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of Debates
(Hansard)**

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Wednesday 21 March 2012

Mercredi 21 mars 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 21 March 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 21 mars 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE ACT
(EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT), 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CONGÉ FAMILIAL
POUR LES AIDANTS NATURELS
(MODIFICATION DES NORMES D'EMPLOI)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave / *Projet de loi 30, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels.*

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to rise this morning to speak on Bill 30, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver leave.

This bill was introduced on December 8 and has been discussed on a couple of occasions. I thought it was important for us who are proud to be parents and family members. At this stage in life, I can tell you that these provisions of being able to take time off for compassionate leave and caregiver leave are important. We live in a busy economy.

Now, I would say this: Let's be fair here. When the bill was introduced—I had a chance this morning in preparation here to look at the remarks made by the minister. No one can fault the intent at all, really. Quite frankly, it's compassionate, it's the right thing to do. That's not in dispute here at all. I think that's a given. Also, in looking at the response from our critic, Mr. Hillier, it basically said, "During those technical briefings with the minister's staff I did have a number of concerns that were raised in those briefings. The first of my concerns is just the very limited consultations that the ministry has done on this bill." Of course, I expect at second reading it will go to public hearings to clarify some of the intents.

Again, I want to repeat, repeat, repeat on this thing. It's important to say, compassionately, that we think it's the right thing to do.

Now, this is where it becomes somewhat my job in the opposition to point out things that the minister—I see the minister is here; I appreciate that as well.

I should qualify as well: I worked in personnel for General Motors for probably about 10 years in my 31-year career. Part of that was dealing with these very issues of what's paid time off, what's not paid time off and what's leave of absence. In fact, when I was first elected in 1995, I had a leave of absence for political purpose and for public service.

Now here's the issue: For large corporations, many of them incorporate this as good HR policy. I'm also thinking of people I know who are independent. Take, for instance, a doctor's office. They have a receptionist, probably a nurse. If one or both took the time off, they're out of business. Now, who pays for it? That's where we're really getting into the implementation phase or the how to do it, how to get it right.

But I looked at the minister's remarks. It was all very—"Our bill fulfills a commitment" that they made during the election of "a new kind of leave for family caregivers." Everyone was looking forward to it. There's not one nickel in this bill, not one cent in the bill, on behalf of the government. But what they are doing here is—she goes into this sad tirade here. Oh, here it is: Our proposal would give "up to eight weeks of unpaid job-protected leave to employees to care for seriously ill or injured family members."

This is the real linchpin of the whole thing, and the people of Ontario have got to know just how shallow this particular government is. And that's not the intent. The intent here—if it was done by our leader, Tim Hudak, we'd have a plan that was executed. There'd be a set of regulations that would allow this to become effective.

Here's what it says here. Remember, the people taking the time off don't get one nickel. In fact, the employer, you could argue, is saving money. There are 600,000 families in Ontario now that don't even have a job. Caregiver allowance? They're sitting at home watching Dr. Phil or Oprah or something.

Here's the key: "We will again ask our federal counterparts to take the steps necessary to extend employment insurance benefits to those taking family caregiver leave." The federal government has 10 provinces, and they try to have uniformity in health care, all these various things. Now Ontario's coming in—it's the largest province, about 13 million—and says, here's another thing for you to do; here's another requirement.

Who pays for unemployment insurance, by the way? It's insurance. The employers pay for it. So this is a tax. This is a tax on employers. It's a tax on jobs.

Now I want to repeat for the third time—let's keep this in focus. We agree with the compassionate concern, the intent, the validation of that, the sincerity. They promised it. Here's another one of those promises that doesn't deliver. The intent is there, we all agree. I'm sure my friend from Trinity–Spadina agrees; in fact, I hope he speaks after me. But the fact is, this is so shallow, it's actually—it gives away the whole way this current government works. This is the problem I have.

It's like, right now, debt. When I think of the debt in the province of Ontario, that's future taxes on the children. They're looking good today for things they're going to have to pay for tomorrow—your future, the cost of university, the cost of education, the lack of jobs. These are the things that aren't being taken care of by this government. It all, to me, comes to a crystal-clear impression of what this government is not doing.

I did read in detail the bill. Here are some sections—there are some questions that need to be answered. I know the minister's here, and the minister's listening. I'm certain the minister will have public hearings on this.

The bill itself, for the public here, is one page. The cover's bigger than the contents of the bill. There's a section two, subsection two, and it says here—it outlines all the people who are entitled, and I'll just go through it because I have a few minutes here:

“(1) The employee's spouse;

“(2) A parent, step-parent or foster parent of the employee or the employee's spouse;

“(3) A child, step-child or foster child of the employee or the employee's spouse;

“(4) A grandparent, step-grandparent, grandchild or step-grandchild of the employee or the employee's spouse;

“(5) The spouse of a child of the employee;

“(6) The employee's brother or sister ...”

Now here's a really interesting one—it's broad and encompassing: the next-door neighbour. Well, it doesn't say that, but it says, “Any individual prescribed as a family member for the purpose of this section.” So the next-door neighbour—why wouldn't you want to care for the elderly person next door? I agree with that. Well, you can stick that in here.

0910

My point is, this bill—who was asking for it? Who's putting the demands on this, on the small business? I think of my brother-in-law, who's got a delicatessen in Peterborough. He and his wife work all the time, and they're very skilled. They have a little restaurant component to it. They work hard. They have one or two people who work for them, I think, usually at lunchtime and stuff like that. I wonder: Would they be entitled to take the time off because they're—why not, if the cat was sick or the dog was sick? Let's not trivialize. Let's not trivialize here. This pet may be the only contact—now, I don't want to accuse them of being insensitive, but to some people who are living alone, their only care is for their pets.

I think this bill needs hearings very seriously because it's so loose, and really what they're doing is they're blaming Stephen Harper. They're blaming Stephen Harper. That's who they're blaming.

Not only this; this puts a bit of an implication on the health care system. You can't get to a doctor now because you have to go to emergency, but they have to get some kind of certificate. You have to go to the doctor and verify that—you can't just say, “My spouse isn't feeling well.” So now you've got a cost to the system, which is already overstrained.

We've got a deficit in Ontario of over \$16 billion. I hope it's going to be smaller in the budget next week. It probably is, because what they usually do is they super-inflate numbers to \$16 billion, \$17 billion. Then they're going to come in with the budget: “It's \$10 billion. What a great job we've done.”

Look, there are 600,000 people—and Don Drummond told you that if you don't do something, you're going to double the deficit. Right now, that whole deficit discussion is being ignored, but here's the issue: Right now, we have the lowest interest rate in recent history. The cost of servicing our debt now is just around \$10 billion. If this interest does pick up—because interest always has to be greater than inflation, and inflation is creeping up. It's about 2.4%. Interest always has to be higher than inflation, so if interest goes up, the cost of debt is going up. If it goes up 1%—let's say it's 2% now. If it goes up 1%, that's a 30% increase in the cost of debt.

I look at that whole scandal around Ornge that we talked about yesterday. My head and my heart were both aching, to think of how much money has been stolen out of the health care system under the watch of Dalton. I almost get passionate about this when it starts to bother me so much inside. I try to sort of move back once in a while and not get so serious.

But I do realize—now, I'm going to care. There were a very good number of questions asked yesterday by the leader of the NDP, Andrea Horwath. No, it was France Gélinas, pardon me, the member from Nickel Belt. And these were about the lack of hours of care through the CCACs. The minister kind of bobbed and weaved: “We've put more money in. We've doubled the money.” You've doubled the cost and you've got half the service. That's what they've done.

France Gélinas, the wonderful critic in health care, much like Elizabeth Witmer—they're both very focused on that. Here's the issue: It was clearly stated by a critic that knows her details that people—and they mentioned specific references to specific families. I don't want to use this. She did a wonderful job yesterday. What they're saying is—she came back with things like, “Well, we have a new strategy. It's called Aging at Home.” It's actually called aging alone, because there is no care at home with them. They're cutting back the CCACs. They're told, or directed, that there wasn't enough money—because of the deficit, because of overspending on other things, helicopters and things like that—for

hours for home care. Now we're going to give them more time off.

Actually, what the people of Ontario want is a job and a sense of security around them and a vision for Ontario. McGuinty's vision is to open up more casinos to help hurt the poor even more. I think in every area that I look at, Mr. Speaker—it's good to see a new Speaker in the chair there. Everything I've watched in the last several months, it's going downhill at a rapid speed and accelerating. The people of Ontario—it's in everything. Don Drummond said there's 300-plus recommendations. Here's some help: Grab one of these life rafts and start to pull yourself out of the hole. But what have they done? They've kept digging.

This is another example of trying to promise everything to everyone. Here, you can have a day off work and then you can have home improvements for seniors, but there's no money in it; you have to spend \$10,000.

There isn't one thing that I can see that makes any sense and the people of Ontario need to start paying very close attention, with the budget next week, to what their plan for the future really is. They threw this out—this promise on Bill 30—during the election, that we're going to improve caregiver time off. They didn't put one cent into it. They've spent more money printing paper than they will helping the people in their homes. This is the truth.

And if you read it, even their pets will be covered, I think. It's not clearly in here but I'm pretty sure it will be, because who wouldn't want to? Who wouldn't want to help the pets? I put that for the minister to respond to. Is she going to deny the—

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Move an amendment.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister, are the pets here?

Mr. John O'Toole: No, it says "any individual"—so it's not a pet—"as a member, for the purpose of this section," as described—well, it's open to interpretation in the regulations. Again, we need to clarify this.

First of all, Tim Hudak and our critic, Randy Hillier, have made it eminently clear that we're completely supportive of the intent. That's not to be disputed. There's a lack of clarity. They should have taken a bit more time to draft this up. I know it was an election promise, and how many election promises have you actually kept? None. Zero.

Even the other day he promised—this is why I'm getting calls at my constituency office. You made a promise on—after Don Drummond issued the report, he said, you know, he stood there, sort of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could I ask the member to kind of stick to the topic? You're drifting a little bit.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you. I respect the comments of the Speaker. I think this whole idea that I was wandering, it gives me this kind of—the thing is that I'm concerned.

I think some of these people could be off work in Ontario because of stress. And what would the stress be? Because their children have no future. There are no jobs

for the kids graduating from university and college. Tell me in your response, what are the jobs of the future? Not some job at a casino. Who are you kidding? All these jobs in energy and renewable energy are a good example of why they're in stress, so it is related to the bill.

What would the stress be? Well, they're going to have 50,000 jobs in the green energy. There are reports that say you actually lose jobs. Now, what are the jobs? Cutting the grass around the solar panels, driving a lawn mower. After they've welded together all the towers and that for the wind turbines, who's working around those turbines? I don't see anybody standing around. There's nobody working around them.

I see the Minister of Energy's here as well.

This stressful society in the last several years—when people look at the eHealth scandal, they get stressed; when they look at the Ornge helicopter issue, they get stressed. Then they get worrying about their future. Then they take time off work and the employer has to pay unemployment insurance premiums, which is a tax on jobs. It's a vicious cycle. There's no plan for the future of Ontario. In fact, I would like to say that in the—

Mr. Jeff Leal: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I consider the member from Durham a very good friend of mine, but he is kind of wandering here a little bit. I know he wants to get back on topic—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock.

Mr. Jeff Leal: —because he has something very articulate to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I must confess, he is certainly skirting around the issue. He has points that are related but sometimes he drifts. So I would ask the member once again, try to stick to the script, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and out of the deepest respect—I also respect the member from Peterborough.

Now, the member from Peterborough, let's say, for example, he met with the horsemen from Peterborough who are all upset because they're losing their jobs. Why? Because of his lack of action. Now they're going to be stressed and they're going to take time off. Who's paying them? Now they're going to close the casino that they work at, some of them. Look—

Mr. Jeff Leal: They're not going to close the casino. They're going to move it into the city.

Interjections.

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

0920

Mr. John O'Toole: For the record, I want to repeat what the member from Peterborough said: It's a commitment he made today that they're going to keep the casino at Kawartha Downs open and—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Oh, now the member from Peterborough—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Now at least he's starting to disclose the plan, the secret plan—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Stop the clock. The member from Peterborough must refrain from his comments if he wants the member from Durham to stick to his script.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I feel a certain amount of stress, when the member from Peterborough withdrew, how he's starting to feel conflicted now. He's got to feel conflicted, because I know he wants to help the people in Peterborough. I know that.

For instance, small business—my brother-in-law Sam at the deli—is all that I'm talking about. You would know—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: Yeah, exactly. My point is, these are people.

I want to go back. The strategy in society today, in summary, is this: We have an aging population in Ontario. There's evidence that people are living longer, and in health care you consume all of your money in the last 20% of your life. The higher the age group gets, 80 to 90—they spend about \$70,000 a year per person. To stay in a long-term-care home is about \$60,000 per bed—per bed.

They haven't added one bed, not one. What they've done is they've regulated retirement homes. Now retirement homes don't have one cent of provincial money in them. What they're going to do is they're going to increase the cost of retirement homes. How much does a retirement home cost? I know first-hand. It's between \$3,500 and \$7,000 a month for a retirement home.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You've got to be a millionaire, for God's sake.

Mr. John O'Toole: Exactly. So the people of Ontario have every reason to be concerned that this bill is just a false shell. You open it up and there's nothing inside it. It's another broken promise by this government. And what are they going to do? They're going to blame Stephen Harper for not paying these people that are off unemployment insurance. Why would that not be the case for all of Canada, then? So you think that Premier McGuinty, who can't run this province, is going to start running the country?

Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I want to repeat, because our leader makes sure that we would implement this in a fashion that would be a commitment you could trust. So to me, this debate this morning comes down to one word: trust. The word is "trust." Can you trust them to deliver? That home renovation tax credit: You can't get it. The 30% student deduction: You can't get it.

To me, all of this paper comes down to the single word "trust." Trust Premier McGuinty and the Liberals to give you unpaid time off for eight weeks—and you must take it a week at a time. Not for a doctor visit—no, you

can't take a day off; you have to take it in blocks of entire weeks. This is another piece of good intention poorly executed, and that explains this government to a T.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Close enough. The member from Davenport. Thank you, Speaker.

I was listening to the member from Durham and, you know, I was following along. For the most part it made sense to me, particularly when he called this act a bit of a false shell. It's obviously something that we will support. It moves in the right direction when we start to talk about improving employment standards. But the truth is that people in this province are very stressed out, and I also agree with the member from Durham, who stated that and said that people are also stressed out in their workplace.

What's been happening in this province is that labour standards are going further and further down. When I talk to people in my riding of Davenport, people are stressed out that they can't find work. When they do find work, it's not full-time; it doesn't pay the bills. I was speaking to someone the other day who is about my age and is still living at home with his parents because there's just simply not a job market out there that will employ him full-time.

What we really need to do is make sure that people in their workplace are supported to stand up and speak out if their workplace is unsafe. But I think what has happened in this country around EI—the fact that most people are not eligible for it; the fact that minimum wage is not keeping up with the cost of living; the fact that our welfare system is so dreadful in this province—means that people will not speak out. People cannot afford to take sick leave even if they want to, and that's a real concern.

I also heard the member from Durham say that this report probably cost more than the actual implications of implementing it. We need to spend more money on the people, on enforcing labour standards in this province, than we do writing the papers that we create these things on.

So I will be supporting this, but I do think we need to make sure that we actually have inspectors coming around workplaces and making sure that they're safe workplaces for the employees who are there.

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

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Thank you, Speaker. I just wanted to join the conversation. I wish I had more than two minutes.

I wanted to comment on what the member for Durham said. It was a very entertaining speech, and certainly I think it's academy-worthy, indicating his support of pet coverage. But this is a really serious issue, and I think there are certainly enough families across this province that we've heard from who are currently trying to balance the struggle they have, balancing a very sick family member with retaining their job. We've heard from

caregivers; we've heard from a variety of HR professionals across this province.

I understand that he really hasn't followed the bill all that closely based on his comments. So I just want to remind him that there are personal emergency leaves right now that provide a short-term leave that would help a family. They have 10 calendar days that they can use. There's also a family medical leave, but that's in case of a very serious medical condition where there's a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

We've identified a gap. There's a gap in the current leaves of absence under the Employment Standards Act. It doesn't currently provide a long-term, job-protected leave for employees who want to care for a family member with a serious medical condition that requires care or support. This is in the case where there's no risk of imminent death. It's a very serious issue.

When we made the announcement, we had a young woman come forward with a very sick mother. She had to leave her job to help her mother get through all those doctors' appointments. It was very serious to her. She lost her job. It was something that she loved doing, but she was torn between caring for somebody she loved and keeping her job.

This is about providing compassion. You started out when you had that conversation at the beginning. I appreciate that you believe that there's good intent, and I would like to encourage you to do what the member from Nickel Belt did. She provided some very thoughtful comments on nurse practitioners. I'd encourage you to do the same thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Comments and questions?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would just like to share a couple of comments with regards to my reflection upon what our member from Durham shared with us this morning. He is an absolute study in debate, and I certainly appreciate his perspective and the manner in which he brings such eloquent points across in this chamber. I congratulate him for that.

But, you know, he brings up a very good point. I represent an absolutely wonderful rural riding, and when we talk about the government strategy for aging at home, I think they've been totally void of understanding real issues. I have a 96-year-old grandmother who lives in rural Ontario on the farm still. She's very independent, but in terms—she needs her CCAC. But in terms of aging at home, the reality of rural Ontario is, when the roads are closed, who's going to get there to help them on a cold winter day?

There are so many things that are suspect. We're cautiously sharing our support for this because we're suspicious that the minister hasn't really consulted with a lot of people. We've just heard from across the floor that they spoke to a lot of people. We're quite interested to know who those folks are. The fact of the matter is, this is a very serious issue. People should be able to take leave and support the people that mean the most to them and fill their hearts because they've given so much. But

the fact of the matter is, as I said, we're cautiously—how do I say this? We're cautiously offering support because the fact of the matter is, we feel there needs to be more consultation, and we actually urge the minister to withdraw this bill from second reading and work with the opposition parties to create a select committee to investigate and collect evidence that would support the introduction and passage of this bill based upon merit, not posture.

0930

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I do agree with the member from Durham on one thing, and that is that people are stressed out. They're probably stressed out in this Legislature and outside of this Legislature. The real stress, in my view, is income-related. More and more people are becoming poorer and poorer than ever.

The problem with this bill, as much as it is a nice gesture, is that people will be able to take a leave, a protected leave, but it will not be paid by anybody. This is not, as the member from Durham says, a tax on the employer; this is going to be taxing on those individuals who will be pressed to take care of somebody in their own home, but it's not a tax on the employer. It's a huge tax on the individual that is going to have to take time off work to take care of somebody, and that's the dilemma that people are going to be facing. That's where the real stress is going to be.

We haven't touched on reprisals against people who want to take time off, and there will be reprisals from the employer when someone asks to take time off to take care of one of their own. That is for sure. That's going to happen.

But when I hear the member from Durham saying, "We've got a better plan," I don't know what that plan is. And when the member from Durham says it's a matter of trust, I say, "Hmm. I've been through Mike Harris's regime, and I don't remember them doing one single little thing for the seniors. Not one little thing."

And while these Liberals haven't funded any long-term care—which is true—nor have they built any long-term-care facilities, do I believe, John, that the Tories are going to do that? No siree. So when you talk about trust and a plan—hmm, I don't know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham has a two-minute reply.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm really pleased that the member from Davenport—I just want to prove that I did listen to their comments. He said, basically, that people can't afford this. That's basically what he said.

I would say I'm very impressed that the minister was here, and she did say that I—I thought she made a bit of a slam on me there; it wasn't called for. But I'd like her to produce the request that she mentioned, the information from the HR professionals. I'm requesting publicly a copy of those documents. I've not had one call on this, to be honest.

Now, I think the most realistic comment was from the Huron–Bruce member, a good friend and also quite an expert and highly regarded in the agricultural community. I think she hit it when talking about the CCAC and her 96-year-old mother—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Grandmother.

Mr. John O’Toole:—grandmother. Pardon me. Sorry about that—a slip that I could pay for. But the fact is, that’s a sentiment that we feel on this side, together with the young families of members that are in the caucuses who have children. I know I have a couple of daughters in England—one just had a baby, and one’s expecting one in May—and I have one in Clarington that just had one as well. The little boy was born six weeks premature and was quite unhealthy. Now, we do have parental leave, but between the things—I think her husband, my son, should have been able to take time off, and I’m sure his employer would, because that’s the way civil society works. This bill, in itself—good intentions, but actually nothing in it.

I think the member from Trinity–Spadina—and I’m highly respectful of the fact that he even listened to what I said, but the fact is, he said pretty much the same thing as well. He said people simply can’t afford it, he said people are stressed, and he said that this bill is a shallow promise.

Well, I can commit to this: Tim Hudak keeps his promises.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I’m pleased to speak to the Family Caregiver Leave Act today. This bill is a step forward in making life easier for those who need care for a family member, but it is a very small step.

Once again, as we’ve seen in other government bills that have been put forward lately, they have really great names. I’m sure that we all know someone who simply has had no choice but to take time off of work because a family member needs their attention. When it happens, you have no choice; you have to do what you have to do. In such an event, this bill would entitle an employee to up to eight weeks’ leave per year to support a family member who has a serious medical condition but is not at risk of death. It is certainly good that the person’s job would be protected. Unfortunately, it is only a guarantee of unpaid leave, and for many, that’s the kicker.

