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Tuesday 7 May 2013

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Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 7 May 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 7 mai 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2013, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to rise today and begin the New Democrat debate on the budget motion that was brought forward last week.

I want to start by framing my discussion with a little bit about myself, to be honest with you. I'm a daughter of an auto worker. My family depended on a steady paycheck to put food on our table and to keep a roof over our head. I'm proud of where I come from, but I also know that times are changing in this province.

We face new challenges. Some people think that meeting these challenges means letting people fall behind. I've seen what happens, though, when a breadwinner suddenly loses a good job, and I've met families across this province who are facing some pretty tough decisions these days: Do we sign the little one up for hockey or do we pay the electricity bill? Do we pay for piano lessons or do we insure the car? Over half of Ontarians say that they struggle to pay the bills and if they miss just one paycheck they don't know if they'll be able to make it.

Economists tell us that household debt and economic insecurity are a drag on the economy. They tell us that the growing economic gap that's squeezing families out of the middle class is squeezing momentum out of our economic growth. But it doesn't take an economist to convince me or to convince my New Democratic caucus that it's people who are the economy in this province. So if our economy is going to work, families need to be looking to the future with some confidence. That means we need to focus not just on economic growth but on growth that creates good jobs and real investment in Ontario.

You know, our province has depended on manufacturing for decades, but global forces are putting pressure on that sector in North America and across Europe, and of course Ontario is caught in that situation as well. But we face added hurdles in this province. We have the

highest electricity rates in the country, and I dare say in the entirety of North America. That's what Ontario faces.

You know, I have to say that it's no myth that Ontario has lost far too many manufacturing jobs. Over the last eight years in Ontario, 30% of manufacturing jobs have disappeared, and these were exactly the kinds of jobs that fueled our economy, the kinds of jobs with pensions, the kinds of jobs with health benefits and the kinds of jobs with wages that paid almost \$25 an hour.

Over the last decade, governments have focused their efforts on improving productivity investment. This is one of the things that we've heard from governments both federal and provincial: Productivity investment is the focus. We have to get more productivity investment in our nation and in our province. But instead of improving, productivity has actually slowed down. The growth in productivity is going in the opposite direction, and investment as a share of GDP in this province has declined steadily—not just since the recession, not just since 2008, but for at least the last decade. This is having a real impact on the business climate, but it's also having a real impact on the everyday people who make this province work day in and day out.

Now, some of my friends, particularly in the Conservative benches, believe that the way to deal with this is to start driving down wages, to try to take a path like states in the US. They think that the best thing for Ontario to do is to become the next Alabama. I know that the race to the bottom, and New Democrats know that the race to the bottom, is not a path for prosperity for the province of Ontario. In fact, the provinces that are outperforming us right now didn't do it by driving down wages, and they didn't do it by closing hospital beds and hospitals the way the Liberals are doing here in Ontario. They didn't do it by slashing strategic supports for businesses that rely on those supports to succeed. They did it by working with job creators and incentivizing job creation.

I know that not everyone will agree with me, but across-the-board reductions—cuts—in corporate taxes are not producing the results that we need in Ontario. The evidence is very clear. So whether your ideological perspective, being a Liberal or a Conservative, is that corporate tax reductions actually bring results, the evidence is clear that that simply is not the case. It's a failed direction that has been followed perilously by Liberal government after Liberal government after Conservative government after Liberal government. It does not work, Speaker. It is failing the people of this province.

If we're going to embrace opportunity for the future of the people of this province, then we need to do things

differently. We need to do better for them, Speaker. So what New Democrats have been doing is putting forward some positive ideas to achieve just that. As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, we know that the government brought their budget forward last week in terms of their motion, and now we have an important decision to make. But New Democrats have been pretty clear: We want to see a balanced approach with a budget that's accountable to people, a budget that tackles people's concerns about creating jobs and growing our economy while helping them in their daily lives and balancing the books in a balanced way.

We've worked hard to put the issues that matter to people on the agenda, and we put some very simple, affordable proposals forward—ideas that would make small but very real differences for people. People told us they were worried about youth unemployment. They want to see young people finding good jobs and new careers, not waiting in their parents' basements until they're 30 years old to try to find a job. I have a son who's 20, Speaker; that makes me very worried as a mom, I have to tell you. So what did we do? We put our First Start plan together—a modest incentive to encourage companies that were ready to put young people to work.

People told us that they were worried about home care for their aging parents and loved ones. Some seniors are waiting as long as 262 days in this province to get the home care that they need. That is not acceptable, Speaker, and we know that depending on the region in which you live in this province, it will determine how long you're waiting for home care services. So what did we do? We proposed a modest investment to ensure that everyone approved for home care gets a guarantee that they'll receive it in five days and that real, immediate focus is put on getting rid of the 6,100-person-long waiting list for home care in this province, which is a tragedy for the people who are still on that list to this day.

0910

Speaker, people told us that they couldn't keep up with the cost of living. Ontario drivers pay the highest auto insurance rates in the entire country despite reforms that have dramatically reduced people's benefits and put more money in the pockets of the insurance companies in the province. So what did we do? We came up with a proposal that very clearly says it is achievable and the responsible thing to do—it's the fair and balanced thing to do—to actually bring the rates of Ontario drivers' insurance down by 15%. For us, it makes more sense than to put it in the pockets of insurance companies, because in the pockets of the people of this province their lives become better and more affordable. That's why we have that as one of our requests for the budget.

People told us that they want the budget to be fair; they want the budget to be balanced. They're tired of seeing their money spent by the Liberal government year after year after year without any guidelines, without any outcomes, without any clear results. We proposed eliminating some tax measures that weren't clearly linked to

creating jobs or increasing Ontario's productivity so we could focus on measures that work. We also proposed cost-saving measures like bulk purchasing to achieve effectiveness. Speaker, the tragedy of it all is that not a single one of these ideas was actually taken up by the Liberals in their budget as they read it last week.

People told us they were tired of being ignored by governments that seemed more concerned with themselves, more concerned with their own political skin, with their own political opportunity, with their own political well-being than they were with everyday people, than they were with the people who elected them. So we put the people's issues on the agenda. Now is the important part, because we want to see accountable results. That's the least that the people of this province deserve, for a change.

Our budget proposals were designed to make life better for the people who make our province work, but they also aimed to rebuild the trust with the public. We made it clear that Ontario should go no deeper into debt, and in fact didn't need to had our proposals been implemented as we set them out.

So now we're hearing from Ontarians. We've been hearing from them for the last couple of days. There is no doubt that people are concerned that Ms. Wynne and her Liberal government have not learned the lessons of their government's billion-dollar eHealth scandal, the \$700-million scandal at Ornge, the half-billion-dollar gas plant scandal—they have not learned their lessons. People need to know that the government will be investing public dollars wisely, carefully, smartly, and with the people as a priority. They need to know that in tough economic times every single dollar is being put to good use.

Now, as a New Democrat, I have lots of positive examples to look to where my party in government has actually led the way in that regard. New Democrat governments have run fewer deficit budgets than any other political party across this country. We have done better than the Liberals and we have done better than the Conservatives, and we have run smaller deficits as a ratio to GDP when they've had to be run. We've achieved these results by taking a balanced approach and looking carefully at our respective provinces' revenues and expenditures.

The results we delivered in the last budget took some positive steps towards that very same type of goal. We didn't get everything we wanted last year but we got good results. We got good, concrete results that moved us closer to our deficit reduction goals and made people's lives better in Ontario.

So now we're looking to this budget and we're asking the people of this province, what's the best way to keep moving toward this goal? We want to hear from people from all walks of life about some important issues. How can we make the budget more accountable to Ontarians and make government more transparent? What kind of cost-saving measures do people want to see so that we can balance our budget without deep and harmful cuts?

What are realistic and affordable ways that we can fund transportation infrastructure and transit? What guarantees do people think are important so that when the government makes a promise, we can make sure that they actually keep that promise? Are there ways to ensure that the budget is fair to everyone in the province, so that a family looking for home care in Chatham–Kent gets the same outcome as a family in Toronto or a family in Kenora, London, Windsor, Sault Ste. Marie or Peterborough?

We actually know that our province can't succeed over time while under the burden of a huge debt, but we know also that how we tackle that problem is extremely important. Much of the deficit that we're currently running may have been necessary to protect good jobs, or to protect some jobs, during the economic downturn. But now we need a responsible long-term plan to get back into balance, one that doesn't put an already shaky economic recovery at risk or put more pressure on households that are already feeling the squeeze. We only need to look at what's happening in current economic debate about the fallacy of the things that happened in Europe, and we're watching those communities fall apart, those nations fall apart, because of the action that they took on ill-advised advice that was more based on ideology than facts, Speaker.

There's no doubt—I don't think anybody in this chamber, anybody in this province, believes that we are not still in challenging times. But I believe there is hope too. I'm not offering easy solutions. I'm not promising quick fixes, because reckless, short-term thinking is not the way to improve our economy. I don't have all the answers, but I'm not afraid—or embarrassed, for that matter—to take advice from the very good people who make this province work day in and day out.

You know what, Speaker? I'm committed to building wealth for Ontario and for every Ontarian. I'm listening. New Democrats are listening. We owe it to our kids. We owe it to our families. We owe it to each other to make sure that we create a shared prosperity in this province, a prosperity that every Ontarian can share in. That should be our goal. That is certainly the goal of New Democrats, on this side of the House.

But we are only going to be able to do that if the people are able to rebuild their trust with government. We believe that by showing them that governments can be held to account, that governments, if not naturally—because that's obviously a problem with the Liberals—can in some ways structurally be forced to respect their dollars and be held accountable for their dollars, then we can actually begin to rebuild that trust, and that's the very least that Ontarians deserve.

So, over the next while, Speaker, that's what we're doing. We're working with Ontarians to make sure they know that there's at least one party that understands not how fed up they are with the behaviour of the Liberal government, and that we're actually putting some things forward to try to make it different and make it better, instead of just washing our hands and walking away. We

don't know where that's going to end up; we're going to find out in the next little while.

New Democrats came here under the minority situation with clear marching orders from the people of this province. Those marching orders were, “Go there and get some results for us. Get some things done for the people of Ontario.” That's what we did in the last budget; that's what we're attempting to do with this budget. We'll see over the next little while how well we're able to keep the government to account, because it's not good enough just to pay lip service to the proposals that New Democrats put forward.

We want real results. We want real action. We know that's what Ontarians want, and that's what Ontarians deserve. Our job, Speaker, is to try to make that happen for Ontarians, and we're going to do our damndest to do exactly that.

I move adjournment of the debate, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): We have moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 0920 to 1030.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of the International Awareness Day for myalgic encephalomyelitis, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Unanimous consent was asked, to wear the ribbons. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I also believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of Child and Youth Mental Health Week today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We've been asked for unanimous consent to wear the ribbon. Agreed? Agreed.

It is now time for introduction of guests.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to welcome Tracey, Leonard and Sarah Starrett from Whitby. They're the parents and sister of page Daniel Starrett, who is page captain today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is World Asthma Day, and I'm delighted to introduce George Habib from the Ontario Lung Association, Chris Markham from

Ophea, and Rob Oliphant from the Asthma Society of Canada.

Mr. Steve Clark: I know there are a number of folks in the galleries today representing their local ME association. I'd like to recognize the Brockville ME Association president, Shirley Michael, and all of the members. Although they're not here today, they're with us in spirit.

Mr. Kim Craiton: I happened to look to my right here, in the members' gallery, and I want to recognize some people from the Niagara region. Maybe they've already been introduced yesterday, but I'm going to introduce them again today. That's the regional chair, Gary Burroughs, who was also the Lord Mayor of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake at one time; and my friend Councillor Barbara Greenwood is here as well. To everyone else who is up there: Welcome.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to welcome the member from Newmarket–Aurora here this morning. I know he had a very difficult evening last night. But take it from me, as a team member from the Ottawa Senators: When you're ahead 2-1 in a series, it feels really good, and when you're behind 2-1 in a series, I can only imagine how hurtful that is, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's save those until after introduction of guests, and I promise to give the member from Newmarket–Aurora equal time.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm very happy to introduce three summer interns in my office, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. They're three university students: Alia Hussain, Galen Harris and Cecily McKnight. They are really looking forward to delving into all of the issues that we're dealing with at aboriginal affairs. So welcome.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Some may have been introduced already, but I want to make sure there's a complete list. Niagara region is here for its special week at Queen's Park, and among those who are here today—

Interjections.

Hon. James J. Bradley: —despite the heckling from the other side, I will still introduce them—are Regional Chair Gary Burroughs, Pelham Mayor Dave Augustyn, Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati, Councillor David Barrick, Councillor Brian Baty, Councillor Barbara Greenwood, Councillor Bruce Timms, CAO Mike Trojan, Ken Brothers, Debbie Elliott, Patrick Robson, Diane Simovic and Matt Robinson. They're all with us today. Welcome.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce Sandra Gibbons, who is a constituent of mine visiting today. She had a media advisory day with the Lung Association about making our schools safer for children with asthma.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is Nursing Week, and today is Registered Practical Nurses Day here at Queen's Park. We've got a number of RPNs here with SEIU: Joanne Kilmartin, Christine Peacock, Mary Lee Turcotte, Roudlyn Henry, Kim MacDougall, Anna Maria Makris, Kelly Brew, Jackie Weller, Laurann Edwards, Dernel George, Evelyn Belchoir and Mena Amrith. Please, I know you all want to welcome the RPNs to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to introduce one of our summer interns at the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, Alexandra Sherwin, who is joining us for a great summer of work. Alexandra, welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to express my appreciation to my colleague the member from Nepean–Carleton. What I want to remind her of, and all of the Senators fans here—I think there are two of them—is that it's not how you start out; it's how you end up. The Toronto Maple Leafs are pacing themselves. We want this to be a long series and a successful one.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have representatives from SEIU today. They represent over 45,000 workers. Some 8,000 of them are registered practical nurses, and quite a few of them are here with us today.

The first thing I want to say is, we have this tiny, weeny little issue that some of them are wearing their scrubs because they came from work. The Sergeant-at-Arms won't let them come in because they're wearing scrubs. I would ask for unanimous consent to let the nurses come in in their nursing uniforms.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to come back to the member from Timmins–James Bay. I believe it was a point of order—or introduction?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One moment.

I do have a comment on this particular issue before I ask for the unanimous consent. There are rules that this House has about the wearing of any kind of identifiable uniform or issue. I've instructed the Sergeant-at-Arms, when groups book lobby days, that they will be receiving a one-page outline of the rules of this House. Regrettably, undue pressure is being put on the Sergeant-at-Arms for following the rules.

Interjection: I love the Sergeant-at-Arms.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'd better.

I am asking all members to co-operate with what the rules are. If they do bring individuals or guests, I'm reminding them to follow the rules: that this House be not used as a place of protest inside while we're doing it; and that, in the future, a one-page outline will be provided to all lobby days and all groups and individuals who plan to be here about what they can and can't wear.

Now I will deal in respect to the request for unanimous consent. The member from Nickel Belt has asked for unanimous consent for the practical nurses to wear their scrubs, as they have been arriving from work. Do we agree? Agreed. Thank you.

The member from Timmins–James Bay—

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wasn't done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You weren't done. You were asking for unanimous consent. That usually shuts you down. Are you introducing another guest?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, I wanted to introduce them. I was not allowed to introduce them because they were not allowed in. But now they will be making their way in, and I will introduce them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Proceed.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you so much for your great indulgence toward me, Mr. Speaker. Here we go. They should be making their way in as I speak.

We have Joanne Kilmartin, Mary Lee Turcotte, Kim MacDougall, Roudlyn Henry, Anna Maria Makris, Kelly Brew, Laurann Edwards, Mena Amrith, Dernel George, Jackie Weller, Christine Peacock and Evelyn Belchoir. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay on a point of order, or an introduction?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what all this fuss about Ottawa and Toronto is. I'm a Montreal fan, and all I have to say is: Go, Habs, go.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As the member may know what my position is, it's not a point of order, but thank you.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. Just one week ago, we heard some damning testimony from the Ontario Power Authority's CEO, Colin Andersen. In his testimony, he stated that everyone, including you, knew that the cost to cancel the Oakville power plant was far higher than the \$40 million that your Liberal government claimed.

Premier, unlike the NDP, we're here to hold you accountable with respect to these decisions. When did you know that the cost was far higher than \$40 million, and will you finally apologize to taxpayers for not letting them know what you knew when you knew it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I did appear before the committee for an hour and a half. I answered all of the questions. I said that I was going to do that. I followed through and I have done everything in my power to make sure that all of the information, all of the documents were available, and that the committee had the scope to be able to ask the questions that it needed to ask.

I want to be very clear that I take full responsibility now for putting in place a plan that will improve the siting of large energy infrastructure in the future. We made an announcement yesterday: We're going to work to develop a new regional energy planning process. There will be the components of strong public consultation, formal municipal input, a better decision-making process. That's what we need to take from this exercise.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, Premier, over the past few days you've been asked on multiple television and radio shows to apologize for spending more than \$600 million to cancel gas plants. You were even pushed by Matt Galloway on Metro Morning to apologize; you

refused. Premier, hard-working Ontarians deserve accountability. They deserve to know that every one of their tax dollars is treated with respect and not indifference. We won't be sidetracked by a couple of splashy expenditures. We will do what the people of Ontario have elected us to do, and that is to hold you accountable. Premier, as leader of the province, don't you owe taxpayers an apology, or will you continue to put party ahead of province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I respect—I absolutely respect—the role of the opposition and its responsibility to push government, to ask difficult questions and to force open difficult issues. I have not been resistant to that. I have opened up the process. I have been very open and transparent about making sure that all documentation—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —be made available, by making sure that there was a process in place. Remember, Mr. Speaker, we suggested a select committee.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We suggested that the mandate of the justice committee be broadened so that all questions could be asked. I have said repeatedly that I regret that the decisions were not made differently. I regret that the upfront process was not better and that the decision was made to locate the gas plants in that place in the first place. We need a better process going forward.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Premier, it's pretty clear that you don't really think you owe us anything on this side of the House, but I think that at a cost of \$600 million—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader, come to order.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: —taxpayers deserve an apology from you. They've paid enough for it. You are the leader of the Liberal Party. You're also the leader of this province. Isn't it time to act with leadership and take ownership of this decision? Premier, you've been asked in committee, you've been asked in this House multiple times, but still you continue to dodge the question, so I'm going to ask you—and Ontarians deserve an answer to this—will you finally apologize to the taxpayers of Ontario for the \$600 million that you spent to save a few Liberal seats?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I think the member opposite actually hit on something very important when she raised the issue of ownership. I have taken ownership of this issue. I have said clearly that our government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member for Northumberland, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—implemented a decision that was agreed to by all of the parties, but we took the responsibility to implement that decision.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your timing was awful; the member from Northumberland, come to order. Just as I got it quiet—that's timing. Everyone else, just kind of bring it down.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I take responsibility for a process that was not right. I take responsibility for putting in place a new process. I regret that the process was what it was, I wish that we had not been in this situation, but my responsibility is to the people of Ontario. The opposition has a role in forcing open those issues, and we've been working with them.

We're going to develop a new regional energy policy: strong public consultation, formal municipal input, better decision-making—the right location at the beginning—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—OPA and IESO to report—

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

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, Dalton McGuinty followed the same dodge-and-weave approach at the justice committee this morning in an attempt to do what he's always done, and that is to put the Liberal Party's interests ahead of the interests of the people. He failed to be forthright to the same question that you, Premier, failed to answer 32 times last week: When did you know that the Oakville gas plant cancellation was more than \$40 million? We have sworn testimony from several witnesses, including Colin Andersen of the Ontario Power Authority, who swore everybody in the government knew it was more than \$40 million.

Premier, you had eight cabinet interactions with these gas plant deals. We know you know the answer. When did you know the Oakville cancellation cost was more than \$40 million?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader is going to want to speak to the details of the committee interaction today.

But I will just say that I appeared at committee; I answered the questions that I was asked. I was there for an hour and a half, and I answered every question that was asked of me. I told the members of the committee what I know, and thereby doing, the people of Ontario know what I knew and when I knew it.

I have been clear that what we need to do now is, we need to make sure this doesn't happen again, that we have a better process going forward for locating and siting these large infrastructure projects. That's what the process is about. That is the process we are developing: regional energy plans. That is why the IESO and the

OPA will report by August 1 on that new process that will have strong municipal input and a strong consultative component.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just a reminder before you ask your supplementary: I remind all members that any member in this House is to be referred to either by their riding or their title.

Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, that's not quite accurate, Premier. I asked you, and the member from Nepean—Carleton asked you, 32 different times, when you knew. We still have not received that answer from you.

But your predecessor told the justice committee this morning that he had no limit to the cost he was willing to spend to cancel these power plants. He tried to insist he didn't know anything about the costs of the Oakville and Mississauga cancellations when documents showed he knew everything, and in fact his staff actually negotiated with the Oakville proponent. Documents show there were government-instructed counter-offers over three times. Several witnesses have testified to the buckets of costs that were well known.

