and millions of dollars. So there's no strong argument whatsoever around the resistance to the FAO on the cost. This is a progressive idea. It makes financial sense. And yet we continue to hear resistance to the Financial Accountability Office.

I have to think that perhaps this is just resistance in general, because we've seen from the opposition a resistance to having a discourse and a debate about what we're trying to do here. What New Democrats have said is that we've come to the table and put forward some very needed plans and strategies to enhance and strengthen the province of Ontario:

- a youth employment strategy, which was embedded into the budget;

- the issue of auto insurance and affordability and reprioritizing the finances in this province to make sure that we can put forward progressive ideas on public transit, and that's actually what we're going to do;

- the whole issue of home care. My goodness, if we had not brought forward the issue of those 6,200 people on that wait-list after 10 years of Liberal government, I'm quite certain that wait-list would still be the painful reality of people in this province.

The PCs have sort of said, "We're just going to put the brakes on all ideas." I think that it's frustrating us because we think the people in this province actually want politicians to work more. They want us to work harder and they want us to try to get results for them.

Back to the FAO, it will be unique in its scope, in its independence from government, in its ability to stop spending scandals before they start. This is another angle, another aspect of the FAO that I thought would have appealed to the opposition, because it's an ounce of prevention before—it's a scandal preventer. This office has the ability to stop scandals in their tracks.

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I mean, think if we had been more proactive, for instance, on the drug oversight issue with the chemotherapy. Think if we had been able to go to the Financial Accountability Office and say, "This has been going on for five years. We have been hearing from people in the community. We've seen that one thousand people received watered-down chemotherapy drugs. Where is the oversight? What is the cost? What is the cost savings?"

Health care is one of our independent, fundamental values as a province, just like public education is. Think of what the Financial Accountability Officer could have done with Bill 115: costed out the court cases that are still ongoing; costed out the emotional and perhaps the financial strife that that piece of legislation brought to public education in the province of Ontario.

This office is unique in that it is a preventive measure to stop the waste of taxpayers' money. I think it's long overdue, and I think the potential to actually move forward progressive ideas in a financially responsible way is something that has been a long time coming to this House.

As I mentioned, it's a historic piece, it's a historic idea, and it has actually broadened the scope of the federal Parliamentary Budget Officer, who, quite honestly, gave Stephen Harper quite a hard time. That fellow—I guess he would be described as a thorn in the side of Stephen Harper, and quite honestly, anybody who is a thorn in the side of Stephen Harper is a friend of mine.

I think this is really important for those on this side of the House who really struggle with getting the financial stats, getting the financial records from this government. All of us have fought to get the truth, through FOI requests, through official requests, through the auditor.

If it wasn't for the work that the estimates committee did last spring, we would be in a very different place today. Having had to drag out for a whole year of strife and debate and acrimony in this place—we could have actually been talking about progressive transit ideas, for instance, or the 21st-century requirements of public education, not just the cuts by a thousand cuts to arts and music programs, but broadening the conversation that we need to be having in this province on public education.

It's unprecedented, actually, that this level of accountability will now be brought to Queen's Park. That's what New Democrats are bringing to Queen's Park. Now, I understand that my friends in the official opposition

might be anxious to discuss those successes, what with the problems that have happened, actually, at the federal level. Just to give you an example, Mr. Kevin Page posed for their federal cousins just a huge amount of resistance to some of the very basic ideas that the federal cousins of the PCs put forward, most especially the Parliamentary Budget Officer's reassessment of the estimated full cost of the F-35 fighter jets, for instance. At that point in time, Mr. Kevin Page said that the true cost of those fighter jets would be \$29 billion, including upgrade costs of \$3.9 billion—much higher than the \$9 billion that the Department of National Defence had publicly estimated. Can you imagine? Some \$9 billion is proposed by National Defence. Mr. Page looks through the report, combs through the finances and comes out with the true cost: \$29.3 billion, almost \$30 billion.

And just think of the potential of what could have happened before those gas plants got moved, before we started privatization within the health care system. Think of the potential, from a preventive peace of mind.

If the PCs are in fact interested in a more thorough discussion about financial accountability, they should do as the members of the government caucus are doing, and that is to follow the New Democrats' lead and support the historic creation of the Financial Accountability Office.

There is a real trust issue here; we are in agreement with that. The people of this province are actually in agreement with the fact that there is a serious trust issue here in the province of Ontario. Yet we have brought forward an idea, a concept, of true accountability which will enhance the trust back in this place.

One of the issues that we've heard from Ontarians throughout our conversations before the budget and then after the budget was that Ontarians want to have trust in their government and they want us to work harder and they want us to put the people of this province first. By ensuring that there is true financial accountability with their money when they send us here to Queen's Park, we will be honouring that trust. We actually feel very strongly about that responsibility on this side of the House. That's why the New Democratic proposals for the budget were very clear. Our proposals that we put forward throughout the budget process were costed out, and they were clear about the results that people in this province would achieve.

The Financial Accountability Office would start to rebuild some of the trust people have in their government. Right now, people don't believe that they can trust the government's numbers, and, truly, who could blame them?

We just heard this morning, in question period, that the Minister of Health has said that every home in this province has been inspected, that there has been a thorough inspection of every long-term-care facility in this province, when our numbers are very different. Actually, we have heard from people in the long-term-care facilities that those inspections have been subpar, that they have just been surface, that they have not gotten

to the very issue of patient safety, patient integrity and the safety of workers in those homes, as well. This is another issue that we have to remain vigilant about. Those are the most vulnerable seniors in the province of Ontario, and they cannot always advocate for themselves, and they are relying on us to do so.

With the slow, painful process of getting the true cost of the cancelled gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga from the government, numbers that seem to fluctuate week by week, Ontarians have every right not to believe what the government is telling them about the cost of various programs. Frankly, that's a sad state of affairs for us.

Yet, if this office comes into place, it is an opportunity for us to go back to the people to explain that they truly have an advocate in this place and that New Democrats are supportive of the powers of the Financial Accountability Office to ensure that every single dollar that they brought into this place through tax revenues goes to responsible spending, goes to programs that meet their needs and are not wasted.

We need the people of this province to have more faith in their elected representatives, not less. That trust in government is the foundation of our democracy. We need their engagement in Queen's Park, to ensure that we are actually doing our job. In order to get that engagement, we need that trust to be re-established. The Financial Accountability Office would give people reason to trust again, no matter the spending scandals any given government has cooked up. I think that this is really important.

Just for the record, just so that we stay with the facts, I want to read one of the key pieces that is in the mandate of the Financial Accountability Office. It's actually in the legislation. The Financial Accountability Office will "undertake research into the estimates and all legislation of the government and opposition members." So it empowers opposition members to give them the financial oversight that they require.

It will also "undertake research to estimate the financial cost of any proposal that would impact the province's finances and that relates to a matter over which the Legislature has jurisdiction including government agencies and ministries."

Finally, it would "undertake research into the province's finances and trends in the provincial and national economies."

So this is a proactive office. We will get to the waste before it happens. This is a smart way—in the traditional sense, it's a very conservative concept: You evaluate your spending priorities before you spend the money. You do true consultation. You share the strategy and the proposal before it goes out into the broader community and before gas plants get moved around the province like chess pieces.

It is certainly a way for us, as New Democrats, to ensure that this government is truly accountable for the funding that, quite honestly, has been wasted. If we can get the waste under control, we can actually reprioritize the spending in this province to ensure that we build

healthier communities, that we build a stronger education system, that we address the environmental issues that are ongoing, and that we get the energy portfolio under control, because it is a mess.

