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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
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(Hansard)**

Thursday 11 April 2013

Jeudi 11 avril 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 11 April 2013

Jeudi 11 avril 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR AMBULANCES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES
(SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 9, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 11, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to participate in the debate once again on Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act. This bill, as everyone knows, has been revived by the Liberals after their same legislation, Bill 50, died with prorogation. As many of my colleagues have pointed out during this debate, if this was such an important bill and not simply a way to deflect from the Ornge scandal, then why did the government shut the place down for four months and prorogue the House? Obviously, this bill wasn't and isn't that important.

I'm pleased to engage in this debate today. It comes with some apprehension, though, on my part as, quite frankly, it's beginning to seem like Groundhog Day around here: We have the same member introducing the same legislation that has already been vigorously debated over the past year from which extensive input, from our party's perspective, has been garnered. Despite our clear and concrete concerns having been brought forward, we are here now again, having the exact same debate about the exact same legislation as if the original debate never ever happened. None of our observations about the failures of Bill 50 and the failures of this government were ever incorporated into this successor bill, Bill 11; none of them.

So let me use my time today to reiterate what the opposition has been saying time and time again. Maybe this time the Liberals will listen. This legislation as it is, quite honestly, is a useless piece of legislation that is no more than window dressing by the health minister and this gov-

ernment to hide behind and use as a distraction for their mismanagement and failed leadership into yet another spending scandal. It's ridiculous for the health minister to stand up and pretend that her government didn't have oversight abilities to intervene at Ornge. It doesn't even make sense.

The fact of the matter is that both the Independent Health Facilities Act and the original Ornge performance agreement stipulate that the Minister of Health has had, has always had, the ability to send inspectors into Ornge and the ability to take over the board. If the minister had checked with her legal team, she would have been told exactly that. As a former Minister of Health, I can tell you that I used the Independent Health Facilities Act on at least four occasions I can think of offhand to rein in potential problems at agencies. Ornge is no different. The government, including cabinet, has a lot of powers and can override just about any agreement in the province if they so want. They have that authority.

Also, past testimony from various witnesses in government has confirmed that the Ornge performance agreement stipulates that the ministry could and, in fact, was mandated to provide oversight but failed to do so. Various experts have testified to this in committee.

In an exchange between my colleague Mr. Frank Klees, from Newmarket–Aurora, and the director of the emergency health services branch, Mr. Malcolm Bates, you will see that Mr. Bates agrees that the performance agreement allowed for ministry oversight. Let me read parts of their exchange from Hansard.

Mr. Klees says to Mr. Bates: "Nowhere in that performance agreement that I can see, unless you can point me to it, does it in any way relieve the Ministry of Health, and specifically the emergency health services branch responsible for air ambulance or ambulance services in the province, of its oversight responsibilities. In fact, there are very specific references to reporting that's required, to oversight responsibilities."

Mr. Bates's response: "I agree that the Ministry of Health and the emergency health services branch have and had oversight responsibilities and that oversight responsibility was basically set in line by the Ambulance Act, by the performance agreement and by the transfer-of-payment accountability directive."

Mr. Speaker, the inadequate oversight of Ornge is also well documented by Auditor General Jim McCarter. In a press release from last March, the auditor says, "The Ontario government has given Ornge more than \$700 million since 2006 to provide ambulance service in the province without sufficiently monitoring how well Ornge

was doing its job or whether it was following appropriate public sector business practices.”

In fact, the auditor’s report revealed that the Ministry of Health never even requested the information needed to meet the standards they themselves set, when Ornge was created, to monitor its performance. The auditor’s report clearly notes that the red flag warnings about financial irregularities and concerns over patient safety were not taken seriously by the government, and that the Minister of Health, Deb Matthews, knew about the problems, was able to intervene and simply chose not to.

In Ontario, our parliamentary system dictates that cabinet ministers bear the ultimate responsibility for the actions of their ministry. They are responsible for ensuring the services that the ministry pays for are provided effectively and in a way that meet the needs of the public, and in this case the health care system. This clearly was not happening at Ornge. The minister’s refusal to take responsibility for ignoring these repeated warnings goes against hundreds of years of parliamentary convention and our democratic system of government, and really should not be tolerated.