I just mentioned that the leave is for people who have an ill family member who is not at risk of death. That distinction is made because we already have the family medical leave, which provides up to eight weeks’ leave of care for a family member who has a significant risk of death occurring within 26 weeks. In the case, however, of the family medical leave, there has been EI support since 2004. This is not the case for the family caregiver leave.

Without EI support, I have to wonder how many people would be able to take advantage of this leave. It’s all well and good to say, “Look, you’re going through a difficult time just now. You need to take some time and look after your family. Don’t worry, your job will still be

here when you come back.” It’s good for a worker to hear that, but if you’re living from paycheque to paycheque, struggling to pay the bills, it doesn’t mean much if you’re having that leave, and you have no money coming in. No, to make this really meaningful, the government needs to pressure the federal government so that there is some form of income support for those who need to access this leave. So the bill may be once again putting the cart before the horse.

I would also like to take some time to talk about the Employment Standards Act, which this bill seeks to amend. The Employment Standards Act sets minimum standards for employees in Ontario. Some of the workers are members of a trade union. They are, as we would say, organized, and these workers have brought themselves together to act as one. Collectively, they can negotiate contracts and look after each other to ensure that they are not taken advantage of, that they get a fair rate of pay and that adequate attention is paid to their health and safety. But not every worker in this province is unionized. Unfortunately, the laws of our province and the power of employers do not make it easy for workers to exercise their rights and join a union. For those workers, the Employment Standards Act is all they’ve got; that’s it.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you, I’ve worked in many places where the Employment Standards Act was our only safety net. I can tell you that many, many workers in that situation are not aware of what the minimum standards of employment in Ontario are. Several workers would not even dare to speak up to an employer, because they are fearful or at risk of losing their jobs.

I can also tell you that employers don’t exactly go out of their way to make sure that employees know their rights under the ESA or even that it exists. Perhaps a handbook of the ESA would be a suggestion that is made during the committee process of amending the ESA. Making sure that all workers are given one of these handbooks could ensure that all workers would know their rights, and employers would know that they would have to follow the ESA.

The point I want to make is that for an amendment to actually have its full impact, we need to ensure that people know that the provisions exist, and they need to know how to access them. We already know that the Minister of Labour only hears a very small percentage of violations of the Employment Standards Act. Again, I must repeat: There are several workers, especially racialized workers, who will not stand up for themselves for fear of reprisals, and they will not stand up for fear of losing their jobs.

There are several employers out there who are not so worried, because they definitely have enough resumés stacked up in their desks, with Ontarians chomping at the bit to have any opportunity for employment. We know that, no matter what it says in the act, workers are being denied overtime pay, are being paid below minimum wage or are owed wages.

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The Workers’ Action Centre has reported that only 4% of workers who are owed wages actually even file claims

under the ESA. Clearly, these are issues with compliance with the act, and there are issues with the ability or reluctance of workers to take advantage of the provisions of the Employment Standards Act. Again, possibly this handbook would ensure that workers know their rights, and it would be a key tool to ensuring that Ontarians are getting a fair deal when going to work each day.

Mr. Speaker, the ministry must take a more proactive role in administering the Employment Standards Act. Don't get me wrong, Mr. Speaker: I'm not against employers, because this bill does nothing to protect them either. How could an employer safely ensure that a job will be held if he or she needs to run a business? Will there be any form of insurance policy for them? A small business that relies on possibly only one or two employees will certainly miss them and run into hardships when covering this time when the employees are gone.

Unfortunately, just as this bill is being debated, the government wants to cut \$6 million from enforcement at the end of this month. This after promising to invest \$10 million a year to hire new employment standards officers and improve compliance with the act. I urge the Minister of Labour, don't undermine this amendment before it's even in place. Do not cut \$6 million from the ESA enforcement budget.

Some unionized workers or employees in managerial positions already have written into the contracts provisions that allow them to use sick days to care for family members who are seriously ill; and, as I said, these are not the workers who are going to rely on the Employment Standards Act. No, the workers who need the Employment Standards Act are often those who earn the least, those whose jobs are the most precarious. We have a responsibility to these workers. If they are not being given the opportunity to join a union, then we should at least make sure that we're providing decent minimum standards and make sure that those minimum standards are enforced.

If we're going to be changing the Employment Standards Act, there are other items that we should be thinking of, like increasing the minimum wage for Ontario workers. How can we justify a minimum wage that is below the poverty line? As the gap between rich and poor grows, we simply cannot accept that those at the lowest end of the pay scale do need and deserve a raise. It should be raised to \$11 per hour this year and indexed to the cost of living.

Another concern I have with this bill is the term "serious condition." It says that the doctor will decide this, but will he or she be given the proper direction of what that term means? And will this add further burden onto the appeals that are already before the ESA? We see in WSIB, ODSP, CPP cases the backlogs that have been caused due to the fact that a particular doctor did not give an answer that someone liked, no matter which side they're on. We just seem to be always adding another screw to the wheel and hoping that the air will stay in it. And there again, another problem: Who is going to pay the doctor to fill out the note that has been requested?

Another burden and time constraint to our very, very busy doctors.

Mr. Speaker, I seem to have found more things wrong with this bill than in the positive nature that I'm sure it was written in. I will once again say that this bill is a very small step in the right direction. We really need to push hard for the EI support for the family caregiver leave, and we need to make sure that workers know about the provisions, that they feel able to access without fear of reprisal.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Let me start off by saying that this bill is far from perfect. Only a very limited number of employees will have the personal resources necessary to even be able to access these provisions. That said, it is a step forward, although a very small step forward, and for that reason I will be supporting this bill, in expectation that this is only the first of many other following steps forward and that greater provisions will come in the future.

In Ontario, many families are put in difficult situations. They have seriously ill family members, but the current employment protections do not go far enough to allow them to care for seriously ill family members who are not in a terminal or life-threatening situation. This bill addresses that concern and it creates a provision for a family caregiver to take up to eight weeks of unpaid leave without the fear of losing their job, a regulation that should have been in place years ago and an amendment that will become even more important with our aging population and greater need for family members to pull together to care for loved ones.

As I have said, this bill is weak. It's another half-measure by this government. Probably the most glaring weakness is that there isn't any income support for those taking the leave, meaning that only those with the financial resources will be able to take time away from their jobs to care for their loved ones. This is a weakness, and many people will simply be unable to afford the eight weeks without any income. I don't think I'd be stretching too much to suggest that many families in Ontario today probably would find two weeks' unpaid leave completely unaffordable. But at the very least, this amendment sets the groundwork for future advances, and I'm hopeful that sometime in the next few years there will be the political will to provide income supports for these workers to help ensure that more families can take advantage of this employment protection.

One thing I've not heard but I'd like to hear about would be a cost-benefit analysis of providing income supports in a case like this. I would suspect that the cost to the system would be much less expensive to help cover the income of a family member or spouse for eight weeks, even if it is a percentage of their regular income, than it would be for the government to cover the cost of health care and support workers for the ill family member. We know that many social programs such as this one actually come at a net benefit to the taxpayer, a notable

example being the reports that suggest that full-day kindergarten saves the government money through savings in other programs. I'd certainly like to see an analysis of this—if this could be the case for this program. We know that investing is not only the right thing to do, but it actually maximizes our tax dollars.

I would, of course, be remiss if I didn't acknowledge that the most likely funding source for an income supplement program like this would be through the federal government's employment insurance program, so I will admit that the fault for this shortcoming may not necessarily lie with the provincial government. That said, I hope the Minister of Labour could give her assurances that they will lobby the federal government to make the changes necessary to ensure that this program is accessible to all workers and not just the lucky few who can afford to take an eight-week unpaid absence from their job.

Of course, in an ideal world we wouldn't need a piece of legislation like this. In an ideal world, employers would happily provide their workers with some level of compassionate leave, and I'm sure that some do. But we all know that this is not an ideal world and that, unfortunately, we have to legislate based on the lowest common denominator. With this in mind, I do think, again, that this is a step in the right direction.

Another provision that I do have some concern with is this bill's impact on very small businesses and essential services. As it stands, this bill does not state a minimum number of employees and it does not seem to exempt certain essential sectors, and I do worry that the potential exists for some problems in this regard.

In many communities, "small businesses" is a very literal term. The small stores or other operations may have one or two employees. If one of those employees suddenly takes eight weeks' leave, it does have the potential to pose an undue hardship on the other employees or the business owner. But I know that in these circumstances, most of these small businesses are tight-knit communities and almost like families where the employer would more than likely encourage their employee to take the time to care for their family and return to work when they're able.

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Likewise, I worry about how this would affect essential services in small communities, such as police officers, where, again, there isn't always the staff complement necessary to fill in for a prolonged absence. That said, I'm sure—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There seems to be about six sidebars going on. I'm having difficulty listening to the speaker. If you want to have sidebars, I suggest you go outside. Thank you.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you.

That said, I'm sure these are larger organizations and they will find ways to adapt to find short-term solutions to fill the staff complement.

While I do worry about the impact on smaller staff operations, I'm hopeful that the provisions of this amendment will come under review and that, if there is need to accommodate small business, the government will be agreeable to that in the future.

As happens with all new legislation, there will be hiccups along the way, but I believe this is a good step, and although a minor first step, it does have the potential to have a positive impact on families across the province and an even greater impact when income supports are in place and all the problems are ironed out.

I am hopeful that the committee charged with reviewing this bill will seek submissions from some of the organizations that could be adversely affected by the legislation and propose amendments that they deem necessary to make this a workable plan for Ontario business.

The other thing I'd like to talk about is protection for employers. I think, in particular, of tourist operators in my region. Many of these businesses are what you could call mom-and-pop operations, where the owners do the majority of the work, including cooking, cleaning, renovations and meeting the needs of their guests. Their only employees may be guides or casual positions that are brought on purely by demand, meaning the employee is booked for a particular week because there is a guest who wants a guided trip.

Guides are extremely skilled and knowledgeable individuals whose work simply cannot be filled by someone coming off the street. So, if the guide were to cancel at the last minute and the owner was unable to fulfil the request due to other commitments, such as guiding a group of their own, it leaves the guest unhappy. They talk to their friends and business drops.

Anyone who knows the tourism industry in the north-west knows that business is built on repeat business. A satisfied customer may visit the same lodge for 10, 20 or 30 years. Over the course of that time, in an extremely tough industry to make a living, that's how we lose a lot of business: if we are unable to satisfy a guest for any particular time. I would certainly encourage the committee to ask the tourism industry for their thoughts on this bill.

That said, I think it's important to offer this type of leave. It's important to protect the jobs of people who are facing serious family illness. The problem is that this bill does not go far enough. It has no income protection, and I wonder about it having adequate inspection.

We all know that the current Employment Standards Act is almost a joke. If you have a union, you're okay. If you don't have a union, you've got literally no protection. I've seen that working in the constituency office in my former job, when I worked with the former MPP. There, I helped a man who worked in one of the small communities in my riding. He was working for a year at this company. He was on the management track. He did all sorts of dirty and difficult jobs. He went above and beyond. He received excellent performance reviews, and yet he was let go so that the company could hire the owner's cousin, who had less experience. In that situ-

ation, the Employment Standards Act did nothing to help this individual.

And so, while I will support practically any measure that will strengthen our Employment Standards Act, this bill doesn't go far enough.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the member from Hamilton Mountain and the member from Kenora–Rainy River for their comments.

As the minister indicated before, we have identified a gap in the leaves that we currently have in place. I want to assure them that the government intends to ask the federal government to extend employment insurance to those who would take the new family caregiver leave, if the bill is passed. So the government does intend to ask for EI benefits for this proposed leave.

Going back to the gap, we now have in place the personal emergency leave and the family medical leave, and both have EI support. What the gap intends to address is, for example, if a family member falls ill unexpectedly, one could take advantage of the personal emergency leave, which would give the employee 10 days that they can take from work and would be paid by EI. If the family member was to become terminal, with a significant risk of death occurring within 26 weeks, then the employee could ask for the family medical leave, which would still be covered under EI. Then, let's say—how can I say it?—the family member would undergo an operation and then be recovering; that's when the family caregiver leave would kick in. And we will be asking the federal government—hopefully they will provide EI benefits.

Also the—

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's an honour again to stand in this chamber and discuss Bill 30 that the government is proposing.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we understand—the member from Durham earlier mentioned the compassion that we have for our families and family members. The member from Kenora–Rainy River put it quite well and eloquently, and the member from York South–Weston obviously has some valid points. But let's be clear about something: This bill has good intentions, but it doesn't—if you truly want to assist, you have to push a little further. You have to do more than just what this government is proposing.

And another theme that I've sort of picked up on—and there's a bit of a pattern being developed here—is that of passing the buck. They try to blame our federal cousins and counterparts for not doing their fair share. Quite obviously, they're not doing their fair share. I mean, it's one thing to be compassionate. We all love our families, we all have seniors and loved ones we want to help and assist. We want them to be comfortable in their own homes, live a life with dignity. But we need to actually look at a bill that's going to provide that kind of requirement. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I don't think this

bill goes far enough in what the government is trying to propose.

So if you're going to present something that is, again, window dressing—that's all this is. It's a feel-good kind of bill but there's no real substance to it. There's no foundation to it, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I don't think Bill 30 is a bill that I can support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments? The member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad you got that riding right. I was a little bit concerned about what your comments were going to be today.

But anyway, again, coming from a background that directly deals with individuals that are faced with the challenges of caring for their individuals, dealing with the stresses of every day and helping their family members, this bill definitely doesn't go far enough, and it's unfortunate. We have an opportunity here where we can really do something good for all Ontarians.

If we lived in a perfect world, where we all had good employers, where we all had that good relationship, we wouldn't need this legislation because we would have that ability, we would have that compassion between employee and employer to have that time off when we need it.

But we do have to build something. We do have to present some type of legislation in order to cover those individuals who are not in a union environment, who are not protected through certain regulations and legislation that should be in place. This is the opportunity that we have to help those individuals to take that time off when they need it to care for their family members. And it certainly doesn't go far enough.

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We're saying that you can take up to eight weeks off. Never mind eight weeks, just one week—one week is the decision that people are going to be faced with in order to take that time off for their loved one. They want to have that opportunity; they want to feel safe, like they can take that opportunity without any reprisals. So it's definitely going to be up to this government to make sure that we educate the public of their rights, that they can do this—not just a little ribbon on top of a vote. We have to make sure that they are fully aware of their rights so that they can do this and so we can benefit individuals. But let's take the time to push this and bring it to the level that it needs in order to bring the benefits that are supposed to come from it.

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

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Our government does want to give employees the one thing they need the most when their family or loved ones are ill or injured. We want to give them that time off with their loved ones, and that's why we've introduced this legislation, which, if passed, would give up to eight weeks of unpaid leave, job-protected time away from work to care for people and family members with a serious medical condition.

I want to respond to members opposite and how they keep saying that this bill is unworkable because employers won't grant this time off. It's up to eight weeks of unpaid leave. It provides them flexibility, whether the need is one week, three weeks or eight.

Family caregiver leave is a matter of compassion, and it's the right thing to do. At the end of the day, we want to help Ontarians in difficult times. I can't tell you, Speaker, how many times constituents in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East have come in and said that they're trying, they're struggling, to balance work with caring for an ill or injured family member, and they would welcome this kind of relief, this kind of support from our government. And I would like to think that all parties would be supportive of such a wonderful piece of proposed legislation.

As my colleague from York South–Weston indicated, we will be encouraging the federal government to allow workers to access employment insurance if they take the leave. It's the right decision for people in Ontario, and if passed, the bill would not come into force until July 1, 2012, to give adequate time for employers to transition and to be ready for this very important legislation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from Hamilton Mountain has two minutes to reply.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members from Guelph, Northumberland–Quinte West, Algoma–Manitoulin and Pickering–Scarborough East. It's definitely been an interesting debate happening here this morning, and there seems to be a consensus on this side of the House that it is a good bill; there just needs to be more to it.

I'm happy to hear that the intention is to go forward to get EI, but is that putting the cart before the horse? You know, that's a scary thought. People living paycheque to paycheque—how can they simply afford to just, you know, take up to eight weeks' time off? It sounds great, but most people probably wouldn't be able to afford to do that.

So I am happy to hear that your side will be going after EI. Will the feds come to that? I don't know. I really think that, if we are going to be opening the Employment Standards Act, we need to make sure that we're doing it right. If we're going to do it, let's do it right. The handbook may be a really great tool, making sure that employers are handing these out to the employees so that they know what their rights are. How many employees are actually even going to know that they have the right to this? Is the employer going to say, "Oh, there's new legislation that will help you out"? No. There may be some, because some communities, you know—there are great people out there. There are fabulous, great-hearted people out there, but there are some people who are there for the almighty dollar. They don't care. They have a drawer full of resumé's waiting for the next person to take your job if you're not going to be there that day.

Are people going to know their rights? That's my biggest concern about this. I look forward to further de-

bate. I know I will be supporting this. Hopefully we will get the EI to support it also. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate? The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You're doing a wonderful job in the chair today, keeping everybody directly on course and not drifting off too far afield.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to speak on the family caregiver act as the critic for labour for the PC Party. I also am very appreciative that the minister is once again in the House to listen to this debate on Bill 30.

I will start with this, because it's from the minister's own comments in the House this morning. She stated in the House, in her two-minute response to the member from Durham, that the minister had heard from a number of groups, a number of people. HR professionals was one of the groups that she mentioned that they had heard from.

The minister's statements in this House this morning are completely inconsistent with and at odds with what her own ministry personnel have stated to me on two occasions. During ministerial briefings, I asked the minister's political staff and the administrative staff in the ministry with whom they had spoken and what their response had been. The minister's own staff said they hadn't spoken to anybody and that there had been no efforts put forth for anybody to actually demonstrate that there's a need for this bill. So maybe at some point today, the minister could rise and clarify the inconsistency between her words in the House and her staff's words to me in the ministerial briefings.

I think a real crux of this bill is: Where is the demonstrable need? I've heard from the members of the third party, and I've heard from members of the government, about how people are being denied the time off to care for their loved ones.

I'll give you my own personal experience and observations of near 40 years in the workforce. I have never come across somebody who was denied time off for care of their loved ones—never, not once. It has never happened to me, either as a union electrician or a non-union electrician or during my time in retail. Never have I been denied time off.

I heard the members from the third party say things about reprisals and stuff. Reprisals from employers for people who take time off to care for their loved ones—I've not seen that. I guess maybe where I come from, it is a little bit more civil society than some of these other places, but once again, I've not experienced that, Speaker. The minister's staff has not collected any data. That's another great flaw in this bill: It doesn't provide any mechanism to actually collect data, to see if people are indeed being denied any time off or having reprisals for taking time off for caring for their loved ones.

I also think that there are the unseen and the unintended consequences of this bill. At the present time, if I'm an employee in a small business—and I'll say "small business" because most union collective bargaining agree-

ments have mechanisms in place to address family care for their collective bargaining members. But for small business people, the non-union sector, right now there is a mutual and natural check and balance in the arrangement. An employer is not going to want to lose a good employee. They're going to want to keep that good employee. They're going to provide flexibility and latitude for that employee to take time off to care for a loved one. And the employee is also going to be flexible and have some latitude to ensure that the employer is not overly burdened by those actions as well.

Under this act, that natural check and balance, that natural incentive for mutual agreement, is taken off the deck. The cards are no longer there. Now everybody will have up to eight weeks of time off, and it really is, as the member from Durham mentioned, so broad a spectrum. It's not even a sieve; it is just a big, empty net. Anybody can be in there and qualify as part of the family caregiver act to take time off for.

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Now, that on its own may not be a significant problem. But if this government gets its way, and we know—the ministry staff have told me quite clearly that they are pushing and advocating for the federal government to include time off for family caregiving as an insurable EI benefit. Take a look at this. We have this big, broad net: brothers, sisters, mothers, cousins, second cousins, third cousins, next-door neighbours. Anybody can be captured in this act, and you'll be able to take up to eight weeks, if the government has their way, of paid unemployment time off. I think you could make a good, strong case for a defined family member, but not such an expansive group of people.

Also, it doesn't identify what the illness or the injury or the ailment has to be. If somebody is sick with a cold for eight weeks, it would qualify under this bill. If somebody is feeling a little down in the dumps, they would qualify under this bill. We certainly must have in this bill a requirement that the injury or the illness is a significant impairment and prevents that person from, indeed, caring for themselves and requires assistance. But this bill, in my view, Speaker, is nothing but political posturing by the Liberal government. It really—

Hon. John Gerretsen: Oh, how can you say that?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, if you were here, Minister, you would have heard my arguments, but you were asleep at the switch once again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member will take his seat. I would suggest that the member does not get personal and sticks to the script—and withdraw that last statement.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Anyway, Speaker, those are a few of the significant problems with this bill—not just what is today, but what is going to come out of it tomorrow. If the government does indeed get their wish of employment premiums or benefits out of this bill, it really must be tightened up.