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This is what we need from the third party—and from the opposition party, for that matter. This is something that we should all agree on. This is something that this province needs. The Financial Accountability Office is a pragmatic idea brought forward by New Democrats to serve the people of this province, and I'm so pleased that we have the opportunity to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: I regret to interrupt the debate, but I would like to correct my record. In my statement earlier today, in referring to the Ornge air ambulance crash, in my tribute to the first responders, I referred to primary care flight paramedic Chris Snowball as being 41 years of age. He was 38 years of age, if the record could be corrected, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm pleased to add my voice to those who are debating what we call a substantive motion.

I think it's probably in order at this point to take a few minutes, look at that television camera right there and say that if you're watching me—on channel 105 here in the GTA, or however you may receive the Ontario Legislature channel, wherever you are in the province of Ontario—and you're completely lost and you're one of the 10 long-suffering souls who are sticking it out and trying to figure out what's going on, or if you're in Thornhill and know that I'm going to speak about some of the things that affect you, nice to see you.

What we're trying to do here is debate a motion that addresses—and I think I'm paraphrasing correctly—the speedy passage of the budget bill, which is not being debated right now. This is a motion that would ensure speedy passage of the budget bill. We have been debating this motion for speedy passage for four days, so that tells you something about how this place works. And I'm delighted that there are so many Liberals in this House right now to hear what I have to say about this, because I think it's important.

But before I get on with any form of presentation, I haven't personally addressed, in or outside of this House, any aspect of the Financial Accountability Office. So although it's not required of me to respond to my friend from Kitchener–Waterloo, I feel that I must say a few words about her 20-minute presentation on the reason for the third party's wish to establish a Financial Accountability Office, which now, as people in this House know, and some people outside know, forms part and parcel of the package that the NDP has formed with the Liberals in order to ensure their support for this budget. I haven't

said anything about it—positive, negative or in between—but I want to say a couple of things.

She imputes to me, or at least to my party, the fact that we're on record as opposing the budget, that we're on record as opposing the budget process. The fact of the matter is, we won't be voting for the budget, and she knows that.

But the only thing we're really on record for is that we oppose this government. The reason that we said a couple of months ago that we were not going to go through with this budget charade—because we've been through it too many times before, and I'll get on to more amplification on that in a few moments—is because we don't trust this government to deliver what it says, much less to do what it implies.

So in terms of what we oppose, we oppose the government and, frankly—I'll go on record right now and I'll say it—we oppose the behaviour of the third party, the NDP—dare I say, the duplicitous behaviour of the NDP—in, on the one hand, standing up in the morning—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Parliamentary language. Come on. Seriously?

Mr. Peter Shurman: “Duplicitous” just means “two-way.” It's not pejorative.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member for Thornhill to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I will withdraw the use of that word.

I have to say—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): You have to rise and say, “I withdraw,” without any explanation or qualification.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I return to the member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Let me go on record, then, and say that I find it somewhat strange that I'm being lectured by a member of the third party, which has worked with a government that for most of a year it has criticized up, down and sideways, called everything from the implication that it's lying to the fact that it is a completely untrustworthy body with which to work. But there it is supporting it.

But don't worry, I'm told the Financial Accountability Office will ensure that we're not going to have any problems in the future. I find that rather difficult to believe. How is a Financial Accountability Office going to intervene before the fact to ensure that somebody doesn't get half-strength chemo drugs? It just doesn't make any sense to me. However, I respect the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, and I thank her for her explanation.

Let me move on with discussing a couple of things that have directly to do with the budget that we're trying to speedily pass. I have with me, not props, but three copies of budgets: the current year, the year before that and the prior year, so I go back to 2011. This is the 2011 Ontario budget under the Honourable Dwight Duncan,

then Minister of Finance—a pretty book; they all look about the same, have some nice pictures on them—called *Turning the Corner to a Better Tomorrow*. That's what they wanted to do in 2011—a very nice idea. They were going to turn the corner and get us out of the financial woes we were in and the mounting debt crisis that they claimed came as almost a complete result of the recession a couple of years prior to that.

I guess they didn't turn the corner very well, because the next year, 2012, they decided that they were going to address their budgetary woes by bringing out another book, and this budget was called *Strong Action for Ontario*. I guess they didn't turn the corner. *Strong Action for Ontario* didn't imply; it meant that in that budget they were going to address aspects of how the province operates in a way that was somewhat different, and I guess with more teeth, than what they had prior to that.

They said at the time that they were going to deal, for example, with government unions—and there are about 4,000 collective agreements—in a new way. They were going to demand zeros in terms of wage increases for two years, at a minimum. Then they kind of amplified that and said, “We have to balance the budget; that's the first order of business.” They didn't do that. As a matter of fact, it kind of culminated in Bill 115, the now infamous Bill 115, where they were going to war with the teachers, and they decided that they would give up the war. They cancelled Bill 115 and they gave the teachers more than they were originally planning to do. I'll address a little bit more of that as I get into the presentation, because the teachers were the beginning. That was the opening of the door to not staying at zeros. So that was strong measures.

Strong measures also meant we were going to reform the arbitration system so that we wouldn't cost the people of Ontario so much in dealing with our government unions through arbitration, and it also was going to deal with privatizing some services where that made sense. So all of that was not a given that would allow us to accept the budget, but we kind of thought, well, maybe the Liberals are getting a little bit of religion, because they were using at least some of the language that Progressive Conservatives believe is necessary when you're trying to right a foundering ship, which, there is no question, this province is.

So out goes Dalton McGuinty, back in the fall of last year, over a scandal that continues to plague his memory even today, and plagues this government today, that involves essentially misappropriation of funds, which they virtually admit to, to stop the building of two gas plants that, had they been completed or continued, would have, by their own admission, lost them some seats. So we have a committee that's hard at work on that. We've got about 130,000 documents that attest to some of the goings-on. We've had the Premier and the former Premier testify at committee—all kinds of things like that.

Things change under Premier Kathleen Wynne and there's a new finance minister, the Honourable Charles Sousa. The book's about the same size. It's a slightly different colour—it looks black, a bit ominous. But this

time it's not *Strong Action*; it's *A Prosperous and Fair Ontario*. That's what Minister Sousa is talking about.

But, you know, I discovered something, Speaker: If you take a really close look at this picture on the front cover and you're a conspiracy theorist and you read books like Dan Brown's—he's the fellow who wrote *The Da Vinci Code*. If you look really closely at this picture, up in the corner—and I don't know if the camera can catch me here or if we're on high-definition television, but I'll read it. It says, “Trustworthiness.... Tell the truth.” That's what it says. It's not a prop. It says, “Trustworthiness.... Tell the truth.” I have never seen a message in those pictures in all the years I've been here. I suspect that that is Minister Sousa channelling Dalton McGuinty. That's what it must be. Otherwise, why would you put it there?

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Anyway, a bit of a jest, but the fact of the matter is, I question how you can manage an economy by putting out budgets in succession that address the economy in so many different ways and still wind up with the same result. This is probably the reason why every once in a while in debate here I mention Einstein and his theory about the definition of insanity.

By way of demonstrating what it is we're trying to get to in this motion, we're trying to get to polishing off the business that involves putting the bill that enacts this budget, Bill 65, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts, through this Parliament. Let me give an example, again, sort of show and tell, of what happens one year when you decide you are actually going to make change, whether you are able to effect it or not, and what happens in another year when you say, “We're going to try to play it cool with another party and get this budget through” for political purposes. This is the bill, and it's about one inch thick, that became law last year, Bill 55. This is the budget that ended March 31, and, I might say, ended in a way that was quite different than a booklet that outlined the budget said it would be. This little skinny one—I don't think it's an eighth of an inch thick—is Bill 65, which we're trying to get to this year, which doesn't leave very much room for manoeuvring, and this motion leaves virtually none at all because it calls for about a day of public hearings. That's the difference between what they've done and they're doing.