Premier, I ask you again, who knew? The answer we got from Colin Andersen was everybody. I'll ask you, tell us the date when you knew the Oakville cancellation was more than \$40 million.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I can't help but comment how amusing it is that we're having a discussion here today about various witnesses in front of the committee, including the current Premier, the former Premier, two former Ministers of Energy who have come forward, and yet we still await to hear from the Progressive Conservative Party. We await the testimony of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is getting ridiculous. I'm getting heckling from the person on the side who's giving the answer. So, please, control yourselves—and the same thing on the other side.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: We're awaiting to hear from the Leader of the Opposition about his costing, about his analysis, about his—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'll ask the member from Stormont to come to order. You got me up. That means something.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, we want to hear from the Leader of the Opposition about his analysis, about his costing while he went out, starred in a YouTube video surrounded by adoring candidates and told people that if he was elected Premier, it would be "Done, done, done."

We have been forthcoming on this side. Perhaps the honourable member, in his supplementary, will talk about when the Leader of the Opposition and when various PC candidates will—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm glad you are amused, House leader. Unfortunately, the taxpayers of Ontario are not amused with your \$585-million bill.

Premier, you said these gas plant cancellations were political decisions. Basically, you and your former leader rolled the dice in order to win a majority government, trying to win those five seats, which you ended up winning. Sadly, it did not give you the majority government. You're one seat shy, which is why the PC—

Interjections.

1050

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Sadly for you; luckily for the province of Ontario and the taxpayers. That's why our party and the NDP have the majority in the committees. That's why we actually have these hearings today.

In 2011, Dalton McGuinty was Premier and you were vice-chair of the campaign. You signed off on the cabinet minutes for this Oakville deal. Your government can't be trusted, Premier. Will you call our confidence motion to the floor for a vote?

Hon. John Milloy: Let's remind everyone who Geoff Janoscik is. He was the Progressive Conservative candidate in Mississauga South—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton—again, it's a timing thing—come to order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Timing is everything.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No. No other words said. Thank you. On both sides.

Please finish.

Hon. John Milloy: He sent out thousands of robocalls to the citizens of Mississauga South saying the only way to cancel the gas plant was to vote for Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservatives. We have called him before the committee several times and he has told the Clerk to stop calling him.

Let's talk about Mary Anne DeMonte-Whelan, who put out this brochure to thousands of people in his riding saying, "The only party that will stop the Sherway power plant is the Ontario PC Party. On October 6, vote Ontario PC." She agreed to come to the committee and at the last minute suspiciously declined and has refused to appear yet. Mr. Speaker, I could go on—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. No, you won't. New question.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. In tough times, people need to know that public dollars are being managed responsibly and well. As we look at the budget proposed by this government, those questions are more important than ever, especially when we consider the hundreds of millions of dollars Liberals spent cancelling private power deals in Oakville and Mississauga. Can the Premier tell us whether the govern-

ment knew what the cost would be when cancelling those private power deals or whether they just didn't care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much. Again, I have gone before committee and I have answered the questions that were asked of me. The reality is, the relocation of these large infrastructure projects was going to cost money. It's unfortunate and I have said I regret that, but the reality is that every party in this House believed that those gas plants should not be located in those places. All of the candidates were campaigning in that community on cancelling those gas plants.

So it's true: We implemented that decision. We took the responsibility to implement a decision that everyone in this House agreed to. It's unfortunate that there wasn't a better process in place. Our responsibility is to make sure that, going forward, we have a better process so we will not be in this position again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to ask the Premier a question that her predecessor refused to answer this morning: Was there any limit to what the government was prepared to spend?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much. You know, I understand that the leader of the third party wants the answers to these questions, but we have provided the answers. We made a decision that the gas plants needed to be relocated. We then had to enter into a negotiation, and that was what was undertaken, because it was the right decision to move those gas plants. The people in the communities made it very clear. It was politicians who decided that we would respond and that we would move those gas plants, as both opposition parties agreed to. We implemented that decision. There was a cost attached to it. We need a better process going forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, no matter how much the Premier refuses to acknowledge it, I was actually asking a question. How much would it cost before we were prepared to actually tear up any contracts?

But you know what? The government signed the contracts. They knew what was in those contracts. The government had some of the highest-paid legal advice going. They knew what the cost would be. The last Premier knew that the cost was going to be high, and this Premier knew as well that it was going to be high, but at every stage of the process the Liberal government has done everything they could to hide the real cost and the details from the public who would be paying the bills.

Is the Premier not only ready, finally, to apologize but to even go one better, Speaker, and acknowledge that this government has failed to make transparent and accountable decisions and that this needs to change for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the New Democratic Party can't have it both ways. Her can-

didates were out in both Oakville and Mississauga, talking about the opposition to the power plant. Let me quote from what was said in front of the justice committee.

Frank Clegg, chairman for Citizens for Clean Air: “We met with all the parties and all the candidates and were given commitments by every candidate in the Oakville area that they would support cancelling the plant.”

He went on to say, “C4CA was very pleased that all parties publicly committed to stop the construction of the proposed Oakville plant....”

Let me tell you about Greg Rohn, Coalition of Homeowners for Intelligent Power. He told the justice committee, yes, “The NDP were against the plant....”

Mayor Hazel McCallion, Mr. Speaker, someone I wouldn’t want to mess with: She said, “The impression that was certainly given beyond a doubt ... I think all parties would have cancelled it; there’s no question about it.”

Mr. Speaker, the Progressive Conservative Party, the New Democratic Party, the Liberal Party—we all had the exact same position.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier, Speaker. The Premier knows these are tough times. People need to know that their money is actually being spent in a way that is responsible and that is accountable. Instead, they see the government waste half a billion dollars on gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga, and watched as one Premier after another tried to prevent them from seeing these costs, tried to hide those costs from them.

New Democrats think the budget needs some accountability, because the people are tired of seeing scarce dollars spent as if it’s the personal bankroll of the governing party. Does the Premier understand why people deserve to see more accountability in their government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just really have to disagree with the premise of the question in the sense that since I have been in this office, I have done everything in my power to open up this process and to allow for the questions to be asked and answered and for documentation to be available.

I wrote to the AG, the Auditor General, on Oakville, to look at the Oakville situation. He agreed to do that. I immediately called the House back. We struck committees. We expanded the scope of the committee, because the way the questions were being asked, they were very narrow, and I thought that the committee needed to be able to look at the whole situation. We offered documents from across government. I appeared at the committee. The committee has been meeting since February and has heard from 25 witnesses.

I have done everything possible to open up this process and to be accountable to the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That is my responsibility, and more than that, I take responsibility for a better process going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There’s one thing that the Premier misses, and that’s the fact that the people actually want answers: not just the process to get there, but the actual answers.

Today the former Premier testified at the justice committee, the Premier who famously said, “On the matter of the cost, Speaker, it’s \$40 million ... we’ve nailed that down.” But of course, that wasn’t even close to accurate.

Does the Premier understand that a justifiably skeptical public wants to see a government that’s accountable to them when it comes to public money?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I absolutely do understand that. I understand that, and that is the reason that when I came into this office, I said the process needed to be opened up so that answers could be found. I am as frustrated as the leader of the third party that the numbers have changed, that it has been very difficult in this complex issue to nail down numbers.

But at the same time, I don’t think that the people of Ontario would want us not to talk about how to move forward, how to put a better process in place, how to make sure that we get a budget passed that actually will deal with some of the things that are affecting their everyday lives: making sure that youth unemployment strategy is in place; making sure that we are going to be able to invest in the roads and bridges in their communities so companies will come to their communities; making sure that we’re putting the business supports in place so manufacturing can flourish and we can bring business to the province.

I think that some of the issues—many of the issues—the leader of the third party has raised are addressed in our budget, and I hope she will work with us.

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

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, there’s one thing the Premier fails to recognize, Speaker, and that is people want their government to treat them with respect and their money with prudence—that’s all they want. But then they see their government waste half a billion dollars on gas plants just to put a few Liberal Party members first.

They expect their government to be fiscally responsible so that we can afford to put families first, not Liberals. But instead, they see a government that barely paid lip service to closing brand new tax loopholes that will cost Ontarians \$1.3 billion, not just once but every single year.

Will the Premier admit that her budget falls badly short on accountability and transparency?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really believe the people of Mississauga and Oakville deserve to have a voice in this. I know that there have been voices raised on this. They were very concerned about the location of those gas plants and their representatives raised those issues over and over again and made it clear that it was not a good idea for those gas plants to be located there, which is why

candidates from all three parties were campaigning and saying that all three parties were committed to relocating those gas plants.

I have the deepest of respect for the people of Ontario and I have the deepest of respect for the people who live in all of the communities in Ontario. That's why we acted on the promise that had been made by all three parties. That's why we've written a budget that focuses on getting people jobs and helping them in their everyday lives. I hope the third party will work with us on that.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Premier: Earlier this morning, Dalton McGuinty appeared before committee and said—I withdraw, Speaker.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Old habit.

The member from Ottawa South testified at committee and said it was the “right thing to do” to cancel those power plants in the middle of an election. You admitted last week that it was a political decision, so we can only conclude it was the right thing to do politically for the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Earlier today he also refused to acknowledge how much was too much in order to cancel those power plants and save those seats. We don't know: \$1 billion, \$2 billion, \$3 billion—he wouldn't say.

We also know that Shelly Jamieson, JoAnne Butler, Colin Andersen, David Livingston and David Lindsay all said that you knew from the outset how much this was.

Are you refusing to tell the assembly what you knew and when you knew it, in terms of those costs, because you are afraid that your caucus and you will be—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I went before committee; I told the committee what I know. I know the government House leader is going to want to speak to the details of the committee actions. But Mr. Speaker, I'm not afraid. I was not afraid to go to committee. I was not afraid to say what I knew. I believe categorically that the decision that was made was in the best interest of the people of Mississauga and the people of Oakville, and we need a better process going forward.

On the issue of the political decision, I have said quite clearly that it was a decision that was made by politicians, and it was a decision that was going to be made by Liberal politicians or Conservative politicians or NDP politicians. That is the extent to which it was a political decision. We all agreed those gas plants should be relocated. We implemented that decision, and I've been very open about that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: With all due respect, Premier, I don't want to hear from the government House leader. You own this. You were the campaign chair for the Liberal Party. You signed the memorandum to cabinet. You are now the Premier of Ontario. You knew the true

cost and you have not told this assembly what that true cost is despite my colleague from Nipissing and I asking you 32 times in committee, asking you exactly what those other testimonies said you knew. You knew from the outset it was over \$40 million. You made this decision to save seats, including the finance minister who sits beside you.

Our question back to you, Premier, not to the government House leader: Are you withholding what you knew and when you knew it because your caucus, your cabinet and yourself would all be held in contempt?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Thornhill, come to order. The member from Whitby—Oshawa, the member who's not in her seat, come to order. The member from—and I'll go through, and the next time I'm throwing out. If you're testing my resolve, I'll win.

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I'm not surprised that the honourable member—

Interjection.

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

Hon. John Milloy: I'm not surprised that the honourable member doesn't want to hear from me because, unfortunately, I remind her of something, and that is the fact that her party aggressively campaigned against those plants and said that if they formed government, they would cancel it.

Geoff Janoscik, their candidate who will not appear in front of committee, told Mississauga News that only Conservative leader Tim Hudak will cancel the Eastern Power gas plant slated to be built on Loreland Ave. He tweeted, “An Ontario PC govt will stop the plant for good.” Mr. Speaker, he was involved in sending out thousands and thousands of robocalls and, my understanding is, helped greet the Leader of the Opposition as he toured the site and said that if he became Premier it would be “done, done, done.”

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You don't know when, but you'll be surprised.

New question.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: Premier, real leadership means asking tough questions, being account-

able. Why didn't the Premier ever ask her predecessor how much it cost to cancel the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants when she was on the campaign as co-chair, when she was signing cabinet documents or when she became Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that is a legitimate and a good question. The reality is that there were negotiations that went on. It was a confidential negotiation, it was a business process, and as we have seen, there were not firm numbers available. We relied on the information that was given to us through the Ministry of Energy that came to them through the OPA. That is the reality. That is what I said at committee because that is the truth. We dealt with the numbers that were given us.

I think what's extremely important is, we put in place a better process going forward. We're proposing an improved regional planning process that would lead to better placement of these large pieces of energy infrastructure going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, the Liberal scandal over the cancellation of the gas plants caused the last Premier to lose his job, along with that of the Minister of Energy. Ontarians expect accountability, yet the former and current Premiers both say they never talked about costs, no matter that she was the co-chair of the election committee, the Liberal campaign, and she signed cabinet documents authorizing expenditure of funds, or when she was appointed Premier.

Ignoring these problems doesn't mean they're going to go away. Is that the sort of leadership we should expect?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The question of establishing costs has been a challenge from the beginning. I think everyone would agree with that.

The important point here, the important date, is September 24, 2012. On September 24, 2012, the OPA filed a 216-page contract which set out the sunk costs and set out a formula in terms of calculating the costs.

It's important to know that a couple of weeks ago, when the CEO of the Ontario Power Authority was here before committee, he came with two different costs. He also had provided a third different cost about two or three weeks earlier, and the opposition in that particular committee meeting had a fourth cost. We had the Auditor General—

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

New question.

1110

TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. As we all know, our government tabled a budget last week, a budget that's a road map to not just a prosperous Ontario but also a fair Ontario.

Speaker, I have to tell you this: I actually looked up the titles of the past 17 budgets, and never does the word—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, I was just mentioning that I actually took the trouble to look at the titles of the last 17 budgets, and this is the first time the word "fair" or a word like "fair" pops up, a testimony to the values of this Premier and this government, and I'm very proud to be part of that.

Coming back to the question, I know that the budget speaks a lot about transit, and I just wanted the minister to speak in particular—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I guess you asked for it. The member from Northumberland—Quinte West is warned.

Carry on.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Minister, if you could speak to the particulars of the transit plan in this budget. Thank you.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We are right now increasing our investments in transit over the next three years. We are starting this year with \$3.5 billion—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —next year it grows to \$4 billion, and just over \$4 billion in 2015-16.

We're doing this for a very good reason, because Ontarians need to get to work, they need to get home, young people need to get to jobs, and transit is critical for that. So we see—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, come to order. The member from Huron, come to order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —\$400 million going into the brand new beautiful subway cars operating in downtown Toronto; \$600 million on Ottawa's LRT, a really remarkable investment; in Kitchener—Waterloo, \$300 million in that community's remarkable RT, plus—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The test was put and I'm putting it. The member from Northumberland—Quinte West is named. If you guys haven't got the idea that I'm not happy right now, you'd better get it.

Mr. Milligan was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish you're answer, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have \$870 million right now in a trust, the MoveOntario trust, which is building the largest expansion of our subway system in decades.

This is resulting in 30,000 jobs for Ontarians across the province, which is a remarkable investment and a great return on investment in transit and employment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister, for that update on transit. I know that the constituents of Mississauga East—Cooksville will be very pleased to hear about our continued commitment to transit.

But the reality is that if you live in Mississauga, not everybody can take transit. A lot of my constituents do take the highway, so I also wanted to get an update on what this government and what our infrastructure plan has in store when it comes to our highways.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member, who has been such a great advocate for transit and transportation investment, is quite right, and there are synergies between the two. We are adding 16,000 new parking spaces on our GO lines, so if you are on your way into town and you're in traffic, you can jump onto a GO service as well.

But specifically on highways, we are widening key sections of Highway 401 in the GTHA and Highway 417 in Ottawa, Highways 11 and 17 between Thunder Bay and Nipigon, and the rather remarkable Herb Grey Parkway getting ready for the new bridge crossing in Windsor, which is critical to trade development. We have improvements to Highway 17 in Renfrew county, the 401 in Northumberland county and Highway 66 in northeastern Ontario. Finally, we have the planned extension of Highway 427 to Major Mackenzie in York region and new HOV lanes on sections of Highways 401, 404, 410 and 427.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Last week in the justice committee, you refused to answer the question as to when you knew that the cancellation of the Oakville gas plant would be exceeding \$40 million. In fact, you refused to answer that question no less than 32 times—this in spite of the fact that seven witnesses, including the OPA's CEO, Colin Andersen, testified under oath that you and all of your cabinet knew all along that the cost would exceed \$40 million.

A recent poll found that a large majority of Ontarians believe that your government has not been truthful about the cost of the Oakville plant cancellation and relocation that you've provided to the public. Premier, your credibility is in tatters. There's only one thing left to do: Call a want of confidence motion so that this assembly can decide on your fate.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said many times, I went to committee; I answered the questions that were put to me; I told the committee everything that I knew. That is part of my attempt to be as open as possible and to provide the answers and the documentation that were being asked for.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the confidence motion, we have a very large confidence issue before this House right now, and that is the budget. The budget speaks to the need to address issues that affect people's everyday lives. It speaks to the need to put in place the conditions to create jobs, to work with business, to make sure that young people have an opportunity to have a placement or a co-op or an internship so that they can have an opportunity to get into the workplace, because youth unemployment is an issue that we need to deal with. Those are the things that I believe we need to be dealing with right

now. I hope the member opposite is going to read the budget and that he may consider supporting us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hardly think a budget co-written by you and the NDP is a confidence issue.

Premier, the obstructionist tactics by you and your Liberal Party are now well established. Your former staff have been shown to have a selective memory. Your government denies unequivocal evidence contained in released documents. Your government claims that sworn testimony by witnesses in committee is false. It is clear that your government will do anything to avoid coming clean and allowing the truth to get out. You're afraid to face the truth.

I don't know how any member of this House can prop up this government in good conscience.

I ask you again, Premier: Will you today call on this assembly to debate our want of confidence motion so this issue can be dealt with once and for all?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Afraid to face the truth? This is the Premier who, when she took over the office, asked the Auditor General to look into the matter and offered a select committee, which they rejected. She offered a complete document search across government. They rejected it.

If we want to talk about the truth, let's talk about Geoff Janoscik. Where is he? Why will he not appear in front of the committee?

Let's talk about Mary Anne DeMonte-Whelan. Why will she not appear in front of the committee and talk about her brochure that said, "The only party that will stop the Sherway power plant is the Ontario PC Party"?

And what about the leader of the Progressive Conservatives, who keeps saying he may show up at committee—maybe the 7th, but no; maybe the 14th, if it fits his schedule?

Mr. Speaker, when asked, the Premier was there, and the Leader of the Opposition should offer the same respect to this Legislature and to this committee.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélina: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

Speaker, yesterday the committee heard from Medbuy, the company that contracted the outsourcing of the diluted chemo drugs. Their testimony was in stark contrast to that of Marchese, the supplier of the diluted chemo drugs. But all Ontario patients see is a lot of finger pointing, but none of the accountability, none of the oversight that they know is needed.

Will the minister admit that her office stood back and did nothing while oversight of our health care system vanished?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I completely reject that notion.

I can tell you that we have one of the finest cancer care systems in the world. The member opposite has acknowledged that. We have an excellent cancer care system with very strong oversight, but we have learned that it was not perfect. We have learned that there are steps that need to be taken and that are being taken to be able to give the assurance to patients that when their doctor orders a drug, they get exactly that drug in exactly the concentration that was ordered.

That work is ongoing as we speak. We aren't wasting time. We're moving forward, fixing that issue.

We're also looking forward to the committee report and the report of Dr. Jake Thiessen, who is looking at the safety of the entire cancer drug supply chain.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France G  linas: The minister has done nothing while outsourcing grew and, with it, the risk of errors. I asked Medbuy yesterday what they had done to mitigate that higher level of risk. Their answer was really clear: nothing. It's not their job. It's the Ministry of Health's job to provide oversight and accountability.

The truth is, they failed in their primary responsibility. Does the minister agree that it is time to adopt better measures of accountability and oversight so that Ontario's patients can start to rebuild their faith and trust in our health care system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, you can rest assured that I am as committed to resolving this issue as anyone. It is people in London—in my community—who have been impacted by this, and other communities as well. I think everyone in London either knows someone or knows someone who knows someone who was impacted by this. We must pay attention; we must make the changes that will strengthen our system further, and that's exactly the work that Dr. Jake Thiessen is doing right now.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Ontario has emerged as the largest live music market in both Canada and North America. It is a business that generates \$455 million in revenues and contributes \$252 million annually to the national economy.

To ensure that we truly become a world leader, constituents in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt have asked, what is the government doing to coordinate live music marketing and promotions planning? They want to know how Ontario is leveraging existing resources and creating opportunities to promote music while utilizing online resources.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the government doing to actively position Ontario as a global destination for live music and music tourism?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for asking.

Ontario's entertainment and creative industries support 300,000 jobs, generating \$20 billion for our economy. This is why, in our recent budget, we have committed to providing \$45 million in grants over three years, starting this year, for a new Ontario Music Fund. The fund will support Ontario's live music, positioning the province as a leading place to perform and record music.

In addition, our government is providing over \$5 million through Celebrate Ontario to host music festivals and events throughout the year. Through this funding, combined with our new Ontario Music Fund, we are strengthening Ontario's position on the map as a premier destination for live performances.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: This news is music to my ears. I want to thank the minister for his leadership in ensuring that we turn up the volume on the world stage and bring Canadian recordings to a global audience. There's no doubt that the government's budgetary commitments will sharpen our competitive edge to make Ontario a global music capital.