I think, if the government was being honest and truthful and not just using this bill as a political-posturing

mechanism, that they would define, in this bill, who would qualify, under what conditions they would qualify, and they would also put it right in the bill that they expect that the federal government—or if they're not going to provide that insurable benefit, then cough it up themselves. Put the money where the bill is, Minister. If you really think that this is important, if you really don't believe that it's just a political-posturing bill, put the money in the bill and provide the insurable benefit for those people who need to take time off and provide care for their loved ones.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Trinity–Spadina will get in his seat if he wants to talk.

Mr. Randy Hillier: That would demonstrate—not just to me, but it would demonstrate to everybody in this House, it would demonstrate to everybody in this province—that the Liberals are taking this seriously and not just using it for political posturing.

Once again, they have not collected any data to demonstrate that there is a need for this. There's no empirical—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to thank the member. This will continue at another time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It is 10:15, and this House stands adjourned until 10:30. Thank you.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce constituents from the agricultural community, specifically the Ontario Harness Horse Association people who are visiting us here today at Queen's Park: Paul Lindsey, Kent Baker, Dave Gibson and Dave Heffering. They and others will be visiting members with respect to the issue facing many of the people in the agricultural community today.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome Kevin and Anne Moynihan, who are joining us from Halifax, Nova Scotia, the in-laws of my staffer Li Koo; and a friend of mine, Janet Henley, who is from north Toronto, the Eglinton–Lawrence riding. It's very nice to have you here.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I just had a wonderful meeting with Family Service Toronto and I'd like to welcome Stefanie Morra, Pearl Mendonça and Madeline Kingston.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'd like to introduce, in the members' east gallery today, Dr. Michael Bell and his daughter, Bianca, who are here with me today. They won a lunch with the MPP. Of course, Dr. Bell was the very distinguished candidate for the Green Party in the 2011 federal election, and we certainly welcome both of them here today.

Also, in the members' east gallery is Mr. Rick Johnson, the former MPP for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock in the 39th Parliament.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. We always warmly welcome all former members.

Further introductions?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Alex Forgay and Nancy Bell, who are in the gallery. They're the proud parents of Alex Forgay, a page here in our page program from the riding of St. Paul's. Let's please give them a warm welcome. In fact, I think Alex is the page captain today.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to welcome Mr. Richard Helbig and Mr. James Richardson from Aurora.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. I want to ask the Minister of Finance about his role and that of his ministry in the Ornge scandal. On April 13 of last year, when questions were first raised about the scandal in this chamber and about the irregularities at Ornge, the Minister of Finance stood in his place in response to one of those questions and said this: "I can assure the Legislature and the people of Ontario that the contractual arrangements with Ornge protect the interest of taxpayers unequivocally."

Speaker, given that there's now a criminal investigation into those contractual arrangements, can the minister tell us why he felt so compelled to so vigorously defend this organization? Can he tell us who he got that information from last April?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is aware that we expect the Auditor General's report today. There's a criminal investigation going on that's being conducted by the OPP, and I look forward to the recommendations of the Auditor General, as does our government. I would remind the member opposite—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: —that the OPP investigation will—I'm not certain when that will be completed, but that will also assist all of us in understanding what went on there.

Clearly, there were challenges that we were not aware of at the time, in April. I welcome the Auditor General, as well as the OPP investigation, to assist us in getting closer to understanding what precisely occurred at Ornge over the course of the last number of years—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: It's not enough to say that there's an investigation going on. It's not enough to say that the Auditor General will report the results of his investigation. The question that I put to the minister was very specific. I want to know now who's investigating the Ministry of Finance for the information that they gave the

minister so that he could stand in this place and say that, unequivocally, he can assure the taxpayers that the terms of the contractual arrangements are in the best interest of the taxpayer.

Will the minister now stand in his place and tell us who gave him that information that allowed him so boldly to stand in his place and say that he could unequivocally assure taxpayers that their best interests are being met?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Later today, the Minister of Health will be bringing forward legislation that will contain the government's entire response to this very—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The convention is, when I stand, it gets quiet.

Minister.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Minister of Health will be bringing forward new legislation today. We've signed a new performance agreement. The OPP is key, in my view—and I think it's the view of all members of the House—to understanding what precisely went wrong.

To the member opposite, I do regret saying that last year. There's no question. We on this side of the House are confident the OPP will do the kind of investigation that the Minister of Health has asked them to. I'm confident that the legislation the minister is bringing forward today is appropriate. I'm confident in the Auditor General, and I'm confident the OPP will help us get to the bottom of this.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, finally there is one cabinet minister here who actually regrets that he said what he said about this issue, and I want to commend him for that. But there are many others who have not accepted responsibility, and that speaks to the need for having a select committee of the Legislature where people can come forward and tell us exactly what they knew. The OPP investigation won't go there; the Auditor General's scope will not include that. There are many front-line people who want to come and tell us what happened and what must be done to restore confidence in our air ambulance service.

I want to know from the minister now, in the same spirit that he admitted that he was wrong when he made the statement in April: Will he stand in his place and admit that we need a select committee, and will he support a select committee of the Legislature to get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me first of all say to the member opposite and all Ontarians that our Minister of Health has taken every appropriate and necessary step in a timely fashion to get at the bottom of this most unfortunate set of circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, let's just review what we've done. First of all, the Auditor General will be reporting today. I look

forward to his recommendations, as does the Minister of Health, and she will act on those recommendations.

Second of all, we asked the OPP to come in and look at this because, quite frankly, the member opposite and others know that what went on here could possibly—and we don't know for certain. We'll wait for their investigation. We will learn things that nobody had access to, I suspect, as a result of this. We have taken all the appropriate steps in as timely a fashion as is possible. I'm confident the Auditor—

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

1040

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is also to the Minister of Finance. The Auditor General's report, as you've just indicated, is going to be released about an hour from now. The Minister of Health—as you know, and we all know if we're in cabinet—has had the report in her hand for several weeks. She knows what it will say, and that's probably why she's not here today. She knows it will say that she—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member knows that we do not reference people's attendance in the House, by tradition.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: She knows it will say she had greater oversight ability than she has been telling the public, the media and the members of this House. Who—I say to the Minister of Finance, through the Speaker—made the decision to say that the minister didn't have the oversight abilities which the auditor says she does?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I look forward to the Auditor General's report today, but more importantly, I look forward to the legislation the minister will bring forward today. Most importantly, I ask that member and the party opposite: Will they support that legislation? Because the Minister of Health has acted in the interest of all Ontario taxpayers in a comprehensive and timely fashion. She has responded in a situation that, in my view, is unprecedented—certainly something that I have never seen. I have confidence in her ability to deal with the Auditor General's report. I look forward to the introduction of her legislation today, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to the support of the official opposition for that legislation as quickly as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Finance: I think, again, we're hearing a minister and a government who are more focused on issues management than actually getting to the bottom of the scandal at Ornge.

I'm going to give the Minister of Finance another opportunity to answer to this House. If the decision to have the minister pretend she lacked oversight powers for Ornge came from the Premier's office staff—who were, as we now know, briefed on the alarming and intricate

web of Ornge businesses—I ask the minister, how are they being held accountable?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I have confidence that the Auditor General of Ontario will present us with a full and comprehensive report. I have confidence in the Ontario Provincial Police, that their criminal investigation will result in an appropriate response from them as to whether or not criminal activity took place. I have great confidence in the Minister of Health and the way she has handled this, Mr. Speaker. It has been a difficult issue. The opposition is now on a fishing expedition.

I'm looking forward to the introduction of legislation this afternoon that the minister will bring to this House, and I look forward to the support of that member and her colleagues for that legislation, because what's important to Ontarians is that we move forward and we correct the challenges that were there. The Minister of Health is doing just that, Mr. Speaker, and I have confidence in the—

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Mr. Speaker, we also have confidence in the Auditor General. But we know that the scope of his investigation is limited, and that's why we, again, want to make sure that we have a select committee to get to the bottom of what happened at Ornge.

The auditor is going to say that the minister had the power to oversee Ornge and step in and actually do something to prevent the scandals there. If the Minister of Health is not willing to acknowledge that, and if she's not going to honour the word she gave to the members of this House to support a select committee, then I ask the member, the Minister of Finance opposite, is she prepared to be held accountable, as a cabinet minister should be, and do the honourable thing and resign?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, our Premier, our government and every member on this side of the House has full confidence in the Minister of Health. She has taken appropriate action in a timely fashion. She called in the Auditor General. She called in the OPP. She has dealt with an unprecedented situation. They talk a good game, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A reminder that when I stand, we do get quiet and don't use it as an opportunity to throw in some last jarbs, please.

Interjection: Barbs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yeah, barbs. Minister.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The party opposite refuses to acknowledge that public accounts meets next week. We'll call witnesses. We'll deal with this.

This issue is a challenging one. It is rife with all kinds of unprecedented situations. The Minister of Health has

dealt with every one of them, in our view, properly, appropriately and timely, something—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: —the calibre, the type of minister she is is something we never saw in that government. We're proud of her. We stand behind her. We're going to rebuild this thing and make sure all Ontarians are satisfied that we've taken the right steps.

Interjections.

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: To the Acting Premier: On March 5, the Minister of Health promised, "If it is the will of this Legislature that there be a select committee ... I will, of course, be fully supportive of that."

Yesterday, a majority of elected representatives in this Legislature voted to strike an all-party select committee to get to the root of the debacle at Ornge. My question: Will the Acting Premier abide by the will of this Legislature and promise to strike that select committee today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I'd like to update members on a meeting of the public accounts committee that was held this morning where it was confirmed that, on March 28, as well as April 4 and April 18, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, a standing committee of this Legislature, will be holding hearings on Ornge. It's going to begin in the morning of March 28 with the Auditor General briefing the committee on the contents of his report. In the afternoon, the committee will have the opportunity—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shouting people down is not the tradition of this place.

Hon. John Milloy: In the afternoon, the committee will hear from the Deputy Minister of Health, as well as Ron McKerlie, the acting CEO of Ornge.

I also understand that members brought forward, including the New Democratic Party, a list of witnesses which will be discussed later on during the subcommittee meeting.

There is a standing committee of this Legislature, one which is respected, one which is known—

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Evidently the government will ignore the will of this House, just as it has ignored countless whistle-blowers and its own powers of investigation under the performance agreement until the debacle at Ornge made headline news.

Here's what one of those headlines said under George Smitherman in December. He wrote, "... the ministry did not conduct proper oversight ... it is a commentary on my successors and the ministry." Today, he asks, "What did

the minister do? Let's call them what they are—the funder. What did sugar daddy do?"

Does the Acting Premier agree with the former health minister's characterization, and will he promise to strike a select committee today?

Hon. John Milloy: I don't think the member recognizes, as a new member, that he is—

Interjection.

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

Hon. John Milloy: —that he is, in fact, attacking a standing committee of this Legislature, which is chaired by the opposition.

All members from all sides of the House, members from all parties, unanimously agreed that the public accounts committee would look into the Ornge situation. They have asked the Auditor General to come forward, they have senior officials coming forward, and they'll be meeting later this week to discuss other witnesses that will come forward.

The standing committees of this Legislature have unbelievable power when it comes to summoning witnesses and looking into every corner of an—

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Mr. Speaker, we're not attacking anybody. We want the truth in this House for once and for all. Today, the Auditor General is going to give us that truth, and it's expected that he will highlight the fact that the Minister of Health had the power to open the books at Ornge but did not use it. On top of that, her ministry ignored the warning signs from accountants and employees blowing the whistle and from members of this Legislature.

Does the Acting Premier think that somebody who hasn't done their job should keep it?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the member will not take yes for an answer. He is standing here today and talking about an Auditor General's report and his desire to have a committee of this Legislature look into that report. Mr. Speaker, a committee of this Legislature, chaired by the opposition, is looking into this report. As I said yesterday, far be it from me to meddle in the internal affairs of another party, but I'm sure that if the member speaks to the whip, he can be subbed in to ask questions of public accounts, which is meeting on March 28.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health is introducing legislation this afternoon, and I look forward to the support of the NDP and the Conservatives as we move forward with legislation to address concerns about the Ornge situation.

HOME CARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Your government continues saying that you're increasing funding to home care, yet in our constituency offices in Hearst, Kapuskasing and Timmins, we literally

get dozens of calls every week about people who are being given reduced services from home care.

I want to give you an example. We have Rollande Dumaresq, who's blind and who lives in Kapuskasing. She was getting a day and a half a week where somebody would come in and do her personal care, her bathing, her light housekeeping and her meal preparation. She gets a call last Wednesday saying that that's now going to be reduced down to 0.5 hours per day, two days a week. How is Rollande able to stay at home independently if you're continually cutting the services that she needs to be able to stay there?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it's difficult for me to respond on a specific case. I will take that information and relay it to the Minister of Health on that specifically.

What I can tell the member opposite is that we have invested more than 1.1 billion additional dollars in our Aging at Home strategy.

The other thing I can share with the member opposite is that I do concur there's more to be done. He's right about that. I met with a constituent yesterday who just had his services increased. He has MS. It was well publicized in our local media. Those cases are happening as well.

So we'll look at that individual case to have a better understanding of what happened in that circumstance. We've invested more than \$1.1 billion, but there is more to do. I acknowledge that and concur with the member opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the Deputy Premier: It shouldn't take a constituent having to call their MPP in order to deal with what needs to be done automatically in our health care system. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

The other one is Judith Moses. Judith is a frail individual who lives in the city of Timmins. She is a person who is frail and is not able to do much of what she needs to do at home. She needs services every day in her home to prepare her meals, to do the things that need to be done for her to be able to live independently. She's incontinent at night. She needs somebody to change the bed. Now she goes from seven days a week to two. How is she to stay in her home independently if you're going to be reducing those services?

Will you commit to increasing the funding to those services, or doing the shift in resources, in order to make sure that people are able to live at home independently and don't have to call their MPP to get their services?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, Mr. Speaker, it's difficult for me to respond to an individual case. I'll undertake to follow up with the Minister of Health on that.

But I would like to point out to the member opposite, and colleagues in the Legislature, that our 14 community care access centres have helped more than 200,000 people go to home from hospital. Some 150,000 seniors are living safely in their community; 1,600 children with complex chronic diseases are being assisted every day; 23,000 dying people have the ability to stay at home with

their families. Thousands of people find the different health care services they need and which are provided to more than 50,000 children.

Mr. Speaker, there are always going to be circumstances, unfortunately, like the member raises. I also see circumstances that are the opposite, where services have gone up, but I do undertake to look into that specific case. Ideally, we want to ensure—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I appreciate the offer to look independently into these particular cases. We've already done so with our CCAC. But here's what the problem is: There's \$116 million a year for the northeastern Ontario CCAC. It covers Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, North Bay and every community going north. The issue is, there's not enough money to go around. We have an increasing, aging population who have a deeper need year over year, and there are more people going into the system. So what is the CCAC doing? It's saying, "Listen, we're going to try to reduce services to those people whom we think we can do that with so that we can increase services to those people who are in higher need." The long and the short of the story is that people are going to fail as a result of that. So what I'm looking for from you is a commitment through this budget process that in fact you're going to do something to deal with making sure that people can stay at home independently and have a system that works for them.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We already have that system, Mr. Speaker; I remind the member of that.

I hope the member and his party opposite will support the proposals that the Minister of Health has made public about how we're going to fund health care across the range of services. I would point out that, yes, there will be some things in the budget around home care. But what troubles me is that that member and his party voted against every home care initiative in our past budgets. They voted against, for instance, 10,000 new nurses.

They will pick out individual cases, which is fair. We'll follow up on those. We'll also point out cases where people are staying at home. I've pointed out one individual in my riding, whom I'd never met before, who has MS. He has been able to stay at home for eight years as a result of increasing services. This government and party have the right plan. My hope is, that member and his party will have the courage to support it when the budget is brought—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question: the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have a very serious question for the Deputy Premier, and I think every member of this assembly deserves a straight and very clear response. Can the Deputy Premier tell this House the secret location of the bunker that the Minister of Health and the Premier are hiding in today?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find that the member's question is inappropriate and not to the con-

ventions of this place. I will ask her to ask her supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: There has been a stunning and appalling lack of leadership between the minister and the Premier. They missed a vote in this House last night to have a select committee, and I want to know—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This will be a warning that if another mention of someone's attendance is made, I will skip your question and move on.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Mr. Speaker, the autism intervention program is delivered through nine regional service providers to children on the severe end of autism spectrum disorder. This program is a lifeline to children and families struggling with autism. My question is this: What evaluation is done of this program to ensure that children with autism are receiving the highest-quality and most effective treatment?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, as always, I appreciate the question from the member opposite. It gives me the opportunity to remind everyone in the Legislature of our investments to help families that have kids with autism. In fact, since 2003, when this government first came into power, we have more than quadrupled autism investment, to a total of \$186 million annually this year alone. I should mention, as well, last year's new investment of \$25 million specifically for ABA treatment, which is an important form of treatment that I believe approximately 8,000 new children with autism will be able to avail themselves of. That is a new program.

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We will continue to meet with experts and service providers, as well as with parents of children and youth with autism, to make sure that we provide the best possible services.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: It would appear that the reports are compiled outlining the number of children entering and leaving the program. However, evaluations of how the children responded to the treatment and the effectiveness of the programs are not being completed, in spite of the requirements for this evaluation under the program guidelines.

The minister has received correspondence from concerned parents, including an email to MPPs documenting this issue on March 15. When will the minister commit to evaluating these programs so that the best practices can be determined and children with autism are receiving the highest quality of care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It is a good opportunity, actually, for me to mention that not only does there exist a process of appeal if parents with children and youth with autism feel that the treatment provided to them could be altered or improved, but importantly—and I think we all appreciate that parents do want to know how their children are

progressing, the impact of the treatment that they're receiving, the treatment and services that best meet their needs. We are establishing an autism spectrum disorders clinical expert committee to accomplish exactly what the member opposite is asking for and to provide advice to the ministry on effective interventions, emerging research and best clinical practices, so that the experts, on an ongoing basis, can assure the parents that their children and youth are getting the care they require.

USER FEES

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. Minister, it was recently announced that the Ministry of Transportation would be phasing in incremental increases on a number of various MTO services, such as replacing lost drivers' licences, issuing permits for off-road vehicles and plate validation renewals.

These fees have been around for decades, as we all know. Ontarians understand that when they use certain services, a reasonable fee is involved to cover the cost of providing that service.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Do these increases ensure that MTO's fee structures remain fair for the taxpayers of Pickering–Scarborough East and all Ontarians, while allowing priority investments to be made in the future for our transportation infrastructure?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Pickering–Scarborough East for the question. Indeed, these changes do safeguard that Ontario's fees remain fair for all types of road users.

The fact of the matter is, the last time these fees for automobile validation renewals were raised was in 1997, 15 years ago, when the members for Halton, Oxford, Durham, Oshawa, Newmarket–Aurora, Haldimand–Norfolk, York–Simcoe and Wellington–Halton Hills, all Conservatives, voted to raise them.

Another fact is that inflation alone over the past 15, 20 and 25 years has led to many of these fees being critically below the cost of the services they are designed to cover. That difference is something that taxpayers ultimately end up having to absorb, and that disparity only grows over time.

Rather than subsidizing someone else's driver's licence replacement—

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —or snowmobile—

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

I remind members that when I say thank you, that is the last word. I would like you to finish the wrap-up, and then you sit down.

Supplementary?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Minister. I can't think of many services in Ontario where the cost of those services is the same as or less than they were 20 years ago, in 1992. Car washes, theatre tickets and newspapers cost significantly more nowadays than they did 20 years

ago, even though these things have changed very little, if anything, in two decades.

I think most taxpayers would agree that essentially subsidizing other people's things like snowmobile permits is not necessarily an efficient or fair use of their tax dollars. I know the PC Party disagrees with that, and we all know they are for keeping unsustainable subsidies in place these days.

Can the minister assure Ontarians that Ontario fees will not become an undue disadvantage relative to other provinces in our country?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member raises some interesting parallels. Our fees are being brought more into line with the national average but will remain lower than most, even in 2015.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to passenger vehicle validation fees, right now in New Brunswick, for example, the fee is \$172; in British Columbia, it's \$142; in Manitoba, it's \$119; in Quebec, it's \$104; in Nova Scotia, it's \$100; in Ontario, it is \$74. In 2015, the maximum fee in Ontario will be \$98, still below all of the above.

There are some tough choices that lie ahead, but when faced with the choice between supporting better health care, better education and better roads, or supporting millions in subsidies for racetracks and snowmobile permits, unlike the party opposite, our party will choose better health care—

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the Deputy Premier: The Minister of Health says that new legislation to increase oversight at Ornge is coming today, but she knows that the auditor already found she had the oversight powers to step in.

The reason Ornge is in the mess it is today is because Minister Matthews did not have the good judgment to act in response to warnings about spinoff companies stealing valuable health care dollars, or of cooked books, or the almost daily revelations of crew and patient safety being compromised.

Why change the legislation when the problem is the minister who oversaw the scandals at Ornge and did nothing?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, this government welcomes the Auditor General's report. We welcome the OPP investigation. Clearly, the new legislation the minister is bringing in today is designed to deal with a circumstance that had never happened before. What is important is that the minister has acted in a timely fashion—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: She has, first of all, ensured—and I know all Ontarians agree, contrary to what the member opposite suggested—that we have the best paramedics, the best air ambulance service around. All those

steps have been appropriate, and I look forward to his support of the minister's legislation when she introduces it later—

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

Mr. Bill Walker: To the Deputy Premier again: Improving oversight only works when you can trust the people doing the oversight. The minister and top Premier's office staff were given a 30-page briefing note about what Ornge was up to. Even when they are spoon-fed the information, they do nothing.