I don't want to spend an awful lot more time on the budget; I'd rather talk about some measures that could have been in this budget, and I want to talk about them from the standpoint not of being the critic for finance for the Progressive Conservative Party but rather the member of provincial Parliament for Thornhill. In exchanges this morning between myself and the Minister of Finance—and my leader, Tim Hudak, and the Minister of Finance—we talked about some things that could be done in terms of savings rather than the kinds of approaches that this government wants to take.

The government wants to solve its deficit problem by getting more money out of you through different

measures, not by savings. We believe that it's possible to bring the deficit down by saving money at the budgetary level.

Let me talk about a couple of things that have come my way in the past week or two and that are ongoing. In Thornhill, there's an area of town called Centre Street. Centre Street cuts about right through the middle of my riding. It's a wide street, but it goes right through a highly residential neighbourhood with a little bit of light retail in it. It has been the subject of some discussion because it is the only place where a 25-kilometre-long transitway, busway, dedicated busway that runs along all of Highway 7, pretty well all of Highway 7—certainly the parts of it that run through my riding, which are Markham and Vaughan. It never deviates from Highway 7 with the exception of one little area of half a kilometre, and that's along Centre Street, ostensibly to get that express bus down Bathurst along Centre Street to pick up some commuters or drop them off and then take them back to Highway 7. Why? That would be the only half-kilometre stretch in 25 kilometres of busway. Nobody seems to understand, but that is precisely what they want to do.

Here's the thing that connects it to us from a budgetary perspective. The people in Thornhill don't want it, and the people in Thornhill don't need it. Yet this government is going to persist with it through Metrolinx, which is not an organization with all of the screws in the proper places, as far as I'm concerned. They're going to spend \$100 million to do it at a time when we're also discussing something called revenue tools, which are really, by any other name, taxes—a suite of taxes—when they could save \$100 million, and I'm telling them how. I'm very hard-pressed to understand that.

What it effectively would do, for all of you watching in the rest of the province who don't know Thornhill: If you have been in Toronto and you've seen Spadina or if you've been in Toronto and you've seen St. Clair, where they basically have streetcars running up the middle of the street that gum up traffic like you wouldn't believe—that's what they want to do in a lovely bedroom suburb called Thornhill. That's the intent: \$100 million to do that, and nobody knows why.

Let me tell you about eating disorders—talk about a segue. This was another group that came to see me recently on a constituency day. These people are from an organization called NIED; that's an acronym for National Initiative for Eating Disorders. It may sound like a specious comment for the middle of the debate on the budget, but I tell you this is really important stuff. The three ladies who came to see me, either directly or through their families, have been very much affected by this. There is a serious need for further support for treatment but there's also a need for education and prevention, and we don't spend any money on it.

This is a mental illness. It is not—obviously not—a priority for this Liberal government. Those with the disorder often have to seek treatment outside of the country. They actually have to leave and go to the United

States to get treatment for it. I have to tell you, we're talking here about 55,000 people in Ontario who have an eating disorder. Contrary to popular thought, this is not just females who want to be skinny. That's what comes to mind immediately. It's kind of like talking about deadbeat dads; there are also deadbeat moms.

Well, there are not just thin, little teenage females who suffer from an eating disorder; there are a lot of people—55,000 in total—in our province. There is a 20% mortality rate associated with this, and we don't treat this as it should be treated. We don't have an appropriate treatment in this province for it. So I congratulate the people of NIED. This is something that should be reflected in our budget.

Lastly I want to talk about something that has been the subject of petitions and questions on the floor that has to be addressed because there is imminent danger to all of us, coming on August 1, as the rules are changed on physiotherapy in this province. The health minister has to sit up and take notice because, essentially, we're looking at some very, very serious consequences. The rules have changed.

Last year the ministry spent about \$110 million on physiotherapy in long-term care; now the funding is being reduced to \$58 million—very significant. I said “in long-term care,” so the funding may not be reduced in total, but it's coming out of long-term-care homes.

Now, what people may not know, as of this morning—I sought out and got the accurate information—we have about 21,000 people waiting for a long-term-care space somewhere—21,000 people in the province of Ontario—and these spaces don't exist. The number of visits covered by OHIP for seniors in clinics will be reduced from 50 to 12, and people who are in long-term-care homes won't have direct access in those long-term-care homes. This is all short-sighted, and it's a cut that is going to negatively impact the health of Ontarians and very particularly these seniors. Seniors will no longer be able to directly access physio services from their retirement homes and instead they have to access it through their local CCAC or an external community clinic. Many of these patients are already frail and have mobility problems.

Do you know what's going to happen? This will lead to more falls. It'll lead to fractures. It'll lead to respiratory conditions resulting in more hospitalization and additional costs to the system. It will resort in bed sores. Bed sores become infected. It will result in pneumonia. It will result in increased cases of *C. difficile*.

The McGuinty-Wynne Liberals have touted their wait time reductions, but I'm going to say something that is somewhat of a lightning rod: I honestly believe that there may be a Machiavellian scheme involved here that involves increasing the mortality rate in long-term-care homes so that they can accommodate people who are sitting on a 21,000-person wait-list. Isn't that a hideous thing? Isn't that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Thornhill to withdraw that unparliamentary statement that he just made.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I withdraw.

The bottom line here is that we have taken a look at a lot of things that have gone on here in the province of Ontario under various incarnations of this Liberal government. But what we know is that they have created the highest deficit in history, uncontrollably spent beyond their means, and now they want additional taxes. They want additional taxes through a variety of things in the name of transit and infrastructure. We hear the term “revenue tools.” We’ve heard terms in the past like “premiums.” We’ve heard a lot of things about additional taxes. You can call them what they want, but that’s what they are.

We take a look at the spending that has created the need; things like the Green Energy Act, which we’re now seeing a climb down on—where we begged, literally begged from this side of the House, the then Liberal energy minister not to go through with what he wanted to do. We tried to present amendments to that act, and what do we have? We have the FIT program being cancelled now. We had a Samsung deal at the time that was going to create all kinds of jobs, and what have we got? We’ve got a chronic unemployment rate of 7.7%, and 500,000, 600,000 people who don’t have a job here in the province of Ontario right now.

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What does it say? It says that what we’re looking for is for the people who paid the taxes, with the expectation of receiving service delivery from the province of Ontario, where the services weren’t delivered, the money was squandered on gas plants or eHealth plans or whatever it happened to be—Ornge—it was misspent. Now the bailout for this is supposed to come through these things called revenue tools, or through a variety of about 50 different initiatives we started to outline this morning, in documents that we’ve seen that were used to brief cabinet back in January. All of these things—we, the taxpayers, are supposed to bail these people out.

That’s my contribution to a motion that’s supposed to deal with speedy passage of a budget—and, I might say, a budget that is the work of a government and its accomplice, the third party, that we absolutely and unequivocally cannot support.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we know this afternoon, we’re told that the substantive motion we’re debating is designed to speed up the passage of the budget bill and get it through the House and get it through committee. Given the Wynne budget’s recipe for more bilking of taxpayers—again, to pay for a continued, 10-year spending spree—that’s about the last thing I want to see happen right now.

In fact, instead of supporting this government, instead of supporting this budget, I feel we should be supporting our friends opposite, on the government side. Perhaps we can offer some suggestions for help with respect to the spending problems we’ve seen over the past 10 years.

You know, the first step to recovery is admission—admission of the problem. We have a new Premier—

unelected—and as the saying goes, “Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.” I think of the very simple words: “My name is Kathleen and I’m a spendaholic.” It would do us all well to reflect on that phrase.

Ms. Wynne has made it very clear she will continue the legacy of one Dalton McGuinty, also known as Dalton the debt doubler, one who introduced a new affliction of dependence in the lexicon, a phrase known locally as the “Dalton deficit disorder.”

As we know, Ontario’s projected \$411.4-billion debt is largely the result of 10 years of accumulated deficits. Speaker, I suggest we are all enablers if we condone not attempting to pay down these shortfalls, these deficits, if we are in a continued position of irresponsibly leaving these accumulated deficits and this particular debt to our children.