The culture sector overall certainly plays a key role in driving an innovative, creative economy here in Ontario, and it contributes more than \$20 billion annually to that economy. I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, hundreds of youths perform, create and seek out opportunities in the city and across Ontario.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what is the government doing to invest in the creative talents we so proudly possess in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: In addition to the \$45-million Ontario Music Fund, we will also be providing \$8 million to support Massey Hall's revitalization. The renewal—

Applause.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you. The renewal of this iconic landmark will allow Massey Hall to continue to contribute to the growth of Ontario's performing arts scene as a fully functional modern venue. As well, our government will provide funding of \$9 million over three years to support the Canadian Film Centre, supporting educational programs for advanced film, television and new media.

Ontario's cultural scene is an incubator of great talent. This is why we will continue to invest and make our province a creative hub and a world-class destination. The bottom line is creating jobs and strengthening our economy.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question today is for the Premier. Premier, within 72 hours of releasing your

big-spending, job-killing budget, two major manufacturing companies shut down their Ontario plants. Waterloo Furniture in Kitchener is relocating to Michigan, putting more than 230 people out of work, while heavy equipment giant Caterpillar is closing yet another Ontario factory, this time in Toronto, and throwing an additional 330 workers out of a job.

It is clear that Ontario's manufacturing sector no longer has confidence in the McGuinty-Wynne-Horwath government. Premier, will you explain how this House can have confidence in your government when your lack of leadership is driving away business and costing us Ontario jobs?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Of course, it is truly unfortunate and very upsetting to hear whenever a company chooses to close or relocate its business. We're obviously very concerned about the well-being of the workers and their families and are working hard with them—not only my ministry but the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. In fact, through our rapid re-employment and training services, within an hour of us being notified—one hour of being notified of a plant or facility closure—training, colleges and universities actually reaches out to the employer, as well as to the union. They've done so in both cases, both here in Toronto with Caterpillar and with Knappe and Vogt in Kitchener.

In the supplementary, because I don't want the viewers, let alone the opposition, not to be aware of the important things we're doing, I'll speak to that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: What is sad is the reality that is facing the province of Ontario, and that is that we have nearly 600,000 men and women out of work and an unemployment rate of 7.7%. Even worse, Ontario's unemployment rate has been above the national average for 75 consecutive months.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: With Ontario's interest payments set to rise to over \$14.5 billion per year, it is no—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop, please. While I was telling him to come to order, he was still barking. So, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order. Carry on.

Mr. Paul Miller: Oh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I don't need your help on that one.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: With Ontario's interest payments set to rise to over \$14.5 billion per year, it is no wonder that manufacturing companies are fleeing from

Ontario's huge debt, layers of red tape and Liberal gas plant scandals.

Premier, when will you admit that you and your government are not equipped to address the jobs and debt crisis in this province and, in fact, no longer hold the confidence of this House?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I still can't understand why the member opposite continues to beat down our businesses and manufacturers across this province.

Since the bottom of the recession, we've created nearly 400,000 new jobs. We brought back all of the jobs that were lost and then 50% more, including 50,000 just last year. In fact, in the auto sector just last month they had the best April since 2008. Manufacturing in February has gone up as well across the country, led by Ontario. In fact, in February it was four times the census estimate, and most of that actually has been through production.

We're working hard. I hope the member opposite sees in the budget and will support the efforts that we're making: \$295 million for youth employment; we've continued, for an additional three years, the accelerated capital cost allowance, which has been very well received by manufacturers—it's estimated at \$250 million; and we've increased the threshold for the employer health tax. These are the measures that Ontarians want that support our businesses.

CASINOS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. As racetracks across Ontario close down and thousands of related jobs are lost in rural Ontario, this government is trying to reshuffle the decks and devise a special casino hosting deal for Toronto. Now, the Doug Ford booster club to the extreme right of me are evidently big fans of downtown Doug's Toronto casino plan. Premier, I want to know if you are, too.

Will the Premier finally show her cards on the new casino formula and come clean to Ontarians about how much she's anteing up to convince Toronto to host a downtown casino?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear yet again. We are treating the entire province equally. We are not making a special deal for Toronto or any other region. We recognize the importance of the OLG. We all appreciate the transformational changes necessary to accommodate better value for these investments.

1130

We also know that there's a lot of money at stake to support hospitals and education and our social programs. So we will continue to do what's right for the people of Ontario, and we're not giving any special favours to any region.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Rural Ontario is being dealt a massive blow with the decision to cancel the Slots at Racetracks Program. Thousands of jobs are being lost

across the province due to the cancellation of this program—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: —and thousands more will be lost in the near future.

Premier, this isn't penny pinochle in Grandma's parlour. Ontarians have a right to know if their government is playing a backroom deal for big stakes. Why is this Premier seriously—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is there any doubt that I have to mention that I could go again?

Please finish.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Why is this Premier seriously considering a hosting option favouring Toronto over all other communities?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The whole premise around the transformational change of the OLG is in fact to secure more jobs, support the industry and support those communities that are affected. What we want is to resolve and actually further the situation in those border towns that are being affected negatively at this point.

So I thought, and I would believe, that all members of the House would support the initiatives that we're doing to try to protect those communities and to ensure that people who are affected are better served. We will continue to do that, but no region is going to have a special deal, no region at all.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. We're all aware in this House that this is Child and Youth Mental Health Week across the country. Today, almost one in five children suffer from a mental health illness. Approximately 70% of all mental health illnesses begin in childhood. We're all aware of the importance of providing our children and youth with the right supports when it comes to their mental health. In my own community of Oakville, this is a concern I hear often from my constituents.

Would the minister please tell us and the House what we are doing in this year's budget to ensure that the mental health specifically of Ontario's children and youth is being looked after?

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Anybody going to answer that?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I am. I'm waiting. It's all right; go ahead.

Interjections.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville for bringing up this very important issue today, especially this week. Later today I will be delivering a statement on how mental health issues affect our

families and communities, and also on how this government has made providing the right support a top priority.

I'm extremely proud that in this year's budget, funding for the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy is increasing to \$93 million annually. This budget's investment is necessary to give young people the essential supports they need. The investment in this budget will help to deliver services when and where children and youth need them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the minister for that answer. I'm glad to hear this government has made a strong commitment in this budget to the mental health of children and youth in Ontario, because it's sorely needed.

I know that in my community of Oakville, front-line mental health services and programs that are available to young people can make a huge difference in their daily lives. Those services that are able to engage youth can make a big impact in the path that they decide to take and on the road to their recovery. Helping young people realize they're not alone can literally, in this case, mean the difference between life and death. The question is, what is the government doing to ensure that more front-line services will be available to all of Ontario's youth?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Our government has made progress on our Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In the last year, my ministry has made significant investments to ensure that all children and youth have timely access to front-line services. So 456 new mental health workers were placed in communities across the province to go along with 144 new mental health nurses in schools.

I have been to some of these centres that provide the services. I have talked to these workers. These services work and are needed in our schools. As well, my ministry is hiring 80 new aboriginal mental health and addiction workers for high-needs aboriginal communities.

Our investments will help over 35,000 young people across the province. We are proud of these achievements, and through this year's budget, we will continue to move forward.

LOW WATER LEVELS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Minister, I hope you're aware of the dire problems facing marinas and other small businesses in Georgian Bay. Because of declining water levels in the upper Great Lakes, marinas and other businesses have had to spend tens of millions of dollars of their own money dredging the bay in order to be open for this summer season.

Sturgeon Point Marina in Wasaga Beach, for example, has spent \$130,000 on dredging and has an annual additional business loss of \$20,000 because of the low water level.

Without the dredging, hundreds of people will be without work and the tourism industry will suffer.

Minister, with your responsibilities in economic development and employment, how will you assist these marinas and other small businesses?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Obviously, this is an issue that's top of mind for all of us in the province.

As you're aware, the IJC has recently released a report with respect to the changing water levels and the challenges that we are facing. There are a number of factors causing this. There are obviously some effects that individuals and businesses are facing in the Georgian Bay area. I will tell you that this Friday I will be with the Premier and a number of other ministers at the FONOM conference. I know we'll be hearing first-hand about those particular challenges.

At the Ministry of Natural Resources, we're going to do everything we can to accelerate the dredging permits that are going to be requested, because we know that there's a finite period of time that this needs to be done in to ensure that these businesses can operate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, the member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like the Minister of Economic Development to actually answer this because it's a job creation question.

Minister, the low water levels on Georgian Bay have become a natural disaster that could possibly impact thousands of tourism jobs. Marinas have had to spend millions of dollars, dollars that they do not have, just to open for this season.

Clearly, we have seen millions of dollars spent by your government on power plant closures and a dysfunctional regional tourism organization.

Georgian Bay marinas and other businesses need your help so these jobs can be saved.

The state of Michigan has a program, and the cheques are being sent out. When can Ontario marinas expect the same treatment as the marinas in Michigan?

Hon. David Orazietti: Again, Speaker, I want to thank the members opposite for raising this very, very important issue. On this side of the House, we're also very concerned about the low water levels and the potential negative impact that it's having in our communities and with respect to our businesses and our industries.

The Minister of Tourism, I know, has spoken to me about this issue. The Minister of Municipal Affairs is also very concerned about this.

We are going to be in the area for the FONOM conference this week, and I'm happy to engage with those individuals bringing that to our attention.

I have had some conversation with individuals and organizations with respect to dredging and ensuring that they have the opportunity to get their tourist operations moving so that those businesses can put people to work. We are very concerned about that. We're going to do everything we can to ensure that process takes place

effectively and that those businesses can get the support that they need.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Speaker, yesterday I met with constituents of Davenport who are paying the price for a gaping loophole in Ontario's rent control law. Like tens of thousands of other tenants across Ontario, these people live in rental units built after 1991, which means they are not covered by rent increase guidelines in the Residential Tenancies Act. As a result, these tenants face large and often arbitrary rent increases that are simply not affordable.

Will the minister commit to close this outdated loophole which exempts these rental units from rent control?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I really want to thank the member for the question. This is certainly an important issue, and our government has consistently shown a commitment to protecting tenants across Ontario.

The Residential Tenancies Act from 2006 provides tenants and landlords with strong, balanced protection, while fostering a robust rental housing market. Though rental buildings built or first occupied after November 1991 are exempt from most rent caps under the Residential Tenancies Act, these tenants are not without protection.

We understand how important stability in rental prices is for tenants. That's why the Residential Tenancies Act still only allows for one increase per year, requiring a 90-day written notice to tenants of all rental residences.

We also established the Landlord and Tenant Board that will act as an independent body that works with the authority to adjudicate disputes between landlords and tenants.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jonah Schein: With all due respect, that's not the issue. This loophole serves no purpose; it has to be closed. It's created a two-tier rental market in Ontario. It has left almost 60,000 Ontario tenant households vulnerable, with no rent control. Tenants in Ontario, including many people who rent condos, face uncertainty and financial hardship. So when will the minister acknowledge this unfairness and protect all tenants in Ontario from this loophole?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Speaker, as I was saying, this Landlord and Tenant Board—a tenant can take the landlord to court, and certainly if the maintenance standards aren't being met or if the landlord needs to make repairs. We also eliminated automatic evictions, allowing all tenants who face eviction an opportunity to get a fair hearing, because we think that's important. We think it's important to balance protection of tenants with the encouragement of building new rental opportunities.

Certainly, we want to make sure that tenants have safe and affordable housing, and we know that the city of Toronto is preparing a report on this issue. We look forward to hearing ideas from the opposition as well as

other stakeholders about making residential tenancies affordable, and we want to work with them as well as the Residential Tenancies Act. We want to seek consultation of people who are affected by legislation that affects them in a negative way.

So I appreciate the question.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I just want to take a moment to recognize Rosemary Sadlier from the Ontario Black History Society, who is in the west gallery here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. We welcome our guest.

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

The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to welcome the Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, the MEAO, represented by Denise Magi, vice-president, Keith Deviney, president, and the other MEAO board of directors, who are here with us this afternoon.

I would also like to mention that they will be available this afternoon, after 4:15, in the members' lounge downstairs, and they invite absolutely everyone to come and meet with them.

Interjections.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Sorry?

Interjection: The dining room.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Sorry. I said the members' meeting room; I meant the members' dining room.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I appreciate the Attorney General heckling you to tell you the right room.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I always obey the voice of a gentleman with authority, Mr. Speaker, such as yourself or the Attorney General.

We certainly welcome all members there after 4:15 today. Thank you kindly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Introduction of guests.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: We have three guests in the House today from Children's Mental Health Ontario: Christine Pelletier, Margo Warren and Sibel Cicek. I welcome them to the House this afternoon as I do the statement on Children's Mental Health Week.

M^{me} France G  linas: It's also my pleasure to introduce many representatives from the myalgic encephalomyelitis, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities communities. They are here at Queen's Park to teach and educate us on those different diseases. I also encourage everybody to go down to the dining room at 4 o'clock, where they will be welcoming MPPs.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BROCKVILLE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm proud today to recognize a remarkable milestone being celebrated this month in my riding where Brockville Collegiate Institute will mark its 125th anniversary.

I want to thank Alex Hodgkinson, a grade 12 student at BCI and a hard-working volunteer in my office, for her help with this statement.

Brockville Collegiate Institute, or BCI, has been providing students with a world-class education since its doors first opened in 1889. In the 125 years since, BCI graduates have gone on to be leaders in all walks of life.

I want to extend a warm welcome to Red Rams alumni, former teachers and support staff returning May 24 to 26 for a great celebration with today's students and staff.

Event co-chairs John Cristello and Cheryl Donovan, and their dedicated organizing committee, have planned a fantastic weekend of events celebrating what BCI has always been about—community.

Indeed, this has become a truly Brockville event as residents and the local business community have pitched in because they understand how much BCI means to our city.

I'm pleased that all funds raised at events will go to the BCI 125 Celebration Trust Fund to help students explore opportunities in academics, athletics and the arts.

Speaker, after 125 years, education in general and BCI in particular have seen many, many changes, but there's one constant in the halls at BCI: a commitment by staff and students to live up to their motto: "Excellence in Athletics, Arts and Academics."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member might realize there's another BCI, in Brantford, that is almost as old. We share a commonality with BCI.

Mr. Todd Smith: And Belleville too.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Belleville and Brockville.

MOTHER'S DAY

Miss Monique Taylor: This past weekend, I hosted a Mother's Day tea in my riding of Hamilton Mountain. I was joined by women from all walks of life. The ethnic diversity in that room was inspiring. It was inspiring because mothers came together. We shared stories, wisdom, proud moments and unsure times. It was an opportunity for us to get together and celebrate what it truly means to be a mother.

We also discussed the trying times and the issues that we face. As women and as mothers we are faced by many challenges and barriers. I have met women who are working hard to achieve an education while raising a child and going to work. I have met with women who have been on the wait-list for child care for many months—years, some of them. I have met with women

who continue to face violence against women. I have met with women who are finding it very difficult to access supports for their children with disabilities.

But there is optimism, Mr. Speaker. By working together as women and as mothers, we can overcome these obstacles. In advance of Mother's Day this weekend, I would like to wish my mother, as well as all mothers across this province, a very happy Mother's Day.

CONCOURS ACTIFS ET FIERES

M. Phil McNeely: Le 26 avril dernier j'ai assisté, en compagnie de ma collègue, la ministre de la francophonie, Madeleine Meilleur, à un événement tout à fait particulier à l'École élémentaire publique Jeanne-Sauvé d'Orléans : la course des corridors. Pour cette journée toute spéciale, chaque classe d'élèves a fait du jogging d'un bout à l'autre des corridors de l'école.

Cette activité est un prélude au projet Lève-toi et bouge, où les élèves et les parents pourront accumuler des cubes énergie à chaque 15 minutes d'activité physique réalisée entre le 29 avril et le 27 mai.

J'aimerais féliciter le directeur de l'école Jeanne-Sauvé, M. André Larouche, et son équipe pour avoir soumis un si beau projet au concours Actifs et fiers et pour avoir reçu la bannière de bronze.

J'aimerais aussi remercier les élèves et les parents présents pour leur accueil chaleureux. Quelle belle initiative de l'école Jeanne-Sauvé afin de promouvoir l'exercice et de trouver des façons originales de faire bouger nos jeunes. Ce sont des enfants débordant d'énergie que j'ai rencontrés vendredi dernier, et nous connaissons tous le lien étroit entre l'exercice et la bonne santé.

Les représentants du Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario—M^{me} Édith Dumont, directrice; Stéphane Vachon; et Georges Orfali—étaient tous présents pour féliciter et encourager les élèves pour leur implication et leur participation à la course des corridors.

ACTON TOWN HALL

Mr. Ted Arnott: It has always been worth the drive to Acton, but now there's yet another very good reason to visit that community. On Sunday afternoon, I joined MP Michael Chong and members of the Halton Hills town council at the official opening of Citizens' Hall at the Acton Town Hall Centre. Through a unique grassroots effort based on community spirit and partnership, the Acton town hall, built in the late 19th century, was saved from demolition and lovingly restored.

Located at the corner of Bower and Willow, the Acton Town Hall Centre has become a majestic addition to the province's stock of heritage properties. In this, the 21st century, it'll be used for all manner of community events—everything you could possibly imagine.

As the MPP for Wellington–Halton Hills, I want to express my thanks to all who were involved in this outstanding community project. I must begin with the

members of Heritage Acton, whose vision and dedication were the driving force behind the project. The Rotary Club of Acton has been a great supporter as well, along with the town of Halton Hills and many generous businesses and individuals.

In addition, the Trillium Foundation contributed \$150,000 to install an elevator, ensuring that the second floor will be accessible to all. We are very grateful for this grant, made possible through one of the province of Ontario's best programs, which I have always supported.

But Heritage Acton continues to raise money. I have supported them in their fundraising efforts and I wish them well as they continue in this important endeavour.

I would like to invite all members—indeed, everyone listening—to come to Wellington–Halton Hills and see what community spirit in action is all about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for his statement, as I said it without my toggle switch on, so I needed to put it on the record. So thank you for your statement.

NURSES

Ms. Soo Wong: Seeing this is Nursing Week, I'd like to take this time to recognize the hard-working and dedicated registered practical nurses in the province of Ontario.

1510

In my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, registered practical nurses make a difference in the lives of constituents every day. They work in our hospitals, long-term-care facilities and in our homes. Nurses are there when we need them most.

One of the RPNs who I'd like to recognize today is Kathleen Samuels. Kathleen has worked for a nursing agency in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt for over 10 years. She works in a long-term-care setting and acute-care setting, and Kathleen is well respected by her peers and her patients.

As someone who has worked in the health care field as a front-line public health nurse, administrator, hospital policy-maker as well as a teacher, I have witnessed firsthand the need to employ RPNs in their full scope of practice. Doing so will allow Ontario hospitals to more effectively deal with the nursing home shortage facing our health care system and will also allow for the reduction in overtime and agency nurses.

RPNs visiting the Legislature today have been involved in effective care shifting that is assisting Ontario hospitals in maximizing their budgets.

I'd like to say thank you to all the RPNs in attendance today, as well as the over 40,000 RPNs across the province who are essential to the front-line delivery of quality health care in Ontario.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I am pleased to mark the 11th anniversary of Asian Heritage Month, a time for us

to reflect on our Asian history and relations here in Canada and around the world.

Right here in Ontario, Asian Canadians have shown leadership by opening businesses, creating good-paying jobs, taking on active roles in the community and sharing their rich culture through their traditions, arts and cuisine.

It's important that we recognize the contributions that Asian Canadians have made in our communities, both economically and culturally, which have helped us to develop a prosperous and diverse society.

I welcome all Ontarians to take part in Asian Heritage Month in their own communities. In fact, in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, the Waterloo Region Museum is hosting the Hmong exhibit, which shines light on the history of refugees from Vietnam, Thailand and China. These immigrants have made our region their home, contributing to a vibrant Ontario all of us enjoy.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the Korean War and the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and the Republic of Korea. In honour of these two important milestones, Prime Minister Stephen Harper themed this year's Asian Heritage Month the Year of Korea in Canada.

With over 1.8 million Ontarians having Asian descent, we should use this month of May not only to reflect on their past achievements, but also to look ahead to the future as we continue to build and develop our great province together.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

M^{me} France G  linas: On April 18, the Minister of Health stated that there would be some changes to the way physiotherapy would be funded in this province. As per the minister, the funds would go to local health integration networks and community care access centres across the province, rather than to the designated physiotherapy clinics.

We have not heard much since April 18, and a lot of people are wondering, what is the plan moving forward? The changes are said to be positive. The health care dollars would be better spent delivering patients in-home care. The new system will provide better value for money and access to services in more communities.

If this is the case, then why do we have people from across this province calling us because they are afraid that they're actually going to lose a service that they are depending on? I think it is partly because you have not shared the plan with the rest of the people of Ontario. They kind of have to trust you, and right now we're dealing with a little bit of a deficit in that department.