If the minister is not up to the job, it is the government’s responsibility to find someone who is, and that is what should have been done in this case, Mr. Speaker. Instead, as we all know, the health minister is still the health minister, and in fact she was recently promoted to Deputy Premier. The health minister’s failure to act shows her incompetence as a leader. If we can’t trust her to oversee ambulance services, which are a relatively small portion of her multi-billion dollar ministry portfolio, how can we trust her with the rest of it and how can we trust her with this bill?

Ornge was created by this government and was neglected by this government. They’ve never explained to the people of the province why they created Ornge and threw thousands of pilots and paramedics out of work, particularly across northern Ontario with the fixed-wing aspect of the service and the helicopter aspect of the service. Somehow George Smitherman made some deal. There’s something about all this that they’ve never explained why they threw out the old system, which was working perfectly fine, and brought in this new, Liberal system.

Mr. Speaker, I don’t see how Bill 11 will address the fact that the government has never explained themselves or the fact that we should never have gone down this road in the first place. In fact, I fear this will merely help the Liberals further cover up the scandal and future scandals like it. One of the weakest parts of Bill 11 is that it perpetuates the existing structure of the air ambulance service—that’s the Ornge structure—rather than recognizing that it is flawed and acknowledging that it may benefit from ministerial oversight or oversight from some other entity outside of Ornge.

If the government was serious about improving accountability, you’d think this would be at the top of their list, but it doesn’t seem to be the case. In a recent letter we received from the Ombudsman, Mr. André Marin, he

urges the government for Ombudsman oversight at Ornge, and I think he makes a good case.

0910

I’d like to read the letter into the record:

“I am writing further to the first reading of Bill 11, the Ambulance Amendment Act (Air Ambulances).

“There is no doubt that any steps to increase the accountability of the air ambulance service is welcomed. Indeed, in the wake of many stories of maladministration horrors that have plagued Ornge, sound public policy to bring proper oversight to this organization is still sorely needed.

“While moving in the right direction, measures such as the establishment of an Ornge patient advocate and Bill 11’s creation of a new bureaucracy of ‘special investigators’ are insufficient to provide much-needed scrutiny, and continue to shield Ornge from Ombudsman oversight. My office remains unable to address any individual or systemic issues involving Ornge.

“The Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario is a unique resource to support the Legislative Assembly in holding government accountable. It is there to allow the provincial Parliament to scrutinize government bodies. I cannot think of a more persuasive case for this than Ornge.

“‘Special investigators,’ under Bill 11, would enjoy authority similar to that of my office when it investigates the more than 500 ministries, agencies, boards, commissions, tribunals and corporations that fall under our jurisdiction. But there is an important difference: The ‘special investigators’ would report to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.” They would not report to someone independent of government.

Anyway, he goes on to make a very, very good case, and I think that should be an amendment to the bill. I think we’ve had umpteen speakers, certainly from the opposition benches, read the rest of Mr. Marin’s letter into the record and agree with his sentiments.

Again, the Ornge scandal is one of the great blights in the history of this province. This bill does not in any way fix the system. It’s tinkering. You brought it out even before we had hearings in the original Bill 50, so you didn’t even know, supposedly, what all the problems were. You still don’t. The hearings are still going on, yet you purport—the minister and several Liberals continually get up and tell us that this will fix the system. It won’t. You already had these powers; you failed to use them. You failed to be responsible and accountable. I mean, I stepped aside for 10 weeks as Minister of Health when one of my staff said something stupid to a reporter. That was called “ministerial responsibility”: You go to the penalty box even if it’s not your fault and you take responsibility not only for your immediate political staff but for the bureaucracy. You people—time after time, whether it’s gas plants, Ornge or eHealth, you just stay in your seats, keep getting your big paycheques; the limousine picks you up every day and brings you home every day. You have no accountability to the people of Ontario. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I was listening attentively to the member from Simcoe–Grey, and many of his views are some of the points that I actually spoke about in my previous notes as well, in the many times that I've had the opportunity to get up in regard to this bill. I'm going to try it in a different way and see if there's a reception to hearing a message.