We do see signs of addiction with every new money grab that this government is taking, willing to use any means necessary to feed that addiction, bilking those very same taxpayers it purports to represent.

It puts me in mind of the phone scams, the email scams, taking advantage of those who can least afford it. I mention this—there is a very sad story locally, reported in our daily newspaper last Friday, a well-written report on the breakdown of a very large scam, a fraud. Again, I make the analogy to what I’m seeing with the subtraction of money from taxpayers by this particular government.

I think of Metrolinx. I’m thinking back to the Simcoe Reformer headlines that I was reading on Friday about an unfortunate victim. This lady lost well over \$700,000 to a “Nigerian-style scam.”

I’m really concerned about 20 years of Metrolinx. We know the projected subtraction from taxpayers will be \$50 billion. I’m concerned that I may read some future headlines like, “The Ontario Taxpayer Thought She Found Love. Instead, She Was Bilked out of \$50 Billion.” We have seen many of these kinds of newspaper headlines.

Here’s another phrase I was reading on Friday: “The fraud was sophisticated, elaborate, and clever, and started out small.” Oftentimes they start out large. When the victim objects or gets suspicious, they backtrack a bit and ask for slightly less money. Regrettably, oftentimes they get the money. Again, in this newspaper article—and I was thinking of Metrolinx when I was reading the story—“by the time it was over,” she “was out of her life savings.”

Indeed, we should all be looking at our savings as a province and as individuals. After five years of study, we see a government that recently announced a \$50-billion plan to build subsidized subways and Toronto transit. My question: Who will be paying for this? It’s something I think we should all be asking, just like the hapless victims in what reports refer to as Nigerian-style scams. The designers of this plan are obviously taking aim directly at our wallets.

Of the \$16 billion spent so far on Toronto’s transit, \$13 billion came from the Ontario taxpayer. As for the remaining \$34 billion, again I suggest to the people of Ontario: Hang on to your wallet. Most of Toronto’s

Metrolinx spending so far came, again, from the Ontario taxpayer, not from the Toronto region—no regionalization there. As we know, the best predictor of future behaviour—we're talking about a 20-year plan—is past behaviour. These are the kinds of schemes a provincial government dreams up to feed its need to spend more, and we have the figures from this year's budget: \$3.6 billion more in this budget alone.

When I speak to this substantive motion, it is with a concern over the possibility that if we don't speak out now and we don't draw a line in the sand, we in fact all become enablers, and essentially taxed-out enablers and financially drained enablers at that. Again, Metrolinx could be an example of what I'm talking about. The lion's share of that cost is proposed to come from a 5% increase in gas taxes and a 1% increase in the sales tax, taking the HST up to 14%. We've recently heard the federal finance minister already draw the line on that one. That, as we know, was not part of the original deal to bring the HST to the province of Ontario.

People in my riding and, I would suggest, much of rural and northern Ontario are concerned that they will again be digging into their pockets to help feed this government's spending problem. I recall reading a tweet a year ago or so from an area columnist, a journalist, Monte Sonnenberg. He was talking about reaching into his pocket to grab some change and ending up shaking hands with Dalton McGuinty. That's an analogy of what we have been seeing for the last 10 years, and I suggest it's something we're going to see over the 20 years of this Metrolinx project alone.

I don't think I've run into anybody in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk who rides the subway or rides the rocket. For years, locally, we've been paying provincial gas taxes to fund public transit, but we haven't had any public transit in our riding. We get nothing back in return. I suggest that people in my riding are starting to figure this out. I'm suggesting that the Metrolinx tale could well read like a well-managed scam of the like I've been reading in my local paper. Much as our rural taxpayers have been sending their money to Toronto for nothing in return, so, too, the unfortunate victims of email- and telephone-type scams agree to play along. There are roadblocks—they rationalize; they justify—which they requested for more taxes, additional fees, and eventually the sum gets larger and larger.

1700

Newspaper reports indicate that the victim in my riding was asked to send thousands of dollars to cover costs, with the promise that she would be reimbursed later. Each time, the amount needed was upped, and she complied until her fortune was cleaned out.

Speaker, it puts us in mind of this government's decade-long efforts, seemingly aimed at cleaning out our bank accounts with very little to show for it. I think of the health tax; eHealth, obviously; Ornge; Caledonia—that was a very expensive scandal; the gas plants. And, again, will it be Metrolinx? Will we read headlines 10 years from now, 20 years from now? You can do a lot that's

good; you can do a lot that's bad by subtracting \$50 billion from taxpayers in Ontario.

In the tradition of a regime that we see here that has yet to meet a new tax or a toll or a levy that it didn't like, this plan for the Metrolinx transit plan—the Big Move, as it has been dubbed—proposed billing to the tune of \$500 a year for each family. That bill quickly rises to \$1,000 a year if you are a family of five with two cars, so that comes out to about \$20,000 over the 20-year life of this proposal.

How can we legislators, in good conscience, support a substantive motion that would push along a budget, would support a government that's overspending and allowing free rein to move forward, for example, with this recently announced Metrolinx proposal?

Government representatives are suggesting a “regionalization” of the Metrolinx tax hikes: make the gas tax regional; make the sales tax addition regional; limit it to the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. In my view, that's either naive or they think the Ontario taxpayer is naive.

Last night I was speaking with people in my riding, while door-knocking, actually, in Canfield. It's in Haldimand county. They have a provincial highway right through the centre of the village. The highway now is something like four feet higher than the sidewalk and the front lawns of the houses. Obviously, there's flooding. We had a lot of rain just the other night. Here's an example of a village in my riding—they have a transit issue. It's a provincial highway. They have issues with flooding. Anyone I talked to last night really wasn't concerned about more money for a Toronto subway. They don't use the subway, but they use this provincial highway. This has to be fixed. It is being fixed. They're going to dig out that highway. They're going to lower that highway four feet. They've put in new hydro poles and telephone poles. It's odd; the poles are right in the centre of the sidewalk from one end of the village to the other, but I think that's going to get worked out in time as well. These are the kinds of things you come across when you're out door-knocking. It's a good way to really find out what's going on, of course, as we all know.

Again, a substantive motion—my concern is it's really just going to go further to enhance this addiction to spending that we're seeing now.

Like the victim in that local scam down our way—I obviously don't believe the Premier is motivated by greed. With respect to Metrolinx, I'm concerned she is going to get hooked on the story presented to her by her sense of wanting to do good, perhaps her feeling of wanting to not only leave a legacy, but to continue the legacy of her predecessor.

But when you look behind the scenes, the story doesn't seem to add up with Metrolinx. I really wonder who are the middlemen—who are the money mules—that we see in these Internet scams. The Premier herself may well be a victim in the end; perhaps she's being led to believe that she's engaging in legitimate work. Again, we have to be ever, ever vigilant. We've got to help out on this.

I will say, I found this last night at the door: People in my area are skeptical. You really don't pull the wool over their eyes. They see many of these government plans, this budget, these cash calls, really for what they are. They see past the headlines. They understand that—going back to Metrolinx once again—government is demanding people—I'll make reference to Canfield, the village that I was in last night. They have no subways there, obviously; no streetcars. They have no choice but to drive. Asking people in that particular village and throughout my riding to fund transportation needs of their big-city cousins—that gives them reason to have concern.

I know that people down my way will say things like, "We'll believe the musings of money for rural roads and bridges when we see the promised two-cents-a-litre tax to be sent back to our two counties." Again, they know they haven't seen the money yet and they know that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. They are wary. They know the track record of broken promises from this government.

Everyone remembers the McGuinty health tax, the \$1.7-billion tax that "would be dedicated entirely to health." Ten years later, I think everyone realizes it was an income tax grab. It now comes in at \$3.4 billion a year, flows into general revenues, as you know, Speaker, and is allocated by this government to whatever catches this government's fancy.