The minister's failure to step in when she could shows her bad judgment. She no longer has the trust of Ontarians. She cannot fix the problem because she is the problem. Why hasn't she resigned?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Minister of Health has dealt appropriately, timely and reasonably, and has done all the right things to make sure that this never happens again. I would suggest, with respect, that the people of Ontario have confidence in that minister, as does every member on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. I have had the opportunity to serve in public life for some 23 years in a variety of capacities, and I am proud of the response to a very difficult circumstance.

I look forward to the Auditor General's report later today. We look forward to receiving the OPP investigation. We look forward, as the minister has said, to responding to all of the Auditor General's recommendations. I put that Minister of Health up against any Tory on that side of the House, and certainly any Tory health minister in the past. One of the—

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

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan American Games. On February 28, I asked the minister about concerns raised by Paul Henderson respecting the games going over budget. The minister said at the time that less than 3% of the budget had been spent and that we are still negotiating venues. Sixty percent of the venues have been clustered from 51 sites to 30 sites.

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Speaker, will the minister tell Ontarians the details of the tendering processes and the actual operating and new construction costs associated with these significant venue changes?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am very proud of the fact that Toronto 2015 has been doing what's necessary to provide a world-class set of games to Ontario. They have just made a presentation to PASO down in Mexico. They'll be updating their website with some of the details of that presentation. We are undergoing, in regard to finalizing those venue announcements.

I am extremely excited, as should all Ontarians be, about the outstanding contribution that the games will bring in 2015. Over 10,000 athletes and officials will be

attending. More than 15,000 jobs will be brought to the province. This is going to do an amazing amount to promote athleticism, tourism and economic—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Charles Sousa: —for the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Once again, I didn't get an answer. Speaker, we have two and a half years until the opening of these games. Minister Sousa's Pan Am website states that we will see economic development, as he just said, through building new and improved sport and recreation infrastructure.

With the new clustering of event venues and no public financial accounting to date, Speaker, will this minister tell us where these venues will be located, and where the money for building the new venues, some so far from Athletes' Village, will come from? And when will the financing of these games be shown to the taxpayers of Ontario? We've been asking for a long time. What's the price?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We do know that there's a contribution of over \$500 million from the federal government. They're contributing now in terms of the venues and the construction of the venues. They'll be putting up 60%. The municipalities will be putting up 40%. The government of Ontario's putting up \$500 million as well, for operating.

There's a total of about \$1.4 billion in that budget. That is out there already, in the public domain. We have made every effort to ensure that things are done on time, and Mr. Speaker, we're doing everything we can to make sure it's on budget. I am very, very proud of the efforts and the work done by those individuals.

To the member across the way: I am extremely anxious to get everything out there openly and transparently. It is my desire to do the same, because we want to ensure confidence in what's being done. I'm sure the member across will be just as excited once—

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

TOURISM

Mr. Monte Kwinter: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. In the midst of the global economic uncertainty, major cities around the world are competing with one another to corner the tourism market and to remain major destinations for tourists. The city of Toronto is no exception.

As a major metropolis and Ontario's capital, Toronto is constantly competing with overseas markets, and that is why it's important for the government to ensure that Toronto remains a destination of choice for national and international visitors.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what reassurance can this government offer to Toronto residents to let them know that their city is fiercely competing for tourism despite challenges to major economies?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member from York Centre for asking.

The member will be happy to hear that Tourism Toronto recently reported that 2011 was a record year for tourism in the city. For the first time ever, the number of sold hotel rooms surpassed nine million—a wonderful record indeed. Visitor spending, including same-day trips, totalled \$4.6 billion in the Toronto region, covering a range of businesses and activities while employing 242,000 people in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Our government remains proud and committed to actively engaging new and emerging markets to enhance Toronto's and Ontario's tourism industry, and we will continue to move forward to attract new visitors.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm happy to see that Toronto has improved its visitor numbers and continues to grow in the tourism market. However, in addition to overnight stays, I'm sure Torontonians would like to know their city is benefiting from tourism that attracts hosting and events. The city is equipped with a multitude of venues that are second to none, which should be used to showcase what Toronto has to offer.

Speaker, can the minister indicate what sorts of attractions are bringing tourists to Toronto and what exactly this government is doing to invest in the city's tourism so that it may continue to compete on an international level?

Hon. Michael Chan: Our efforts have firmly placed Toronto and Ontario on the world map as a premier global travel destination by offering one-of-a-kind festivals, cultural attractions, conventions and world-class sporting events that generate jobs and strengthen our economy.

Toronto has hosted a number of organizations and signature events. Last year, Speaker, our government was proud to welcome the International Indian Film Academy Awards to Toronto, drawing tens of thousands of visitors and enabling our economy to gain a greater share of India's \$125-million overseas film production industry. This year, Speaker, the city welcomed the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada for their conference, which drew close to 30,000 people to the city. And this July, Toronto will host—

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

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Deputy Premier. On March 1, the Minister of Health looked the members of this House in the eye and said, "If it is the will of this Legislature that a select committee be struck, I will be nothing but supportive."

Well, the Legislature has spoken. It is our will that a select committee be struck, yet the minister has been silent. Deputy Premier, where is the minister and why is she not supporting our call for a select committee?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is desperately close to making an assumption of someone's attendance here in the House. I understand what she said. I don't like the idea that it's walking the line. I would ask and remind the member not to do that again.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Once again, I know that the honourable member would never want to leave the impression that standing committees or the committees of this Legislature are not looking into the Ornge situation. As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, on March 28, the public accounts committee, a standing committee of this Legislature, which in fact is chaired by one of her colleagues, will be looking into the Ornge situation.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In this case, I was actually trying to hear clearly and the member is sitting right beside me. I still couldn't hear, so please.

The answer?

Hon. John Milloy: On March 28, at 9 a.m., it will begin with a briefing by the Auditor General, followed by an appearance in the afternoon by the Deputy Minister of Health and the interim executive director of Ornge. Mr. Speaker, at the same time, the minister will be tabling legislation, introducing it in the House this afternoon, which, if it receives second reading, we anticipate will go to a parliamentary committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The will of the Legislature has been very clearly stated, and that is to have a select committee to look into this matter. The public accounts committee is not set up for that. They track progress in fixing the financial mismanagement the auditor identified. Similarly, the OPP is looking at evidence of criminal wrongdoing, not the focus that we need to have. And the legislation that the minister is proposing to bring in this afternoon is completely premature because we don't even know what the problem is. That is why we ask again, will you set up a select committee that has been identified and voted and supported by the will of this Legislature?

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I thought the standing ovation was for me.

Let me review for members once again. We have had a forensic audit of Ornge. We have an OPP investigation into Ornge. We have the Auditor General's report, which will be made public very shortly. We have the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which has the full authority of any standing committee to call witnesses, to ask for papers. There was a committee meeting this morning which began to plan their hearings into Ornge. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, very shortly, the Minister of Health will be introducing legislation to this Legislature, which, if it passes second reading, I anticipate will go to committee, which will have an opportunity to examine the Ornge situation.

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I further add, Mr. Speaker, as my friend the deputy House leader keeps pointing out, there are nine standing

committees of this Legislature, and under the standing orders of—

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, on Monday, you stated in this House: "When we discuss programs, serious programs, which this government brought in, we do that in concert with our stakeholders. So we're having discussions with the agricultural sector. We'll sit down with our stakeholders ... to make sure that we get things right...."

Minister, the OLG revenue-sharing agreement was supported by your government for many years. In fact, in 2008, your government commissioned a study which found that the agreement was beneficial for the province. And, sir, the equine sector is a major agricultural stakeholder in the province. Minister, did you consult with the farm families that depend on the horse industry for their livelihood before your government decided to kill it?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: To the Minister of Finance and the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not seeking quiet for you to continue.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. conducted public consultations beginning in January through to June 2011. They met with First Nations, they met with casino owners and operators, responsible gambling researchers, racetrack owners, horse people, industry leaders, operators in other jurisdictions, convenience store operators and government organizations. The consultations were conducted to hear stakeholder perceptions on the future of lottery and gaming in Ontario, to learn about best practices from within the province and around the world, and to identify opportunities to work with the private sector or stakeholders in new ways. The consistent message, Mr. Speaker, was that we had to change the way we're doing business, we had to be more effective and better at what we were doing, and we are—

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Again to the Minister of Agriculture: The horse racing industry creates more than 30,000 direct jobs in the rural parts of Ontario: people who pay taxes, who in fact pay for health care and who create another 30,000 spinoff jobs—jobs that will disappear because your government decided to renege on a contract. The overall losses in the agricultural sector will be far greater than any money that your government will claim to save.

To the Minister of Agriculture: What do you have to say to the thousands of farm families who will lose their livelihood because of your government's decision?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think what needs to be put on the record is what we can do in rural Ontario with \$345 million. For instance, Mr. Speaker, this sector receives two and a half times more than all the money made available to nine other sectors for risk management. With \$345 million, we could hire 18 times more what is needed for meat inspection in rural Ontario; and we could cover all of rural Ontario with broadband. We are spending two times more on this than we spend on the rural economic development fund for all of rural Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, these are difficult choices. Our priority is to move in the direction we've indicated. The NDP are trying to have it both ways. They oppose gambling one day, and the next—

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

QUEEN ELIZABETH II DIAMOND JUBILEE MEDAL

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, this is a landmark year in Canada: 2012 marks the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's ascension to the throne. It is the year of her Diamond Jubilee. This is an incredible landmark, Mr. Speaker.

This year-long celebration gives Ontarians a chance to look back and thank Her Majesty for her tireless service to Ontario and to Canada. It also gives all of us in this House the opportunity to recognize outstanding community leaders who exemplify the Queen's kindness, generosity and sense of duty.

Minister, you've mentioned in this House before that the Diamond Jubilee Medals will be awarded to a number of deserving Ontarians. My question to the minister is: How will this medal serve to recognize those deserving individuals in our communities?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to thank the great member from Ajax-Pickering for the question.

This year marks the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. The last monarch to celebrate a Diamond Jubilee was Queen Victoria, in 1897. To recognize this milestone, the province will recognize over 2,000 outstanding Ontarians with a Diamond Jubilee Medal, and these medal recipients are people who have used their time and talents to make our province a better place to live. Residents of Ontario can be nominated if they are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident and have distinguished themselves in their fields.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fitting way to celebrate Her Majesty and the importance she puts on service to others.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Joe Dickson: Minister, I know that there is a lot of excitement out there about these awards. People are asking how they can nominate worthy community members from their own community. In my community of

Ajax-Pickering alone, there are a number of individuals whose commitment and service have been extraordinary, and these will be announced very shortly.

Minister, how can members of this House and all Ontarians nominate deserving members of our communities for a Diamond Jubilee Medal?

Hon. Charles Sousa: This is an exciting opportunity to recognize some truly outstanding individuals. All members of provincial Parliament have the opportunity to nominate residents of their ridings to receive Diamond Jubilee Medals. This will ensure that they reach every corner of the province and reward those Ontarians who share the bravery, kindness and commitment demonstrated by the Queen.

In addition, all Ontarians have a chance to nominate members of their community for a Diamond Jubilee Medal. Ontarians can visit the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's website and fill out the online nomination form.

Throughout her reign, Her Majesty has been an inspiration to people around the world. Let us recognize extraordinary Ontarians in honour of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Education. Minister, last week you defended the fact that your government broke a revenue-sharing agreement by saying that the agreement only benefits "a few wealthy racetrack owners." Minister, obviously you have heard from Ontarians who are incensed by your absolutely disgraceful comments. Do you still agree that the revenue-sharing agreement that you have broken only benefits a few wealthy racetrack owners?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: To the Minister of Finance.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to take the question, for which I have responsibility—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, last and only warning.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We've been talking today a lot about Ornge, Mr. Speaker. This year we'll spend \$150 million on Ornge. That compares to \$345 million to the horse racing industry.

These are difficult and necessary choices. With the \$345 million we can continue to hire nurses in our small rural hospitals who will contribute to the economy. We can keep teachers in small rural schools. That is our priority: more teachers in rural schools and more nurses in rural hospitals.

1130

These times call for difficult and necessary choices. We've made one here. It's the appropriate thing under the circumstances. Our priorities are—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I can tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker: The horse racing industry is not Ornge.

Minister, today in the members' gallery we have Ms. Rosie Shellswell. Rosie is not a wealthy racetrack owner. Rosie is 31 years old. She has cared for horses and has prepared them for racing for the past 16 years. This is her livelihood. Rosie cannot drive because she has an inoperable brain tumour. She can only dream of having an income and a chauffeur and all the benefits similar to those you, as the minister, have. Yet Rosie continues to smile and care for her horses and has never received one penny of compensation from the taxpayers of Ontario.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Or your leader. Your leader has one. Your leader has a chauffeur.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Why don't you shut up, okay?
Interjections.

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

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I withdraw that, sir.

Rosie is one of 60,000-plus people who will not be able to earn a living as a result of your sad and pathetic destruction of the horse racing industry, an industry that has returned some \$16 billion to this province. Minister, can you explain to Rosie what prompted you to kill 60,000 Ontario jobs, and do you have the courage to actually apologize to Rosie and others like her in this province for your comments?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There are people who are losing their jobs. These are difficult and necessary choices, but we have a \$16-billion deficit. The member opposite feigns deep concern but waits till the last minute of question period to ask questions. Two weeks ago, they said we should end all corporate subsidies. Just be careful, I would say to the industry, to work with all sides of the House, because they say one thing one day and quite a different thing the other day. We differ with them; these are difficult transitions.

There will be a horse racing industry. It will be comparable in size to others. Unfortunately, these difficult and necessary choices are being made in the best interests of all Ontarians.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This question is to the Acting Premier. We have learned today that the dozens of hospital projects that the Liberal government had promised during the election campaign, just a few short months ago, are on the chopping block. In my community, we have been waiting for years for a new facility at Peel Memorial Hospital. Promise after promise has been made and broken. In October 2007, the McGuinty government announced funding for this hospital. Four years later, again on the eve of an election, this funding was re-announced. Can the Acting Premier assure my commu-

ity that the Peel Memorial Hospital redevelopment will actually move forward?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, we're proud of the 23 hospitals that were built or under construction under our government, certainly compared to the 28 hospitals that were closed by the Conservative government. We have been making unprecedented investments in infrastructure over the last seven years. Indeed, the average infrastructure investment by the previous government was \$2.6 billion per year. Our average, over the last seven years, has been over \$10 billion per year.

The article that appeared in the newspaper today is inaccurate in many respects. I would encourage the member to pay attention to the budget. The reality is that there will be some adjustments made in our profiling of infrastructure, but we will still have a very robust infrastructure budget creating many jobs.

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

I offer to the members an observation, and the observation is one of my difficulty in hearing, sometimes, the question, and, most of the times, the answer. Sometimes people point their fingers at each other, saying they said something unparliamentary. I cannot hear everything that is said and done. This is about the honour of members not using unparliamentary language. If any member uses unparliamentary language, I will accept a point of order to withdraw on their own. I will accept the reality of the heatedness of some of the topics. What I'm asking all members to do is to co-operate with each other as much as I'm asking them to co-operate with me.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a special report of the Auditor General on Ornge Air Ambulance and Related Services.

Copies of this report will be deposited in every member's mail slot downstairs in the mailroom, and additional copies will be available in each of the lobbies as you leave the chamber presently.

There are no outstanding votes. I will now recess this House until—

Mr. Rob Leone: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry. The member for Cambridge on a point of order.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I understand the problems that you're having keeping order in this Legislature. I want to draw your attention to standing order 23, sections (h), (i), (j) and (k), with respect to some of the comments we heard in answers to questions, particularly with reference to the fact that the Minister of Finance—or the Acting Premier or the Deputy Premier or whatever his title is today; maybe it's the agriculture minister or the health minister or anything like that. He stated, in

defence of the Minister of Health, that the Minister of Health was better than anything on this side of the House. I say that with particular reference to the member for Oxford, the member for Simcoe–Grey, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo and the member for Oshawa, who are members of a great cabinet, the PC cabinet of this caucus, who knew the value of ministerial responsibility and who are asking legitimately for the Minister of Health to resign.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't find it to be a point of order, and I also probably find it to be a point of opinion.

This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1137 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I have three guests here today from various organizations, and I expect they'll probably come in to watch a bit of the discussion this afternoon, especially given the health care debate: Kim Gavine from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, a wonderful person; Allan O'Dette from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce; and Puneet Luthra, who's the director of government relations for CGA Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park and the information that will be shared this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We're glad they're here.

The member from Pickering-Ajax. I got it wrong. Richmond Hill.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my distinct pleasure and honour to introduce and welcome my good friend Professor Abdolreza Abhari from the Ryerson University computer sciences department. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, and welcome. I apologize to the member. I was looking at the entrance of the member from Pickering-Ajax; hence my mistake. So I apologize.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

DIETITIANS DAY

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Today marks the third anniversary of Dietitians Day. March has been designated as Nutrition Month by the Dietitians of Canada, and Dietitians Day celebrates the professionals who provide the expertise on food and nutrition. This year, the dietitians are using the month of March to debunk myths around food and nutrition through their campaign "Get the Real Deal on your Meal."

As a supporter of this campaign, I want to highlight the tremendous work of dietitians, who are indispensable health care professionals in Ontario. Using high-quality, evidence-based, patient-centred nutritional assessments,

dietitians help our children, our families and, of course, our communities lead healthier lives.

Dietitians apply their scientific and medical expertise to nutritional plans that cater to our individual needs. With the increasing concern on what we consume, dietitians are becoming increasingly more important in a wide range of sectors, including our schools, our nursing homes, our hospitals and in our sports activities. They are members of a provincial regulatory body, which ensures the credibility of their practice and protects the public at large.

Dietitians' ubiquity shows the importance of celebrating Dietitians Day. Once again, thank you to all the dietitians in Ontario.

PENSION PLANS

Miss Monique Taylor: Today, I would like to highlight the situation faced by Ontario retirees and, in particular, those in my riding of Hamilton Mountain.

The workers at US Steel, formerly Stelco, went through a lengthy lockout as they fought to keep the pension benefits that they had been paying for and that they had been planning their retirement around. The end result for Stelco workers was that the defined benefit plan would no longer be available to new hires and that current retirees would lose the indexing of their pensions.

As is often the case in Steeltown, ArcelorMittal Dofasco has followed the same path, and they, too, will be closing the plan to new hires and imposing other reductions in benefits of retirees.

This attack on pensions is a disturbing trend and is a huge concern for retirees, for those thinking ahead to their own retirement and for their families.

Defined contribution plans are unpredictable. Over the long term, a significant move in this direction would be absolutely disastrous for retirees. Additionally, there's a lot of concern with the direction being taken by the federal government to increase the qualification for old age security.

There are many issues on this, Mr. Speaker, all of which I obviously can't get to today, but thank you very much for your time.

DIETITIANS DAY

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise in the House today to recognize that this month is Dietitians of Canada Nutrition Month, and today, March 21, is Dietitians Day.

Every year in March, dietitians across the country remind us of the importance of healthy eating and the positive impact nutrition has on our health and well-being. This year, dietitians are dedicated to busting up popular food and nutrition myths by bringing truths to Canadians.

It's important for Ontarians to know that dietitians are uniquely trained to translate the science of nutrition into healthy food choices, and they work throughout the system, in health promotion and health care, food com-

panies and with our schools. Dietitians also base their advice on best available evidence, and conduct research to further knowledge of food and nutrition.

Speaker, dietitians work with EatRight Ontario, where Ontarians can access free advice from a dietitian through a toll-free number, via email or through their website.

Our most heartfelt thanks to all dietitians in Ontario for all their hard work.

CO-OPERATIVES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today on behalf of my leader, Tim Hudak, and the entire PC caucus to recognize the International Year of Co-operatives. This year is an opportunity to raise public awareness of co-operatives and their social and economic contributions to society. It's also an opportunity to begin legacy initiatives that will outlive the international year and inspire others to support the co-operative movement.

The existence of co-operatives across all sectors of the economy speaks to the influence and relevance of the co-operative movement. Ontario alone has more than 1,300 co-ops, with 1.4 million members. I'm proud to say that four of these co-operatives are located in my home village of Teeswater.

I am a champion of the co-operative movement, not only for the social and economic benefits they have, but because I learned first-hand about the role of co-operatives. Before October 6, 2011, I was general manager of a multi-million dollar initiative known as the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative, based in Teeswater. The Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative was established in 2002—I hope Mr. Leal appreciates this—and this dairy goat co-operative allows members to be actively involved in the marketing of their own milk and to be fully aware of what is happening in their marketplace, their business and with their money.

I'm also pleased to recognize Gay Lea Foods, Huron Bay and our local grocery store, the River Village market, which is owned by members of our community. They are also co-operatives, with ODGC, again in my home village of Teeswater.

I want to thank On Co-Op, the Ontario Co-operative Association, for hosting the MPPs at their Queen's Park reception last night.

GEORGE FREUNDLICH

Mr. John Vanthof: It's both an honour and a pleasure to have this time today to talk about a northern icon and pillar of the community in the municipality of Black River-Matheson.