Premièrement, quand on regarde cette situation, il faut qu'on soit prêt à reconnaître que c'est une erreur qui aurait pu être corrigée ou qui peut être corrigée. Le gouvernement doit prendre l'initiative, eux-mêmes, de vraiment corriger ce problème-là et puis de mettre des procédures en place où le problème ne se représenterait pas. Une des façons qu'on peut faire ça, c'est de faire certain que l'ombudsman est impliqué dans le futur pour qu'il ait les yeux et qu'il porte l'attention nécessaire à déterminer où le problème s'est présenté et comment le problème s'est présenté, parce que ce n'est pas acceptable aux familles qui ont souvent des questions, en effet, sur des sujets qui se passent à travers d'Ornge qu'ils n'ont pas les réponses nécessaires. C'est seulement à travers de la chance de passer à travers de l'ombudsman que ces questions-là vont être répondues et puis les personnes de leurs familles vont avoir les réponses nécessaires pour qu'elles puissent adresser leurs propres questions.

Le gouvernement a la chance présentement de corriger un problème et de retourner un niveau de crédibilité au système de santé. Ils devraient prendre avantage de cette situation. Quand on blâme quelqu'un, quand on fait cette action, il faut qu'on réalise qu'il y en a trois autres qui visent vers nous. On doit prendre l'initiative de vraiment implémenter les changements qui sont nécessaires pour faire le bon fonctionnement des actions et puis la législation ici en Ontario. Merci.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Good morning, Speaker. I'm sure the people who are watching in television-land aren't quite sure right now whether they're watching a rerun from yesterday's 9 o'clock performance, the day before, or the day before that, because what has been said in this House on this particular bill has been said at least a hundred times over. We've now had 18 hours of debate on the bill.

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I allowed your member to speak; nobody heckled him. So please give somebody else an opportunity to say something as well.

There have now been 18 hours of debate on this particular bill, Speaker. I'm sure the people out there in television-land are wondering, have they got nothing else to talk about? There are so many other issues out there. Why don't we get on with it and send the bill to committee?

In committee there are representatives of all three parties. We're in a minority Parliament. If there are good suggestions from the opposition or from government members as to how this bill, the oversight bill on Ornge,

can be improved, that's the place to do it. But to keep raising the same arguments here day after day—when they well know that sooner or later this bill is going to be given second reading, and then it will go to committee. There are so many other issues to talk about that we should be dealing with for the welfare of the people of Ontario.

This is a very important bill, so let's get on with it. Let's send it to committee, let the committee do its work and let's bring it back here so that at the end of the day we will have a new Ambulance Act that will have the oversight provisions that are absolutely necessary for the safety of Ontarians—it's always first about safety—and for the welfare of the people of Ontario. So let's get on with it. Let's stop all this nonsense that has been going on here for the last 10 of those 18 hours, anyway. Let's get on with it and send the bill to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to rise and speak on this subject. It's difficult for me to pick the right adjective to compliment the member from Simcoe–Grey on his enlightening comments. We all know that this is just a bill to deflect the attention away from the Minister of Health; this is what it is. We all know that the Minister of Health and the ministry had the oversight, that the rules were in place, that this really didn't have to happen and this is just a deflection away from the government's responsibility, as pointed out by the member from Simcoe–Grey. We are wasting time here, probably, because we don't need to be debating this bill. It shouldn't even have come up. Yet the government is using this tactic to deflect attention away from their incompetence.

I suggest that the member from Simcoe–Grey was right. He was a health minister in his previous years—an exemplary job as a health minister. I'm sure that when his comments are taken into account, we know that he's speaking from experience and knows what he's talking about. I would suggest that the health ministry and the health minister should look inward and see what happened and know that she had the ability to oversee Ornge and correct the problem before it even started. So this bill is something that is holding up government business, and probably we should get on to something else with this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe–Grey, you have—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): My apologies; the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour for me to be able to stand here on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane and once again speak on Bill 11. I'd like to commend the member from Simcoe–Grey. He did bring a unique perspective because he was health minister under another regime, and brings a unique perspective.

I'd like to focus my comments on the comments of the Attorney General saying that we had already done this and this was a waste of time.

0920

One of the reasons we've already done this is because the government prorogued and killed this bill. They can have all the reasons they want, but if they really want to make this bill better, they could have taken that opportunity when we debated this before the government prorogued, and someone who drafts these bills for the minister could have said, "You know what? They brought up some good points in that debate, and maybe if we changed it, if we took this opportunity"—this isn't why they prorogued the government, but they could have taken this opportunity to make this bill better before it went to committee, and then we would have.