So you can understand why people would be a little gun-shy of a proposal, a \$50-billion scheme that's been recently hatched, in part because so many people are having a tough time paying the bills. They pay enough in existing taxes for transit and are very concerned what percentage of those taxes are wasted. Again, I'm thinking of eHealth, of Ornge, Caledonia and the gas plants. Instead of a knee-jerk reaction to pick taxpayers' pockets, government should be seeking efficiencies within its own. Cut red tape. Cut the waste before thinking of tapping out taxpayers who are already tapped out.

I see in this government the opposite path that opens the door to future schemes. It's only been a month or two since the government was read in the House that we hear this call for a \$50-billion expenditure of more taxpayers' money. I take the opportunity—take a look at some of that old-school advice, the advice that comes out of so many of these Internet scams that so many of us are subjected to.

I go back to the Simcoe Reformer article, our local daily paper. Here's some advice if you were considering Metrolinx, for example, or any previous boondoggles and scandals, whether it be eHealth or the gas plant. It says, "Don't be afraid to come forward if you've been taken—or think you've been taken—in a scam...."

Here's some more advice from the local paper: "Embarrassment is a common feeling, but remember these are professionals who have carefully thought out and planned their frauds...."

Some more advice: "They gain your trust and then take advantage of you...."

"They really ... know what buttons to push...."

Last bit of advice: Contact the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre. And they go on to say, "Reporting frauds is important because it gives authorities a clearer picture of how widespread the problem is and where to put resources...."

1710

The local newspaper report indicates, "Sometimes it takes years for people to report it' as victims continue to believe their rewards are still on their way to them." Again, whether I'm thinking of Metrolinx or the eHealth tax, in many ways many people down my way feel they kind of got taken for a ride.

I know I only have about a minute left, Speaker. Many opposition members have been speaking about their concern with respect to physiotherapists and the impact that this will have on seniors, particularly in long-term-care homes. There's concern—the impact this would have on people who are on disability. I have spoken in the House about concerns with what I feel are unnecessary layoffs, unnecessary program cuts to our children's aid societies, including my local children's aid society.

I've only got 19 seconds left, hardly enough time to talk about the ongoing US Steel lockout down at Nanticoke. We find that the government seems suffocated, the government seems stymied by this when there's no assistance available.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to stand and join this debate today. Just to recap, I'd like to share with the public watching today that the substantive motion we're talking about is also known as a programing motion. In this particular case today, it aims to facilitate a speedy passage of the budget bill through the House and committee. It also includes the establishment of a Financial Accountability Office.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's just no way I can support this particular motion because the fact of the matter is, we need to stand here in front of you and in front of this government and talk about the issues of today that would be just escalated, if you will, if we let this budget pass in a hasty motion. That's why I'm pleased, as I said, to join the debate.

When we take a look at the body—this Liberal government—that's actually trying to get this motion passed, I can't help but, first and foremost, think of scandals. That's why we have to take our time here today and review everything that's gone on and make sure that not only our colleagues in the House but the public knows as well why this government can't be trusted.

First and foremost, for the last 10 years this government's MO has been scandal after scandal. For the last 10 years, how many times did we hear them say they would not raise taxes? Well, we had a health tax. We had eco taxes. We have HST. We have a trades tax, and now, for goodness' sakes, we're hearing about revenue tools—just another way to say, "No, we will not raise your revenue tools now." It's just a travesty that they're trying to play so many games with their intent to spend more

without any cause for concern about how to rein it in and control spending that has gotten so out of hand over the last 10 years.

I was very pleased that, over the last 10 months or so, our member from Simcoe has done a wonderful job representing the College of Trades and how the trades tax would be so detrimental in rural Ontario, and throughout this province actually. It's one example of a tax that is just going to add an extra burden to families who are finding their pockets to be shallower and shallower, and we need to rein this in, as I said. But I'll come back to that in a moment.

We're talking about the scandals this government has imposed on taxpayers across this wonderful province of ours. We've had eHealth, Ornge, the Ontario lottery corporation, gas plants, failed green energy plans, harness racing, and who in the end has to take the brunt on the chin for all of these scandals? The Ontario taxpayers. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today saying it has to stop. We need a change of team here. We need to have a group of people who stand up for what's right. That's why I'm so proud to stand on this opposition side of the House behind our leader, Tim Hudak, because he understands, he's listened and he's prepared to take those bold steps to get this province back on to a path to prosperity. I'm very proud to join him in that task, because the money that has been wasted on these scandals could have paid for so many other things.

Do you know what? They wouldn't have needed to raise the HST to pay for transit if they had not been facing scandal after scandal. Again, they continue to, over and over again, ask the taxpayer to dig deeper. Guess what? There's just no way you can spend your way back to prosperity, and that's why we need to have this debate. We need to talk about the tough issues. We need to talk about how this government has spent its way out of ideas, and that there really is need for change.

That is what the Ontario taxpayer is wanting, because when we take a look at the record of this Ontario government, it's dismal. Eleven billion dollars each year is being poured into servicing debt, debt that we simply cannot afford. That's \$11 billion to pay, simply on interest. I'm going to come back to this, because I spent this past Friday talking to a civics class, a grade 10 class in Huron county, and they absolutely get it. But I'll come back to that—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Minister of Community and Social Services to come to order.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I will, sir. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): And I apologize for interrupting. I return to the member for Huron—Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you, Speaker.

Do you know that next year at this time, we're going to have \$24 billion more added to public debt? This deficit is going to go up \$2 billion next year. Think about what we could spend that money on and what we could

invest in terms of economic development, both in urban and rural Ontario. How many hospitals are not being built or renovated because of all these scandals and total disregard? I think of broken government promises, going back to 2011, for a Wingham hospital and a hospital in Kincardine, and I'd be remiss if I didn't note the hospital in Markdale, who have had the money in the bank, waiting for years, for a new hospital. They deserve their new hospital, and they're just not getting it, because the government is more intent on spending their way to keeping themselves in power. Once and for all, it really has to stop.

But let's talk about what else all this money being wasted on interest could go towards. What about all of the schools that have been closed in rural Ontario? I really feel that this government has no idea about true economic development. They've totally missed the point, and they've forgotten the fact that schools are a pillar and an economic driver in all communities throughout this province. Think about it: When a community, a small village, loses its school and students get bused into a larger centre, think about where the parents are going to do their shopping. Think about where the parents are going to pick up the gas. Think about the time spent on school buses that will keep young people away from jobs. You know, Speaker, this government says they have a program to get youth back to work, but they just don't get it, and that's why we need time to debate.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when I rode the school bus in high school, I was on the bus for 45 minutes. It was tough to get a job after school because of that length of time, and now they're imposing that on more and more students throughout this province. It just doesn't make sense at all—and that was 45 minutes one way, I might add.

Again, when we talk about the interest that's being accrued and all the money that's being wasted because of the reckless spending of this government, there's so much more that we're doing without. What about affordable housing units? How many of those could we have built? And what about the fact that this government can't find any money, so what did they do instead? They're cutting physiotherapy for seniors.

The member for Wellington—Halton Hills has been a great advocate, saying how this is all wrong. The support that he's been getting from a variety of communities—my communities in Huron—Bruce are celebrating how he stood up for their rights—is staggering, and it's felt that way across the province.

I've had protests in front of my office for the last two weeks because of the cuts to physiotherapy. I've had meetings, particularly with the leadership at Braemar, from Wingham, Ontario, and guess what? They're worried about these cuts, because this government, the urban-based government that perhaps doesn't get life in rural Ontario—they don't get it that if a senior is in a retirement home, they may not have the means or the family support to find their way downtown for their physiotherapy appointment. That is a travesty, because

guess what? Those seniors are going to start going without, and then guess what happens: The fall rates are going to increase. That was a huge concern of the Braemar leadership team I met with.