Our office is receiving calls from long-term-care facilities, people in retirement homes, patients, nurses and physiotherapists—they all want to know: Will you be able to guarantee access to the people who presently receive physiotherapy services so that the gains that they're making in mobility, in balance and in strength will continue to happen?

MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr. Joe Dickson: The Myalgic Encephalomyelitis Association of Ontario, the MEAO, is a registered Ontario charity and a volunteer-operated organization which was founded in 1990. MEAO is a place of information, support, awareness and education for people living with myalgic encephalomyelitis—sometimes known as chronic fatigue syndrome—fibromyalgia and multiple chemical sensitivities. There are over 500,000 people in Ontario, as per the Community Health Survey of 2010, living with one or more of these chronic, debilitating and often disabling illnesses.

The symptoms of these illnesses often overlap and are very complicated. Patients with these illnesses often despair for lack of treatment options. Funding of these illnesses is almost non-existent, and the MEAO is actively advocating to help secure the funds needed for diagnosis, treatment, research and community support for all three illnesses.

May 12 is known as International Awareness Day for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, Fibromyalgia and Multiple Chemical Sensitivities. Today, on May 7, 2013, MEAO is having an awareness event here at Queen's Park once again, and it advocates on behalf of all Ontarians who have more than one or just one of these illnesses. We will see each of you members, we hope, in the members' dining room from 4:15 p.m. today. Thank you kindly.

WASAGA BEACH LIONS AND LIONESSE CLUBS

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the Wasaga Beach Lions and Lioness Clubs on the 50th and 35th anniversaries of their respective charters. For both of these organizations, service to the community began decades ago and has only grown since.

In 1963, Reverend Donald French formed a group of businessmen as a means to increase church membership. From there, the Wasaga-Oakview Lions Club was born. Since its inception, it has contributed more than \$2 million to our community and international causes worldwide.

Following that, in 1978, Sid Taylor, the then-president of the Lions Club, sponsored a club for wives of Lions members that was termed "Lionettes" but has since been renamed the Wasaga Beach Lioness Club. Together, these organizations have contributed significantly to the betterment of every aspect of our community and play an important part in our region's history.

One of their first donations was an ambulance to the town of Wasaga Beach. They funded the construction of our local Wasaga Stars Arena. They contributed to the development of our library, to our local RecPlex, to parks and bus shelters, and also to the Small Fry club, which preceded kindergarten in the province of Ontario.

True to their slogan, they "Have Fun while Helping Others," and without question, they have left an indelible

mark on our community, with a lasting effect for generations to come. As MPP for Simcoe—Grey, I could not be more proud of the membership of our local Lions and Lioness Clubs, and I would like to thank them for their tremendous contributions to our community.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

UNLAWFULLY POSSESSED HANDGUNS IN VEHICLES ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ARMES DE POING ILLÉGALES DANS LES VÉHICULES

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act and the Civil Remedies Act, 2001 to promote public safety and suppress conditions leading to crime by prohibiting driving on the highway in a motor vehicle in which there is an unlawfully possessed handgun / Projet de loi 66, Loi modifiant le Code de la route et la Loi de 2001 sur les recours civils afin de promouvoir la sécurité publique et d'éliminer les conditions engendrant le crime en interdisant la conduite sur la voie publique d'un véhicule automobile dans lequel se trouve une arme de poing dont la possession est illégale.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Mr. Speaker, as you know, there is a constant flood of smuggled handguns into Ontario that is endangering the lives of regular citizens and our front-line police officers because these gunmen find it too easy to ride around city streets with unlawful guns in their cars. It's about time we did something about it.

1520

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (TROUBLE DE STRESS POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder / Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les

accidents du travail relativement au trouble de stress post-traumatique.

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.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This will be the fourth time for this bill. It says that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, is amended to create a rebuttable presumption relating to post-traumatic stress disorder affecting emergency response workers. Subsection 15.3(1) defines "emergency response worker" to mean a firefighter, paramedic or police officer. Subsection 15.3 states that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to the employment as an emergency response worker unless the contrary is shown. The bill sets up procedural and transitional rules governing claims to which a presumption applies.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I rise in the House today in recognition of Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario, being observed this week. This is an opportunity each year to increase the awareness of mental health and its signs and to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness. It's also a time to increase our understanding of the help that is available for those with mental health issues and their families.

I can tell you from personal experience that parenting is both rewarding and challenging. I have met parents who are raising children with mental health issues, and I've learned about the hurdles that they have to overcome every day for things that other parents may take for granted, so I absolutely commend all those mothers and fathers for all that they do for their children.

There was a time when the topic of mental health was not only considered taboo, but the help and support needed either did not exist or was not accessible. Individuals and families affected by mental health issues suffered alone and in silence.

Today, because of broad efforts by community members, organizations and governments, we are becoming increasingly more aware of mental health issues. I'd like to take a moment to recognize our partners from Children's Mental Health Ontario, who are with us here today. We welcome you to the Legislature. Thank you for providing us with the green ribbons that members are wearing to commemorate Children's Mental Health Week.

It is through the work of individuals and agencies like Children's Mental Health Ontario that many more people

are talking more openly about mental health. And we need to continue to talk, as families, as friends, as colleagues in our communities, because not only will that fight the stigma associated with mental illness, it will help us find solutions for children and youth living with mental health issues and their families.

We need to talk about it because every young person in this province with mental health issues deserves the support and every opportunity we can provide to help them reach their full potential. That's why I'm proud to be part of a government that introduced and continues to move forward with Ontario's comprehensive Mental Health and Addiction Strategy. In developing and implementing this strategy, we continue to work across government and with all our partners—including the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Education, and Training, Colleges and Universities—to create a system that delivers what young people need, when they need it, as close to home as possible. Our goal is simple: To create a more co-ordinated and responsive child and youth mental health system across the province.

Our strategy focuses on children and youth first because we know that one in five young people in Ontario today is dealing with mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and eating disorders. We also know that 70% of mental health and addiction problems begin in childhood and adolescence. Early identification and intervention is key. It can put children and youth back on track, leading to better outcomes and improved school achievement.

That is why our government continues to strengthen our investments in child and youth mental health. New investments that began in 2011 will grow to \$93 million annually at full implementation.

Our strategy is working. Already, approximately 35,000 more children and youth and their families are benefiting from quicker and easier access to mental health services and supports. These are being provided through over 770 new mental health workers in schools, communities and youth courts across the province.

Speaker, an unfortunate outcome of mental illness is sometimes suicide. That's why our government is also focused on prevention and has engaged in dialogue with experts and those with lived experience of attempted suicide. Youth suicide prevention strategies are now integrated in community resources and training.

As we implement the strategy, we continue to work with our aboriginal partners and communities to provide culturally appropriate mental health services so aboriginal children and youth can reach their full potential. Our new investments include funding for more than 80 new aboriginal mental health and addiction workers in high-needs communities, which are expected to provide additional services to 4,000 more aboriginal children and youth each year.

We've come a long way in reducing the stigma related to mental illness and in supporting children, youth, and their families. We need to continue to work together with all our partners—those affected by mental illness and

their families; agencies, organizations, clinicians and different levels of government—to keep the momentum going.

I want to thank all those who work with and on behalf of children and youth with mental health issues. Your compassion, your strength and your dedication are a powerful contribution to the children, youth and families you serve and the communities you live in. Thank you for your daily commitment, for caring, and for being part of the solution.

NURSING WEEK

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It is with great pleasure that I rise during National Nursing Week to acknowledge the enormous contributions of nurses to the health of the people of Ontario, and to thank them for that contribution. Without a doubt, Ontario's health care system, of which we are so proud, simply wouldn't provide the high quality of care that patients rely on if not for our nurses.

Nurses in Ontario work collaboratively each day using the best evidence available to guide their work. They work hard to improve the quality of patient care and focus on ways to improve the patient experience and patient outcomes.

For the last nine-plus years, this government's commitment to Ontario nurses has been inspired by the same consistent commitment that nurses have shown and continue to show for their patients. Almost as soon as we took office, we began working to change the culture in health care.

Nurses are front-line partners in health care, and that's why we're committed to invest in them throughout their career. One of the ways we've accomplished this is through the Nursing Graduate Guarantee, which we launched in 2007. Since then, more than 14,300 nursing graduates have been connected with full-time nursing opportunities through that program.

Until now, the Nursing Graduate Guarantee has been available only to nurses who graduated here in Ontario. But yesterday, I was delighted to announce that we're expanding the Nursing Graduate Guarantee initiative to allow nursing graduates educated elsewhere in Canada to participate. The expansion will support Canadian nursing graduates who choose Ontario as their preferred place of employment.

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In addition, we're creating a new initiative within the Nursing Graduate Guarantee to provide internationally educated nurses with support to transition to practise in Ontario's health care system. That program is called the Nursing Career OriENtation initiative and it will provide up to six months of funding to health care organizations to hire internationally educated nurses to participate in a hands-on orientation program. This program will help those internationally educated nurses who qualify to practise in Ontario to integrate more easily into our health care settings.

There's more we can do to improve primary care delivery across the province and optimize the role of nurses within primary care. My ministry will be partnering with the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario to provide funding to develop and disseminate two new initiatives.

First, we're investing \$100,000 for the online optimization of the Nursing Workforce in Primary Care Toolkit. This education suite will help employers to ensure that they're using to the fullest extent possible the skills and knowledge of their RNs and RPNs to provide primary care services.

Second, we're making a \$100,000 investment for a Primary Care Nurse Education Fund for both RNs and RPNs to participate in primary care learning programs. This initiative will help nurses increase their knowledge and skills in primary care nursing so they can provide the best-possible care to the people of Ontario.

My deepest appreciation goes to the RNAO and RPNAO for their partnership and collaboration in making these two new programs possible for their members. These are just the latest investments we've made to support our nurses and allow them to practise to the full extent of their scope. I cannot think of a better theme for this year's Nursing Week: Nursing, A Leading Force for Change.

We are working in partnership with nurses to bring about necessary and positive change in our health care system. Just last month, the Premier committed to help nurses deliver more services that will improve the care of their patients. Our government will work with the College of Nurses of Ontario to expand the scope of practice for registered nurses and registered practical nurses so they can dispense medication in specific circumstances; for example, when patients do not have quick access to a pharmacy.

We're also working with the nursing community to identify additional opportunities to expand their scope of practice. Potential changes could include allowing registered nurses to prescribe certain medications and nurse practitioners to prescribe controlled substances.

Expanding nursing scope of practice helps to provide patients with access to the right care at the right time and in the right place. That's the focus of our action plan for health care. Nurses can see first-hand better than anyone the need for transformation in our health care system. That's why Ontario's budget builds on our government's commitment to shift care into the community and into people's homes, in particular for seniors and people with complex conditions. We know that more care at home and in our community will make a real difference in people's lives.

For example, we're investing an additional \$260 million this year into the community care sector. That includes home care for 46,000 more people, most of them seniors. Our investment will allow us to set a five-day home care wait time target for complex patients, starting from their community care access centre assessment.

This will clearly mean a bigger role for RNs, RPNs and NPs.

Our government is committed to ensuring Ontario is the healthiest place to grow up and grow old. We've come a long way in making real, long-lasting changes to our health care system, but we still have work to do. It's a source of real comfort to me as health minister that I can always count on the nurses of this province to do their part.

As well as acknowledging National Nursing Week, I'd like to note that this coming Sunday is International Nurses Day. On Sunday, I hope every one of my friends here in the chamber will spare a quick thought for the wonderful contribution of nurses all over the world and say a sincere thank you. I know I will.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses. The member from Barrie.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Rod Jackson: This week is child and youth mental health week. It's an honour to speak here today on the importance of bringing awareness to mental health, which is one of the most pressing issues faced by our children and youth today.

For too long, mental health has been treated as an afterthought in our health system, despite the fact that 10% to 20%, or 1.2 million children and youth, are affected by mental illness or disorder. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among young people, a scary fact. The total number of 12-to-19-year-olds in Canada at risk for developing depression is a staggering 3.2 million. The need for support and services to ensure good mental health is growing, as mental health problems are predicted to increase and become one of the five most common causes of morbidity, mortality and disability among young children.

It doesn't have to be this way. It's estimated that 70% of childhood mental health issues can be solved with early intervention and therapy, yet to receive treatment, children and youth face an average wait time of six to eight months, and only one in five children who need mental health services ever actually receive them—and those are just the ones that we know of.

Our children and youth, the future of Ontario, deserve much better. Mental health is an essential part of overall health. Like good physical health, good mental health enables children and youth to lead happy lives and grow up to be happy, healthy, productive adults. Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness; it is a state of well-being. This is something every parent wants for their children, and something that every child and youth in our country deserves.

The PC Party of Ontario recognizes the importance of children and youth having good mental health, and has pledged to make mental health a priority. This month, actually, I am proud to have MPP Christine Elliott, our deputy leader and health and long-term-care critic, come

to Barrie to host a round table with mental health service providers in my community.

I'd also like to mention quickly Terry Fox school in Barrie, which is just down the road from my house. It is holding a mental health awareness walk today. These students and staff should be commended for recognizing that child and youth mental health is such an important issue, and I commend them on their efforts in this regard.

NURSING WEEK

Mr. Bill Walker: On behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, it is with great pleasure that I rise during international Nursing Week to acknowledge the great contributions nurses make every day to our health care system and to thank them for their invaluable knowledge, skills and compassion.

Nurses are often the first line of patient contact. They are the backbone of our system, and Ontario proudly has some of the best nurses in the world. So it is a fact beyond any doubt that our health care system would not be as respected and as strong if it wasn't for every one of the 150,000-plus registered nurses, registered practical nurses, nurse practitioners and PSWs that work in our communities and care for our loved ones.

Nursing Week is also a time to celebrate the Ontario Nurses' Association's 40th anniversary. ONA represents 60,000 registered nurses and allied health professionals, as well as more than 14,000 nursing student affiliates providing care in hospitals, long-term facilities, public health community clinics and industry.

Yet I'm a little concerned that we're praising nurses at the same time that the Liberal government is cutting nursing jobs. ONA members are gravely concerned about the impact on patient care following an announcement of an additional 25 full-time-equivalent RN cuts at the Ottawa Hospital. In January, as many as 90 nursing jobs were cut, representing a loss of almost 200,000 hours per year of nursing care at that hospital. Most recently, 15 registered nurses in Sarnia and 20 registered practical nurses in North Bay received layoff notices. Statistics compiled by the College of Nurses of Ontario confirm this fact: The number of registered nurses fell by about 1,000 between 2010 and 2012. Ontario has nearly the lowest number of working registered nurses per capita of any province or territory in Canada.

This week, as many of us prepare to visit and witness first-hand the role of nurses in our ridings as part of the annual Take Your MPP to Work day, let's remember that a viable health care system requires a diverse health care team of nurses. I hope that every one of us in this chamber will find our own way to recognize the contributions of nurses all over the world and say a sincere thank you.

I know from my own personal experience with the health care system, as executive director of a hospital foundation, as a father and also as a son, that nurses are vital to Ontario's health care system. For all that

excellent work they do for our loved ones each and every day, I thank you. Happy international Nursing Week.

That includes the very hard-working Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP, Laurie Scott, and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Madeleine Meilleur, the only two nurses in this Legislature, to my knowledge.

Interjection: Soo Wong.

Mr. Bill Walker: I can add Soo Wong as well. Thank you.

Interjection: And France Gélinas.

Mr. Bill Walker: And France Gélinas.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Walker: No? Speaker, we'll retract that last one, if I could. Thank you, Speaker. Thanks for your help, caucus.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If the member didn't have the time, I wouldn't let him.

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CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm proud to stand with Ontarians in celebrating Children's Mental Health Week. As the statistics show, we have about 500,000 children and youth who have mental health problems. ASD, autism spectrum disorder, affects one in 88 people. About 6% of our children have anxiety disorders serious enough to need treatment. ADHD affects 5% of children. These are just some of the many mental health disorders that are affecting today's children and youth.

These disorders can be caused by chemical imbalances, exposures to toxins, or hereditary influences, but they can also come from low self-esteem, poor performance at school, or stress at work.

This information and much more can be made available by the children's mental health folks here in Ontario, and I really urge the members to contact the 85 agencies across Ontario to speak about these.

These community-based agencies are the backbone of Ontario's mental health system for children and youth. They provide excellent care and treatment for our young people. These agencies are staffed by many dedicated professionals and volunteers, who do amazing work for our children and youth.

Unfortunately, I must echo what I said at this time last year: the fact that there is little uniformity in the delivery of services and treatments across Ontario. Their strong community-based focus has meant a lack of mandated programs and regulation of the sector. This means that not every agency is able to provide the same level of care or training. They cannot ensure the same treatment and coordination of services.

In 2005, the government stated that the primary goal was for a child and youth mental health sector that is coordinated, collaborative and integrated at all community and governmental levels. Eight years later, this still hasn't become a reality.

I know that Children's Mental Health Ontario is keen to work with government to reform the system.

Successive budgets have promised hundreds of millions in funding, but the previous two decades were marked by chronic underfunding that has taken a toll on the system.

I know I'm going to fall short, Mr. Speaker. I could go on for quite a long time about this industry and the great work that they're doing, but I do have to share my time with the member from Nickel Belt.

NURSING WEEK

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to say a few words about Nursing Week, la Semaine des soins infirmiers.

I want to start by thanking the registered practical nurses who were at Queen's Park today with SEIU and treated us to lunch. That was very nice of them, and a nice way to celebrate Nursing Week.

Of course, I say thank you to all of the other nurses, whether you'd be a nurse practitioner or a registered nurse. Thank you for the profession you have chosen. Thank you for the care you give us.

As you all know, nurses can work in every part of our health care system, be it in hospital, long-term-care homes, primary care health units—they're everywhere. But they're also outside of the health care system. They work in our jails and they work in our penitentiaries. Last year, for National Nursing Week, I went to visit—my second tour of duty—the Sudbury Jail. What I saw really shocked me. On both my visits, the 184 beds were full of inmates. About two thirds of them were of aboriginal descent, which means that the rate of diabetes was through the roof.

I would say that I knew about half of the inmates, mainly because I used to work at a community health centre that offered mental health services, and those people had accessed the mental health services that we had. But they were now in jail.

I also saw the great work that Tammy, Tracy, Suzanne and Trevor were doing. Those are the four full-time nurses who work at the Sudbury Jail. Their caseloads were really heavy, and their support—well, non-existent. Even the examination table, the room, the medical instruments—everything was old and decrepit.

Speaker, I've never heard a judge sentence somebody to amputation or blindness, but when a nurse doesn't have time to dispense insulin, this is really what we're doing.

When a nurse is running off her feet, she doesn't have time to do the mental health treatments that have been prescribed to about half of the inmates who suffer with mental illness. And then we know the drastic consequences of mental illness when it is not treated.

I want to say a special thank you to all of the nurses who do the great work in the jails in Sudbury and elsewhere in the province. Tammy, Tracy, Suzanne and Trevor, thank you for your great work.

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

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to read a petition from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows—and I'll be quick, because there are other people who want to participate.

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the" failed "Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines" in development.

I'm pleased to sign and support it and send it to the floor with Victoria, one of the pages.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from all over Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

"Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don't complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

"Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system;"

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman's oversight "to include Ontario's long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Megan, from Sudbury, to deliver it to the Clerk.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

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

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

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

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

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

"Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

"Whereas 'community of interest' is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

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

"Whereas the commission's report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

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

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

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

I fully support it and give it to page Ethan.

AIR QUALITY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean program was implemented as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and vehicle emissions have declined significantly from 1998 to 2010; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

"Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

"That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I affix my name to this petition, because I support it, and give it to page Simon.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for northern families;

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"Whereas the government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that essential goods and services are affordable for all families living in the north and across the province;

"Whereas government policy such as the Green Energy Act, the harmonized sales tax, cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga have caused the price of electricity to artificially increase to the point it is no longer affordable for families or small business;

"Whereas electricity generated and used in northwestern Ontario is among the cleanest and cheapest to produce in Canada, yet has been inflated by government policy;

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

"To take immediate steps to reduce the price of electricity in the northwest and ensure that residents and businesses have access to energy that properly reflects the price of local generation."

I support this and give this to page Jack to deliver.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Rouge Valley, Ajax and Pickering hospital campus was expanded and opened one and a half years ago, with the largest expansion in our community's history; and

"Whereas the new growth in this area creates added pressures to the system; and

"Whereas the rapid changes in modern technology create the need for infrastructure upgrades;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, sign this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and ask that the government of Ontario continue to invest in our Ajax-Pickering community hospital by adding additional services on an ongoing basis so our residents can continue to receive the best care in this province."

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I will pass it—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank Stephen Kirkwood and the members of the Leeds and Grenville Landowners Association for providing me with this petition. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government admits power prices will increase an additional 46% by 2015; and

"Whereas a recent study found the Liberal government's renewable energy subsidy program is adding \$5.2 billion in costs to Ontarians on their tax and hydro bills, while the political decision to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants on the eve of the 2011 provincial election will further drive up rates; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for families in rural Ontario:

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring an end to the current government's scandalous mismanagement of Ontario's energy sector by enacting policies that will put the province's consumers, farmers and employers ahead of special interests."