For the people at home, that's how we would run the government. We wouldn't prorogue. But they prorogued anyway, so make things better. But on this, they haven't. They've proposed exactly the same bill, and then they chastise the people on this side of the House when we try to tell them, "Here are the things you should change."

And yes, it feels like Groundhog Day because we've had to tell them twice. They had the opportunity to change while they prorogued, and they didn't take that opportunity.

This bill should go to committee. It's very unfortunate that the government didn't take their opportunity to make this bill better while they shut the Legislature down.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe–Grey, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank and agree with the members for Algoma–Manitoulin, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Perth–Wellington. And Timiskaming–Cochrane—the honourable gentleman makes the perfect argument, exactly. I mean, the government had four months, 100-and-some-odd days, 127 days I think, to change the bill, but you didn't listen. Stubborn, arrogant—the same old Liberal Party that we saw in the first nine years.

The fact of the matter is, as House leader, I can guarantee you that every one of my caucus is going to take their democratic right, and they're going to speak on this bill. In fact, they're going to speak on every bill until you get it right.

You treat this place with disdain by not listening to anybody on this side of the House. You don't change your ways. Then you get up and have the audacity to lecture us about our exercise of our democratic rights. We're trying to get you to listen for once. You don't listen. You don't take responsibility. You throw what used to be fairly sacred—

Interjection: Parliamentary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: —parliamentary procedure around here, which is to take ministerial responsibility—when the Liberals were in Ottawa, they did the same thing. They just ignore their scandals. You had Gomery inquiries.

Here, we have nobody taking responsibility for buying an election with over a billion dollars in the gas plant scandal. No one is taking responsibility for eHealth. I guess you threw out Mr. Caplan, I suppose. I met him the

other day—a fine gentleman who did not deserve to be the scapegoat on that. The rest of you sit here smugly, not taking responsibility, and then we have the Ornge scandal. If you think we're going to let any of these scandals go, we're going to keep going and going and going until somebody finally takes some responsibility on your side of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd like to thank the member from Simcoe–Grey, who was also the Minister of Health, for his courage to stand up and take responsibility on what he did as well.

It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services. Let me say at the outset that it has been enlightening being here in the House over the last year to get a close-up view of the controversies boiling around Ornge. Watching the minister's footwork and listening to her wordplay has been especially instructive. To hear her tell it, she was just a patsy, bamboozled by forces beyond her understanding or control, and this from the head of the very ministry that helped to construct the house of cards.

I find it astonishing that when they were constructing their 2005 performance agreement, they couldn't agree on the matter of performance. The government didn't think to integrate measures that would ensure that the performance metrics of this agency were tracked at all, never mind on an ongoing basis to ensure that it was always delivering the best possible care. To listen to the Minister of Health tell it, that's just the way things turned out: unfortunate turn of events but nothing much that she, her ministry or this government could do about it. If you only had the minister's talking points to listen to, you might be convinced that the entire Ornge debacle was some kind of a fly-by-night operation that hoodwinked the province. But, of course, there are other accounts.

Speaker, it is extremely hard to look at Bill 11 as anything other than a wag-the-dog reaction to the Auditor General's scathing indictment of this government agency. It seems like it was created as a tool of deflection before anything else.

To her credit, the minister keeps up a bold front, doesn't stray from her talking points and always pays tribute to the men and women on the front lines at Ornge. I would naturally like to salute them as well. It's certainly not their fault that they were set adrift by this government. They went above and beyond, making the best of whatever they were given. I have enormous respect for the professionalism, expertise and composure of Ontario's first responders and front-liners. They hold our communities together whenever and wherever the fabric of our community is strained, frayed and torn by suffering and tragedy.

I would like to thank the whistle-blowers at Ornge who stood up for patients and Ontarians when the minister would not. Without their disclosures, we would only have learned a fraction of what we know now. The abuses

and indulgences might have been carried on without restraint, and this agency could have strayed further into the fog. The pilots, paramedics, engineers, dispatchers and administrators at Ornge should not become collateral damage for the mishaps and misdeeds of their masters.