1720

They see that cutting physiotherapy is actually going to have a very negative impact on the health of our seniors, and because of that, it's ultimately going to add to health care costs across this province. Yet again, another knee-jerk initiative to save a few dollars here and there, but ultimately, if they had thought it out they would have had a business plan that showed and pencilled that the net result would be negative and therefore they should not have done it. But that's what this government is all about: knee-jerk reactions, quick ideas, ill-conceived ideas that ultimately continue to throw this province further back into the status of a have-not jurisdiction. And that is so sad and so unacceptable.

Again, let's talk about all this money that's being wasted on interest. That \$11 billion could have been more money for social services in our communities. People I talk to in some cases are finding it really difficult to afford basic household expenses. And do you know what is really, really rich in this whole situation? Just a week or more ago, the former Minister of Finance, Dwight Duncan, even said this is a terrible budget. How ironic is that?

People are warning us about potential downgrades. What will that further explode? Interest rates. It's a spiral that has to stop, Mr. Speaker, and the only way to stop this is to change the team, change the perspective, have a focus on our economy and have a focus on paths that bring us back to prosperity. There's only one team in this House that can do it, and we all know who leads that team: Tim Hudak. And we are so proud, as the PC caucus, to stand behind him.

I heard the NDP mentioned, and I'd be remiss if, in my minutes here in the House during this debate, I didn't bring the NDP into this conversation. It is a travesty that they have essentially sold themselves out. They've rented themselves out so this Liberal government could have a majority to push through their ill-conceived, poorly timed ideas through this budget that we really can't afford.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I thought it was horrible last week that the NDP actually had the audacity to be celebrating with cake that they're helping this Liberal government continue to spend, when people in my home area are struggling with their energy bills, struggling to make ends meet. How can the NDP do that in good conscience? I just think they're totally off the block. No wonder the NDP seemingly has a split caucus.

I would be embarrassed by some of the priorities and initiatives happening out of that caucus today. Especially, it would be embarrassing to be celebrating with cake a budget where two out of three ministries are increasing their spending when more than half a million people are out of work in Ontario.

It just goes to show, as I said, that the Liberal government will do anything to cling to power, and in this case,

they agreed, over and above the spending that was already embedded in this poor budget that Dwight Duncan really does not like, to spend \$1 billion more to buy NDP support. That is just absolutely horrible.

It's pretty interesting to watch the antics that go on in this House. In the morning, when the cameras are rolling, the NDP is slamming the Liberal government for their scandals associated with the gas plants. On the flip side, in the afternoon, when the cameras aren't rolling, they're behind doors cooking up deals to prop up this scandal-plagued government.

You know, if I was a person who carried an orange membership card, I'd be ripping it up, because you don't want a party that talks out of both sides of its mouth. You want a party that stands tall; you want a party that's not afraid to take firm, tough decisions because we have to be focused on righting this ship.

When we think about it a little bit more, everybody on the left side of this House, this coalition government that has formed before our eyes, needs to be told time and time again that we need to live within our means. This particular budget we're debating today means nothing more than spending, spending, spending. There, no jobs. I would be ashamed to prop up this budget as a result.

When we talk about spending, I had the opportunity, this past Friday, to spend time with a grade 10 civics class at St. Anne's high school in Clinton, a wonderful school. Their students and teachers are very, very bright. When we started talking about debt, I thought it was really interesting, because grade 10 students get it. So I just don't understand why the third party and our Liberal government don't get it. They understand that when their wallet is empty, they have to stop spending.

We talked about the example whereby when you're out of money, sometimes what happens? You put expenditures on a credit card. Then we talked about the interest that accrues on credit card expenditures, and the kids in that grade 10 St. Anne's class get it. That's a tribute to Mr. Thompson's efforts in that class. I have to tell you, they think it's absolutely wrong that we are accruing so much interest on spending that we can't afford.

Thinking back to May 2, when the Liberal government introduced this particular budget, I was watching CTV News at 6 o'clock. They had a little ticker going, and that ticker was showing how much interest was accruing on the debt in that one news hour. It was staggering, and I applaud CTV News for doing this, because it was a very effective visual, and real—very, very real. By the end of that news hour, the interest accrued on Ontario's debt was \$1.045 million. Do the math. That's over \$1 billion a year, as I spoke about earlier. We're poised to possibly be paying over \$2 billion in the very near future if we keep going on the path that we're on. We just can't afford it.

Grade 10 kids know it. They don't want us to be mortgaging their future. They want us to rein in spending. They want us to get this path right so that their future is bright. That's the only type of programming this gov-

ernment should be focused on in terms of youth development and jobs. They need to be thinking about what it takes to get our young people back to work. Spending like a Mad Hatter is not the type of focus we should be having.

When we talk about spending recklessly and introducing programming recklessly and knee-jerk reactions, I can't help but think about energy and the energy plan that has been devised by this Liberal government over the last 10 years in Ontario.

To cut to the chase, I met with a manufacturing company called Bogdon and Gross in Walkerton. They're a century-old furniture manufacturer—great history, great products, great employees and great commitment to the future. But their future has to include affordable energy. Speaker, they told me that they have to see a government in Ontario that gets it. They need to see a government in Ontario that uses energy policy side by side with an economic policy. Energy no longer can be afforded in this province to be seen as a social policy.

In terms of economics, it was fascinating. Bogdon and Gross has new owners over the last five years. They have tracked their operating costs very closely, and in five years, guess what? Electricity rates have been reasonably consistent. The cost of distribution in their area has been consistent as well. What has caused their price of electricity to double in five years? It's a category that's painted green in their graphs, called "Global adjustment, debt retirement and taxes."

They're just one out of so many manufacturers in Ontario that are saying that if this doesn't get reined in, it's going to get really, really tough. For some manufacturers in this province, it has gotten behind the point of no return. And guess what? They've relocated south of the border, and they've taken the jobs with them. They've taken family and friends from Ontario with them as well. It's just not right.

Let's talk about energy for a second or two a little bit more in depth, specifically with regard to renewables. There's so much smoke and mirrors that cause me to be embarrassed by this provincial government. Just this past week, on Thursday, the Minister of Energy introduced new changes. They were cancelling FIT on a go-forward basis. They talked about giving municipalities more say.

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There was a cut line in the London Free Press that said, "Communities spoke, mayors spoke, and we listened." Well, guess what? On constituency week, I went back to work in my riding; I went back home and reached out to the 14 municipalities that work really, really hard on behalf of the folks who live in Huron-Bruce. Not one of those 14 municipalities had been contacted by this ministry before they introduced their changes. How ridiculous is this government that they don't even reach out to major stakeholders?

I just have to revisit the fact that in Huron-Bruce, if everything stays the same, they're going to be inundated by hundreds and hundreds—upwards of a thousand more turbines. The announcement on Thursday has no bearing

on what my riding is going to face in the future. We can't afford it. We can't afford the subsidies paid out to wind; we can't afford the subsidies paid out to solar. Because, guess what? As I said before, people are finding it tougher and tougher every day to hold their head up and make a good, solid living with a little bit of savings at the end of the day for their future.

That's what this budget motion comes down to. We have to debate this; we have to make sure the good taxpayers of Ontario know that this government is out of steam. They're venting steam for nuclear; they're spilling water. Well, guess what? They've spilled their goodwill across this province; they've run out of time, and we need change, because this budget does nothing to rein in spending and it does nothing to restore the confidence of people to invest in this province. That's what we need. That's how we have to look forward and get back on a path to prosperity. We need to, again, have a good fiscal handle on our situation so that ultimately we're attracting jobs and we're attracting investment so we have a future for our young people.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I too want to take my 20 minutes to talk about the bill today. You know, the budget here does not spend a lot of time talking about northern Ontario. It certainly doesn't offer anything new for northern Ontario—a repeat of older programs, a rehash. So perhaps today I'll spend some time talking a little bit about the part of Ontario that I live in and the part of Ontario that can contribute so much more to the province of Ontario.