I'm pleased to affix my signature with this wonderful pen and—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Petitions?

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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

"Whereas St. Joseph's Health Care centre has decided to close its less than 15 year old community hydrotherapy pool on June 28/13. Hundreds of people in pain will be denied this imperative therapy which has been specifically ordered by their physicians and physiotherapists. There is no other affordable pool in the area with three depth levels, salt water at least 92 degrees F with excellent accessibility and hydrotherapy leadership. This decision is in opposition to the statements of the health minister to increase health dollars in the community for physiotherapy and for seniors. Pool patrons' requests to work with St. Joseph's to continue this program have been ignored. The sacrificial work of fundraising to build the pool is being ignored.

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

"We ask you to direct St. Joseph's Health Care centre to continue its hydrotherapy program in this excellent, appropriate pool. This decision will save huge amounts of health dollars both now and in the future."

I sign the petition and give it to page Brigid.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr. Todd Smith: This comes from my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Health Insurance Program ... previously covered one ... Pap test a year for women in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that 1,350 Canadian women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and 390 died from the disease in 2012, and that

this valuable test is a simple screening procedure that can help prevent cancer of the cervix; and

"Whereas the province through OHIP now only covers the cost of a test once every three years under new rules that took effect January 1; and

"Whereas women who want an annual Pap test now have to pay for the screening themselves under the new rules;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the OHIP funding for annual Pap tests for women in order to help prevent cervix cancer and ensure women's overall health and well-being."

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a petition—one of hundreds of signatures that I've already delivered—another one here:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to affix my—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition from my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Auditor General confirmed that no comprehensive evaluation was completed by the McGuinty”-Wynne “government on the impact of the billion-dollar commitment of renewable energy on such things as net job losses and future energy prices, which will increase another 46% over the next five years; and

“Whereas poor decisions by the McGuinty government, such as the Green Energy Act, where Ontario pays up to 80 cents per kilowatt hour for electricity it doesn't need and then must pay our neighbours to take it for free, and the billion-dollar cost of the seat-saving cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas power plants, have contributed to making the cost of Ontario power the highest in North America; and

“Whereas there has been no third party study to look at the health, physical, social, economic and environmental impacts of wind turbines; and

“Whereas Ontario's largest farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, have called for a suspension of industrial wind turbine development until the serious shortcomings can be addressed; and

“Whereas the McGuinty”-Wynne “government has removed all decision-making powers from the local municipal governments when it comes to the location and size of industrial wind and solar farms;

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

“That the Liberal government support Huron–Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson's private member's motion which calls for a moratorium on all industrial wind turbine development until a third party health and environmental study has been completed.”

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

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sprott Power, also known as Zero Emission People, Energy Farming Ontario Inc., and Wind Works, are proposing to construct 10 wind turbines, known as Settler's Landing and/or Snowy Ridge Wind Parks within

the city of Kawartha Lakes in order to produce up to 20 megawatts of power; and

“Whereas the proposed wind parks are to be located, in whole or in part, on the Oak Ridges moraine; and

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“Whereas the location of the proposed wind parks will adversely affect wildlife populations, wildlife migration patterns, human health, and the natural environment; and

“Whereas the proposed wind parks will also reduce property values and the quality of life in the surrounding communities;

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

“The government of Ontario live up to its throne speech commitment, and deny these applications in recognition of this not being a willing community for industrial wind turbines; and

“That the government announce an immediate moratorium on the further development of industrial wind turbines until complete studies have been completed into all direct and indirect health impacts associated with these projects.”

It's signed by many people in Kawartha Lakes. I'll hand it over to page Brigid.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time for petitions has ended.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROSPEROUS AND FAIR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 POUR UN ONTARIO PROSPÈRE ET ÉQUITABLE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Gerretsen, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 65, Loi visant à mettre en œuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I will be sharing my time with the member of Vaughan. He's one of the newest members in the House, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. He's hard-working, dedicated, extremely competent, and he will give you a very good outline of what's in the budget.

However, before turning it over to him, I would just tell the people of Ontario that if they're interested in obtaining a copy of the budget, all they have to do is go online to www.ServiceOntario.ca/publications. They can get the entire budget online. They can also order it through ServiceOntario.ca, or they can go to one of the ServiceOntario contact centres during normal business hours to get a copy of the budget, Speaker.

I will be reading from the budget. I know there are an awful lot of talking points that the members of the opposition have—maybe even some of our own government members—but I always believe in sticking to the actual text.

Speaker, let me tell you, I've been here for 18 years, and if any budget cries out for support from all sides of the House, from the Conservatives over there and from our friends in the New Democratic Party over there, this is a budget that does that. This is a budget that talks about a prosperous and fair Ontario.

Interjections.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know there's a lot of heckling, Speaker, but this budget really does something for all of the people of Ontario. Let me just review some of the highlights in the budget. I refer, first of all, to page 3 of the budget.

Interjection: How much did that cost?

Hon. John Gerretsen: No, it didn't cost anything. It notes in a very affirmative fashion that of all those jobs that we lost in the recession of 2008-09, some 400,000 jobs have been gained back as a result of the policies of this government. Now let me make it clear: The government did not create these jobs, but we put in place policies that allowed those jobs to be created in the private sector. We have gained back everything that was lost during that horrible period of time.

I could tell you all sorts of other things, but let me just outline a couple of very positive measures in this budget. First of all, we've got a \$100-million fund to help those smaller municipalities who have major infrastructure issues and problems so that they can be helped to repair those roads, those bridges and all of the other municipal works that are absolutely necessary. That is good for everyone.

Transit: We all know the tremendous transit and traffic problems we have here in the GTA. My golly, I experience it every time I drive into Toronto and drive back home again to Kingston, Ontario. I have made that trip, in 18 years, over 750 times. We know there are major problems here, so what have we done? Over the next 10 years, GO Transit is going to be expanded so that there won't be as many people having to come in by car from Whitby, from Hamilton, from all over the place.

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: They will be able to go by GO Transit. Even the Conservative finance critic is applauding that measure, and thank you very much for your support in this.

Let me talk about something that the Conservatives are really interested in, that we've included in the budget. Listen to this: that we are supporting Ontario manufacturers by extending the accelerated capital cost allowance for manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment, providing \$265 million in tax savings over three years. That is good for business. It's good for the job opportunities it will create. It's good for the province of Ontario. The more jobs there are in the province of Ontario, the more prosperous we are, the better we all do.

Speaker, I want to talk about some of the other highlights in the budget as well. First of all, let me just talk about something that I feel very, very—

Interjections.

Hon. John Gerretsen: We listened to your opposition leader, you listened to our Premier, and undoubtedly you listened to the leader of the third party. Why don't you listen to what other members have to say at this point in time?

On page 69, something that I feel very strongly about: I think one of the major problems that we face in this society is the ever-growing difference between the haves and the have-nots in our society. That is a major, major problem. The difference between the people at the bottom end of the economic scale and the ones at the top over the last 15 to 20 years has expanded tremendously. That is not good for our society, and it certainly isn't good for the people who are at the bottom end of the economic scale.

What are we doing? We are starting to implement the Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh report by providing the people at the bottom end of the economic scale some added relief. Let me just talk to you a little bit about that. We're saying, for example, that of the first \$200 per month that is earned by the people who are getting Ontario Works, they will be exempted. In other words, there won't be a clawback of that. The first \$200 that they earn will not be clawed back against any support payments that they get.

Secondly, we're also increasing the social assistance rates, including the top-up for single adults without children receiving Ontario Works. We all know that's needed. No one can live on \$660 or \$700 or \$750 per month, and if you think you can, why don't you try it for a while? I know I couldn't, and I'm sure there's no member in this House who could do that. We also increased the Ontario Works liquid asset limits to help recipients save and become more financially secure. That is good.

It's only a start. Much more work needs to be done, but it's heading in the right direction, and I know that we've got the confirmation of both Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh to thank for their report, and they agree with this particular approach.

Let me just deal with another highlight that can be obtained on page 103. I believe in total fiscal responsibility. There's no question about that. I don't think that governments can continue to provide the necessary services in health care and education to the people of Ontario if we continue to run budgetary deficits. We cannot borrow from future generations. I totally agree with that. But we also know that at times it may be necessary, particularly when we've gone through the kind of depression that we went through in 2008 and 2009. One of the most startling aspects of this budget is the fact that last year we projected a deficit of some \$14.8 billion. We were able, through good, sound management, to limit that this past year to \$9.8 billion. It's not the end result, but it's a darned good start. And, by the way, we are going to

have a balanced budget in the year 2017, which is exactly the same thing that the other two parties promised as well.

Finally—and the Minister of Health has already talked about this today, and I will be turning it over to the parliamentary assistant in a moment—one of the real good-news items in this budget is the fact that over the next three years, we, through our common tax dollars that we all pay into—it's never the government's money; it's always the people's money—are going to contribute another \$700 million over the next three years for improved home care services so that people can stay in their own homes longer. People don't want to go—elderly people—to long-term-care homes; they want to stay in their own home environment as much as possible. Some people can't do it right now because the services may not be available to the same extent as we want them to. But the fact that we're contributing another \$700 million to the home care programs in this province through the community care access centres is a good thing for people. It will allow them to stay in their own home.

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Speaker, once again, if ever a budget, in all of the years that I've been here—and I say this particularly to my good friends in the New Democratic Party. If ever a budget cried out for unanimous support in this Legislative Assembly, this is it. Vote for the budget. Do the right thing. Don't do all the political calculations. Vote for a budget that will truly help the majority of the people of the province of Ontario.

Now I'll turn it over to the parliamentary assistant.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Vaughan.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the Attorney General for his very passionate remarks, for his kind words—in this case, his kind words about me. I want to thank him in particular for making sure that there's a lot of energy in this chamber before I have the opportunity to stand up and deliver some of my own remarks with respect to Bill 65, a bill that I think is very appropriately named the Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act.

As the Attorney General explained in his opening comments, I am very proud to serve as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance. That's a role that I've enjoyed taking on over the last number of months. It's a role that I started out serving in when the former member from Windsor, the former Minister of Finance, was in that role. It's a role that I've continued to enjoy serving in and I'm very proud to serve in alongside my colleague the member for Mississauga South, our current Minister of Finance, who stood in this House last week and delivered an eloquent and articulate budget speech outlining exactly how our government intends to continue moving our province forward over the next number of months and years.

Before I delve into some of the specifics around the bill itself, I would like to spend a couple of minutes—because, as many in this chamber will imagine, putting

together a budget, particularly a budget that's so effective, is a mammoth task. There are a number of individuals who I believe deserve a mention, both in my remarks and the thanks of people in this chamber and the thanks, frankly, of people across Ontario.

Of course, as in every minister's office, as in every MPP's office, there are a number of staff who have worked extremely hard over the last number of months—political staff, that is—on this particular budget, on this document, on this blueprint for moving Ontario forward. There are a number of very talented women and men who work at the Ministry of Finance, from the deputy minister on down, who have done extraordinary work in pulling this together, as they have in many, many years past.

I want to mention, of course, every member of our caucus on the government side who had the opportunity to provide input over a number of weeks; many members on this side of the House who led and participated in virtual town halls and in their own pre-budget consultations in their respective ridings, certainly the members of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, chaired by the member from Oakville and populated by members like my seatmate, the member from Scarborough—Agincourt; the member from Thornhill; the member from Beaches—East York; and others.

The work that the members of that committee did in listening to consultations and listening to submissions from Ontarians right around the province is certainly something that helped inform this process. I believe the members of that particular committee deserve the thanks of this chamber.

Of course, as was mentioned by the Minister of Finance last week, the more than 600,000 Ontarians who had the opportunity, through all of these consultations, both in-person and in virtual consultations, to feed into this process to make sure that we were able to develop and put out, put forward and propose a budget that speaks to the aspirations of this province—I will say again that I believe this particular budget, Bill 65, definitely does speak to the ambitions and the hopes of the people of Ontario.

Before I go a little bit further into the details of the budget, I do want to talk a little bit about the context. I've only been in this chamber as an MPP for the last eight months, but I had the opportunity a number of years ago to serve in this building as a staff person for a couple of different elected officials. When I was contemplating what I wanted to say today—what I wanted to talk about in these remarks—I gave some thought to what it was like when I worked here, when certain other parties were in power, in particular the official opposition when they were last in power. I contemplated exactly how much of a difference we have in terms of the environment that exists in Ontario, the democratic political dynamic that exists in Ontario. I, like many in this House, can remember a time when an outgoing government wasn't forthcoming with the people of Ontario with respect to what kind of deficit lay behind—a \$6-billion hidden

deficit in 2003. I can remember budget speeches that weren't delivered inside this chamber, where they are supposed to be delivered—budget speeches that were delivered off-site, outside these four walls at places like Magna.

I can remember between 1995 and 2003 all kinds of mammoth omnibus legislation, bills that put forward things where the people of this province did not have the opportunity to participate in the proper kinds of discussions. I can remember the front lawn of this hallowed property being covered with individuals from all across Ontario, from all walks of life, who felt fundamentally that their democratic rights were being ignored, were being trampled on, and that they did not have the opportunity to participate in their own democracy.

Over the last nine years, the women and men serving on this side of this House as part of our government have worked extremely hard to make sure that we don't go back to those days, because the people of Ontario deserve far better.

I think of things like the fiscal accountability act—
Applause.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely. I think of measures like the fiscal accountability act that effectively provide or make it impossible for outgoing governments to not be forthcoming about where things stand in terms of the budget and the numbers. I think of all the other rebuilding that we've done of vital public services, health care, education. I think about the change in tone and the change in attitude, respecting the will of the people of the province of Ontario.

I think about all of that, Madam Speaker, over the last nine years, with every budget and certainly in this latest budget. Those are the kinds of values that this legislation speaks to. When the Minister of Finance stood last week and presented this budget, those were the fundamental underpinnings of what he was talking about, and they speak to the very nature of Premier Wynne, Minister Sousa and the women and men who serve on this side of the House.

I think it's extremely important, as the Attorney General said in his opening remarks—I know the members of the official opposition, many weeks ago, without having taken the opportunity, without having taken the time to even consider a review of what would be in this budget, told the people of Ontario that they didn't want to participate in this process, that they didn't want to take the time to, frankly, do what they're elected to do to, which is to review this and provide constructive assistance to make sure, especially in the context of a minority Parliament, that we had the kind of budget that would speak to the desires and hopes and ambitions of the people of Ontario.

Notwithstanding the fact that the members of the PC caucus, under their leader, decided that they wanted to be absent from this process many, many weeks ago, I think a little bit irresponsibly, I would stand here in my place today and call on those members to reconsider in this regard, because I think it's extremely important, and,

frankly, the people of their respective communities elected them to take a look at this budget, to make sure this budget speaks to what the people who live in their communities want to see in terms of how the province is going to move forward. I would recommend that they reconsider, I would recommend that they take a look at it, because there are many instances in this budget where I believe, if they wanted to take a look, if they wanted to be reasonable and balanced and fair about this, they would see that there are many points of common interest.

I don't think it would come as a surprise to anyone here or beyond these walls that we all want this province to move forward, regardless of partisan stripe, regardless of colour. I hope the members of the official opposition, as I said, will take a serious look at this budget, will reconsider what I think was their irresponsible choice of a number of weeks ago, and will find a way to work with us and with members of the third party to put together the kind of budget, going forward, that will help the people of Ontario.

To the members of the third party, I would say, though you certainly haven't taken that irresponsible path I talked about a second ago that the official opposition did a couple of weeks ago, I understand that you still want to consider your options. That's perfectly acceptable and perfectly right in this context. We are, after all, in a minority Parliament. But I would strongly encourage you, as I said a second ago, to take a look at this budget, work with us. The Minister of Finance, the Premier and others on this side of the House have said repeatedly over the last number of weeks, and certainly since the budget was tabled, that we believe there is a way to move forward on this; we believe there's a way to work together on this. It's the hallmark of our government. It's the hallmark of our Premier and Minister of Finance. I believe we can get the job done on behalf of the people of Ontario. Frankly, Madam Speaker, that's what they ask of us, that's what they deserve of us, and that's what they demand of us.

I did have a chance to hear a little bit of what the leader of the NDP had to say in some of her remarks in response to the budget speech; I believe it was earlier this morning. Frankly, I didn't have a chance to listen to the whole thing—I was busy working on some other items—but I noted, I believe, at the outset of the leader's remarks that she talked about her own personal history.

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Again, as I gave some thought to what I was going to say in the Legislature today—I think that is an important perspective that we all have to bring to our debates and to our discussions and proceedings here. After all, where we come from, how we were raised, the environments in which we grew up—all of those have helped make us and shape us and have given us the abilities to assess and analyze and move forward and make decisions.

So as I heard the leader of the third party make those remarks, I thought a little bit about my own background and my own upbringing, Madam Speaker.

Interjection: Tell us.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thank you.

Not that many days ago—at least, it doesn't seem like that many days ago—I had the opportunity to deliver my maiden remarks in this chamber, and so some of this stuff might sound like a little bit of an echo of that. But I want to take just a couple of minutes to say that when I think of my own parents—my father, who came from Italy in 1958, and my mother, who came from Scotland in—I want to say 1961—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Point of order: the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: On a point of order, Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to call the motion standing in the name of the member from Simcoe–Grey, MPP Jim Wilson, filed on April 29, 2013, for debate on May 15, 2013.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there consent? All those in favour?

I heard a no.

You may continue, the member for Vaughan.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I know that I'm relatively new in this chamber. I'll give the member opposite the benefit of the doubt. I'm not quite sure that I understand exactly what the inspiration was for that particular interjection. Understanding that it's a point of order, and that, I guess, is within the rules of this House, I will only say that if I was a less forgiving individual, I would presume that the member opposite was continuing to participate in those kinds of antics and those kinds of stunts that the people of this province do not respect and do not deserve.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I'm going to return back to my remarks.

When I think about my parents, people who came from different parts of the world—as many parents and grandparents of those in this chamber did—I think of my own grandparents—again, from Italy, from Scotland—people who came to this country, in most cases, not necessarily with a lot of material possessions, but people who had certain ambitions and hopes for themselves, for their kids and for their grandchildren. They came to a country and, in the case of Ontario, came to a province where they wanted to take advantage of the opportunity that existed.

This is a budget that is all about making sure that we continue to provide this kind of opportunity for future generations, that we continue to move our province forward in that balanced, reasonable, responsible and fair way.

That's the name of this budget: the Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act. It's what's at the very heart of this budget, it's what's at the very heart of everything that our government has done over the last number of years, and it's what we plan to do, hopefully, with the help from the members opposite. Hopefully, if they're willing to participate with us, it's what we are determined to do over the next number of years.

As I said, Ontario is a great place in which to live and work. I know that earlier today, the Attorney General

talked a little bit about where Ontario found itself at the depths of the recession not that many years ago, and how this budget highlights the fact that over the last few years, in some regard because of the initiatives taken by this government, but largely because of the partnerships that we have developed with people in the private sector and across many sectors, our province now stands at a point where we have managed to recover all and more of the jobs that were lost at the depth of the recession.

As the Minister of Finance has said repeatedly and the Premier has said repeatedly, the people of Ontario expect and deserve a government that will provide them with high-quality public services. But they also expect that the costs of these services will not be unsustainable, and that these services will not lead to unsustainable debt levels and high interest costs for future generations. That's why our government is so committed and is on track to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18. Just as importantly, we are committed to reducing the net-debt-to-GDP ratio to the pre-recession level of 27%. We are taking a balanced approach to eliminating the deficit.

I mentioned a little while ago that I had the chance to work here as a staff person a number of years ago. During that same era, we saw a different approach to dealing with public services and balancing books and moving a province—at the time, admittedly, they said “forward.”

The people of Ontario have seen that movie before. They've seen that slash-and-burn approach to trying to balance the books. Ironically, Madam Speaker, the slash-and-burn approach to completely eviscerating public services while not successfully balancing the books, while leaving that kind of residual hidden \$5.6-billion or \$6-billion deficit—

Interjection: Who did it?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I believe that was the members of the official opposition.

That's a movie that we in this province have seen before and it's a movie that we've rejected more than once. It's why Ontarians are so determined that they have a government in place that will move forward in that balanced, fair and responsible way to make sure that we have a plan for jobs and growth.

The government's role, as I said earlier, in job creation is to encourage the right kind of environment for businesses and for entrepreneurs so that they can take risks, they can make investments, they can create jobs and they can drive innovation.

When I think about job creation, I know that, regardless of any other factor, I'm extremely blessed because I have the opportunity and the privilege to represent the people of Vaughan. It's an outstanding community. But it's also a community in many respects that's driven by that entrepreneurial flair and spirit. We are lucky in Vaughan, it's true, but we are lucky because, over the last nine years, in some cases because of the kinds of investments that this government has made, we have been at the leading edge of job creation in the GTA, in the municipality of Vaughan.

Just recently, over the last year, at a function in our community last year, the mayor of my community was able to stand up and talk about 500 new jobs coming to a brand new head office, the 905 head office, for KPMG. That's something that's going to happen in the relatively near future in something called the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre.