Part of honouring those individuals, Speaker, is in remembering our own duty to be vigilant and critical when it comes to proposed legislation like Bill 11. Yet despite the central role that whistle-blowers have played in this sad and shocking tale—or perhaps because of that—the bill before us does not seem to attach much value to whistle-blowers. In fact, the legislation arguably reins in whistle-blowers by failing to extend across-the-board protection to all individuals. When you place restrictions on this kind of disclosure, you turn acts of conscience into thought crimes. How shameful is that? It speaks to a compromised allegiance to transparency and accountability. It suggests—dare I say it?—a certain moral cowardice. Speaker, anything less than comprehensive whistle-blower protection is simply a camouflaged muzzle law.

Ironically, what Bill 11 does best is underline the failures of this government and ministry. They are each uniquely flawed and yet they share one thing in common: They stood idly by, were blind to the red flags and deaf to appeals. There is no reason to believe that amended legislation or Febrezed performance agreements will change those fundamental failures of oversight.

We in the PC caucus have been clear about where responsibility ultimately falls, and we have always appreciated the exceptional level of care, compassion and professionalism that the staff first responders and frontliners at Ornge have brought to every working moment, despite the inefficiencies and perverse bureaucracy they have had to contend with. Factors like these cannot make the job of saving lives any easier, Speaker, and it is hard to imagine what benefit there is in avoiding the steps needed to ensure that performance issues and organizational problems are rooted out at every turn.

When it comes down to it, that is why the government's stubborn refusal to invest this bill with real measures to ensure accountability is so disappointing. The closest we get to transparency in Bill 11 is when the minister creates a mechanism for funneling compliments into her ear.

Speaker, I would be interested to know how the Ontario Ombudsman's heart rate charted when he read that section. Maybe his years of exposure to Liberal incompetence have made him resilient. In his letter to the Minister of Health, Ombudsman André Marin writes, "The Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario is a unique resource to support the Legislative Assembly in holding government accountable. It is there to allow the provincial Parliament to scrutinize government bodies. I cannot think of a more persuasive case for this than Ornge."

0930

Indeed, Speaker, after all that we in this Legislature have been through, I can see no credible reason for keeping this agency beyond the oversight of the Ombudsman.

That this new initiative is coming from the Deputy Premier signals to me that the party is not a new government at all but that it is still twisted by the same secretive DNA that characterized the McGuinty years.

Now, as then, we're seeing this government's head in the sand, completely out of touch with this critical component of the most resource-intensive ministry of the entire government. They didn't think to question, couldn't be bothered to use the tools at their disposal, indulged the worst in their midst and naively hoped for the best—that nobody would find out and that nothing would go terribly wrong.

When we talk about the excesses at Ornge we are not just talking about an unthinkable waste of precious resources and the haphazard management of a critical link in our health care sector. There is also an excess of arrogance, as if anything was possible and nothing would ever suffer consequences. This government had every authority and had the tools needed to wade in this organization and get it sorted. We've heard numerous times during this debate that the Minister of Health had the power to intervene at any point to stop the circus, to bring the sideshow to a halt and to restore balance and discipline. The lack of leadership is striking.

There were clear and repeated warnings about Ornge, warnings about a dark whirlpool of finance irregularities, awestruck accounts of sky-high executive salaries and grave details about operational shortcomings that put the lives of staff and patients at risk. All of it was brushed under the carpet with a merry whistle by the highest-ranking members of this government. It's shameful—shameful.

Where was the leadership years ago when the seeds of this scandal were first scattered on the wind? And where is the leadership from this government now? Is Bill 11 really the best you've got? If so, this government has not truly learned the lessons of Ornge. I would have hoped that this party opposite, which went out of its way in the throne speech to try and rebrand itself as a "new government," would have taken the four months the Legislature was closed and done some soul-searching, gone back through the hours of debate on Bill 50 and come up with revised legislation that was serious and strong. But they did not, and that speaks volumes of what this government really cares about. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jonah Schein: As always, I'm honoured to stand up today on behalf of my constituents in Davenport. I do feel a bit of remorse that this is the, I don't know, the millionth time I've stood to speak to this issue. As we've said on numerous occasions, this bill is not going to address the lack of accountability in other agencies across the province that need attention. We feel assured that Ornge, from this day on, will be under close scrutiny, but there has been a slow death, I would say, of transparency—well, of accountability—in this province, an infatuation with off-loading responsibility and with deregulation.