The Ontario that I grew up in certainly would have been known as the engine of Confederation. It was a proud province that I grew up in. If Ontario was the engine of Confederation, then northern Ontario was the fuel for that engine; it was the lumber, it was the minerals. It also had the minds that were used in crafting northern Ontario—engineering minds, accounting minds, legal minds, all of these components that produced the products that helped build the rest of Ontario.

Sadly today we see an Ontario—the part that I live in, my own community of North Bay, has 11.3% unemployment. We have 60 mills that are closed in northern Ontario, predominantly due to the high cost of power. We have fallen from number 1—the number 1 mining jurisdiction in the world when this government took over; today we have fallen to 13th. This is not the Ontario that I want to see for our families. This is a shell of its former self.

So our party has put together a series of ideas, paths to prosperity—a dozen of them. I want to talk a little bit about some of the content of those paths to prosperity in the Ontario that can and will come again. I know a couple of the speakers have spoken earlier about, "Hang on, Ontario; we're coming back." When our leader, Tim Hudak, is elected Premier, you're going to see an Ontario that is coming back. I look forward to that day.

Recently our leader, Tim Hudak, was in northern Ontario, where he has spent a tremendous amount of

time, and he talked about some of the opportunities and presented our vision for northern Ontario in a brochure. It was simply called Our Northern Vision. Let me tell you a little bit about it, Speaker.

One of the main components of our vision is the Ring of Fire. I know we've heard a lot of talk about it. We've been here more than a year and a half now, but sadly, all we've heard so far is a lot of talk and not a lot of action. We're seeing, again, a government without ideas, without any concept of how to actually kick it over the goalpost, run it over the line. We're seeing talk and no ideas.

Let me talk a little bit about what we call the opportunity of the century.

I want to say that our leader, Tim Hudak, has been to the Ring of Fire. He has actually been in the base camp.

Almost a year and a half ago, I was at a Ring of Fire seminar in North Bay, my hometown. The Ring of Fire Secretariat stood up and was giving a speech about the Ring of Fire. She had been employed by the province of Ontario as the key person, the go-to person for the Ring of Fire—the Ring of Fire Secretariat, the person at the top of the pile. She had been employed for 18 months. She gave an interesting speech about what could happen. This was a while ago now. I went to her and I was talking about either my first or second or third trip there—I can't recall—and I said to her, "Coming over with the helicopter, as soon as we got to the base camp and I saw those blue-and-white tents, a big smile came over my face because I immediately recognized that those tents were made in my riding. They were made by a company in Rutherglen called Canadian Can-Tex. They make canvas products. I thought, 'Wow, this is what we're talking about. This is only the beginning of the opportunity.'"

As the helicopter rounded and it began to set and I saw these triangle mounds of drill rods—another smile. I felt so good. In Nipissing, my riding, North Bay has 12 companies and Powassan has one that make those drill rods, that ship those drill rods to the Ring of Fire. It's just a fascinating place.

I was so excited with that, and I said to her, "What was the thing that got you the most excited the second you saw that?"

She said to me, "I've never been there."

My jaw dropped. The Ring of Fire Secretariat, the key person who was going to coordinate the activities of the Ring of Fire, had never set foot in the camp at the Ring of Fire.

Our leader, Tim Hudak, has said that we will have a comprehensive plan of action—no more talk. Let's get some action. Let's consult with the mining firms. Is it going to be a rotor or is it going to be a rail? What do you need? We'll be at the table with our share of infrastructure. He has made that commitment.

The first step has to be to talk to the First Nations communities, as we have. We need to understand their needs and their wants. We also need to understand the conditions that they are living in today and whether they want these changes made. That needs to be a consultative

process with the First Nations. They need to be in the game all along the way.

I know that our leader has said that he will take a provincial cabinet minister, one of his ministers, and make that person, whoever he or she is, the key point person for the Ring of Fire, to make sure that we can see the end of the talk and the beginning of the action.

It is an exciting opportunity for every community in Ontario—not just for communities in the north, but for men and women who want to work in an exciting sector. It's going to provide a tremendous amount of jobs.

If you dare to dream a little bit, think of the components of stainless steel, Speaker: ore, nickel and chromite. Those are the three components that are needed to manufacture stainless steel. In Ontario today, we mine a lot of ore, and we certainly mine a lot of nickel. And once we get through the talking and get into action in the Ring of Fire, we will mine chromite. Now we have all the components for stainless steel. It's something that we need to look at. We need to understand the value added that can be hopefully in northern Ontario, but at least in Ontario.

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This is the kind of vision that our party and our leader, Tim Hudak, are bringing to Ontario. We're also looking at other guidelines in the mining sector—again, we hear lots of talk and no action. Our party will make a share of the mining tax available to the First Nations communities and to the local communities.

I think about our friends in Sudbury—always a good example. I know that when I served as mayor, we would sit with the mayor in Sudbury and the other mayors throughout the north. It was called NOLUM, Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors. The five of us met monthly, and we developed plans. We would come and we would try to get these ideas put forward. They were great ideas—sharing the revenue. The mayor of Sudbury was always quick to say, "You know, the mill is over here and the mine is over here, and the trucks barrel up and down the streets, tearing up the streets. The city has to pay for all the repairs, and the province gets all the money without having to pay for any of those." It was always an interesting debate. Our party has looked at that, and we have agreed with those northern mayors that yes, there is revenue that should be shared. We have agreed with the First Nations: Yes, there is revenue from mining that we should be sharing.

The same can be said for forestry, that there is an opportunity to discuss the forest tenure system that has failed in Ontario. It's not just mining that's suffering today; it's forestry as well. Our party will commit to 26 million cubic metres per year of lumber that will be harvested, and this will be very, very good news to the forestry communities throughout northern Ontario. Again, when we can afford it, the stumpage fees from the forestry sector, like the mining fees, will be shared with the First Nations and with the local communities, the municipalities who need that revenue so much, whose streets are being torn up by the mining and forestry vehicles and who are not earning any of that revenue.

In addition, we look at our plan for northern Ontario, and we believe that Ontario Northland should be treated as the economic engine—the infrastructure—for the rest of northern Ontario. Ontario Northland needs to be treated as an economic development tool, not a plaything that we've seen in this province.

Actually, just last Friday, in North Bay, I uncovered and presented to the waiting media the transition funding requirements. You know, this government announced the sale of Ontario Northland with no consultation whatsoever with stakeholders, with their employees. They just stood up one day and announced, "We're selling it off. Goodbye." They said it was going to be sold to save \$265 million a year. The document that I uncovered, a Liberal cabinet document that we got through the gas plant scandal hearings—oops, we're not going to save \$265 million. It's actually going to cost the government \$790 million to sell Ontario Northland.

I've said earlier, and I'll say it again, to the Premier: End the charade now. You got caught. Your own documents tell us that you're not going to sell it anymore. Will you put the families—the 1,000 families of Ontario Northland—put their minds at ease and end this misery that you've put them under for more than a year now? You're not going to sell it anymore. It's going to cost you \$790 million; your own document shows that. So quit the game, quit fooling around and get down to the point. Do what we've asked of you right from the beginning.

We brought great solutions to this Liberal problem right from the beginning. We said, "You need to have a strategic asset review. Review all of the assets, and let's find out what we need to make each of these things work." Instead, they just kept going ahead with the sale. They never did sell anything because they now realize the 14-year severance requirements for Ontario Northland employees and seven-year severance requirements for Ontera employees—they finally figured out what we told them right from day one: "You're not going to save any money. It's going to cost you money." We told them how much it was going to cost, but now, for the first time and the only time, we have written proof, the only written proof here, that the Liberals know themselves it's going to cost this money. So we asked them to end the charade and start treating Ontario Northland like the economic development tool it should be.