Not that many days ago, I had the opportunity to go on behalf of the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport to Vaughan Mills mall to the official opening of Legoland: 34,000 square feet of the only—

Mr. Michael Prue: Did you go to Bass Pro?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Yes, near Bass Pro, in fact. The member from Beaches–East York is quite correct—near Bass Pro in the same mall. That's a mall that's not been open that many years, and yet it's performing at an extraordinarily highly functioning level.

But to look at the faces of the people working in Legoland to see how happy they were to have those employment opportunities—and there are so many more. The subway that's under construction in my community: It's going to be operating in 2015-16 or thereabouts. That's a project that has helped lead to, directly and indirectly, 20,000 jobs in my community and in the GTA.

Those are the kinds of investments that this government has been taking on over the last little while. As I said today—or if I didn't say it, I will say it now, and I know I've heard the minister say it before—the single most important thing that our government can do in order to secure Ontario's prosperity is to eliminate that deficit, our deficit, in a balanced way.

The 2012-13 deficit is now estimated to be \$9.8 billion, as the Minister of Finance said, just a number of days before the budget speech itself. That's a \$5-billion improvement compared with the 2012 budget forecast. The fiscal year that just ended marks the fourth year in a row that Ontario has reported a lower deficit than forecast. It's important to note that, while our work is not done—and I think a point of pride for this government, but a point of pride for all Ontarians to know—that we are the only government in Canada to achieve that level of success.

It also marks the second year in a row where the rate of growth in program spending is projected to be less than 1%. The deficit projection for 2013-14 is \$11.7 billion, and even that is an improvement of more than \$1 billion from the projection in last year's budget.

I know that a lot of people might say, "Well, those are just a bunch of numbers that the member from Vaughan is putting out there." But it is important to note that when you have a federal government that seems unable, at least in recent memory, to hit any of its recent deficit reduction targets; when you have provinces across the country that have those kinds of similar difficulties, I think it is extremely important to highlight, Madam Speaker, that here in Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, under the leadership of our finance minister, Charles Sousa, we are on track, as we've been for the last number of years, with respect to deficit reduction.

It is important to note that since the 2012 budget, expectations for global economic growth have weakened. European economies are in recession, and the growth in emerging markets has slowed. As we all know, Ontario does still rely heavily on the US market as a major export market, and the province faces significant challenges as a result of the high dollar and low productivity growth. Acknowledging these challenges and working with business, labour and other key partners to deal with them head-on will position our province for stronger growth. The government's economic plan will help Ontario face these challenges and stimulate growth.

With respect to that plan, there are certain points that I'd like to highlight.

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Ontario will promote its competitive business climate to attract new investment and jobs. Investments—and this is extremely important—in modern infrastructure renewal will continue. The 2013 budget provides more than \$35 billion for infrastructure investments over the next three years, including a new fund to help small and rural municipalities build roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

Interjection: That's a good thing.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely.

Applause.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is quite right to applaud; he and many others on this side of the House advocated so successfully for the inclusion of that kind of measure in this budget—

Interjection: And we listened to Ontarians.

Mr. Steven Del Duca:—and they certainly listened. We all listened to Ontarians.

And we've heard members opposite talk about that kind of measure in my time over the last eight months in this House. Yet again, this is an issue on which the members of the PC caucus, I think, should find common cause with our budget and common cause with our Premier and Minister of Finance.

As I said earlier, in terms of continuing to encourage that kind of economic growth and prosperity, the province will continue to invest in skills and education for its workforce. The 2013 budget proposes a comprehensive Youth Jobs Strategy that invests \$295 million over two years. This strategy would generate job opportunities for about 30,000 youth. Madam Speaker, I don't want to speak for every other member of this Legislature, but I know in my own community, in Vaughan, how important this kind of measure is. I speak to parents regularly; I speak to grandparents regularly—people not unlike my own parents and grandparents, who, as I said a few minutes ago, had such high hopes for themselves, for their futures and their kids' futures. Perhaps for the first time ever, because of stuff that they're reading in newspapers, stuff that they're seeing on television, stuff that they're hearing about how unstable the world economy is these days, those parents and grandparents have a certain degree of anxiety. Their anxiety is not unfounded,

because our work needs to continue to go on. That's why I'm particularly proud, when I'm talking to them now, to be able to say that our government wants to move forward, hopefully with the support of the parties opposite, with this comprehensive Youth Jobs Strategy, to invest that much money in a strategy that will generate 30,000 opportunities for youth.

We will continue to strengthen the ability of Ontario's entrepreneurs to innovate and transform ideas into goods and services for global markets. This includes increasing access to capital, promoting arts and culture, and making it easier for manufacturers to invest in new machinery and new equipment.

Ontario will help its communities and regional economies benefit from opportunities. Key measures include promoting local food and reducing electricity costs for mining and forestry companies in the north. The government will also consider a range of new revenue tools to support the expansion of transportation and public transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

Our government, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, is committed to ensuring that all Ontarians have a reasonable chance to succeed, no matter where they live. Whether they live in the GTA, whether they live in the north, whether they live in an urban community or a rural community; regardless, we believe that all of us should be able to live, thrive and enjoy a high standard of living in each of our communities.

When I stand in this House from time to time, I spend an awful lot of time talking about my own community of Vaughan. I am very proud to represent this community, and I think there are certain perceptions of what my community is like—perhaps some misperceptions about what my community is like.

It is true that Vaughan, like many GTA municipalities, does have a reputation for being, relatively speaking, affluent. There is no doubt that there are many women and men who live in my community who have worked hard over a number of years—generations, in some cases—to be, to a certain degree, successful. But like all other growing municipalities, Vaughan continues to have its own challenges. Vaughan is not alone—it could be Richmond Hill, it could be Scarborough, it could be Don Valley East, it could be Oakville, or it could be others.

As our municipalities continue to grow, with thousands upon thousands of newcomers coming to our region, we continue to have ever-increasing complex challenges. That's why the other pillar of this year's budget is so important. It's important for communities like mine, and I believe it's important for communities right across the province of Ontario. Of course, I'm speaking about that second pillar: that whole notion of a fair society. That notion that any society, any community, any province is only as strong as its weakest link is something that's at the very heart of the kind of passion that's on display on a regular basis from Premier Kathleen Wynne and the people on this side of the House. I believe it speaks to a fundamental desire on the part of Ontarians to make sure that we have a fair society, that no one is inadvertently left behind.

Ontario's economic performance is stronger, as I said, when everyone has the opportunity to be gainfully employed, to participate in the life of their communities and contribute to the prosperity of our province.

Our government's plan for increasing prosperity and building that fair society involves continued investment in health care and education and transforming social assistance. This transformation will help more people find employment and provide better financial security.

The government will increase opportunities for people to save for retirement. Ontario will improve opportunities for youth, for people with disabilities, for aboriginal Ontarians, and it will protect the most vulnerable.

The new Ontario government is proposing to remove barriers to employment and to improve financial security for people who receive social assistance. For example, we propose to create a \$200 monthly earnings exemption for people who receive Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program benefits.

We propose to increase social assistance rates by 1%. We propose to improve the benefit rate of Ontario Works single adults without children, the group of social assistance recipients that experiences the lowest income, with a monthly top-up and increased cash and other liquid asset limits for people who receive Ontario Works.

Ontario is transforming health care services so that more people receive the care they need on a more timely basis. The 2012 budget committed to increasing investment in home care and community services by an average of 4% per year. This year's budget, the 2013 budget, proposes an additional 1% per year, for a total increase of over \$700 million by 2015-16 compared to 2012-13.

In the 2011 budget, this government introduced the Ontario Trillium Benefit, which combines payments of three different tax credits and delivers this assistance monthly to help people pay their bills as they arrive. Some people have asked for the ability to choose between monthly payments and one annual lump sum. The 2013 budget announces this option. Again, Madam Speaker, I don't want to speak for every member in this Legislature, but over the last number of months since I've had the privilege of serving here, I have heard from time to time from more than just a handful of my constituents about that particular Trillium Benefit, and I know, over the last number of days, as word has spread throughout my community, as local media and others have been talking about it, how favourably this is being received by people in my community of Vaughan. I'm sure the members opposite, including the member from Beaches–East York, who I know has given a great deal of thought to this particular idea and this particular option and has spoken about this option many times in this House—I am sure he will stand with us on this and applaud the movement that the Minister of Finance announced on this measure in last week's budget.

That goes right to the heart of what I'm talking about, when I said at the outset of my remarks today that there are many points of common interest. If the members

opposite from both other caucuses will put politics aside and the partisanship aside and that narrow view aside just for a quick second and think about the broader view, think about what's most important for the people of their communities and for the people of Ontario, they will see that in this budget in 2013, our government listened. We consulted extensively. We gave everyone the opportunity to provide constructive input—

Interjection: Six hundred thousand Ontarians.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: More than 600,000 Ontarians. And we are delivering, with this year's budget, on issues like the Ontario Trillium Benefit and on others.

Madam Speaker, I want to spend a couple of minutes talking a little bit more about the path to balance. It's something that I know is extremely important to the women and men of my community in Vaughan. I said this just a couple of minutes ago: that eliminating our deficit here in Ontario is the single most important step that our province can take with respect to making sure that our economy continues to grow and that we create jobs. We are strongly committed to eliminating our deficit by 2017-18 and to lowering that net debt to GDP ratio to the pre-recession level of 27%, once we balance the budget.

Ontario is beating its fiscal targets, due in large part to the transformation of how we deliver public services. Over the last year, the government began moving forward with about half of the recommendations made by the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services, and this year our government will continue to move forward with a total of 60% of the recommendations.

To follow up and implement the Jobs and Prosperity Council recommendation that government consolidate all business support funding into a new Jobs and Prosperity Fund focused on innovation, productivity and exports, the government is announcing a technical panel to identify savings in business, and this panel will report back in six months.

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Now, it's true that businesses in Ontario currently enjoy a very competitive tax environment. The technical panel I mentioned a second ago will report back in six months with recommendations that will include restructuring, discontinuing, maintaining or replacing some credits with grants to ensure they are producing effective results that create jobs. Ontario is already also working closely with the federal government to close tax loopholes and to combat the underground economy. These are the right things to do to ensure that everyone is paying their fair share to protect public services and eliminate our deficit.

Ontario is a province with tremendous diversity and a strong economic foundation. In the face of global economic challenges, we continue to outperform many parts of the world. As our province moves forward through a sensitive economic recovery, we are taking, as I said a few minutes ago, the balanced approach, but not just the balanced approach—the most effective approach—to

eliminate the deficit and make smart investments in our people and in our infrastructure for long-term economic growth. Eliminating the deficit strengthens our economy and helps protect core public services, like schools and hospitals, which matter to people in Vaughan and matter, I know, to people across Ontario. These investments will help our province seize opportunities to compete in the global economy and create jobs here at home.

Our government is effectively managing the rate of growth in spending to keep Ontario on track to eliminate that deficit by 2017-18 and also making strategic investments to strengthen our economy. Our government is committed to helping all Ontarians succeed. Taking that balanced approach to strengthening the economy will help build a prosperous and fair Ontario for everyone. Ontario's 2013 budget makes smart investments that will strengthen the economy, help create jobs for youth and take action, as I said earlier, to eliminate that deficit.

I know I repeat myself a little bit when I talk about how important it is to make sure that we are doing this in a balanced and fair way. I participated in a virtual town hall just a number of days ago that I believe reached out to residents living in my own community of Vaughan but also municipalities like Richmond Hill, municipalities like Markham, municipalities like King township and others. I know these kinds of virtual town halls happened right around the province of Ontario. I know that many members, including the Minister of Labour and certainly others, did their own, in-person pre-budget consultations. And out of the work, as I said earlier, of the finance committee, as we reached out to people right across the province of Ontario and gave tens and tens of thousands of Ontarians—600,000 Ontarians—the opportunity to provide their constructive input, it was that balanced approach that they kept talking to me about. I think it's really important to stress that we reached out, that we asked people to provide that kind of input, and that they brought it forward.

Now, there are a number of initiatives—frankly, Madam Speaker, because this budget is so chock full of the kinds of things that are going to provide Ontarians with excellent opportunities going forward, I could talk all afternoon and evening, as many on this side might know, about what's in this budget, but there are a couple of other areas that I do want to highlight, because I believe they're important.

Certainly over the last number of weeks and months, this chamber and many people across Ontario have been a little bit seized with the issue of auto insurance. I know that, for example, the member opposite from Bramalea-Gore-Malton has spoken out repeatedly about this, as have many members on this side of the House. In our caucus on this side of the House and elsewhere, we have heard the message loud and clear. I've heard it from constituents of mine in Vaughan. I know that my seat-mate the member from Scarborough-Agincourt has heard it, and many others have heard that people in our ridings, people across Ontario, are concerned about what's happening with respect to auto insurance. So our govern-

ment, in this budget this year, is proposing an auto insurance cost and rate reduction strategy that would reduce premiums by 15% on average for Ontario drivers. This strategy would also intensify our government's existing work to address the critical issues in the system and increase accountability and transparency to help ensure that cost savings will result in lower premiums for Ontario drivers.

In just a second, I will spend a bit of time talking in greater detail about these measures, but there's something that I think it's important to stress about our plans with respect to how we want to move forward and build more fairness in the system regarding auto insurance. I know a lot of stuff has been said back and forth in this chamber, and I know a lot of stuff has been said, frankly, via the media, about exactly what approach is necessary to make sure that we are providing more affordable auto insurance premiums for the people of our ridings.

But when I took a bit of time to think about this particular issue and how I wanted to address it today, I realized that through many, many years, over many years, more than once since we came back to power in 2003, and many times before that, the issue of insurance in Ontario, and the issue of auto insurance particularly in Ontario, is one of those issues that flares up from time to time; it periodically flares up.

I see the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has entered the chamber, which is fantastic news, given that we're talking about the auto insurance issue right now.

This is the kind of issue that flares up from time to time. I believe one of the reasons that this issue flares up from time to time is, frankly, because far too often in the past governments of all stripes have treated this issue like a political football and have come up with simplistic ideas, simplistic solutions that don't have any sustainability about them. They don't take into account what people are feeling and what folks from the industry itself are saying—and all walks of the industry, not just the insurers themselves.

So what I'm particularly happy about in this year's budget is that the Minister of Finance and others on this side of the House gave very serious thought and consideration to trying to figure out exactly how we could produce some ideas and some solutions so that this issue would not flare up from time to time. We didn't want a quick political fix. We didn't want any kind of bumper sticker politics around this. We wanted a sustainable fix. We wanted a sustainable solution that make sense for the people of Vaughan, for Scarborough, for Brampton and Bramalea—for all communities across Ontario.

That's why I'm particularly proud to talk a little bit about the auto insurance strategy that appears in this year's budget. For example, if implemented—and I sincerely hope it will be, with the support of the members opposite—our auto insurance strategy would build on the success of the government's 2010 reforms and a series of fraud prevention regulatory amendments in January 2013. It is essential that further action be taken to ensure that reductions to premiums can continue from these reforms.

A number of critical issues are leading to cost uncertainties for insurers and are preventing significant premium reductions for Ontario's over nine million drivers. Our government is taking strong action on these issues. To achieve the premium reduction, our government will introduce legislative amendments that would, if passed:

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

- require insurers to offer lower premiums for consumers with safe driving records;

- give the Financial Services Commission of Ontario the authority to license and to oversee business practices of health care clinics and practitioners who invoice auto insurers;

- provide the Superintendent of Financial Services with the authority to require insurers to file for rates;

- make the superintendent's guidelines binding, incorporated by reference in the statutory accident benefits schedule;

- expand and modernize the superintendent's investigation and enforcement authority, particularly in the area of fraud prevention; and

- consolidate statutory automobile insurance reviews.

Madam Speaker, to increase accountability and transparency, a new independent annual report by outside experts will look at the impact of reforms introduced to date on both costs and premiums. The report will review industry costs and changes to premiums, and recommend further actions that may be required to meet the government's reduction targets.

The government will intensify its existing cost and rate reduction strategy by transforming the current auto insurance dispute resolute system by appointing an expert to review the system and propose legislative amendments in the fall of 2013; base auto insurance benefits on medical evidence, including directing the regulator to provide an interim report this year on the progress of the minor injury treatment protocol project; and investigate additional new measures to reward safe driving and reduce costs and premiums.

Our government will call on the Financial Services Commission of Ontario to reduce the return-on-equity benchmark used and rate filings, and our government will also conduct further study and consultation on other initiatives to reduce costs, including provincial oversight of towing and amending the definition of "catastrophic impairment" in the statutory benefits schedule.

Madam Speaker, I think it's important to note that from 2006 to 2010, Ontario experienced a substantial increase in claims costs because of fraud on the system and overuse of benefits. The significant increase in costs was primarily caused by increases in accident benefits claims costs; for example, exams and assessments, attendant care and housekeeping. While claims costs for repairs to physical damage to vehicles remained stable, claims costs for certain benefits more than doubled.

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Due to the generosity of Ontario's auto insurance system, accident benefits claims costs in 2006 were

already much higher than in other provinces with similar private auto insurance systems such as Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. From 2006 to 2010, these costs in Ontario went up even higher, increasing by 91%.

Within Ontario, accident benefits claims costs grew especially quickly in the greater Toronto area between 2006 and 2010. It's important to note that of the \$2.4 billion in increases, \$2 billion occurred here in the greater Toronto area. In 2010, accident benefits claims costs per vehicle in the greater Toronto area were more than four times higher than in rural Ontario.

In September 2010, the government introduced major reforms to Ontario's auto insurance system to address the substantial increase in claims costs. These reforms controlled costs, increased consumer choice and simplified processes in the system. As a result of the reforms and ongoing government action, costs have been reduced and rates have been stabilized and have now started to decline.

The government built on the success of the September 2010 reforms by announcing an Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force in the 2011 Ontario budget. The task force received more than 50 presentations and submissions from interested parties, including the insurance industry, health care providers and consumer groups, and submitted three reports to the government over the course of its work.

The task force's final report in 2012 contained 38 recommendations in the areas of fraud prevention, detection, enforcement and regulatory roles. In January 2013, the government took early action and approved regulatory amendments to address some of the reforms proposed in the final report of the Auto Insurance Anti-Fraud Task Force and to build on earlier actions taken to combat fraud and protect consumers.

Madam Speaker, as you contemplate this and some of the other measures that have been undertaken by our government over the last number of years, you see that on this side of the House, the issue of auto insurance affordability is something that our government takes extremely seriously. We have heard loud and clear—certainly, in my own community, I have heard loud and clear—that these are issues that are of concern to the people of Ontario.

I know that members opposite, like the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton, have brought these issues forward. I know, for example, that on several of the standing committees of this Legislature, these issues have come up from time to time. Members of the industry and members from other aspects of the industry—the brokers etc.—have come forward to talk to us very passionately and very knowledgeably about what they understand to be some of the problems in the system.

I know that what you find in this year's budget regarding auto insurance has taken into account all of the ideas, all of the analysis and all of the research. What we've come forward with, I believe, is a package of ideas and reforms that will help make sure, as I said a little bit

earlier today, that we aren't continuing to play a bit of a political game around this issue—that we are avoiding what sometimes, for all politicians, is that very easy attempt to degenerate into bumper-sticker politics.

It's too important, in terms of making sure that auto insurance either becomes or remains affordable for drivers across Ontario, that we embark on these kinds of reforms, because this is the best way to ensure that we will have sustainable solutions to this particular problem and that we won't be back here in this chamber in a number of months or in a couple of years having another debate, another discussion and another conversation or dialogue—that we actually have the kind of fixes that will help our system continue to be affordable.

I do want to spend just a little bit of time—I see how many minutes I have left, and there is so much good news to be considered in this year's budget. I want to talk a little bit about numbers, the revenues and expenses that we have in this year's budget. Total revenue in the 2012-13 budget is estimated to be \$114.2 billion. This is \$1.7 billion above the amount projected in the 2012 budget.

This increase is due to higher taxation revenues and higher net income from government business enterprises, as well as higher other-non-tax revenues. Lower government of Canada transfers partially offset the overall increase. Revenues are projected to increase at an average annual rate of 3% over the 2012-13 to 2015-16 period.

In terms of expenses—and I think this is extremely important to note in terms of the kind of work that we have undertaken on this side of the House regarding how we perform and how we have reformed public services in the province of Ontario.

Total expense in the 2012-13 budget is projected to be \$2.4 billion lower than forecast in the 2012 budget, a result of our government's commitment to managing growth in program spending—program spending that is projected to be held to less than 1% for the second year in a row, along with lower-than-forecast interest on debt expense.

Program expense is \$2.1 billion lower than projected in the 2012 budget. This change is a result of the one-time savings in the education sector as well as efforts across all ministries to contain growth in spending and manage within their budgets. In fact, 16 out of 25 ministries—or more than 60%—are projected to spend below their 2012 budget allocation in 2012-13, helping to hold growth in program spending to less than 1% for the second year in a row.