So, rather than take any more time up in this House today speaking, I think I would just ask the House to join me in a minute of silence to think about how we can do this—how we can run this province in a better way that is accountable.

I will just stand for a minute and think about that—the province that we could build together.

Thank you, Speaker. I found that helpful.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: We've heard a lot of criticism of this bill and the predecessor, Bill 50, I think it was. But having sat on the public accounts committee—and I even did a tour of the headquarters of Ornge yesterday. But this has been going on for some time.

Carole McKeogh, who is the senior lawyer for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, had nothing to do with the first agreement, which brought in a fresh look and said, "How do we repair that?" Carole McKeogh was in front of the committee, under oath, twice. She said on April 25, 2012, "I have also been involved in the development of Bill 50"—which is the predecessor of this—"An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, which received first reading on March 21, 2012. The proposed legislation, if passed, would provide the province with many of the same powers for intervention in the public interest which currently exist for public hospitals under the Public Hospitals Act"—so are we going to change all those acts that govern hospitals?

"In my view, there is a useful comparison to be made between public hospitals and Ornge. Both hospitals and Ornge are non-profit corporations. They are both charities with volunteer boards. They both provide essential health services to patients and are funded almost entirely by the province.

"However, in the case of public hospitals, the legislative framework includes the power to intervene in the governance of a hospital through the appointment of a hospital supervisor, who can assume all the powers of the board and the corporation. This is viewed as an extraordinary power of intervention which exists to protect the public interest. It is an important safeguard which has been included in the proposed legislation for Ornge."

This is good legislation. It was prepared by Carole McKeogh. She testified twice that it was the right thing to do. We know that it is the right thing to do. It's a good piece of legislation. Let's get it to committee and give Ornge the other part of their ability to move ahead.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to stand in respect for the member from Burlington, who I think had spent a fair amount of time pointing out in detail the lack of respect, lack of leadership and lack of action.

I think that our side and the earlier speaker, the member from Simcoe-Grey, a former Minister of Health, added content that the viewers today, or those following the transcripts, would need to recognize: that there has been a lack of responsibility and leadership.

Now I should say out of respect for the front-line people at Ornge and the paramedics who were here yesterday that it's clear that they were ignored and vilified as well. They were all painted by the leadership under Chris Mazza, and all the way down, of taking advantage of taxpayers' money in this whole scandalous scheme around Ornge.

I want to pay respect for the member from Newmarket-Aurora for the work and leadership that he has done, and to the media, who in fact have shown this to be the scandal that it is.

The member from Burlington—I believe the detailed content of her speech is worth looking up in Hansard online and refreshing the memory of why are we so upset with this waste of taxpayers' money and, more specifically, health care dollars. It troubles me when I look at seniors unable to get long-term care, unable to get home care, and yet there's this wasteful spending of millions and millions and millions of dollars on the equipment, the leadership, the governance—it's simply unacceptable. I would expect that the Minister of Health would read these transcripts and apologize to this Legislature. That's how strongly I feel about it.

The way it has been trivialized is another example of not taking responsibility for their lack of action.

0940

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, an honour to be able to stand on behalf of my good people in Timiskaming-Cochrane and make a few comments about those from the member from Burlington.

She spent part of her talk focusing on the Ombudsman. We don't agree on a lot of things, but I think on that one we agree, and I'd like to give you an example, because it was someone whose family lives in my riding and who was a very early whistle-blower on Ornge. His name was Trevor Kidd. When he came to testify at the committee, everybody was happy that he came and testified. He sat in this House and everyone clapped for him. He tried to warn people for years—for years—and he was vilified. He was sloughed off. The Ornge scandal didn't come to people's attention until the media took it.

So now, on the next Ornge—because there will be. No one's perfect, and this is a big organization. Governments are big organizations and people are people. So the next time, and if this is the model we're going to use, then someone like Trevor is going to have to find the special investigator or have to convince these people who have been put in there by the ruling party, whoever that may be.

Wouldn't it have been so much better if people like Trevor could have called the Ombudsman, someone who they felt was impartial? The Ombudsman will get some calls that don't come to fruition, because that's the thing about being a whistle-blower. Every time we think you've been wronged, it's not always right, but at least it would be a place where people could call impartially without fear of retribution, and we can't figure out why the government doesn't want to go that way.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The member from Burlington, you have two minutes for a response.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you so much, Speaker. I'm up for my last hit here and I'd like to point out a couple of things.