Dr. George Freundlich was born in Romania, travelled the world, worked in Newfoundland and then decided to take up residence as a general practitioner in northern Ontario. No one calls him Dr. Freundlich. To Matheson and beyond, he is Dr. George. Nineteen years ago, he came to Black River-Matheson to start his practice, and

the residents of the area have been receiving the benefits of his life's work ever since.

As a doctor, Dr. George is dedicated to providing excellent health care for both the residents of the area and to Matheson's Bingham Memorial Hospital, a health care facility located in the great riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane. As we speak, he is holding the fort, working 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to keep the emergency room open as the community looks for a second doctor to join the health team.

This is not the first time he has accomplished this feat. A few years ago, he did a six-week stint where he was the sole health care provider for the whole area, and again, he managed to keep the ER operating during that stressful time.

As a thank-you to Dr. George, the municipality of Matheson has organized an evening of appreciation in his honour. On Saturday evening, March 24, 2012, the community will gather to say thank you to the man who has made health care a stable entity in their town.

To Dr. George, I say thank you for your endless support to health care in Matheson and beyond.

1510

OTTAWA ST. PATRICK'S PARADE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to talk about the 30th annual St. Patrick's Day parade that took place in Ottawa this year and takes place every year in my community in Ottawa Centre. This parade has been going on since 1982, and it's the largest parade of any kind in the city of Ottawa.

St. Patrick's Day is obviously a special day for all of us, whether we are Irish or not. For that special day, I think we are all Irish. And it's the Irish Society of the National Capital Region which has been successfully hosting the St. Patrick's Day parade in Ottawa, in my riding of Ottawa Centre, for the last 30 years.

The society, of course, hosts an exciting Ottawa Irish Festival for the whole week, for all members of our community. This week-long event, Speaker, allows residents and visitors to enjoy the very best of all things Irish—music, poetry, history, song, dance, theatre, language, sport and, of course, the annual Ottawa St. Patrick's Day parade and the grand Irish party that takes place at Lansdowne Park in the great riding of Ottawa Centre.

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Sean Kealey, who is the parade manager, and also the board of the Irish society: Tracey Dixon, Laura Hay, Scott Bell, Denise Trottier, Bryan Daly, Peter Rock, Margo Connolly, Micheline Patrice and Helena McSheffrey Beattie for their great community work and organizing. And thank you to them for always choosing Ottawa Food Bank as the official charity and for the people of Ottawa for coming out to the great parade.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. John O'Toole: This is a very serious topic. With the Premier's dismal fiscal record, I find it ironic that the government continues to tell persons with defined contribution pension funds what they can do with their money. Ontarians with RRSPs have full control over their registered funds; Ontarians who have locked-in pensions do not. The money in these locked-in accounts cannot be fully accessed without permission from Premier McGuinty. Those facing financial hardships have to file an application with FSCO, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario, to get their own money.

Until 2009, the cost of these applications alone was between \$200 and \$900. Over much of the past decade, FSCO has spent almost \$30 million to administer this program, but has rejected virtually none of the applications. In 2009, for example, only two applications were rejected. In 2008, none were rejected. Yet they're spending \$30 million administering this committee. Does the Minister of Finance even know the province is wasting \$30 million each year in a rubber-stamp process that allows Ontarians to access their own money? This is an example of government waste and duplication and red tape.

I want to recognize the Ontario Coalition of Independent LIF Holders and Bill Nafziger for his advocacy on this issue. Thank you, Bill.

The solution is simple: End the red tape, give the citizens the right to their own money, not just half of it, the way they should with RRSPs. In this process, this government could save millions of dollars and help people that need relief.

PROGRAMME RÊVE ET RÉALITÉ

M. Phil McNeely: La ville de Toronto sera l'hôte, en 2015, des Jeux pan/parapanaméricains. Dans le cadre de cet événement sportif, le comité organisateur a introduit le programme Rêve et réalité. C'est un projet pilote fascinant et unique de Toronto 2015 qui rassemble des athlètes de haute performance et des élèves de neuvième et 10^e années. Le but est d'inciter les jeunes athlètes à se fixer des objectifs atteignables, à s'engager au sein de leur communauté et à adopter un style de vie sain et actif.

Plus de 20 écoles dans le sud de l'Ontario pour l'année scolaire 2011-2012 y participent. On jumèle les écoles participantes à un athlète d'élite de leur communauté qui leur rendra visite deux fois par année, dans le but de faire part de ses expériences de vie et de ses expériences sportives à titre d'athlète de compétition sur la scène nationale et internationale. En plus de rendre visite à l'école, chaque athlète demeurera en contact avec son école par l'entremise des médias sociaux.

C'est donc avec fierté que j'ai appris que l'École secondaire publique Louis-Riel, située dans ma circonscription électorale d'Ottawa-Orléans, a été choisie pour faire partie de ce projet pilote. Alors,

félicitations à l'école Louis-Riel pour sa sélection et bonne chance aux élèves participants.

HEADWATERS HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Headwaters Health Care Centre on celebrating 100 years of outstanding health care service for the residents of our community.

The original idea for a local hospital began with the Lord Dufferin Chapter of the International Daughters of the Empire after a train accident in 1907, when necessary medical and life-saving measures were not readily available. The IODE began raising funds shortly after that tragedy, and by 1911 had raised the \$2,300 needed to purchase the Kearns house on First Street in Orangeville.

When the doors of the Lord Dufferin Hospital officially opened in 1912, there were enough beds for eight patients. A school of nursing was also operating there until 1933.

Over the last century, as the town and surrounding communities have grown, so, too, has the hospital. The exceptional philanthropy and community spirit that inspired the women of the IODE has continued for 100 years. In 1997, our community, from elementary school children to seniors, worked together to raise funds so that we could build a new hospital. The community has also generously supported over the years the latest diagnostic equipment or specialized services, such as cancer care and dialysis, so health care can be provided close to home.

A commitment to compassionate care is the hallmark of Headwaters. Over the years, countless volunteer board members, physicians, nurses, allied health professionals and our auxiliary volunteers have worked to make Headwaters a community hospital in so much more than name.

Congratulations to Headwaters Health Care Centre on your 100th anniversary.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Dunlop presents a committee report. Does the member have a brief statement?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: No, I don't, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Pursuant to standing order number 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT (AIR AMBULANCES), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES (SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Ms. Matthews moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I will do that during ministerial statements.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (BRAKE PAD STANDARDS), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (NORMES RELATIVES AUX PLAQUETTES DE FREIN)

Mrs. Sandals moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 51, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to brake pad standards and specifications / Projet de loi 51, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui a trait aux normes et aux caractéristiques relatives aux plaquettes de frein.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

1520

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you, Speaker. The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require that motor vehicles, other than motorcycles, that are equipped with brake pads be equipped with brake pads that meet the prescribed standards and specifications and that do not contain asbestos.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise in the House today to introduce legislation to amend the Ambulance Act. I'm taking action on the Auditor General's recommendations

to strengthen accountability, oversight and transparency at Ontario's air ambulance and critical-care land ambulance service, Ornge.

I have met with many of the dedicated front-line paramedics, pilots and staff at Ornge, and I can tell you that they are fully committed to providing the best possible care to Ontario patients.

As the auditor notes, we have already taken substantive action to address many of the issues in this report, starting with the appointment of an interim president and CEO and a new board of directors. I want to thank the new leadership at Ornge, who have already made tremendous progress in their core mission of providing life-saving care to Ontario patients. They have my full confidence. Ornge is now on the right path forward, but there were serious problems under the former leadership.

Speaker, I took action when I learned that the Auditor General was being stonewalled by Ornge. When I learned about the outrageous compensation being paid to their president and CEO, I launched a forensic audit and recommended that new leadership be put in place. When the forensic auditors found serious financial irregularities, my ministry officials referred the matter to the OPP, and their criminal investigation is currently under way.

As minister, I take my full share of responsibility for what has transpired. It is important that we all learn lessons from this situation. I deeply regret what has happened, and I am fully committed to fixing the problems so that they will never happen again.

Speaker, these proposed amendments to the Ambulance Act will strengthen oversight and prevent future abuses of power at Ontario's air ambulance service. It is vitally important that employees do not feel intimidated when raising their concerns. That's why our proposed legislation will protect whistle-blowers at Ornge who disclose information to an inspector, an investigator or the government. These amendments will allow the government to take control of Ornge in extraordinary circumstances through the appointment of a supervisor, just like we can with our hospitals. These changes will also allow us to appoint special investigators where it is in the public interest to do so, and to appoint members to Ornge's board of directors.

In the past, if we needed to make changes to the government's performance agreement with Ornge, we could do so only with Ornge's agreement. That was simply not feasible when immediate changes needed to be made. That's why the proposed legislation will allow the government to change the performance agreement with Ornge at any time.

Speaker, if we had had these legislative powers—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I want to remind the members—all members—that in this particular case, when ministers' statements are being made, there is an opportunity to respond. When the bill is introduced, which it has been, there will be many more other opportunities for all members to speak. I would appreciate very much the avoidance of heckling during a

minister's statement, as will be my expectation of the government's side not to heckle the response.

Minister, proceed.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: If we had had these legislative powers, they would have gone a long way towards keeping those in charge at Ornge in check.

In addition to this legislation, we now have an amended performance agreement with Ornge in place. The original performance agreement simply did not provide the accountability, oversight and transparency needed by the government. The amended performance agreement will safeguard patient care and provide better value for taxpayer dollars.

Speaker, I am steadfastly committed to continuing our progress at Ornge, and I'm confident that the steps we have taken today will provide the oversight needed to ensure a bright future for Ontario's air ambulance service.

Again, I want to thank the paramedics, the pilots, the front-line staff at Ornge who, from the beginning, have put patients first. We know there is much more to do, but we have taken swift action and will continue to work hard to ensure the best possible care for the people of Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. It marks the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa on March 21, 1960. That's when police opened fire on a peaceful crowd demonstrating against laws designed to segregate the population and severely limit the movement of people who were not white. Tragically, 69 people lost their lives.

This appalling event led the United Nations General Assembly to proclaim March 21 of every year the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On this day, nations are called on to redouble their efforts to end all forms of racial discrimination.

Much has changed since the Sharpeville shootings. Apartheid has ended, the United States has passed civil rights legislation, and in Canada, in 1962, Ontario's Human Rights Code came into force. The code banned racial discrimination, as well as other forms of discrimination. This legal framework underpins a thriving and diverse society of which we are all so proud.

Over the past half century, the face of Ontario has changed dramatically. Newcomers come from everywhere, all over the world. In Ontario, more than 20% of us are from visible minorities, and in the greater Toronto area it is more than 40% of the population. Ontario succeeds because we have a shared commitment to work together and build together as a people, united and equal. We do things in what the Premier calls the Ontario way. Ontario is a place where we celebrate our differences. We know it's right to respect each other, support each

other and lift each other up. We recognize our diversity as a strength.

We also know diversity requires continuing work. We will not rest until we have removed every taint of racism in our midst. Whether a taunt in a schoolyard, vandalism at a place of worship, unfairness in the workplace or restrictive access to service, Ontarians have zero tolerance for racial discrimination. Racism hurts us all. It betrays our shared ideals. And we all lose when some of us are excluded from participating fully in society.

We are fortunate to have dedicated community groups around the province striving to take down barriers that divide us. On this international day, I salute their tireless efforts to make diversity work.

I also remind the House that fighting racial discrimination is everyone's business. We all have the power to change hearts and minds. Together, let us create an Ontario free of racism, an inclusive Ontario where everyone lives with dignity and mutual respect, and where everyone contributes to building a brighter and more prosperous future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

It is now time for responses, and I do remind the government that I've asked for respectful listening to the responses to the ministers' statements.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today is a black day for the people in the province of Ontario as they are faced with yet another scandal, a scandal where we see that there has been a total mismanagement of public finances and also a total lack of concern and oversight to an agency called Ornge. It's a black day because the minister now, in an attempt to whitewash all that has happened, is introducing what she says is an agreement that will correct the sins of the past that have been committed by this government.

When we listen today to the Attorney General in his report—

Interjection.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The Auditor General; I apologize. He highlights it by saying, "They failed to provide the oversight," and yet this minister has continued to stand in her place and to tell us that she wasn't able to do so. We hear from him that that wasn't the case. We hear about numerous red flags that were raised by him and by others, but we also hear that this government, this minister, this Premier, never took the concerns seriously. They never investigated them. They never questioned the practices at Ornge and those who came in front of them. They totally discounted the fact that public money was being wasted, and they also didn't take into consideration the safety of patients.

1530

The Minister of Health in the province of Ontario is responsible and accountable for the safe and timely

transport of patients. We have learned, as we take a look at what happened at Ornge, that there are tremendous concerns that have been raised about the quality of patient care that has been provided. I think the minister has much for which she should answer.

We also know that the minister was given a draft report in September of last year. At that time, again, she was told by the Auditor General that there were lots of red flags and that they needed to be asking more questions, but they refused to do so. In fact, there were red flags raised in his 2011 letter. It was suggested at that time that they should be asking more questions of the Ornge executives who were setting up those new companies.

But we got the impression each time that this government was trying to cover up what was going on at Ornge, because they had never lived up to the commitment that they made when Ornge was established. That was to provide standards and to make sure that they monitored the performance standards and that they would provide the oversight that was required to ensure fiscal and patient accountability.

So we have today an agreement which is totally meaningless. This minister has always been in a position, as has this government now, since 2006, to monitor and to provide the oversight to Ornge that was necessary.

Mr. John O'Toole: They did nothing.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: They did absolutely nothing. Red flags have been raised now for several years, several months, and it's an embarrassment for the minister to stand up today and to say that anything is going to change.

In fact, it is embarrassing to listen to the minister today blame the people at Ornge. She is accountable. As a minister in cabinet, you are responsible for what goes on at your ministry. When we were in government, we stepped down. We resigned. Well, ultimately, she is responsible for the scandal at Ornge, as this government was for the scandal at eHealth, and the only appropriate thing to do today, because the oversight at Ornge was totally inadequate, is for the minister to step down and resign.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Response?

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

The Sharpeville Massacre shocked the world, and it led the United Nations to create the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Apartheid was discarded in 1994. Racism is not dismantled quite so easily.

Racism doesn't require razor wire—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, member. Responses?

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mr. Michael Prue: In response to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, we are here to salute the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This year's theme is to end racism and conflict everywhere.

We know throughout the history of humankind, particularly in the last century, that there have been many racial conflicts, many people murdered and killed—anything from the Hutus and the Tutsis in Rwanda, World War II, the atrocities that took place in the former Yugoslavia, what happened at the beginning of the century to the Armenians and the Pontians.

We look, even today, at what is happening around the world. We look to France in the last couple of days, where innocent Jewish children were murdered in the street, where people who are soldiers who are believed to be followers of Islam are murdered in the streets of France, and you have a country there that is in absolute turmoil. Then we say to ourselves, "Thank goodness this does not happen in Canada. Thank goodness, in this country, we recognize and support people of all faiths and religions."

I would like to think that that was true and, in fact, I believe for the overwhelming majority—99.9% of the people—that's true. But I want to read—I got the most disturbing, disturbing email the other day that I want to share with you, because these attitudes are still out here in our city and in our country.

I had an opportunity to make a comment to the Toronto Sun and to talk about how immigration procedures could be improved in Ontario to help more people immigrate to this great province. This is the response I got, in part: "Perhaps one day your limo driver could drive you out to the wilds of Scarborough and you can take a first-hand look at what immigration had done to Toronto and the surrounding areas."

"You actually think that we need more Chinese in Scarborough? We have to move from our house we have lived" in "for 30 years because our area has been overrun with Chinese who have been allowed to ruin everything in their path."

It goes on to talk about people being garbage. It goes on to talk about the horrible smells that they bring to the streets. This is the kind of stuff that's still out there.

So I am here today to say that we cannot hide any longer. We cannot just stand up here on platitudes. We have to expose people with statements like this, with the idiocy that's in their minds. I'm not even going to tell the Legislature this man's name, but this is what's happening.

This is the day for the elimination of racial discrimination. We will be celebrating the J.S. Woodsworth Awards tonight across the street, over in the Macdonald Block. We invite everyone to come. We want to show that we support people in their efforts to make this a great country.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Member's response?

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, today was a rather distressing day for the NDP caucus. We had the report from the Auditor General that basically told us that when Ornge was established, the ministry promised management board and the public accounts committee that they were "committed to establishing performance standards and monitoring the performance of" external service providers. They never did put that accountability agreement in place. They never did put those standards in place.

But the auditor goes on to say, "...the performance agreement did contain a number of administrative and reporting requirements that Ornge" had to comply with, but through those seven years that Ornge has been there, those levers were never used.

We now have a minister that's telling us we need better levers to be able to control Ornge. That ship has sailed, Mr. Speaker. They had levers in place. They had—and I will quote: "The agreement also states that the ministry can terminate the agreement if Ornge does not comply...." They had levers at their disposal; they never used them. They had knowledge, red flags that went up. Months passed. Nothing was done.

Today in the press conference, the minister said, after the January 11 letter was published that assured them, in writing and orally, that there was no public money being used for for-profit—she said alarm bells were rung, and "we continue to do the work." But then the Auditor General tabled his interim report in September, and he had to convince the government and the minister that something was wrong at Ornge.

The story doesn't jibe, Mr. Speaker. The minister cannot go out and say, "And we were trying to move," but then the auditor comes and asks them to move and they say, "No, no. We don't think there's anything wrong." The only thing left to do is to resign.

PETITIONS

WASTE DISPOSAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for petitions. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Are you going to ask for a resignation as well, there, Grant?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Speaker—and no.

It gives me great pleasure to rise today on behalf of citizens in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents in the constituency of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell in the province of Ontario, draw to the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the following:

"Whereas the petitioners have serious grievances with the proposed development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services, proponents of the Capital Region Resource Recovery Centre planned for the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties between Eadie Road and North Russell Road, between routes 100 and 200 in the township of Russell;

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"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to take action to cause an absolute cease and desist order for this proposed CRRRC development by Taggart Miller Environmental Services on this site of the old Russell shale pit and surrounding properties in the township of Russell in the province of Ontario."

Interjections.

Mr. Grant Crack: I would like to affix my signature to this and give it to my friend, page Alexander.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will make a quick—I can't believe I'm going to ask people not to heckle during petitions.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The record-breaking member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Speaker, I'll break another record here. I have a little preamble here.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the greenbelt; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility," in fact, "a duty to protect the sensitive areas of the greenbelt and provincially sensitive wetlands; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier governments to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permitting process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Minister of the Environment to initiate" immediately "a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the greenbelt until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to protect our water and prevent contamination of the greenbelt, specifically at" locations in my riding of Durham.

I am pleased to sign and support this and present it to Teresa, one of the new pages.

INSURANCE RATES

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition in front of me that was given to me last week. It's regarding

insurance premiums and was prepared by Effie Hadzis, one of my constituents, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough have been experiencing drastic increases in their insurance premiums year over year because of the area they happen to live in. The rate increases have been so extreme, whereby within one year, insurance premiums have increased by more than 25%, regardless of the residents having an excellent record or standing with no claims to date. Rate increases have occurred up to four times per year;

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

“We disagree with the significant multiple increases in our insurance rates each year mainly due to the area we live in Scarborough. The Ontario government needs to implement a law to regulate the drastic increases in insurance premiums which insurance companies make each year, especially for the residents of Scarborough who have an excellent record or standing with no claims to date; thus standardizing the rates fairly.”

I present this petition to the House today. I sign it because I agree with it, and give it to page Nicholas.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition signed by a great number of people in my riding, concerning the future of 80 long-term-care beds in the village of Tavistock. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Tavistock’s Bonnie Brae Health Care Centre is an 80-bed, D-class nursing home that must be either rebuilt or closed by July 2014; and

“Whereas there is currently an application by a private operator to move the 80 licensed beds outside of Oxford county to the city of London, despite the recent opening of two other long-term-care homes in Middlesex county in 2010; and

“Whereas long-term-care wait times in Oxford county can be as much as 134 days longer than in Middlesex county; and

“Whereas Tavistock receives referrals from the nearby Waterloo Wellington CCAC, which has among the highest waits for long-term care in the province;

“We, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario retain these beds in Tavistock and seek partners to fast-track replacement of the Bonnie Brae as part of Ontario’s 10-year plan to modernize 35,000 long-term-care beds.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity. I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: On behalf of literally thousands of people from my riding of Huron–Bruce, I’d like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the closure of the Bluewater Youth Centre will have a negative economic impact on Goderich and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas there is a need to deal with overcrowding in the Ontario correctional system; and

“Whereas the federal Bill C-10, Safe Streets and Communities Act, will increase the population in the Ontario correctional system over the next four years; and

“Whereas the Bluewater Youth Centre would need very little retrofitting and the staff would need minimal retraining to open as a medium-secure correctional facility which could hold more than 200 beds required by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services; and

“Whereas specialized treatment programs within the correctional system such as drug treatment, mental health issues, could be offered with the skilled support staff currently in place; and

“Whereas we believe that this is the most economical way to add an additional 200 beds to the Ontario correctional system, as the building is in place and staff are currently hired to run such a facility;

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

“That the government engage in meaningful community and employee consultation in order to find alternate uses within the youth services or correctional services system for this facility, thereby preventing job losses and economic hardship for an area already badly impacted by plant closures and tornado damage.”