When I talk about a balanced approach and a responsible and fair approach to making sure that we reduce our deficit, get back to balance and keep our economy moving, these paragraphs—this section of the budget—speaks to that very eloquently. There is no need—notwithstanding what the leader of the official opposition and the people serving in his caucus say on a regular basis—to engage in the kind of slash-and-burn politics, the slash-and-burn ideas or agenda that I talked about.

In fact, not only is there no need to participate in that kind of government or those kinds of politics; it doesn't

make sense. It doesn't make sense when we are on track, if not ahead of schedule, to achieve our targets, when we are keeping program spending to low levels, while at the same time preserving the kind of core public services in areas like health care and education and the revitalization of our crucial public infrastructure. There is no reason. In fact, the recipe—or the formula—that they've developed on that side of the House is, frankly, nothing more than a pathway to poverty for the people of Ontario.

We are making progress. We are ahead of schedule. We will continue to work hard to make sure that we accomplish and achieve our goals in that balanced and fair way that I talked about earlier today.

The total expense outlook is lower each and every year compared with the medium-term forecast in the 2012 budget, representing a projected cumulative reduction in total expense of \$3.8 billion over the next three years. I also want to note that compensation costs account for more than 50% of Ontario-funded program spending, either paid directly to the Ontario public service or as part of the government's transfer payments to schools, hospitals and other public sector partners. All public sector partners, including employers and bargaining agents, need to work together to control current and future compensation costs, including wages, benefits and pensions.

Additionally, an advisory panel will be appointed to review compensation practices for senior executives in the broader public sector. This panel's mandate will include the consideration of hard caps on compensation, while recognizing the need to hold senior executives accountable for the results that they need to produce.

The government—our government—respects collective agreements and the collective bargaining process and will not override existing collective agreements. Such actions, as proposed by members in the official opposition and by their leadership, would not only create significant legal risks; they would also undermine the ability of responsible employers and bargaining agents to increase productivity, maintain services and ensure fiscal sustainability through respectful bargaining that reflects Ontario's economic circumstances.

I think it's extremely important to note that salaries have been frozen for designated executives at hospitals, universities, colleges, school boards and provincially owned electricity companies. All aspects of compensation plans are frozen, and base salaries cannot be increased. In addition, the overall performance-pay envelopes at designated employers are frozen. Those restraint measures will be in place until the budget is balanced in 2017-18. As we all know in this chamber, members of provincial Parliament will also continue to see their wages frozen, bringing the total length of the freeze to five years.

Ontario public sector settlements are now below the average of those in the private sector, municipal sector and the federal public sector. Pension expense forecasts are down, in part as a result of successful efforts to contain public sector wage growth, and these results have been achieved while protecting jobs and services.

Madam Speaker, I could go on. There is an awful lot more in this budget that I'd like to talk about: issues relating to economic growth, issues that speak to some of the job creation ideas, the investments in health care and education, the continued investments in the revitalization of crucial public infrastructure.

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But these last numbers of sentences that I spoke to just a second ago, I think, are really important when one takes into account some of the unfortunate fearmongering that is emanating from the official opposition, and has been, over the last number of weeks.

On a virtually daily basis, I come into this House to represent the people of my constituency and I hear the leader of that party and the members of that caucus talk incessantly about why there needs to be a combative, adversarial approach to moving Ontario forward, why there seems to be nothing but vitriol and anger and bitterness emanating from that particular side of the House. Madam Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to—

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I'll withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think it's important to stress that there is a way to move Ontario forward, the way that we on this side of the House have been moving Ontario forward for the last nine years, and that is to make sure that we continue to engage in dialogues and discussions; to make sure that we bring everyone inside the tent, that we bring business into the room, that we bring labour into the room, that we bring everyone into the room who wants to provide constructive ideas, constructive analysis, thoughtful dialogue, so that we can continue to move our province forward.

In this year's budget, the Minister of Finance laid out, as I said at the outset of my remarks, a blueprint to make sure that we continue on that path. We have had a very successful run over the last nine years, working with Ontarians, and I know that if we continue to move forward in this vein—and hopefully, we are able to continue moving forward, because the members opposite, particularly members from the third party, who are keeping an open mind about this process, unlike their counterparts in the PC caucus—hopefully, we will be able to move Ontario forward. I know that we can do it. We've been doing it for the last nine years.

I know that on this side of the House, we ask all members to come together with us, support this year's budget, keep Ontario on the right track and move forward together.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Comments and questions?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments to the speeches from the Attorney General and the member for Vaughan. I appreciate that the member for Vaughan was a bit more measured. I

found my colleague the Attorney General was a bit more combative in his speech this morning.

However, I do want to make a few comments, because I do disagree with a number of points that the member from Vaughan mentioned.

I think he alluded to the Magna budget, and in my understanding, the ruling talked about, rather than sending the budget address outside of this chamber, that it be presented in this place. I know that their plan has always been that they leak the budget out, prior to its presentation in front of the members. So, you know, I'm not going to judge what's worse. However, I think the member should realize that their hands aren't clean on that file as well.

I think anyone who reads page 208 of the budget really understands why some of us are upset: the fact that spending has been increased by \$3.6 billion in this budget. As well, I believe quite strongly that the McGuinty-Wynne government has put their own party's fortunes ahead of those hard-working Ontarians who want some relief in terms of spending. I think they're the ones who have had the irresponsible choice. I disagree with his comments. I think we've been involved in the process, but there's a fundamental difference in how our party would handle, I think, a responsible way as opposed to the coalition that I see here this morning.

I hope that the critic for the New Democrats will finally get an opportunity to speak. I feel that his leader has muzzled him a bit, and I really want to hear from the other party. They've got \$1 billion worth of goodies, and I think he should have the right to speak.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane has two minutes.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's a great opportunity for me to speak for my first comments on G65, the so-called Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act.

I'd like to respond directly to the member for Vaughan. For the people at home, from northern Ontario, that's where Bass Pro Shops are, if you want to picture that. He made a statement about how it's all about opportunity for Ontario, but not once in the leadoff speech was northern Ontario mentioned, and that's about—

Mr. Steven Del Duca: That's not true.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, no. And some of the things I'd like to talk about—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: There has been a cut to MNDM of \$50 million, and one of the reasons given by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is because they save money on the transportation side of ONTC. So, while we talk about transit in southern Ontario, we've lost our train transportation in northern Ontario, and that's seen as a good thing. Yes, in the budget document they created a committee to talk about ONTC, but they didn't actually give the committee any real power, because the committee can only look at the divestment of northern Ontario infrastructure, and once again that's seen as a good thing. In southern Ontario, we want to

invest in infrastructure. In northern Ontario, we want to talk about strategies but sell infrastructure.

One other vital piece of infrastructure that's mentioned in a couple of lines, and we've heard about it for years, is the Ring of Fire, but there's no real attempt in this budget to say how we're actually going to get there. Before all Ontarians benefit from the Ring of Fire, we have to have a real plan with real numbers behind it to say how we're going to get there, and that's also sorely lacking in this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on the 2013 budget and pass some comments on those comments that were made by the Attorney General and by the member from Vaughan, which—it's no surprise—I agreed with entirely. I thought they put the budget and the process we're engaged in in pretty good perspective.

I'm looking to the budget, and I think my constituents look to the budget—as much as there's a game going on here and there will be a lot of politics and a lot of partisanship, I'm sure, exhibited over the next weeks and months, what they're looking for is what impacts them on a daily basis.

Certainly what I'm seeing in my community is there's an increasing need for home care. We're finding we are being successful at moving people out of the hospital setting and into the community. What they're saying is, "If you are going to take me out of the hospital and put me in my home, make sure you've got the nurses, make sure you've got the people who can come and assist me in my home." This calls for an increased investment in that.

Something that we compel the people of this province to do is to have automobile insurance, so, certainly, as a province, we have a role to play in that. Some members from the third party and from my own party have expressed a concern with fraud in the industry, and they've also expressed a concern with rising premiums. This budget, I think, goes a long way towards putting in place a process that is going to result in improvements in that regard.

Many of our young people, despite having a 7% to 8% unemployment rate in Ontario—you'll find that the unemployment rate for youth in Ontario is about double that and perhaps even more. When you see the youth employment strategy in this, when you see that we're starting to put in place some initiatives that are going to result in long-term jobs for young people in our society, I think it's a good thing.

All in all, with the investment in transit—we're making that full-time. The gas tax is now going to be a full-time, permanent investment in Ontario's municipalities.

Certainly, I know the mayor of Oakville and our council support this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate here and comment on some of the comments made by the

member from Vaughan over the last 45 minutes or so, following up on the comments from the Attorney General this afternoon.

It's quite frightening to me, as a member of the official opposition and a resident of eastern Ontario and rural Ontario, when the member from Vaughan actually says that this government is on track and on schedule to meet their targets when, clearly, this province is headed in the wrong direction. I merely have to go to an article that was in today's Toronto Star, written by the not-so-stealthy left-winger Martin Regg Cohn, who said, "Finance Minister Charles Sousa argued in his budget speech that eliminating the deficit is the 'single most important step' the government can take to revive the economy." Meanwhile, we have a deficit before us for this current year at \$9.8 billion, and that is actually going to increase next year to \$11.7 billion. So all you have to do is look at the budget that they presented last week, partially written by the NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, to realize that we're headed in the wrong direction.

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I have to look at this comment as well, from Mr. Regg Cohn: "The finance minister seemed clueless about how to deal with the bigger challenge in his debut budget. It's about the economy, Sousa," it says.

It just seems crazy to me that the members on the other side can actually stand up with such fragile confidence, I would think, and say that they're ahead of schedule, and clearly the numbers in their very own budget show otherwise. We're in a dangerous situation. We're in a grave situation in Ontario, Madam Speaker, if this is the direction that we're headed. We're paying \$12 billion this year in interest. That's \$12 billion that won't go to keep our nurses working or our educators in their schools. That number is headed to \$14.5 billion in two years' time at this pace.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Vaughan has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to begin by thanking the members from Leeds–Grenville and Timiskaming–Cochrane, the hard-working member from Oakville, and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings for their comments and for their questions. I only have two minutes, or less than that now, so I just want to mention a couple of points.

To the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who raised a very important point about the needs and the desires and the ambitions of the folks who live in northern Ontario, I do want to make sure he understands that although I might not have specifically mentioned northern Ontario in my leadoff remarks, it is important to note that there are a number of initiatives brought forward in this year's budget, the kinds of initiatives that have been fought for and advocated very successfully and aggressively by members like those that we have on this side of the House from Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury and, of course, Thunder Bay. In particular, I wanted to highlight the new \$100 million that's been set aside for crucial infrastructure—roads, bridges etc.—for both

northern Ontario communities and rural Ontario communities. That's something that I know the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Rural Affairs will be working on with all of those communities, particularly those crucial communities in northern Ontario, to make sure we implement in the right way.

With respect to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, I would only say this: First of all, I've only been in the House for a very short period of time, and I'm awestruck that that member opposite has now taken to actually quoting from the Toronto Star. I think that's an impressive evolution in his own particular thought processes. But I would also say that I have never, in all of my time—not just in this House, but in my life—ever seen a group of individuals who are so determined to ignore simple mathematics. We are billions of dollars ahead of schedule with respect to our deficit reduction targets—something that their cousins in Ottawa seem completely unable and unwilling to accomplish. The province of Ontario, under the leadership of Premier Wynne, is the penultimate example of deficit reduction target hitting in the country of Canada. I would invite the members opposite to actually take out their calculators, do the math, join with us and support this year's budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker.

The first thing I want to do is to make it clear that I will be sharing my time with the member from Durham, because the clock's going to run out around 6 o'clock, and this debate won't resume until tomorrow. So the member from Durham will continue.

I can't help but start by doing what would be the equivalent of a two-minute comment on the presentation by my opposite number, the parliamentary assistant, my friend from Vaughan, because he made a couple of comments that are worthy of some reaction.

What he said basically was—and I made some notes—we were supposed to, here on this side, want to read this and work on it together, that one way or another, he would hope that we would engage in some reconsideration. But I've got to say that he was going on the premise that somehow or other we're voting against a budget in this. We've made it clear from the outset that we will not be voting against a budget. In fact, on the floor of this House, when the question is called, of course we will vote no on the budget, but what we're voting against is a government. We're voting against the way the Liberal government does business. We cannot any longer accept it. I said in my speech yesterday—

Hon. Liz Sandals: So you actually like the budget.

Mr. Peter Shurman: —when we were talking about the budget motion, what we said—

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Why don't you be quiet for a change? You know, you're very noisy. Okay?

In any event, we're voting against a government.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Peter Shurman: You made it a point to say you've been here for eight months.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Sorry, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker.

The member for Vaughan said that he'd been here for eight months. I've been here for closer to eight years at this point. That doesn't mean I'm smarter than him; it means I've been around longer.

This would be, I guess, the seventh budget I've heard from this government, if you don't count the ones that came before I arrived in this chamber. And do you know what? In some ways, this is the same budget you always present and it's in many ways the same budget that we've come to expect. It talks about how you're going to create jobs and it talks about how you're going to calm the economy and turn things around. When it doesn't talk about what you're going to do, it talks about what the world has done to create the situation that poor Ontario finds itself in.

He also talks about the fact that he would like to see a hospital materialize in his riding. That's the same hospital that I want in Vaughan, and hospitals in general. Thornhill wants that too. He wants transit to expand and he believes that this budget will allow for transit to expand. I don't see that. But I just as much want transit to expand as my friend from Vaughan. I want the same great health care and education as my friend from Vaughan wants. But do you know what? With a budget like that, we have no right and no business to expect that to happen. So that's my response to his request for reconsideration. I have a problem reconsidering anything when it comes to the budgets that come out this of particular government.

As I was beginning to say, I quoted Einstein's theory on the definition of insanity, which is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. That's precisely what this government has done over the period of time—at least the period of time that I've found myself present in this House.

Let me go to my own notes. I was handed, as I always am by my staff, a series of speaking points that I might want to work from that are based on what I wanted to say. I kind of rejected them when a couple of things came along over the course of recent time. I didn't write these and my staff didn't write them, but there are a couple of newspaper columnists who did, and I'd like to read pieces of these into the record because they so address the situation we find ourselves in.

One comes from what my friends over there—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me. If you have conversations, please take them out of the chamber.

The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker.

One of them comes from a paper that would be characterized by my friends on the other side as leaning more right, and the other one comes from a paper that we would characterize as leaning more left, so I think it's appropriate to put some of these comments on the record.

This one is in the Financial Post. It comes from Friday's edition, the day after the budget. It's written by Jason Clemens and Niels Veldhuis and it's entitled, "It's Not Our Problem: Ontario Liberals Kick Deficit Can Down the Road." The salient points I want to put on record read as follows:

"The May 2 minority Liberal budget is a politically expedient document that likely avoids an election but unfortunately fails to tackle Ontario's looming fiscal crisis. The longer the province waits, the more difficult and painful the reforms will be when the inevitable day of reckoning arrives.

"Minister of Finance Charles Sousa was quick to trumpet the \$5-billion improvement in last year's (2012-13) deficit which came in at \$9.8-billion instead of the original \$14.8-billion. Of course, what he didn't mention is that over half of the improvement came about from one-time events, including a \$1.2-billion boost in corporate tax revenues from tax assessments for years prior and \$1.5-billion in savings from reducing liabilities associated with public sector sick-day banking." That would be the teachers.

"In addition, Minister Sousa failed to mention that the budget projects a worse deficit in 2013-14, when the deficit is expected"—by his figures—"to increase to \$11.7 billion."

It goes on to say, "Clearly, the Liberals are kicking the can down the road"—isn't that an interesting phrase; my leader, Tim Hudak, has used that so many times, but these are independent writers—"and when they get there, they simply kick it further."

Sub-headline: An "inability to control government spending came through loud and clear...."

"This unfortunate history is critical since a significant part of the Liberal 'plan' for deficit reduction is premised on the government's future ability to constrain spending growth and rein in compensation. Beyond that, the Liberals will need decent economic growth, stable increases in revenues, and continuing low interest rates.

"In short, it's not a plan grounded in reality."

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The final paragraph that I want to read from this particular article is:

"A recent analysis by University of Guelph economist Ross McKittrick calculated that Ontario's electricity prices will soon be near the highest in North America, if not the highest.

"Passing a budget when a government is in minority is always a tricky business. Unfortunately, all of the serious problems of deficits, debt, competitiveness, and energy prices were deferred to the future."

That's what writers who are independent thinkers wrote in the Financial Post last week about this budget.

I said that I was going to deal with some sources that were a little bit unorthodox. That was one of them. This one is really unorthodox, because it's more a source that I would expect to hear from Liberals than I would from Conservatives. More importantly, it comes from the *Toronto Star*, which some of us here on this side occasionally think is almost the house organ of the Liberal Party. I've heard people say of the *Toronto Star*, "You would be better informed if you read no newspaper than if you read the *Toronto Star*." I'm not saying that, especially this time.

This is an editorial in today's paper—no less than today's paper—written by Martin Regg Cohn, who works here at Queen's Park. He is the fellow who writes the editorials that are based on the goings-on in this place—in other words, political commentary on Ontario. It's captioned, "It's About the Economy, Charles Sousa."

Now, as people here know, that's a play on a quote that comes from James Carville, also known as the Ragin' Cajun, and that quote goes back to Clinton days. What he had originally said was, "It's about the economy, stupid." I'm not suggesting for a moment that we should equate the word "stupid" with Charles Sousa; the man is not. He's the finance minister. I respect his title and, frankly, I respect him.

So I'm not calling the minister stupid, but I'm calling his motivation into question, with the budget that he has presented. I would have to say that at this point, what we've got is a brand new finance minister who is the victim of his own party, and he's demonstrating a certain level of ineptness in how he has handled this.

I think, without putting words in Regg Cohn's mouth, that that's what he's trying to say. I'd like to put some of what Martin Regg Cohn has placed on the record in our record here in Hansard.

He says: "The big story in Ontario's budget isn't the political concessions to the NDP. Nor is it the austerity measures aimed at eliminating the deficit.

"The real news relates to our slumping economy and the sense that no one in government—or the private sector—knows how to deal with it.

"Finance Minister Charles Sousa argued in his budget speech that eliminating the deficit is the 'single most important step' the government can take to revive the economy.

"But it's not the only step.

"Eliminating the deficit is a means to an end, not an end in itself."

He goes on to talk about what happened on *The Agenda* the other night. I was on that program, along with my colleague from the NDP and the minister himself. What they were putting on the screen—I didn't see what was on the screen; I was sitting in the studio—according to Mr. Regg Cohn, was the NDP demand and the Liberal response, and everything was captioned "Asked and Answered."

"The finance minister seemed clueless about how to deal with the bigger challenges in his debut budget. It's

about the economy, Sousa." Again, this is coming from Martin Regg Cohn.

"It's a tale of declining productivity, competitiveness," research and development "and machinery investment, amid soaring labour output costs.

"Ontario's economy will grow by a paltry 1.5% in 2013—our third consecutive decline, year over year—well behind" the United States, running at 2.1%.

"While the US remains the major destination for Ontario's goods, our share of American imports is roughly half what it was in 2000....

"Hitch our wagon to the listless US market? We can barely keep pace....

"Is there a way to balance the budget while bolstering economic growth? New Democrats and some economists on the left believe stimulus is the only answer (the deficit be damned). Tories and business economists call for tax cuts (again, the deficit be damned)." This is according to Regg Cohn again.

"One recent analysis, from the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, argues that Ontario must rein in the deficit because of rising interest costs, but should also ramp up educational spending because it lags other provinces (per capita). It also calls for more investment in infrastructure, such as transit, because it pays future dividends."

Finally, he says, "Government can help set the table, but it can't singlehandedly instill an entrepreneurial spirit in Ontario's commercial classes." To that, the member from Thornhill, Peter Shurman—me—says, you know what? Setting that table properly makes the guests want to come for dinner.

That's what our party is about: It's about saying that if we balance the budget and we generate on the part of the credit rating agencies, and if we put out the word to the world around us and to entrepreneurs who live here amongst us that it's okay to spend money because there's stability here and there's a steady workforce that wants to work, then we start to prosper.

That's not what this budget is saying, and it has been consistently for the past 10 budgets over nine and a half years not what that government is saying. That's why we don't support the budget, and that's why we said, before the budget came down and we could even see it, that we were not prepared to support that government.

In terms of reading the budget, and this is not the first time you'll hear this from me, because there are going to be some question periods ahead, we read this budget. We read it really well. I question whether or not any members over on that side who are going to debate this budget bothered reading word one, because they were told, "This is the Kool-Aid. You drink it, and you vote for it," because that's what they always do.

Well, let me refer to the notes that my compatriots upstairs have dutifully prepared, now that I've gone almost 15 minutes courtesy of the people who write in the various newspapers. One of the things that hasn't been touched upon by anybody so far, other than to say that we did it, is that there is a committee called the

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. For the people who are viewing us at home, it's worth saying that we use an acronym, SCOFEA, which is the first letter of each of the words that I just cited. That committee, SCOFEA, travelled the province to find out what people around the province, stakeholders around the province and organizations—whether they were poverty organizations, corporate organizations, native people, or whoever it may have been—had to say about what should happen in the budget process.