I'd like to say that, being an MPP, we have many mentors. I look at the member from Newmarket–Aurora and the member from Nickel Belt, and what they have done to bring this to fruition has been humbling to me over and over again. It's an honour to see the two of these people work diligently. The passion they have, that they believe in, is overwhelming to myself. I stand here as a PC to be part of this process with the Newmarket–Aurora member, and I am so grateful that you are part of this team. I would like to say that first.

I would also like to say to the Attorney General that it is our responsibility as the Queen's loyal opposition to be continuing to do what needs to be done for the Ontario people. I had someone the other day ask me, "Why are you still talking about gas plants and Ornge, and why is this still going on?" I said, "Listen, this is why it's going on. We have a responsibility, when we spend \$1.8 million more an hour than we take in, and 20% of what we spend is borrowed money, and it's our third-largest expenditure after health and education, to make sure that every single dollar that we've wasted that we could have been putting on the front line to people, because of the government's reckless mismanagement of money, has put us in a position that these people—there's no money."

So how is it that you can patronize and look over at us? I have never been so proud to be part of Tim Hudak's team, the leader of this opposition, who has a plan and who has the most phenomenal team here that comes together and works as hard as we possibly can—and in this whole House the only one with a plan—to do what is best for this government.

Thank you so much, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place to speak to Bill 11. The purpose of this bill is to provide oversight and accountability over the Ornge air ambulance service. I cannot support Bill 11 for three reasons: Bill 11 does not provide complete protection for whistle-blowers, Bill 11 does not allow independent oversight of Ornge by the Ombudsman, and Bill 11 does not change the flawed corporate structure of Ornge. I will come back to my criticisms of the bill after providing some context.

Bill 11 is a road map of what the minister should have done in response to concerns that were raised years ago. The minister has had the power all along to stop the malfeasance at Ornge, so we don't need Bill 11. The calls for a ministerial investigation into Ornge came first in 2008, five years ago, then in 2010 and again in 2011. In March 2012, a majority of the members of this House voted to form a select committee to investigate serious allegations of misconduct at Ornge. Even though the

health minister promised that, "I support the will of this Legislature" and "The will of the Legislature rules supreme," the select committee on Ornge has never been formed by this government.

Nonetheless, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts has been relentlessly investigating this issue for well over 100 hours now, and has slowly but surely been pulling the story of the Ornge scandal out for its full public airing.

In 2005, the responsibility for Ontario's air ambulance service was changed forever. It was entrusted to a start-up company headed by an emergency doctor who was a recent MBA graduate from university. This was Ornge under the direction of its founder, Dr. Chris Mazza.

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind everyone that the other founder of this corporation is this current provincial government.

Before 2005, Dr. Mazza worked at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto, which happened to be the base hospital for Ontario's air ambulance service; Mazza was exposed to the air ambulance business. At that time, a few small airlines and one large helicopter company worked on contract for the Ministry of Health. The 25-person team at Sunnybrook called in a plane or a helicopter when required. As part of their contract with the ministry, the companies outfitted their aircraft as air ambulances. Ornge was Mazza's brainchild to fix Ontario's air ambulance service. Dr. Mazza had no experience running a corporate operation like this, let alone an operation with a budget of \$150 million.

By 2004, Dr. Mazza had sold the McGuinty Liberal government on his plan. Mazza became the president and chief executive officer of Ontario's new air ambulance service. This Liberal government took a hands-off approach from the beginning. In a couple of years, the government allowed Mazza and his board of directors to change a 25-person operation run out of a provincial hospital facility into a 234-person corporation housed in a \$15-million building that the employees called "the crystal palace," miles away from a hospital. Where the old air ambulance service used contracted airlines, Dr. Mazza thought it best to purchase 12 custom helicopters from Italy for \$144 million and a fleet of 10 single-engine aircraft from Switzerland.

By 2011, Ornge had grown into a not-for-profit corporation with many for-profit subsidiary corporations, employing over 400 people, including several vice-presidents and executives, managers, dispatchers, paramedics, pilots and aviation specialists. It had its own air and land ambulances operated from 12 bases across the province.