I agree with this petition, and I affix my signature.

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

The member from the Nickel Belt.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s always nice to see you in the chair.

I have this petition from the people of the northeast, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government is making” PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

“Whereas,” since October 2009, “insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario,” with Health Sciences North, “its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through” Health Sciences North, “thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens” of the northeast.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Felix to bring it to the Clerk.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have a petition from a group of residents of my riding of York South–Weston addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas St. John the Evangelist Catholic elementary school in Weston is overcrowded, with 480 students in a school designed for 260; and

“Whereas the students will be relocating 40 minutes away in September 2012 during the duration of the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; and

“Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012;

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

“Respectfully request full funding to replace St. John the Evangelist school during the Metrolinx Weston tunnel construction; therefore, the students are not relocated twice.”

I agree with this petition; I will affix my signature and hand it over to page Teresa.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Robert Bailey: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has announced that the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. will end its Hiawatha racetrack slots operations in Sarnia on March 31, 2013; and

“Whereas the end of this program will cost the city of Sarnia 140 jobs immediately and \$1.5 million a year in gaming revenues, not to mention potentially 60,000 jobs across the province if the program is scrapped entirely; and

“Whereas there has been absolutely no consultation with the community, employees, or owner/operator of the local facility; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government continues to put more and more Ontarians out of work due to its ill-conceived, ad hoc decisions, including, in Sarnia, the loss of 80 jobs at the local jail, 100 jobs at Lambton generating station, and numerous others due to high energy costs on businesses;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the McGuinty government stop risking thousands of jobs in Ontario and \$1.5 billion in potential revenue by mismanaging the racetrack slots program and focus on finding solutions to the real problems that Ontario is facing.”

I agree with this, and I affix my signature and send it down with Liam.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This is a petition on behalf of the members I represent in Algoma–Manitoulin.

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have been paying over millions in extra charges on their hydro bills to help retire the debt. The amount collected to date as per the Auditor General’s report is \$8.7 billion, but the amount owing was \$7.8 billion;

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“Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking, where is the money being invested?

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking why this was not addressed at the time” of the debt being paid;

“Whereas electrical rates have increased with the new creation of green energy coming online to include solar and wind, refurbishment of nuclear plants and deregulation of Hydro One;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows to obtain answers to the following” two “questions:

“How much of the debt remains?

“When will it be eliminated from Ontario taxpayers’ hydro bills?”

I agree with this petition, and I will be presenting it to Felix, this wonderful, strapping young gentleman.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I’m pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the people of Ontario with respect to the decision to close Blyth Public School by the Avon Maitland District School Board.

“Whereas the pupil accommodation review states that an ARC committee is required, among other things, to determine the value of a school to the local economy, yet in the case of the Blyth Public School, there is in the minutes of the ARC committee not a single reference to any discussion of the effects of school closure on the local economy; and

“Whereas the same guideline states that the ARC, which is appointed by the board, must include membership drawn from the school community and the broader community, including, among others, business and municipal leaders, yet the ARC meetings considering the Blyth Public School included no Blyth business or municipal leaders; and

“Whereas the only invitations to public meetings in Blyth regarding the accommodation review were taken home by students to their parents, with the result that the broader community were not represented in the discussions; and

“Whereas many other communities across Ontario are now encountering very similar behaviours by their school boards; and

“Whereas single-school communities across Ontario are being permanently damaged economically and socially by the closure of their only school, which is, according to Premier McGuinty, the heart and soul of these communities; and

“Whereas the current Education Act of Ontario very undemocratically provides school boards with the abso-

lute power to close any school they choose, with no avenue of appeal available to anyone, not even members of their own communities;

“Therefore we, the residents of Ontario who have signed our names below, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to adopt and enact the following measures:

“(1) An immediate moratorium on all disputed school closures resulting from the accommodation review process and continuing until June 30, 2015; and

“(2) The immediate striking of a truly independent third party body with the authority to review and reverse all disputed school closures found to be detrimental to the community or in conflict with other provincial programs or regulations; and

“(3) Revision of the Education Act to require school boards to work with their municipalities and communities to ensure school closures comply with the principles and practices of sound community and educational planning.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I sign it and I'll give it to Emily to present to the table.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to have a petition from my riding of Durham, which reads as follows—in fact, there's a very interesting meeting in my riding in Blackstock tonight on this very issue.

“Whereas Cartwright High School is an important part of the Blackstock and area community; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, ‘Rural schools help to keep communities strong’—I kind of go along with that.

“Whereas schools in rural areas are community places; and

“Whereas Cartwright students, families, friends and staff have created an effective learning” environment and experience and atmosphere in the community for “individual attention and full participation by students in school activities; and

“Whereas the framework of rural schools is different from urban schools and therefore deserves” a governance model of a “rural school policy; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep rural schools open in communities such as Blackstock;

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

“That Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education”—who's here today—“support the Cartwright High School community and suspend plans to close Cartwright High School under the school board's accommodation review process until the province develops a rural school policy that respects the value of smaller schools in rural communities of Ontario.”

I'm pleased to sign it and support it and present it to page Nicholas, because I'm sure he would support this petition as well.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2012

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2012

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012 / Projet de loi 46, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2012.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Milloy has moved G46, second reading. Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to just speak briefly about Bill 46, which is known as the supply bill. It's an opportunity for the Legislature to, in effect, vote the resources that the government needs to undertake its operations, and is traditionally a time for members of the Legislature to talk about the policies of the government in any area, as it involves the overall operations of the government. Certainly on our side, we're very proud of the story that we have to tell in terms of our focus on education, on health care, on services to the public in terms of infrastructure, in terms of energy—a chance to really outline the very ambitious program that our government has undertaken in the name of Ontarians: a future-looking program which I know members will want to reflect upon this afternoon as they debate the bill. Thank you.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to engage in debate on the supply bill, the supply motion, and to talk at this time about the finances of our magnificent province that is right now going through some significant challenges as a result of our heavy debt and deficit load in this fiscal year.

What concerns me, of course, is that we have had before us a report, namely the Drummond report, with a substantial number of recommendations that have warned this government that if they continue on their spending spree and their scandals and their tax hikes, we will probably see, in the next few years, a \$30-billion deficit and a \$440-billion debt.

What does that mean, Speaker? Well, let me tell you what that means. The third-largest spending priority in this government, outside of health care and education, is servicing our debt. What does that mean? Well, it means that every single dollar that is used to service the debt and deficit is a dollar being taken away from key priorities like health care and education. That is deeply concerning to me as a member of provincial Parliament,

but also as a mother, because what this government has done over the past eight and half, close to nine years, is continually mismanage the public purse.

Today we were told about the Ornge scandal and how bad it was. In fact, this government blindly signed an agreement to allow Ornge to set up a number of for-profit companies. Can you believe that? Only after they were caught being asleep at the switch—or perhaps they just didn't care—they offer us a piece of legislation. Instead, what we would have preferred is ministerial accountability, because, as I said, a \$30-billion deficit and a \$440-billion debt means we're servicing that debt and deficit and that money is coming from other priorities.

Then, when you add on top of that mismanagement and you see a scandal where almost \$1 billion was flushed down the toilet by Chris Mazza and this Liberal government, you wonder really what their priorities are. You wonder: Do they really even care about getting it right? And you wonder, Mr. Speaker, if they actually even understand the damage they've done to this province.

In the days ahead, my party, the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party, led by Tim Hudak, will continue to call for the Minister of Health to resign. We will continue to call for a select committee of this Legislature to be established so that we can allow people across Ontario, particularly health care providers, to come in and talk about the waste that was at eHealth and—sorry—Ornge. We'll continue to probe for more answers to see how this government could have gotten it wrong—and wrong so badly, particularly with the backdrop of what Don Drummond has explained to us. It was quite catastrophic, as we move forward.

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Next week, we will see this Liberal government bring in another budget, and we'll still see another deficit. We will continue to see them—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Debt growing.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod:—grow the Ontario debt as they grow the Ontario deficit, at the cost of future priorities and current priorities. I look, for example, at some of the school boards across Ontario right now which are struggling with many of their capital costs. I know, for example—and this is where I'll have an opportunity to talk about my community of Nepean–Carleton, a fast-growing community, Mr. Speaker, as you know, one of the fastest growing in all of Canada. It is the fastest growing in the city of Ottawa, and where there used to be farmers' fields there's been an explosion of growth.

The population has expanded quite significantly, and in one of our schools, the Longfields Davidson Heights Secondary School, we have a grade 7 to 12 school that is over capacity, maximizing the use of portables, and they haven't even got to grade 12 yet, not to mention the new developments that are going to be around the community. So community leaders like Laura Lee Comeau, Taz Mawji, Anna Clement, Reshma Dalial, Norm MacDonald, Sue Patel, Ravinder Minhas and Christina Thiele have gone to bat. They've launched a petition campaign to go to the school board.

Of course Ottawa's a big city—there's lots of competing demands—as is Nepean–Carleton, which is growing, as I said, because we also have a great big community in Riverside South that right now doesn't have a public secondary school. And that's why parents like Scott Hodge, Craig Cudmore, Alison Vitniemi, Kathy Michells, Mike Marshall, Jared Langdon, Krista Matthews, our school board trustee Mark Fisher, Bev L'Anglais, Brenda Knight, Dave Wardis, Ted Garan, Peter Cantrell, Jen Johnson, Marion Breen, J.D. Dorman, Allison Vanstaden and Debbie Horsfall have all come together to do a community survey that they hope will convince the board to understand the high growth of these communities which just 10 years ago, 10 short years ago, were farmers' fields.

And as we proceed with those two high schools and the demand that is required in our community, and as our school board trustee Mark Fisher leads the charge at the board level, and these parents fight for ensuring that their tax dollars stay in their community, we also have a great need in a small village called Findlay Creek, just off of Bank Street, that was, ironically enough, formerly represented by a Liberal MPP. Sumana Jana, Carole Gallant, Bev L'Anglais and Eddie Rwema, who is with our local newspaper, have all been active in identifying what our community need is there.

Why did I bring all this up, Mr. Speaker? Well, as I've stated, when my community sees the scandal at Ornge and sees that this government took \$730 million—almost \$1 billion—and flushed it down the toilet—not once but twice, because you'll recall they did this with the eHealth debacle. When they understand that we have a—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If we have a sidebar, could we take it out? It's a little loud. I can't hear the speaker. Thanks.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: As we, Speaker, talk about this \$440-billion possible debt and that \$30-billion deficit—and as I said, every dollar servicing that is one less dollar for our education system—my community gets a bit irritated. They've sent me here to Queen's Park to fight for them, and I think my reputation over the past six years I've been here is that I am a fighter for my community. I'll continue to do that and I'll never make an apology for it.

But let me say this: If, next week, this government continues on a path of tax-and-spend, where my constituents get less, less, less, less and less services for all the tax dollars that they're spending, I'm not going to be a happy person. I'm very disappointed that they have made the debt and deficit so large that they are spending so much money servicing that debt and deficit. It has become a detriment to the people of Nepean–Carleton, it has become a detriment to the people of Ontario and it has become a detriment to the future generations of this province. That is what this government has done, and this is what this government has consistently done since it has taken office.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Durham might want to be in his seat.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Next week, Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario will be watching to see how this government will get us out of this mess. They don't believe them. They don't have the confidence in them. They have not seen—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That's the second time. If you want to speak, go to your seat.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: As I conclude my remarks, I look at the needs in our communities—and it's not just mine that has needs; it's across the entire province—and then I look at the waste and the scandal from those across the way. The reality is, it directly impacts the people who have sent us to this place to fight for them to ensure that their tax dollars are being spent wisely. They've continually ignored the people, particularly in rural Ontario, particularly in suburban Ontario, and they've not listened to their needs. Instead, they have misspent, they have brought us scandals—like I said, Ornge and eHealth. Now they want to expand gambling, and we all know the great success the OLG has become as an agency over the past number of years.

Speaker, I've lost confidence in this government. At some point this government will fall because effectively, after the last election, the public lost confidence in them as well. But I'll be watching them, as will our caucus, the Ontario PC caucus, led by Tim Hudak. We will challenge them each and every day so that they get it right. We'll continue to call for that Minister of Health to resign because of her mismanagement at Ornge, and we're going to continue to offer solutions to that debt and deficit crisis that is destroying the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It's a pleasure to have this opportunity; it only comes around once a year. Although it's an interim supply motion, you can literally speak about anything you want: anything you think the government is doing right, which is often very hard to discern; or anything you think they're doing wrong, which is usually a pretty easy job.

Today, I want to take this opportunity to speak about the larger economic issues that are confronting this province and this Legislature and to try to give hopefully some direction to the party opposite when it brings down a budget next week. This budget, I fear, is going to be horrendously difficult for the people of Ontario.

Next week, there's going to be not one budget but two. There's going to be a budget delivered in the province, and two days later there's going to be a budget delivered in Ottawa. We are bracing ourselves, as ordinary people, for the worst. We are bracing ourselves because it's not going to be one hit; it's probably going to be two in pretty rapid succession. We are going to see the hopes and dreams of a generation put at some risk. We're going to see the hopes and dreams of a generation be constricted because governments are going to say there isn't

any money, governments are going to talk about the deficits that they're running, they're going to be talking about the programs they're going to kill, they're going to talk about the jobs that aren't going to be created, and they're going to do everything in the high priesthood of orthodoxy to make sure that somehow, some way, that \$16 billion is reduced. People are bracing themselves.

We know in Ontario today there is much sadness in the province. If you have an opportunity, as I know most members have, to travel around the province, even if all it is is going back to your riding on Thursday nights, you will know that people are unhappy. You will know that there are rising costs for food and for hydro and for transportation and for energy. You will know, if you talk to your constituents, that they are having an increasingly difficult time making ends meet. They're having to skimp on things they did not skimp on before, whether it be new clothes for themselves or their children, whether it be restaurant meals, whether it be a night out at the movies. Some of these things are becoming luxuries as increasingly they have to pay their bills and there is less and less money available for them to do what they once considered life's pleasures.

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At the same time, you also have to know that there is rising unemployment in this province. It has been pretty stagnant above 8% for a long time. We probably have among the highest unemployment rates in the entire country, and they do not appear to be going down. We know there were 600,000 jobs lost in the last number of years, particularly in the manufacturing and forestry sectors of our economy. We know, if you come from southwestern Ontario—if you come from Windsor—that there is an 11% unemployment rate.

I'm fortunate to own a summer property down near Windsor, and it's pretty sad to go into that town. It's pretty sad to go into Windsor and see the boarded-up stores. But Windsor is not alone. You can go almost anywhere in southwestern Ontario to towns that were once vibrant and filled with working people and see shut-up shops, factories that aren't operating anymore, people unemployed, despair and houses for sale at a fraction of their cost.

If you go to London today—a mighty, wonderful city—you'll see it has a 9% unemployment rate, and you'll see that people there are pretty unhappy.

Come to Toronto: 275,000 people are looking for work. That's a lot of people—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Is that it?

Mr. Michael Prue: —275,000 are looking for work.

If you go to northern Ontario, if you get a chance to get up there, see all those tracts of land that aren't being forested anymore, see the mills and the factories that have been closed, see the despair.

Go through small towns that are now ghost towns, where the houses aren't even for sale anymore; they're just boarded up. Nobody lives there.

Ask an ordinary Ontarian what it's like. Last year, the average wage increase was 0.7%. We might look around

and say, “Well, that’s good. It’s something.” Except inflation was 2.5%. And if you include inflation in the last 15 years, the people of this province have not gained any headway at all—none at all. There has been no progress for the last 15 years with wages in this province.

So, what do we have? What do we need? We need a budget that is going to create jobs. If the government only does one thing, please have a budget that you know is going to create jobs. We are sick of the argument of the past that all you had to do was reduce corporate taxes and jobs would spring to life. If ever there was a misguided economic statement—a trickle-down theory, something promulgated out of the far right of the United States—that is it. It hasn’t worked in Ontario; it will never work in Ontario.

At the same time as we create jobs, we need to make life more affordable, particularly for people who are now finding themselves, for the first time in their lives, on the margins.

I see today in this province a disturbing attack on the agricultural sector. I’ve witnessed, over the last couple of sessions in this House, members of the government stand up and pit the agricultural sector, particularly those people involved in horses and horse racing, against the rest of the population. Why is it that we have to choose losing 60,000 jobs that are based around horse racing, farming, hay growing and all of those things in Ontario, and stand up time after time and minister after minister and member after member on the other side and say, “We need that money for schools and hospitals”? Of course we need money for schools and hospitals, but can we afford to lose 60,000 jobs of people who make a major contribution to this province?

Not everything is a widget. Not everything is made in a factory. We have a history here. We have a history that goes back hundreds of years of raising farm animals and horses. We raised them to work in the fields. We raised them to pull our carriages in the past. We raise them today, in many respects, for horse racing, whether it be thoroughbred racing or whether it be standardbred.

People are in here today from the racing industry, looking for answers, wanting to be consulted about why this government is choosing to rid itself of 60,000 jobs in Ontario. I know the government needs money. My God, the government needs money. But why is it that they have to pay that price? Why do we have to have 60,000 more people unemployed, people who have spent their life in the care of animals, people who know that industry better than they will probably know any other industry?

I talked to a man today; I’ve talked to several of them. Oftentimes the people who work in this industry have been there for a long time. They don’t have a lot of formal education. They don’t live in a big city. They don’t have access to industrial work, even though that’s declining. What they know is farming and the issues around farming; horses and the issues around horses. You’re going to take away their livelihood. If you take away their livelihood, what are they going to do? They are gainfully employed. You are going to make them

unemployable. You are going to force them onto welfare rolls. You are going to destroy their livelihoods and their families.

I don’t understand. A budget is supposed to help people get work. Doing what the minister is saying he wants to do, doing what the Minister of Education is saying she wants to do with this money, is not going to keep those people in a job and is going to exacerbate an already bad situation.

Nobody is talking about keeping jobs in Canada. I didn’t hear anything on the other side except some platitudes when Caterpillar decided to shut down in London. Here’s a foreign multinational that comes in and takes over, gets the intellectual property, sizes up the situation, tells the workers they’re going to earn half as much—if they don’t like it, they’re moving to Indiana—and then promptly, the day that workers say, “We reject half-wages, only getting half as much, and losing all our benefits,” it packs up and moves to Indiana. Nary a word. Nary a word from this government.

There was a time, when I was a little younger, when this would have raised every single voice in this Legislature, when every one of you would have stood here and demanded—there would have even been calls from the government side, never mind the NDP—to nationalize such an industry rather than allow what happened in London to happen. We don’t hear that. “That’s just 600 more jobs gone. We don’t need to be involved in that. We’re looking for other ways. We’re looking at doing other things. We’re going to build a casino in Toronto. Maybe one or two of them can get a job there.” That’s what we’re hearing today.

I have to tell you I have some very real difficulties with the attitude. We also have a whole loss of public sector jobs. Information is starting to leak out of the ministries, in case the ministers haven’t heard these themselves. The layoffs are starting. People are coming to us, telling us they’ve been working there for 10 and 15 years in some of the ministries and they’ve been told their job’s gone. There’s going to be hundreds, if not thousands, of people who will lose their jobs there too.

I want to contrast all of that with what’s happening in Quebec. I opened up the newspaper today. Yesterday, Quebec had its budget. Quebec is a have-not province—at least, it was. Quebec was a have-not province. We always sent money to them. We sent them a lot of money. Even though they’re going to get a little bit of money this year, they are going to get considerably less than Ontario. And Quebec, this year, is going to run a \$1.2-billion deficit—not a \$16-billion deficit; a \$1.2-billion deficit. Next year, they are on target to have a surplus of \$2.5 billion. That’s Quebec. Do you know what’s happening there? The government is creating jobs. The government is creating jobs in the resource sector because the resource sector jobs are going there because Quebec has a better electrical strategy and energy strategy than this government has ever thought of. The jobs are going to Quebec, and Quebec is becoming a have province.

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I'm really quite impressed with them. I'm really quite impressed when you read what is happening there. They're expanding on their social programs. They're keeping their people employed. They're not laying off all their public employees. They have an eye to the future. Would that Ontario had the same eye. Maybe we'll see next Tuesday; maybe I'm guessing this wrong, but from the vibes coming here and the things that are being said by the Minister of Finance, I don't think so. I think something here is terribly, terribly wrong.

We need revenues, and I haven't heard too much. The NDP was heartened a little bit a few weeks ago. We've been on a long time about corporate tax cuts and whether we can afford them any longer, whether they are creating the kinds of jobs that were promised, because we certainly know that investment from the corporate sector in either jobs, training or new development of machinery is simply not taking place. It has declined from 8% to 6% in spite of the fact we keep giving more and more money away.

We've raised this issue for a long time. Here's just a few little notes in the past of what's going on. When we first started to raise this issue, we got the following response from the Minister of Finance on February 24, 2011: "What the NDP want to do is create jobs in Alberta." We continued on. We kept asking this question, and we got from the Minister of Finance on February 24, 2011—same day—"The Ontario NDP plan will kill jobs." Then, a few months later, on October 2, 2011, the Minister of Finance again: "Ontarians know a vote for the NDP means killing jobs." Then we've got some more. The Minister of Finance on September 13, 2011, when the NDP proposed an end to the corporate tax giveaway for high-priced meals and box seats said, and I quote, "It represents killing a huge job-creation initiative"—Minister of Finance. On September 9, 2011, "'The NDP's plan is a crushing job killer,' given the party's promise to scrap corporate tax cuts, said Finance Minister Dwight Duncan."