Ostensibly, those trips generate information that is supposed to inform the budget process, that is supposed to be given to the minister, that the minister reads and considers in formulating his budget. I would have to say that—because in a parallel universe, the finance minister is running his own private hearings, and we out here, we mere MPPs on the other side of the House, have no way of even knowing who he even talked to or what process informed his budget, other than the party over here to my left—I don't know whether he read anything that came out of our report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, SCOFEA. I don't think he did. I certainly intend to put some of those things into the record as I speak here today.

I'll start with a quote: "You cannot dig your way out of a ditch, you cannot eat your way into being thinner," and, Minister, you cannot spend to reduce a deficit. What a great quote, and it came from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. That's what it comes down to. That's the kind of thing that you have to listen to. These are people who represent other people.

That's the nature of the travelling that we do. That's the reason why we take taxpayer money, and we spend it well, which is paying for travel at a modest rate, staying in modest hotels, eating modest meals and listening to people who have spent their own money or their organization's money to come see us and say, "Here's what we've found, here's what we think, and here's what we think you ought to do." Wouldn't it be nice if, once in every little while, these people got listened to?

Instead, who was listened to? The third party, with seven demands so that that party could stay in power. That's the budget that you want us to vote for and support? I don't think so.

"The solutions to Ontario's problems aren't hard to figure out"—my leader said this, so I'll tell you who I'm quoting, and he's right—"The solutions to Ontario's problems aren't hard to figure out, they're just not easy to do."

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Ontario needs a government that has a plan to reduce spending, to create jobs, and the courage to implement it, and you can't just say you have one and make it so. You have to actually have one. For the past year and a half since the last election, which—hey, look, we've got 36 members here and you've got more than that, so you won't even if you have a minority. We know that. We decided that we were going to win the next one, and we understand what the mistakes are that we made, so we

started to address them, and for a year and a half, the people sitting around me and all of the people who represent the caucus here and our leader, Tim Hudak, and legions of Progressive Conservatives around this province, have participated in a process that has produced a series of white papers.

No, those white papers are not the additive completion of our platform; they are a way of consulting properly—not with a 1-800 number but properly—with people in Ontario who want to say something about how their government should work. By putting out white papers, we tried all of those ideas, and not all of them were accepted—some of them were. At a given point in time—in two weeks or two months or in a year or whenever it happens to be—there will be an election, and the amalgam of the ideas that came across to us as positive will be put into a platform, and that's what will go out, and it will properly reflect what the people in Ontario believe. As a result of that, I expect my party will wind up going to the other side and you guys are going to be over here. Anyway, that's us Progressive Conservatives.

I want to say something else about Progressive Conservatives. In the course of Finance Minister Sousa's comments to the media in the course of budget day, when we were all in the lock-up, I took the occasion to watch the minister carefully and listen to what it was he had to say, and he went to some considerable lengths and spent some considerable time talking about the alternatives that people had: They can either accept the budget that he has presented as something that actually would stimulate the economy, actually would create jobs and all the rest of it, or they could go with our party which really engages in slash-and-burn politics. This is the word that's always put across to us—

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Why don't you be quiet too—for a change?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Vaughan.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I'm relatively new to this chamber, but I can't believe that that's acceptable behaviour or parliamentary behaviour from the member from Thornhill. That's twice now in his remarks today that he's done that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Thornhill to continue.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'll respond to that, Speaker, in the course of my comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Continue with your remarks. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Shurman: That's fine.

Slash and burn, slash and burn—what is it that the party on the other side actually thinks that this party is about? Do you think that we're going to close all the schools, and your kid is not going to get an education? Do you think we're going to close down hospital beds, and we're going to let people die? What is it you think we're going to do?

Here's what we are going to do. Here's what your talking means to us. It means something that you people have no concept about, and that is, when you take in an amount of money, that's the amount of money that you have to spend, and that's called balancing a budget, and because of the mess that that party has made, it will take us some time to do it, but we think we can do it in about two years. It will be hard, it will be heavy lifting, but it can be done, and that's what we intend to do.

So when we get accused of slash and burn and what nonsense that is, in terms of how we would deal with Ontario, I get incensed, and sometimes when you hear an outburst from me or another member on my side, that's what it's about, because we're mis-accused of motives that are less than noble and we're mis-accused of being able to run the province as well—and I certainly think better than that party has done, and we have 10 years of history by way of the proof point. So I'm really quite tired of hearing about that.

Too many people in Ontario at this point are having trouble finding work, and what's happening here is they're losing hope in their province. They're losing hope in their province, and we call that the Fort McMurray syndrome. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville has two sons working at Fort McMurray. I have a son who is out in northern British Columbia. Why are our kids out there? Because they want to see the mountains or because they want to play with oil in Fort McMurray? It could be. But mostly they're out there because they can't get jobs here. That's what it is.

Look, Speaker, we have been downgraded as a province. We've been downgraded by Moody's—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. I would ask the members to come to order.

The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you. We, as a province, have been downgraded by Moody's. We've been downgraded by S&P. We've lost 300,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs, and we have seen many companies pack up and leave—very recently, as a matter of fact, a couple more.

Our province, at this point, has almost 600,000 people who are looking for work—600,000 of our brothers and sisters who want to work and haven't been able to find a job. As I said, very recently we have some examples. Just this past weekend, it was announced that more good manufacturing jobs were lost; 330 Caterpillar workers in Toronto will be receiving severance packages. That comes after 500 jobs were lost at that same company's plant in London last year.

Instead of taking necessary action, what did our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, do? She used the 2013 provincial budget to take us on the same failed Dalton McGuinty approach as the last decade.

It is now clear that the only way to help Ontario become strong again is to set a new course with a new team. It's time, Ontario. It is time.

Hon. John Gerretsen: We have a new government.

Mr. Peter Shurman: You know what? They don't. I want to say they don't have a new government. They have a new Premier with a team that has not even begun to jell. That's not a new government. That is a recycled old government, and let that be understood. I might say, Speaker, it's quite a shame that the new government which was touted as a new government by that very same Premier when she came in here and talked about collaboration has not come across as a new government. It's come across as a recycled one with a new Premier who has no mandate to govern because she hasn't gone to the polls.

I see little to no input was actually taken into account when looking at the recommendations that we heard at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs on what the minister tabled on May 2—that's last Thursday. As far as I can see, from his own exclusive and private consultations he probably hasn't taken much into consideration either.

This bill, Bill 65, is called the Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act.

Applause.

Mr. Peter Shurman: They're applauding. Last year, it was called "strong measures for Ontario." They have an incredible proclivity for picking titles. I've noticed this in the titles of their bills.

They said they were going to use strong measures last year. The strong measures that come to mind immediately were they were going to deal with their unions' 4,000 collective agreements, to create 0% wage increases. They didn't need to freeze wages, which was something that our party was in favour of. In fact, it's the subject of a bill I presented, and it's something that our party is still in favour of, not because we're interested in union-busting, but because we think a fair and level playing field is the appropriate way to go. They said they weren't going to do that. They were going to talk to their partners and they were going to get it done. The first example of that: They go to the teachers and bring Bill 115 to the floor of this Legislature. We said, "Well, it's not the best bill there ever was, but it's something that we could support because it at least goes partway towards the goal that we have." Along comes the new government, and the new government takes Bill 115 and, for all intents and purposes, it's out the window. Okay? That was strong measures.

They brought in, at least, some passing reference to a change in interest arbitration—the ability for towns and cities, for example, to deal with their employees through an arbitration process that had some teeth and worked. Guess what? The NDP, who they were trying to co-operate with to get their support last year, gutted that and the Liberals went along.

Mr. Bill Mauro: You voted against it.

Mr. Peter Shurman: You're quite correct. We voted against it, but for an entirely different reason. We voted against it because they gutted it. So for two different reasons, at cross purposes, we voted against it—it wasn't going to go along. We could have voted with the government. It wouldn't have provided any teeth anyway.

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We also saw measures in that strong measures budget that looked at the privatization of some government services. The NDP gutted that. It wouldn't vote along with it. We even voted for that piece of it, the privatization piece, but they haven't done anything with it. Those were the strong measures; I guess they're gone.

If history informs the past, I've got to say that strong measures never occurred as a result of that budget, any more than a prosperous and fair Ontario is going to occur as a result of this budget.

This budget is basically unfair to the dozens of deputants who were heard before SCOFEA, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We heard from them all across the province. We travelled to Ottawa. We travelled to Timmins. We travelled to Windsor. We travelled to Thunder Bay. We heard from a couple of hundred different deputants from all aspects of society. Let me put some things on the record, if I can find them. They're here somewhere. Well, I will find them. How's that? I did.

Chemistry Industry Association of Canada: They said, "We take raw resources and we produce useable products. We are a \$16-billion industry in total." This is a supply industry for other sectors, so it drives other economic activity. We're talking about development in Ontario. There has to be a clear plan to reduce the deficit and debt so that it consumes a smaller portion of the offset.

Interest rates are at risk. Ontario could be faced with continued deficits and growing debt. It could be a lose-lose-lose scenario for the province. There is a correlation between deficit and job losses. The corporate tax rate is an issue.

That was the chemistry industry. That's a large industry; \$16 billion is an awful lot of money.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Sarnia.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Sarnia: That's right. My friend from Sarnia points out that it affects his area.

Here was a completely different presentation. These were two young guys, really brilliant, from the Ontario Economic Development Society. They were looking for funding to promote a business they've already started, that already has achieved a modicum of success, and it was for social media funding. They said that Ontario has to take action on business creation. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce were on board with this idea—they presented in Ottawa. They said that they need a better environment to access capital.

What they wanted us to do was legalize crowd funding. Some people who are watching us and who are in this chamber, some people on the outside, will understand what crowd funding is. It is already a fact of life in other jurisdictions. But it has to have registration with the OSC. They have kickstarter.com online right now, \$159 million raised for entrepreneurs. That's a crowd funding site. We have to get on board with that in Ontario.

Again, that was a great idea that came from some people who came before SCOFEA. I see none of that stuff appearing in the budget.

Here is the Timmins Economic Development Corp. This is basically municipal government, or an adjunct to municipal government. They're saying that they want to see land-based gaming and modernization. They were disappointed that Timmins was not selected to host a casino—a willing host community that has a central location for the surrounding region of the north. What they're talking about is because Xstrata relocated, they lost \$3.4 million in revenue and 678 direct jobs, and they have a large visitor base to sustain a small casino for the north.

They said that they would like to be considered for that, and they also said something we heard an awful lot in the north. I'll read some more of these later, but the price of electricity, they said, is too high, and government is directly controlling the standard of living in the province.

These are things, amongst others, that came forward as the committee travelled the province, and these are the things that we haven't seen addressed to any reasonable degree by this government in this budget. Regrettably, the many and varied first-hand consultations at those hearings were not taken into account in any of the development of this budget, as far as we can see. This budget is unfair to the hard-working people of this province because basically, what you've done is you've denied them hope. That's what it is: It's about hope. If you're going to put together a budget and you're going to put people back to work, you have to give them some hope. You haven't done that. You've made concessions, basically, to a socialist party on my left in a bid to stay in power. That's what you did. If you take a look at the budget bill that we're debating and you compare it to other budget bills—every budget bill I've seen in the past, the one last year—they were that thick. People on camera can see it. This year it's that thick. Why is that the case, Speaker? Because they don't want that kind of debate going on.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Shurman: You can holler all you want, but—

Hon. John Gerretsen: It's quality that matters.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask you—first of all, you're not in your own seat. Second of all, you do not have the right to talk to the person across. You talk through the Chair. Is that clear?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

The member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Anyway, Speaker, it is quite clear to me what has been done by the Liberals with the budget bill itself. There's a common trend with the Liberal Party at this point that what it does—and it does this not just in a budget bill, but it does it in many bills—is they talk about grandiose ideas, and then they do

nothing to show that there's any accountability for delivering on those ideas.

Accountability is not there for a very simple reason: It's because you aren't accountable. You aren't. You don't hold yourself accountable. You don't take responsibility.

Look, I'll give a perfect example to the people watching us. We must have asked—and we haven't kept count; well, maybe somebody's kept count—dozens and dozens of times whether or not the Premier of this province apologizes for her complicit involvement in the cancellation of a couple of power plants. She keeps standing up and saying, "I have said, Speaker, I regret that this happened." Well, I'm going to tell you something, Speaker: So do I. I regret it. Regretting is not being sorry. I regret that that party did what it did. So does Kathleen Wynne, the Premier. But she's supposed to say, "I apologize. I'm sorry. I used your money, taxpayers, to do this." I didn't do that; she did. Dalton McGuinty did. But here we are. Here we are, Speaker, I regret.

The numbers don't lie. The minister—and these are numbers from his own document, on page 109 of that document. The numbers are as follows, so let's just make sure that we put them on the record: In 2010, the deficit was \$14 billion. I'll say it again for the benefit of the Attorney General.

Interjection: He's flipping pages.

Mr. Peter Shurman: He's flipping pages. It's page 109.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I've read the document.

Mr. Peter Shurman: So have I.

Page 109: 2010 deficit, \$14 billion; 2011 deficit, \$13 billion; 2012, a deficit of \$9.8 billion—that's the one that you applauded the other day. That's the one from the year just over, and that's the one that I said earlier is contrived. It's contrived because of one-time revenue and the movement of reserves. Otherwise, it would have been larger.

How can I make the proof point for that? By saying that in 2013—the budget that's just been tabled—the increased deficit is \$11.7 billion. This is a government that says that about four years out, 2017-18, it's going to deliver zero on the bottom line. That would be a good thing if it could, because that's called a balanced budget. But we've also proven in debate yesterday that they can't. They can't because there's no change in expenses for the four years leading up to 2017-18. They have no intention of raising or lowering expenses. It's just going to be sitting there at \$118 billion.

So between 2010 and 2012—if I can go back to the figures I've just mentioned—revenue actually increased by \$7 billion despite the fact that the deficit decreased by only \$4.2 billion. They did, in that period of time, what they're still doing now: They increased spending every single year in excess. They never really presented anything of an austerity budget, and we weren't looking for an austerity budget. What we were looking for was for them to actually keep spending in check. But they didn't, and they're still not. That's why I'm standing up

here and decrying the fact that we're not moving out of the same sphere that they've operated in for all those years.

That's some pretty fancy accounting, if you ask me. I guess it really begins to explain the budget bill, this bill about a future full of prosperity. Budget bills usually are what I described before: They're huge omnibus bills—acts within acts and clauses within clauses that take incredible amounts of debate during the period in committee after second reading before they finally come back to third. They contain dozens of schedules to clearly demonstrate to not only the opposition parties but, more importantly, the people of Ontario how the government plans on spending their hard-earned tax dollars in the coming year.

So, once again, accountability seems to be some fictitious concept to the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals.

1750

Accountability in government is everything. The reason why people on the outside right now have not a lot of faith in politicians generally—I have to say it—is because they look at us and they judge us by the people who have been elected for a lengthy period of time to run what's going on. They say, "My God, if they can do that, won't you all?"

Speaker, I went canvassing over the weekend. I wanted to take the temperature in the riding of Thornhill. I got people at the door. I purposely picked an area of my constituency that was not particularly blue; it was more pink, more red the last time around. Hundreds—actually hundreds; I had a big team.

We got a sense that there's a turn. In areas where we knew by our walk sheets that people had voted for the other party the last time, in 2011, we saw a move to our party or to, at the very least, "undecided." We got a very good feeling from that in terms of my re-electability, and that's all we were really testing. It's not scientific.

But what we heard is even more important. We heard from people who wanted to engage us, that they were really disgusted with the nonsense that has gone on of late. They know about Ornge, and they know about eHealth. They even go back to, "We won't raise your taxes" and then getting something that wasn't a tax after all; it was called a health premium that never then and never since has been spent on health. And now they know about buying off two companies that were building power plants that had to be cancelled.

The House leader for the government stands up every day in question period and he says, "Those parties wanted to cancel the power plants too." No, those parties wanted to react, as they did, to what was going on in those constituencies in terms of dealing with what people wanted.

But here's what the parties on this side didn't do: We didn't try to hide the cost of what it would be if we had gone ahead and done it, and that's what they never admit to. It's not a question of having cancelled the power plants. It's the motive at the time, and it's the costs being hidden at the time and for many, many months after-

wards, that required incredible sleuthing on the part of this party, and that, again, goes to accountability.

So let me get back directly to the budget. With such a thin budget bill, I have to ask how the Liberals intend on actually enacting anything that was promised in the budget. Very proudly, said the minister, you will hold spending to 1.5%. It's right there in black and white, again on page 109 of your budget. Yet there is no indication whatsoever anywhere in that book of how you plan on doing that in this bill. So where's the accountability there?

The Premier has stood up in this House, saying that there is—I'm not quite quoting, but I'm paraphrasing—no money for much-needed projects: funding for autism, better social services throughout the province.

I myself stood up during the debate of the supply motion—it must be a month ago, six weeks ago—and I talked about a woman in my riding, Laura Kirby-McIntosh, who has a son who is severely autistic and with whom she has a problem, and he's 14. It was only because I stood up and spoke in this House that the CCAC immediately came to the fore and handed her some temporary relief. But other than that, she couldn't be heard. Is that what it takes—for an MPP to stand up in the House in debate and actually say something—in order for one person to get help?

I think we all know of the tragedy last week in Ottawa, where a mom had to take her 19-year-old autistic son and literally give him away, because she was at the end of her tether. How can we countenance this in the province of Ontario? How is it possible that this can be even happening in our midst?

Yet these people on the other side, who claim to be accountable, can be spending like drunken sailors. The 2013 revenue is \$116 billion. That is up \$2.6 billion from the previous year. Expenses are increasing by \$3.6 billion, to \$127.6 billion, hence the accusation—because it's true, by your own admission—that you continue to spend in larger degree than what you take in, and you continue to generate deficits that are larger than the year before. That is what you term “controlled spending.” It's not. There's nothing controlled about it. It's just spending. But it's what you do; it's in your DNA. And that, Speaker, is why this party made a conscious decision, and I think a very principled decision, not to support the government.

It's not about a budget anymore. It's about a way of life, and that way of life has to stop in Ontario, because if it doesn't stop in Ontario, even people with a plan—that's us—are going to have a really hard time taking over government and fixing anything. That represents a clear and present danger to everybody who lives in Ontario.

Right now, there are a bunch of people sitting here in this House—I think the youngest one is in his 30s, probably; if Monte Kwinter were here, he'd be in his 80s, but the point is, it represents a range of age groups. We're not in a position at our age to fix this anymore, so

who's going to fix it? Our kids are going to fix it. Our grandkids are going to. Somebody is going to have to.

This is kind of like if you have a credit card and you keep a balance on it—you keep it maxed out—until one day, when you finally leave this Earth, as we all are absolutely going to do, somebody has still got to pay that debt. Who's going to do it? Your estate, if you have one, but I suspect that if you have a credit card with 10 or 20 grand on it, you haven't got much of an estate, so it's going to be your kid. That's what's going to happen in the province of Ontario on a grand scale.

Correct me if I'm wrong, Minister, but how are you paying for programs that you say you're providing when you aren't taking in the money to cover those programs? I notice in the budget bill that one clause calls for the creation of the ability to borrow up to \$24.4 billion. That would be described, if we were in committee or if we were asking a question on the floor of this House, as business in the normal course; government has to have an ability to pay its bills, so they need a credit line capable of paying up to \$24.4 billion.

I said to myself, “Gee, I wonder why that's there,” and then I realized—I'm the finance critic; I've got this figured out—that they have a deficit projected of \$12 billion, and there's probably \$12 billion out there that they haven't collected in taxes, so they figure that maybe, at the max, they're going to need \$24 billion in a credit line to operate in the coming year. Doesn't that worry you a little bit?

It worries me, because I don't know if \$24 billion is enough, the way these people go. They never manage to keep the spending in check, so if they say they're going to spend \$3.6 billion, my guess is that they'll probably spend \$5 billion or \$6 billion.

How is it that there was always money to save Liberal interests, but when real, urgent programs are required, the money runs out? We don't know the final answer to what happened in Oakville, and we're not going to get that until sometime in the summer. That could be \$600 million or \$700 million; maybe it's \$1 billion, and we're going to find that out. But whatever it was, that money was there, as was, per the Auditor General, \$275 million to stop the construction out in Mississauga, and as was \$1 billion to take care of a bunch of friends who were going to build us an eHealth system. I haven't seen that eHealth system—

Hon. John Gerretsen: Your doctor has one—

Mr. Peter Shurman: My doctor put in his own eHealth system, but I haven't seen an eHealth system that comes from the province of Ontario.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would just ask the member to take his seat.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Ted Arnott: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): A point of order. Yes?

Mr. Ted Arnott: A point of order: I need to correct my record, Madam Speaker.

On May 2, during question period, I told the House that I'd raised the issue of the need to provide funding approval for Kalydeco, a new medication for cystic fibrosis patients, during debate on March 26. I should have said I'd raised it during debate on March 28, which

was the correct date. I apologize for this mistake and accept full responsibility for it. I wish to correct the Hansard record with the correct date.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This being close to 6 p.m., this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

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Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Bill Walker
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Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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