Speaker, I talk a lot about the time that I had the privilege of serving as mayor in the city of North Bay. One thing that confused me more than anything was the lack of attention to the north when it came to decisions. These decisions that were Toronto-centric decisions were made here for Toronto problems, but the solutions spilled over to cause problems in northern Ontario. I've used this example before, but I'm going to use it again because it does reflect the terrible situation when you don't shine a northern lens on problems: We built a phenomenal industrial park in my hometown. It's about a \$40-million industrial park: sewer, water, fire hydrants, utility poles, high-speed Internet, paved streets, a full checkerboard of streets bringing business in. Northern Ontario is built on

two things, Speaker. I'll call it swamp or rocks. That's what we're built on; let's face it. "Wetlands" is the more proper word, but when we look at it driving through there, we know what it is. It's a wetland and rock. Both, to me, are very beautiful and both very necessary.

When you walk through the concrete jungle that is Toronto, you don't see a lot of wetland. You don't see a lot of rock outcroppings either. They've all been blasted away or filled in, and off we go. At home, we have that, and we know how to manage these things. We know very well how to manage these things. Our industrial park is almost entirely wetland. What we do is, when we sell a piece of wetland to be filled in, we had the right under Ontario's laws to recreate another piece of wetland elsewhere of equal size. The conservation authority loved the plan, because when we built this equal-sized wetland somewhere else, we put boardwalks to it, signage. We made beautiful parks out of these areas. We've accumulated hundreds of acres, in my hometown of North Bay, of wetlands with signage, bird-watching sites—just absolutely gorgeous boardwalks that you can just spend your days in.

One day, Bill 26 came through, which oddly enough was called the Strong Communities Act, which did everything except strengthen our community. It said, "No longer can you take a wetland and fill it in and build an equally sized wetland, albeit better, anywhere else." That's gone now, because in Toronto we can't fill our wetlands in. I agree: You don't have enough to fill them in. We in the north understand the filter system that a wetland provides. I'm not sure they understand it here, but that is what it is. They took that away, and now we have a \$40-million industrial park with stop signs and fire hydrants, beautifully laid out, that you can no longer use. It's not for sale; the land is not for sale. Forty million dollars and you cannot build another building there because you need to take the wetland and replace it elsewhere. So that's gone now.

Now the city of North Bay is building a new industrial park up on the top of Airport Hill where the municipality happened to own about 1,600 or 1,700 acres, and off they go, spending millions to build another industrial park. I'm quite sure one day someone here in this Pink Palace will figure out why we can't use that one as well. I'm just being a little facetious today. But the whole point, Speaker, is that you've created a Toronto solution to a Toronto problem with the blinders on, and that solution has spilled over to create an unbelievable problem in every single municipality north of Steeles Avenue.

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It's not just the fact that there's lack of consultation. Had they only talked to us one minute before this thing passed, we would have been able to stay to them, "Great idea. It's very important in Toronto and southern Ontario that you do that. But at home, here's why it won't work, and here's what's so important."

When they took our fishing in Lake Nipissing and cut the amount of pickerel from four to two without consultation; when they announced the Algonquin land claim and

had one hour, after the announcement was made, of public consultation in the middle of March break—that was their idea of consultation; when we hear about the Big Move in Toronto and this plan to raise the GST and other revenue tools here in Toronto—I can guarantee you, Speaker, there's not a whole lot of people in northern Ontario that are eager to start paying 1% more of GST so that Toronto can have their traffic eased, when our transportation through Ontario Northland, whenever we need to spend a nickel on anything, that's a subsidy, but when Toronto needs to spend billions, that's an investment. Those are the kinds of things that we find offensive in northern Ontario. We're offended to hear those words.

While there was very little in that budget document that outlined anything at all for northern Ontario, and certainly nothing new for job creation, I would say to you that this last 20 minutes has been a good opportunity to understand a little bit of what's in the hearts and minds of the men and women in northern Ontario.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on this substantive motion and for my residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

The government is now pulling out their old tricks of ramming through this very unaffordable budget, now with the help of their new partner in this coalition, the NDP farm team, as my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings referred to it recently. This time allocation motion and the amendment by the member from Simcoe–Grey called upon us to debate the very fundamental principles that drive us as members of provincial Parliament.

It is the duty of this House to hold this Liberal government to account for its mismanagement. This is a duty that cannot be subordinate to the convenience of the government's desperate moves to survive, and to a third party so desperate to avoid an election, they are willing to forget their oft-stated principles and set them aside.

We've often heard how \$92 million is being tossed around by the Liberals and the NDP as the cost of an election. With this government borrowing at the rate of \$1.3 million per hour—yes, that's right, just \$1.3 million per hour—a potential election would cost less than three days' worth of the borrowing required to pay for the reckless spending problem that we see in this government.

I could support this budget and its obscene spending if the money was going to make a difference; if it was going to help turn things around; if it was going to bring back the 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have left Ontario since this government came to power; and if it created a fiscal environment that would attract new jobs and grow our economy. But sadly, we see none of this. We see 600,000 Ontarians who woke up this morning with no job to go to. We see no jobs plan in this budget, no plan to reduce the red tape facing businesses in the

province, and no plan to cut the costs facing them so that they could be competitive. We see policies that are geared to allow this government to cling to power by buying support from the other half of their coalition Liberal-NDP government.

My residents of Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry are upset by this coalition and tell me every day that they've had enough. They are tired of the wasteful spending, tired of pet projects that gain the Liberal Party donations targeted at keeping them in power at the expense of the little guy, who is trying to make a living to put children through school and put money away for retirement and to just enjoy what they should: a good life in this province.

We've seen promise after promise, made during the campaign, broken shortly after the election. First it was the promise to freeze insurance rates. Speaker, I remember, at that time, just after the election, my insurance policy coming due and feeling that maybe there was something in this government's policy that would actually benefit me, and calling up my insurance company and getting the answer: "Fear not. We're just waiting for the legislation, and when we get it, we'll roll back and we'll give you a credit." Speaker, that never came about. First promise made; first promise broken.

Then it was the promise of not raising taxes. The former Premier even signed an agreement with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, making a very public presentation to win support of the people of Ontario. But we quickly saw a strong trend from this government: promises made, promises broken, which they quickly did when they instituted the largest tax increase in Ontario's history, the new health tax.

Since that time, we have seen over 100 tax and fee increases by this Liberal government. What about the publicly signed agreement? They challenged the Canadian Taxpayers Federation in court to show that they're not legally required to follow through on any election promise, an ideal this government has wholeheartedly embraced, much to the detriment of the people of Ontario. But they see a government that has not learned from the basic budgeting rule that you can't continually spend more than you take in, year after year after year. Again, overspending for the greater good has some merit with the overall public if the overall public benefits. Sadly, this is not the case, and it continues not to be the case.

We have seen legislation that has driven up the cost of doing business, for the benefit of the Liberal government and now for their coalition partner, the NDP, with more than \$2 billion in promised concessions just to buy their support.

But I caution the NDP about this government's lack of moral character when it comes to keeping their promises. In fact, the leader of the third party, their leader, stood here in question period just a few weeks ago and questioned how they could be expected to trust the government when they hadn't come through with last year's budget promises. One would really wonder.

That brings to mind an old saying: Fool me once, and shame on you; fool me twice, and shame on me. Shame on this government and for its coalition partner, the NDP, for trying it once again. What makes you think that they've changed their stripes and that you can trust them now to keep a promise? My constituents of Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry are telling me, "Shame on the third party for propping up this corrupt McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government."

It's time to change the direction that this province is taking, and the best way to do that is to change the government that's leading it.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That would be a good place to conclude. It being 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

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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	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	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	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	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
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	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	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires 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	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

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	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	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	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Dipika Damerla, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
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**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
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Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Gilles Bisson
Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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