When we tabled a motion—I don't want to leave the honourable member from Ottawa Centre out even for a second—in December calling for a halt to further corporate tax cuts, here's what Ontario Liberal Party president and Ottawa Centre MPP said: "The motion that is being presented by the NDP ... is going to harm Ontario's economy in these tough economic times. It is not going to help in terms of creation of new jobs. I really urge all members to vote against this motion, because what we need to do at this moment is to ensure that Ontario is a good place to do business."

We know the Ontario Liberal Party has been dragged kicking and screaming towards the inevitability that the corporate tax giveaway has been an ultimate and total failure as an economic plan by this government. You know that although they have got increased corporate tax reductions, no jobs have been created out of it. You know that it has made not one iota of difference. When you look to other provinces that have taken different avenues, they are all more successful than we are.

We have, in fact, become a have-not province under your economic direction and leadership. You have not looked at what is good for the people of this province, only what is good for the wealthiest few. You want corporate box seats. You want tax writeoffs for going to sports games. You want restaurants and golf courses to be tax writeoffs so that people can go out there and have a great time with corporate money. But you don't want to look after ordinary people who are starting to suffer.

We find this really difficult. We have already the lowest corporate tax of any of the Great Lakes states. It's 10% lower than all of them. We have lower corporate tax rates than the United States, Australia, Finland, France, Germany, Korea, India, the United Kingdom and a whole host of other countries, some of which are a lot more successful than us. We have no investment in jobs at the same time.

The HST and lower corporate income tax rates have transferred roughly \$10 billion into the corporate sector from the treasury, on top of all the corporate tax handouts from the federal government. Ontario governments have paid the price through higher taxes and levies on the basics. Over that same period, investment as a share of GDP has declined steadily over the past decade, from 8% to 6%. And instead of investing, what are corporations doing? They're sitting on that. The profits are higher than they've ever been before.

We believe that we need to change the strategy. We have implored this government to give money to corporations that produce jobs, that invest in training, that have new machinery, new ways of technology. If they don't invest, then they don't get tax cuts. Don't give them money so that they can have a corporate box at the Rogers Centre, so that they can go and eat gourmet meals in a high-priced restaurant and so that they can sign off all of it against the public dollar. We need to start doing things more wisely. Quebec has done that; Manitoba has done that; many jurisdictions across North America have done that. Even Rick Santorum, that left-wing guy from the United States, is talking and saying the same kind of stuff: If you don't invest in creating jobs, don't expect a handout from the state. And if he's finally come to that conclusion, I find it very difficult to understand why the members of the government opposite have not been able to come to that same ready conclusion.

Now, there are many things we can talk about today. I did want to briefly talk about Ornge, but I'm going to leave most of that to my colleague the member from Nickel Belt, because she's really more up to speed on this.

Government can be very careful in how it spends money or it can spend it without having due regard to the public purse. I listened today to the minister as she brought forward a new bill. I'm trying to be charitable. I'm trying to say that even though the horse has bolted from the door, she wants to do something about this. Let's be charitable. But the horse should never have been allowed out of that door in the first place. We need to know that government has tremendous opportunity and

the ability to monitor and be sure that the public money is being spent wisely. We ask ordinary, sensible questions. We asked last year why the head of Ornge, Mr. Mazza, was not on the sunshine list. He was on the sunshine list in 2008. Why was he not on the sunshine list in 2009? Because it was—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: No, it was all buried.

Interjection: Secret.

Mr. Michael Prue: It was all secret. This is something that this government should never have allowed to happen, and we cannot have these secrets anymore. Ordinary people are becoming frustrated. They're becoming angry. They are wanting in some cases revenge against governments and against politicians, and I'm telling you that we have to act. If Quebec can do the right thing, then we should be able to do it.

We don't need this government to come down with an austerity budget and then watch, two days later, when the people of Ontario get whacked by a federal budget that is going to do much the same thing. We expect and we hope for leadership from the finance minister. We hope for and we expect leadership from the back bench of the Liberal Party. Stand up. Let your voices be heard. Let those in the cabinet know that there is an unease in that party, as I know there must be; that there is an unease with the direction that is being followed and that you want to change it, that you want the Liberal Party to stand up for what you used to stand up for, and that was ordinary people; and you are not going to take it any more when we stand by and have jobs and lives destroyed with nothing to show for it other than, you know, somebody in a corporate box at a big centre.

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Mr. Speaker, I just want to close by asking everybody to be mindful of that. I want everybody to be prepared for next Tuesday. We New Democrats will listen very, very carefully to what is being said during the budget. Do not for a minute assume that we will support a budget that will harm ordinary people. Do not assume that for one second, because it will not happen. You have to do what is right for the people of Ontario, even though that may cause some pain to your corporate friends. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak today on Bill 46, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012, or in other words, the Supply Act, as we like to refer to this particular bill.

It's important to talk a little bit about the background—I like the technicalities of these bills. Many members wonder what these bills are about. We had an interim supply motion, and now we're talking about the Supply Act. The Supply Act is one of the cornerstone acts in the Legislature. If passed, this bill would give the government the authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments. It's an important bill, so I urge

that all members vote in support of this bill, because we're talking about the expenses that occur in the current fiscal year, which will end on March 31, 2012, and this Legislature has given permission to the government to make those expenditures.

Without this bill, the spending authority of the government does not exist, and the government would not be able to provide the public services to the people of Ontario that they count on so much. The government's spending authority for the current fiscal year is provided through the Interim Appropriation for 2011-2012 Act, 2010, and the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act, 2011. These acts were required to provide spending authority until the Legislature could complete the voting of supply.

Let me be clear, Speaker: The proposed Supply Act does not authorize any new spending. It would include spending authority provided by the interim appropriation acts and would repeal those two statutes. So the two statutes we passed in previous sessions are the ones that gave the government the spending authority that is ongoing, and now, by voting for this particular bill, Bill 46, the Supply Act, we will be repealing those two previous bills, the interim and supplementary bills—

Interjection.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I think this is important information, member—and then ensuring that those authorities are embedded in this particular bill.

I think it's important that I provide some additional context. Next week, the Minister of Finance, as is known, will be tabling this government's ninth provincial budget and the first of our new mandate. Speaker, the 2012 budget will build on the progress that has been achieved since 2003 in protecting our education and health care systems, and making our province the very best that it can be. And it will lay out key measures to help us not only reduce the deficit but eliminate it by 2017-18, because it is absolutely essential that the deficit be eliminated by 2017-18; there should be no debate about that. The confidence in our economy depends on it: the confidence of Ontario businesses, small and large; the confidence of international investors, of international credit rating agencies, of our key trading partners; and of course, the confidence of Ontario families. Confidence demands that we take concrete action together to eliminate the deficit.

On February 15, the Drummond Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services delivered sobering advice on how it recommends eliminating the deficit. The commission also painted a picture of how we got here, and I think that's an important conversation frame to have.

Changing economic conditions have hit Ontario harder than other provinces over the past decade. The reasons are simple. Beginning in 2003, the Canadian dollar began a strong ascent. The surge in the currency made Ontario's exports more expensive for foreigners to buy. The impact on Ontario's economy was huge. The province's international trade surplus disappeared by the middle of 2006 and was replaced by a trade deficit.

In my past life, I've been a trade lawyer. My job was to work with a lot of Canadian businesses which sell their products, most of them—especially in the manufacturing sector located in Ontario—selling their products—mostly goods but also services—to other markets around the world, primarily to the United States of America, where the low Canadian dollar was the biggest advantage they had because that made their goods and services cheaper in foreign markets, especially in the US. It gave them that competitive advantage to sell their goods and services. Of course, foreign investors, American investors in particular, were always keen to purchase Ontario goods and services. With a high Canadian dollar, we have seen that competitive advantage disappear significantly, making it difficult for our businesses, especially our manufacturers, to sell in the US market.

The Canadian dollar is key to that business planning, and manufacturers very much rely on that. Of course, as a result of the high dollar, by a reduction in our manufacturing and those market opportunities, Ontario businesses and Ontario families have paid the price and continue to pay the price. In other words, the high dollar may be good for other parts of Canada, but it has been very harmful to Ontario.

The Drummond commission described two other factors adding to Ontario's economic challenge. First, while the recession caused the rest of the Canadian economy to shrink for three quarters, it hit Ontario a lot harder, causing our economy to shrink for four quarters. Second, the federal government continues to take a lot of our tax dollars out of Ontario for distribution to the rest of the country. For example, in 2012-13, while Ontario taxpayers will contribute \$6 billion to the equalization program, the Ontario government will receive approximately \$3.3 billion in return. That's half of what we contribute in the equalization scheme.

We are proud to support public services in other provinces; however, the McGuinty government has long maintained that Ontarians send too many of our tax dollars to the federal government for distribution to the rest of Canada. Over the last 10 years, Ontarians have contributed more than \$50 billion to that particular program. Our government is looking for the federal government to work with the provincial and territorial governments to modernize the federal-provincial fiscal arrangement to support the sustainable delivery of public services. In the meantime, the challenge we are facing is significant. Ontario's deficit currently stands at \$16 billion.

Speaker, we all probably remember that up to 2008 we had a balanced budget. The McGuinty government had a track record of not only inheriting the deficit that the previous Conservative government left in 2003—\$5.6 billion in total—but then taking specific actions to reduce that deficit to the point of eliminating it and then delivering three back-to-back-to-back balanced budgets right here in this Legislature. But we cannot forget the global forces at play. A lot of time, when we're hearing from the opposition, somehow we get the impression that

Ontario exists in a vacuum, or somehow this government seems to be only making economic policy, with no impact as to what's happening in the global sphere.

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In 2008-09, we saw a devastating global recession that not only impacted the economy in Ontario but had a significant impact on the economy in Canada and in fact crippled many economies around the world. If you look at the reason behind the current \$16-billion deficit, Speaker, you will see that it is as a result of the steps that our government took in order to fight the recession in Ontario, investments that we made in infrastructure in every single community across this province—every single one—not just communities represented by government, but also by both official opposition parties. We've heard from other members who talk about the investments and now, if those investments are not being made or are jeopardized, have concerns about them. But that was done because we were able to borrow money so that we could fight the recession and ensure that we stimulated the economy to create those jobs so that we don't get into a deep, deep recession.

We were not alone. If you look at the federal government on its own, they did the same thing. In fact, they've also amassed a massive deficit as a result of the measures that they had to take, the borrowing that they had to undertake to fight the deficit. That's a different government, a different political party, the Conservative Party. So you cannot argue that it's a way of doing of one political party alone. It's a concerted effort that everybody took to ensure that we deal with the recession, that we stimulate the economy and that we work together to ensure that our economy is growing. And we've seen that.

So that's the challenge, that's where the \$16-billion deficit comes from. Of course, now it's imperative that we take this challenge and balance the books—as the economy is getting stronger, as jobs are being created—and eliminate this deficit so that we can continue to strengthen our economy, create jobs and of course provide quality public services, health care and education.

This challenge is not entirely unprecedented. As I mentioned, governments of all stripes have been dealing with it. In fact, since 1990 four governments of three different parties have done so. In the 21 years since then, net borrowing has decreased only once in the province of Ontario, and that was just because of an accounting change. Governments have taken this path because they could rely on economic growth to keep the debt-to-GDP ratio sustainable.

Relatively speaking, Ontario is a low-tax province. This is a trend that has been developing for many years. In fact, tax revenues today are 11.6% of GDP, almost 15% lower than they were in 1994. And still we've been hitting our expense targets. Over many years, Ontario has built expertise at delivering supportive, high-quality public services with low administrative costs. In fact, Ontario's per capita spending is among the lowest of Canada's 10 provinces. This was recognized by the

Drummond commission as well. Last year, we reported that spending growth had been cut to about 4%. So far this year, we are tracking to keep growth in spending to about 2.5%.

The challenges are, in this environment, to eliminate the deficit and deliver the quality services families need. We will meet these challenges. That's what strong leadership means. We will build on the tax reform, infrastructure investments and other actions Ontarians have already taken to increase the prospects for economic growth in Ontario.

All of us have a role to play, every single one of us. As a government, we have to do what families are doing in their own homes: We have to live within our means.

The good news is that this is the right time to be taking action. Our economy continues to grow, and Ontario continues to create jobs. Ontario's GDP grew in the third quarter of 2011 at 2.7% on an annualized basis. Job growth in the province accounted for more than 45% of all jobs created in Canada in 2011.

Ontarians have made tremendous progress over the last eight years. We have modernized the tax system by introducing the HST and bringing in significant tax cuts for both people and business. The tax plan for jobs and growth has also positioned Ontario for growth. Our province, our home, is recognized as a good place to invest. It is the second-most-attractive place for foreign investment in North America, and Forbes magazine, among others, credits much of the work we have done for this fact.

To build on this growth, Ontario must confront another challenge. The 2009 budget took the bold step of transforming Ontario's tax system into one of the most competitive in the world. We have turned around health care and education, and are now getting world-leading results in both. Now we must transform the way public services are delivered and eliminate the deficit.

Speaker, Ontario is open to change and innovation. We will build on reforms to the way government operates to ensure that Ontario families receive the best public services possible. We are reviewing every program, every asset and every function of government. We will transform operations to ensure that Ontario families are receiving the best possible service.

We will not make across-the-board cuts, Speaker. I repeat: We will not make across-the-board cuts. Instead, we will make careful, thoughtful choices; choices that reflect the priorities of Ontarians.

Let me give you a few specific examples. Faced with the choice of hanging on to LCBO's prime downtown Toronto real estate and strengthening our schools, we choose schools. And if we have to choose between subsidizing horse racing and funding home care, Speaker, we choose home care.

We will continue to make thoughtful choices before our budget, in our budget and after our budget until we balance our budget and the finances of our province. That's the plan. That's how we will tackle our deficit: thoughtful choices guided by the values that Ontarians share.

The more we are able to transform the way we deliver—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): This is the last warning to the member from Durham. If he wants to make comments, as I said earlier—and I'll reiterate for him—go back to his seat.

Mr. John O'Toole: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There's no point of order, and humour is not appreciated. Last warning.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Speaker, as I was saying, the more we are able to transform the way we deliver public services, the less we will have to cut. That means we will be better able to protect schools and health care, the services that matter most to Ontarians.

Ontarians have placed their confidence in our government to keep a steady hand on the tiller and steer us toward a stronger economy. That is exactly what we are doing and will continue to do. We will eliminate the deficit. We will keep strengthening our economic fundamentals.

We have put the right plan in place for the times, a plan to strengthen Ontario's economy for future growth and prosperity. Now, each of us has to do our part in moving that plan forward, whether it's businesses that need to continue making the necessary investments to increase productivity or those of us in the public sector who need to strive constantly to ensure we are delivering the best value and the best public services to Ontarians.

I firmly believe, Speaker, that there is no place better prepared to weather economic storms and better positioned to grow and take advantage of new opportunities than Ontario.

Eliminating the deficit isn't just about the numbers. It's about building the rock-solid foundation families need to support their jobs, their schools, their health care and their future. It's about acting responsibly. It's about building a bright future for our children and grandchildren.

That's a large part of why I urge all honourable members to support this Supply Act. Without it and without the necessary spending authority, no government would be able to deliver to the people of Ontario the public services they depend on.

Our challenges may be significant, but so is our willingness to do the work and our determination to succeed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak this afternoon on Bill 46, an act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year.

1650

While I was listening to the member from Ottawa Centre explain an appropriations or a supply bill, I can

understand and see now why, as he said, in his past life he was a lawyer and not a teacher, and that he's now been reincarnated as a Dalton McGuinty Liberal, after that explanation.

The government House leader, when he introduced this bill for second reading, said that this bill was part of the Liberal story, and he was proud of that story. Well, let's put that story to test. I guess what I would say is, that story, especially today, in light of the Ornge scandal—another billion dollars to pile on the heap of previous scandals—the real Liberal story is, “What's another billion?” Maybe that will be their campaign slogan next time around: “What's another billion? We might as well just pile a few more on.”

But here is the real story: Every time a bill gets introduced by this Liberal government, it's an expenditure bill. It's a money bill. They're spending money—surprise, surprise, every time. Whether it was the bill for the southwest Ontario development fund, the seniors' tax credit, the education tax credit—every bill that they put in is an expenditure bill, and then, of course, this still follows through with the Drummond report. Of course, the Drummond report said, “Let's hold off here. Let's”—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry. It seems that members are forgetting to acknowledge the Chair. It's not so much me; it's the Chair. So when you come in and out of this chamber, we would like an acknowledgement of the Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. It's always good for people to remember the proper conventions here.

The real story about all these bills, in light of the Drummond report, is that this Liberal government keeps spending money. When you really look at the story, the story that I see with this Liberal government is that every time they come back with their hand out and spending more money, the picture of a gambling addict, staggering back after rolling the dice once too many times—staggers back to the House, staggers back to the benefactors, promising, promising, promising that they'll not do this again: “Just one more handout. Just one more bunch of money and I promise I won't roll the dice anymore.” But we know that that is the Liberal way: just spend, spend, spend.

Let's look at their track record as they've taken Ontario into have-not status for the first time in our history as a province. Let's say you look at their expenditures and what has happened with the average, everyday resident and citizen in Ontario. In their eight years, they've doubled the debt. They've put more than \$100 billion more in debt on the backs of the residents of Ontario. During that time, under their abysmal leadership, the real GDP growth per capita in this province has been 0.84%—less than 1% real GDP growth in Ontario; \$347 more in real dollars is what an individual in Ontario has today as when the Liberals first took power. And for that \$347 more, they've got over \$100 billion more in debt. We've got a \$16-billion deficit. We have over 600,000 people unemployed. We've got a higher

unemployment rate than the national average. And, of course, we have Ornge, which they're so proud of over on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, this House leader said that he was proud of this story, proud of this story of abysmal economic performance and an abysmal spending record that has put Ontario in our worst fiscal position ever in our history—ever.

Just to give you an example of what sort of spending: As the average taxpayer in this province has seen their real per capita growth grow by 0.84% in eight years, the rate of government spending has been over 7% each and every year of the McGuinty government.

The rising costs of public servants: There was a story in yesterday's paper about how, under the McGuinty term, a first-class constable, a police officer in this province, eight years ago was making \$59,000; he's now at \$84,000. That's a lot more than 0.84%. About 30% has been the increase of our costs of public servants, and this government is proud of it, while a taxpayer has less than a 1% growth in money to pay for their wasteful, ridiculous, abysmal economic policies.

I'm glad the government House leader is proud of that story. I'm looking forward to the next election campaign, when they bring forth that slogan, “What's another billion? What's another eHealth? What's another Ornge?” I'm looking forward to it.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to start out by thanking the member from Beaches–East York for his pointed words about the Drummond report and about the upcoming budget. I think we all need to take some time to reflect over the next couple of days on those words.

I want to spend my time talking a bit about Niagara, the Welland riding and south Niagara. The unemployment rate in southwestern Ontario and Niagara is between 9% and 11%. My riding is probably the third worst in the province. The incomes of workers in this area have fallen to only 0.7% increases, while the cost of living and inflation is at 2.5%.

Just recently, on March 15, there was a report released from the Niagara Workforce Planning Board. It's called Benchmarking Niagara, and it compared the Niagara region to 34 similar-sized communities across Canada. Unfortunately, the news there was grim, and I'm going to share a little bit about that with you.

In Niagara, the growth was only 12.3% as opposed to 20.5% to 21.5% everywhere else in the 34 communities. In 1996, we had 186,000 jobs in Niagara, which grew to 212,500 jobs. Unfortunately, most of those jobs are accommodation, food workers and retail. They're not manufacturing jobs. We lost 13,700 manufacturing jobs in our area in about an 11-year period.

I want to thank the Niagara Workforce Planning Board. And by the way, Mr. Drummond is suggesting that we need to consolidate the workforce planning boards across the province. I want to thank them for their

report. I want to thank their CEO, David Alexander, for bringing this forward.

1700

So although we had some improvements in jobs in those three areas, they're jobs that pay minimum wage or slightly better than minimum wage. They're not jobs that can support families. I know that my community is hurting, and I know that many of your communities are hurting as well. So, you know, at a time when our economy is the worst, the government has now laid off 210 more workers, in one of the worst economic areas in the province, at the Fort Erie slots. Now, these were jobs that actually paid far more than minimum wage and were supporting families in my riding and across Niagara. The cost of that has increased social services in the Niagara Peninsula, and there is a high cost of social services when there are no jobs in your area. Southern Ontario—in particular, Niagara and, I think, Hamilton—needs to have an economic development fund as well, and they need assistance from this government to develop their future economic plans and to bring good-quality, well-paid jobs to Niagara.

The NDP had a plan—it continues to have a plan—which would give corporate tax credits to those who create jobs, to those who provide on-the-job training, to those who invest in equipment and machinery, and that's what we need to do to create jobs in this province.

We also need greater access to upgrading skills, education for laid-off workers and unemployed workers, regardless of whether they're collecting EI benefits or not. Many of the workers in the manufacturing sector that got laid off, some of them are still unemployed, and they should have access to retraining as well.

Many people are holding down two or three part-time jobs, and they need flexible education and training programs geared to quality jobs that can support their families in our areas. They also need to acknowledge their areas of interest, and they need to be programs that don't take six or seven months to get approvals for.

Now, on the Drummond report, I've had an opportunity to review it, and I just want to share some of the highlights that are disturbing to me. It encourages more private, for-profit entities in health care. We have that already in home care, and what we have is personal support workers being paid minimum wage or slightly above minimum wage. We have personal support workers working for a number of care provider agencies, because they can only get part-time work.

I think that some of you in government and some from the official opposition attended a CUPE breakfast a couple of weeks ago, where we saw a video about the care that our seniors are getting in their homes. So to talk about having the lowest-paid worker to provide health care I don't think is in keeping with the comments that we've heard from the Minister of Health about having the right provider in the right place at the right time—and, I would add, for the appropriate period of time. That's the kind of care that we need, whether it be a personal support worker, a registered nurse, or a registered

practical nurse. We can't just give all of health care to the lowest-paid worker. People are not widgets. We're not on an assembly line here, and patients need consistent, quality care.

The Drummond report is also suggesting consolidation of various programs and contracting out, privatizing a number of programs. I know from experience that that will lead to lower wages, no benefits, no pension plans, and—

Mr. Michael Prue: And higher costs.

Ms. Cindy Forster: And higher costs—that's right—and all for the sake of profit.

So closing the existing slots in Fort Erie, Sarnia and Windsor created job losses. Privatization of public safety training will affect the integrity of the programs and will create lower wages and job losses. Eliminating policing duties will decrease jobs and lower wages and benefits at a time when people are losing their jobs in this province. So it goes on and on.

Now is not the time to be cutting jobs; now is the time to be creating jobs that can support families with real wages, benefits and pensions, and I encourage the government to take a good look before they come forward with a budget that is going to continue to negatively impact the lives of Ontarians.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I just want to make sure I pay close attention to the clock.

I believe this supply motion bill is important, but it really is a testimony of the lack of control, accountability and transparency of the McGuinty government. It's a full assessment, but I think the most recent—today, the Auditor General issued a report—Mr. Speaker, you'd be interested in this. You've referred to this report. It falls into this purview of health care, the largest part of the budget.

I think there are a couple of things in here that could be made—the point could easily be made. So I'm just going to let what the Auditor General of Ontario said—this is all available for constituents online. It's a report on the scandalous, outrageous, completely unacceptable practices in the Ministry of Health and the call for the minister to resign. Here's what has been said by the Auditor General. This is important. This is in the report.

Hansard, you can get this copy from me. You just repeat what I say, in case I get it right here. It says:

“In outlining its plans to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts in February 2006 regarding the corporation that would be responsible for Ontario's air ambulance services, the ministry committed to set standards and monitor performance against those standards to ensure that the ‘end result will be improved care, improved access to service, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of service, and the assurance of greater fiscal and medical accountability.’” That's right from the auditor. It goes on to say:

“As well, the ministry's original submission to Management Board of Cabinet”—these are the cabinet

minutes. They knew about this. This is 2006, and they've denied that here. Here's the key thing, Mr. Speaker, that you'd be most interested in because I know how much interest you take in this: that "the Ornge arrangement specified that obtaining and evaluating performance information of this nature would be an essential part of the ministry's oversight function."

There we have it. The minister, even now, in fairness—they're throwing George Smitherman under the bus, but this comes right back to the Premier. I'm quite surprised that Mr. McCarter, the Auditor General for the province of Ontario, had the courage—and I commend him for his professionalism and unencumbered views of the taxpayers of Ontario. He's commendable. They tried to fire him, actually. They didn't want to hire him back because he's so good at it.

There's another part here—and I'm just going to skip a bit, because some of it's even more troubling. These are his words again. On page 9, it says—there's more to it here: "... being flowed to a company called Ornge Global Holdings LP for Ornge's future purchase of limited partnership (ownership) units of that company." So, a limited partnership and ownership in a private company. "At the time of our audit, Ornge Global Holdings LP was owned by members of Ornge's senior management and the board." They severed off a private piece and funded it through government debt. They were the owners of it—and purchased a building and some helicopters here. Here's an example:

"In addition to purchasing 12 new helicopters, Ornge spent \$28 million for 11 used and aging helicopters, planning to use them for less than two years while it waited for the new ones to be delivered. At the time of our audit, Ornge told us it believed this would be more cost-effective than entering into another service agreement with the service provider. Ornge obtained an external consultant's opinion"—and what did that cost, the consultant? They probably went out for dinner and went to Italy for a meeting. "At the time of our audit, Ornge was in the process of disposing of the 11 used helicopters for what was expected to be less than \$8 million." So they lost \$20 million in a year or two. This is tragic. It goes on here:

"Ornge has borrowed ... \$300 million to finance, among other things, the purchase of the 12 new helicopters, 10 new airplanes, the 11 used helicopters and the new office building. This debt is included in provincial debt"—which the taxpayers of Ontario should be just outraged about. The budget is next week. I can't see what more damage they're going to do.

1710

Mr. Speaker, this is an indictment. We're calling—our leader, Tim Hudak, has been calling for an open, select committee with NDP, Conservative and Liberal members to get to the bottom of the disease in this organization. The leadership over here, the Minister of Health and the Premier, have full responsibility. Look, I'd like them to stand in this House and do two things: first, apologize, and then resign.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was listening so intently to the speaker that I was surprised when he sat down so quickly.

The first thing I wanted to add to the debate for the interim supply is what happened today when the Auditor General presented his report, and I will be spending a good portion of my time talking about this.

But today is also Dietitians Day, and you will see how it ties in to the supply motion quite nicely. I would like to take the time to recognize that today marks the third anniversary of Dietitians Day. This day spotlights the profession and reminds us that dietitians are the smart choice for advice on proper eating, good nutrition and healthy living. As everyone might know, March is Nutrition Month and we are in the month of March.

This year, the Dietitians of Canada, the national professional association for dietitians, is focusing on clearing up nutrition myths. It can often be difficult to navigate nutritional information, competing claims of what is healthy and what is not and the science behind nutrition. Dietitians can help to translate all of these messages into real food that meets each individual's unique dietary needs, taste and lifestyle.

As we watch our health care costs—and this is where it becomes interesting, Mr. Speaker—rise in this province, dietitians can help us to focus more on preventive measures. We had an excellent report yesterday from the cancer society and Ontario public health that focused on health promotion and disease prevention. This holds great opportunities for cost savings to our health care system while making people healthy, like the dietitians are doing.

A healthy diet can help to prevent costly conditions like heart disease and diabetes, as well as help manage existing ones and provide care that complements treatments. The dietitians in Ontario are working to improve access to nutritional information and healthy food options for all Canadians, and I certainly support the great work that they do. It would certainly pay off if this Legislative Assembly was to do this.

You will all remember that I introduced a bill called the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act. Basically, what the bill is about is to talk about menu labelling. Next time you go for your favourite fast food—I will pick McDonald's for one—not only would you see "Big Macs—\$2.99," but you would also see "450 calories." We would put nutritional information directly on the menu board. That doesn't cost the government a cent. It is already being done in huge parts of the States, so it's not like McDonald's and all of the big ones will have to reinvent the wheel, because they've already modified their menu board. If you go to any restaurant in New York City right now, you will see this for their food and their drinks. Why aren't we bringing this to Ontario?

It would help with childhood obesity. A couple of weeks ago, we supported a private member's bill that will make the month of May childhood obesity—I'm

hoping eradication—month. There are steps that the government could take in these times of huge deficit that don't add to the public purse but that certainly pays off huge dividends.

So I wanted to salute today the dietitians of Ontario. It is the third anniversary of their special day, and some of the ideas that they put forward, targeted on keeping people healthy, will go a long way.

Coming back to the report from Cancer Care Ontario, if we were to tackle the four big ones, Mr. Speaker—smoking, exercise, healthy weight and healthy diet—if we were to tackle those four, we could get rid of 80% of all cancers. Think about the impact that would have. Think about the impact that would have on the people of Ontario: 80% less cancer if we were to do a good job on the four main ones.

But we don't have a health promotion ministry anymore in Ontario, and I certainly haven't seen any bills that remotely tackle health promotion or disease prevention. What we got instead today was a bill focused on Ornge. That bill came because—my good friend here is reading my notes; I'm going to share some of my notes with him. This bill came because the Auditor General published a special report on Ornge, the air ambulance service in Ontario. For the last many, many weeks in this House—almost daily—I have risen in this House and asked the minister questions about what happened at Ornge. I've been getting the same answer pretty much all the time. But—as I see the clock is ticking here—what was released in the report of the auditor, although I have been actively working that file daily for weeks, still shocked me and disappointed me.

What we get in the auditor's report, in black and white for everybody to read—I'm on page 12, if you're interested—is that the red flag had been raised; the red flag had been presented to the Ministry of Health. The Minister of Health says, after January 2011, that when we got this letter that says, "Here's the web of for-profit companies that has been spun off of Ornge," the not-for-profit, red flags went up. She says that they tried to do follow-up as best they could. She used the words, "We continue to do the work" of trying to get to the bottom of this, trying to make sure that public money was not used for for-profit companies. But then the Auditor General was also doing his work. When he presented his interim report to the minister in September, was he welcomed with open arms? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. He was told, "Oh, no. You're overreacting, Mr. Auditor General. All is fine at Ornge."

Well, those two statements don't jibe, Mr. Speaker. You cannot on one hand tell us that you have tried to get answers but were stonewalled, and then get the Auditor General to give you an interim report and not welcome the extra information that the auditor was bringing forward.

They doubted the auditors, and only after it hit the media did the minister, for the first time ever, call the Auditor General and ask for a meeting—only after it hit the media. It didn't matter that the report had been tabled.

It didn't matter that they had an internal auditor do the work and raise the red flag and tell them to act. They never did—only after it hit the media, and then they acted.

To this, I say that the minister has a duty to protect the health care system and to protect taxpayers' dollars, and she failed at both of them and should resign.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to the supply motion on behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills, whom I'm so honoured and privileged to represent.

1720

Let's talk about health care first, as it's the most important service the provincial government delivers and it tends to be a top-of-mind concern, not only for my constituents but across the province. The hub of the wheel of health care in small-town Ontario is the local hospital. In Wellington–Halton Hills we are fortunate to have two fine hospitals: in Centre Wellington the Groves Memorial Community Hospital, and in Halton Hills the Georgetown Hospital.

In the last provincial Parliament, I spent a considerable amount of time advocating for a new Groves Memorial Community Hospital and urging the government to financially support the planned renovations to the Georgetown Hospital. I drew upon my 21 years of experience as a member of provincial Parliament to push the government to support these projects in every way that I could. But as I've said many times, what's said in the Legislature in support of a hospital project matters little if the project doesn't make sense; and what's said in the Legislature matters little if the project doesn't have strong community support.

Both the new Groves Hospital and the Georgetown Hospital projects made good sense and had the requisite community support that the government could not ignore. I believe it is now my role to hold the government to the commitments it has made to my constituents on the Groves and Georgetown hospitals. I put the government on notice: I will not be silent if there is any indication whatsoever that the promises the minister made to our communities are in any way broken. We await next week's budget.

In the meantime, we read in today's Globe and Mail some very troubling news. Anonymous sources have apparently told Adam Radwanski that hospital projects are "under the axe." Now, I've never promised my constituents a new hospital—never once. What I have promised repeatedly is my best efforts in support of our hospital projects. I haven't promised an outcome, but I've promised my best efforts to get us the outcome our communities need and deserve. I am here to say, on behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills, that we will accept nothing less than what the government promised us before the election. I will hold this government to account for the promises it made to my constituents. If they lied to my constituents, I will not remain silent.

While we are talking about infrastructure, let's talk about the GTA West Corridor study. As members will recall, I raised my objections to alternative 4-3 in the Legislature many times and in many ways before Christmas. I continue to raise the concerns of my constituents. The council of the town of Halton Hills, the council of the region of Halton as well as an extremely well-organized local community group have come together to say that alternative 4-3 would damage our local environment and some of our treasured heritage and historical sites; pave over good, quality farmland; divide our community in half; and reduce our property values. Together, we have recommended a sensible, cost-effective alternative, backed up by a credible engineering consultant. If the ministry wants to ease traffic congestion through the GTA west area, they should seriously look at widening the 401. Surely in these challenging economic times, this would be a more cost-effective solution than building a brand new highway along alternative 4-3. They could use the money that they had saved and put the Morriston bypass on the ministry's five-year plan.

As you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, I've raised this project need with the government many times as well. Yesterday, I discussed it with the Minister of Transportation, urging him to meet with representatives from the township of Puslinch. I reminded him that this project would have a significant regional benefit for all of southern Ontario as it would ease the flow of traffic from Niagara region and the Hamilton area through to the 401. I was pleased with the minister's interest and favourable response, and I hope that his office will soon set up a meeting.

The third matter that I am compelled to bring to the attention of the House is the economic importance of the equine industry in Wellington-Halton Hills. On March 12, the McGuinty government announced that it had directed the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. to implement a number of proposals, including "stopping annual payments to the horse racing industry by ending the slots-at-racetracks program on March 31, 2013."

The equine industry has a significant presence in Wellington-Halton Hills. In fact, I would guess that many hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of my constituents are employed in the industry in one way or another, from the farmer to the horse people to the breeder to the veterinarian. It's an important component, even a pillar, of the economy of rural Ontario. While I firmly believe that the government of Ontario needs to get its spending under control, I do not believe that this should include measures which would kill the horse racing industry. I view the current funding arrangement not as a subsidy but as an agreement between the industry and the government which allowed for the installation of slot machines at racetracks, a revenue-sharing agreement which has been mutually beneficial for the horse racing industry as well as for the government.

On February 22, I was at the rally on the front lawn of the Legislature to show my support for the horse racing industry. I want to see Ontario's horse racing industry

remain strong and vibrant for years to come. The Premier wants to frame this issue in a divisive way, pitting urban against rural Ontario. The Premier says, "If it's a choice between home care or horse racing, I choose home care." What utter nonsense. What about the billions wasted since he came to office in 2003? What about eHealth, the hundreds of millions of dollars thrown out the window? What about the annual Auditor General's reports listing page after page of extravagance, waste and inefficiency? What about Ornge, the air ambulance scandal? What about the growing sunshine list that comes out this Friday? What about the Ontario cricket club and the Liberal slush fund that was handed out before the 2007 election? What about the hundreds of millions of dollars that the government will have to pay in penalties for cancelling the gas-fired electricity plants in Oakville and Mississauga to prop up Liberal incumbents who were likely facing defeat?

Do they have any idea what the economic impact will be across the province? Where is the impact study? Has the Minister of Finance even done one? Why won't he table it in this House? What about the impact on the host municipalities? Does this not represent new downloading? Why doesn't he admit that the gaming market in Ontario is already saturated and he needs to close three slots facilities immediately to make way for the planned mega casinos that he intends to announce soon? Why doesn't he tell the people of Ontario that his vision of a 21st-century economy in Ontario is drawing desperate people to a mega casino and fooling them into emptying their pockets to satisfy a spending habit that he just can't break?

Mr. Speaker, the people of Wellington-Halton Hills believe in the promise of the future. They believe that with the right leadership, the right policies rooted in the right principles, Ontario's best days are yet to come. As their representative, I believe in the promise of the future as well, and it is increasingly clear to all of us on this side of the House that the promise of the future begins with the defeat of the McGuinty Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Close enough.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: There you go. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

It's my pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 46, the supply motion, of course, which is necessitated by the fact that there must be monies available to fulfill the budget commitments, but it also gives us an opportunity to talk about the failures of this government.

We listened to the member from Ottawa Centre go on with a fantasy report about everything good that the McGuinty government has done since 2003, but he looks through rose-coloured glasses, as is his wont to do, and he only tells half the story.

I much more enjoyed the dissertation by my colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills, where he only gave us a

snapshot—a snapshot because of our limited time—of the number of scandals that this government has been involved in, and the absolute abdication of their responsibility when it comes to properly managing the public purse. He talked about hundreds of millions. Well, the number is probably closer to a billion. “Hundreds of millions” just doesn’t seem the same as “a billion,” and you’re talking about \$1 billion in cancellation costs for the Oakville and Mississauga power plants—the one in Mississauga that they kept on building weeks, even months, after the Premier promised it would be stopped, at millions of dollars a day in construction costs. And he talks about jobs? There are no jobs going on at that plant now. It’s a white elephant sitting there doing nothing.

Meanwhile, he’s going to cut 60,000 jobs out of the horse racing industry because he thinks he has a good philosophical argument for doing so. But it is so disingenuous on the part of this government to frame it that way, when we know darn well that it is a revenue-sharing agreement between the horse racing industry and the province of Ontario, and while the horse racing industry has received \$345 million annually, that’s split among the track, the industry itself and also the municipalities that benefit—any municipality that has a track. I’d be anxious to hear from Jim Watson in Ottawa, who probably won’t say a word about it because he’s probably been muzzled or bought off by the government in some other way to keep quiet on this. But the reality is that his municipality is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw, Speaker.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): —knows better. You withdraw that one?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, I withdraw that one. Thank you, Speaker. I got ahead of myself. I got excited.

But we do know how these kinds of relationships work sometimes. It’s sort of like the self-devouring, incestuous relationship that was going on at Ornge.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yeah. You know, this is just the mother of all scandals. We thought that eHealth—with eHealth we’re talking about \$1 billion of our taxpayers’ money that was wasted, poured down the drain. How much could we have done in health care? You know these hospitals where they’re talking about cancelling the capital projects? How many of those would be going ahead or not on the chopping block if they hadn’t wasted \$1 billion on their eHealth scandal?

But then I look at Ornge. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General today, while he couldn’t come out and say it directly, all but said that we need to go ahead with this select committee on Ornge, because he made it very clear that there were areas in this Ornge scandal that he cannot get to. The police are limited to investigating criminal activity; he’s limited to looking at the financial stuff.

The minister today brings in a bill. We haven’t seen the bill. She talks about whistle-blower protection. Well, I’ll tell you, Mr. Speaker, a select committee of this Legislature—it was voted for by this Legislature yesterday—will guarantee whistle-blower protection for those people who want to come forward and tell us more about this Ornge scandal, so that people across this province know—know—how unaccountable that organization was and how the Minister of Health went around blindfolded while all of this went on.

I just want—I hope I have time. This is just the chronology of one aspect of it, where they bought this building for \$15 million, okay? Then they leased it back, paying significantly more than market rate rent to one of their subsidiaries. It just gets—I know it sounds crazy, but the sad part is it’s true. So here’s the chronology.

Ornge leases 34,000 square feet of the building to its operations and subsequently decides it needs more space. Ornge Issuer Trust, a financing vehicle used by Ornge, issues a \$275-million bond. Part of the bond proceeds are used to buy 72,000 square feet of head office space for \$15 million. Bare Trustee, a subsidiary of Ornge Issuer Trust, owns the property and leases it to Ornge.

A committee of the Ornge board begins to examine the reasonableness of a plan to create an international for-profit business venture to be called Ornge Global. Ornge’s board authorizes the creation of the Ornge Global organizational structure. Ornge Global Management Inc. and Ornge Global GP Inc. are officially created. Ornge creates a subsidiary, Ornge Global Real Estate Inc. Ornge Global Holdings LP is officially created. Ornge issues a declaration of trust placing Ornge Global Real Estate Inc.’s single share of capital in trust with the newly created Ornge Global Management Inc. and giving it authority to make all decisions for Ornge Global Real Estate Inc.

Then in January of last year, Ornge creates a subsidiary, Ornge Real Estate Inc. The Ornge board, after receiving reports from its committee, gives final approval of all organizational changes and agreements involving Ornge Global, subject to informing the ministry of the details of its decision. The chair advised the ministry in writing of its new business ventures and its new organizational structure.

It goes on to say that they paid rent. They borrowed \$25 million. Ornge Global Real Estate borrows \$25 million by issuing mortgage bonds financed by a third party, and this is \$9 million more than the \$15-million purchase price of the property. The provincial debt increases by \$24 million as a result of this. I haven’t got time to cover it all, Speaker, but it is such a tangled web that there is no option for any reasonable person to conclude that this book is closed. Any reasonable person listening to the auditor—and he talked about the culture of intimidation at Ornge and how fearful people were about telling the truth. No reasonable person could possibly believe that this book can be closed without a select committee of this Legislature having the

opportunity to examine it in full and come back with its findings and its recommendations.

There are doors that the auditor cannot open. There are doors that the OPP cannot open. Their mandates don't allow for it. There is only one way for the people of Ontario to know what actually went on at Ornge, and that is a select committee.

The auditor went on to say that the minister had the authority to hold them accountable and failed to do so. A select committee and the resignation of the minister: Nothing less is acceptable.

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

There being no further debate, Mr. Milloy has moved second reading of Bill 46, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will say "aye."

All those against the motion will say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

SUPPLY ACT, 2012

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2012

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012 / Projet de loi 46, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2012.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those in favour will say "aye." Those opposed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All in favour? Carried.

This House is adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1738.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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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
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Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
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Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
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Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

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Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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 Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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

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Milligan, Rob E. (PC) Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill 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 Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
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Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
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Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
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