The Auditor General's report of March 2012 regarding Ornge was scathing in its criticism of this Liberal money pit. The Auditor General, Mr. Jim McCarter, said Ornge was, "one of the most difficult auditees we have ever encountered." He was speaking from nine years of experience and commenting on the lack of co-operation from Mazza and his employees.

The complexity of the corporate structures at Ornge and its subsidiaries are still being untangled by investi-

gators. Deaths that occurred on Ornge's watch are still being investigated by Ontario's new chief coroner. This investigation was put on hold last fall when the old chief coroner suddenly became the new CEO of Ornge. We are also still waiting for the results of investigations by the OPP.

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Since 2006, over \$750 million in public health care dollars have funded this government's start-up. In 2011, Ornge was \$300 million in debt. Non-profit corporations and charities were set up to benefit a number of for-profit corporate entities. Public funds were used to leverage investments in the for-profit companies. The scheme was to generate funding for the Ornge non-profits. It was doomed from the start. One Ornge for-profit subsidiary kept 97% of its profits and only returned 3% to the public purse. Dr. Mazza was enabled by his board of directors, so the culpability is not singular. Many perks flowed to senior staff members at Ornge as well, although the main beneficiary was Dr. Mazza. In 2005, Mazza's salary was \$284,000. By 2011, his salary had grown to \$1.4 million, and grew to \$2.6 million by the time he was fired in February 2012.

In the last month at public accounts committee, we have learned that Mazza got the board to purchase life insurance policies for him. The latest policy uncovered was a \$10-million policy on Mazza, with the beneficiary being one of Ornge's for-profit entities. We have learned that Mazza went so far as to design the interiors of the new helicopters, but this led to them being too small for paramedics to perform CPR in flight. We have learned of intravenous tubing incompatible with hospital tubing. We learned of \$1 million spent on patient movers for the airplane fleet that are too heavy for the aircraft. We learned of possible kickback payments to a helicopter manufacturer which is now being investigated over a similar deal with India. We also learned of dispatch problems and of Mazza's policy of preventing Ornge helicopters from attending a distress call until it was determined that their presence was absolutely necessary. It is clear this government agency was allowed to forget about its core mandate.

Mazza got Ornge to pay for his million-dollar home and fine cars, \$150,000 for two custom motorcycles from California, a \$40,000 speedboat and his jet-setting lifestyle. He even submitted the interest on his credit card as an expense. Mazza got his girlfriend a job and a free MBA education. Public health care dollars were frittered away like this on the government's watch.

Lives most certainly have been put at risk because of this minister's shortcomings. She turned a blind eye until she was forced to look. The people who forced her to look were the whistle-blowers, the Ornge employees who couldn't hold back the truth any longer and put their livelihoods on the line. In fact, right now there is an Ornge employee suing the company for being fired after she co-operated with the ongoing investigation. We wouldn't know anything about these problems without these people. Bill 11 fails to provide real protection for

employees in the future who would come forth with information that we need as legislators.

The best way to provide for independent oversight and accountability in government service delivery is by allowing the Ombudsman to investigate. The government won't let him. With Bill 11, the government is trying to get away with only mandating an internal complaint resolution process. This provides neither independent oversight nor real accountability.

Lastly, another problem with this bill is the fact that it leaves in place Ornge's corporate structure, which was criticized by the Auditor General.

Again, Bill 11 is too little too late. Bill 11 is nothing but a cover-up for this government's failure to responsibly manage the Ornge air ambulance service. Mr. Speaker, I cannot support this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France G linas: Not only is the bill not competent at doing what they set out to do, but you have to realize that when it came to Ornge, it's not that the ministry could not act; it's that the minister chose not to. All they had to do was to put a Liberal-friendly face at the front of the parade. It didn't matter what was going on behind. It didn't matter that money was being squandered, that for-profit companies were being set up with taxpayers' money. It didn't matter what was going on; they had a Liberal-friendly face at the front of the parade telling them, "All is good," and nobody did anything. It doesn't matter that the bill gives the minister opportunities to do more. She had opportunities to act, and she refused to do that.

Now they're asking us to approve a bill that will give the minister all sorts of powers that we have never seen in the health care system before. But if you refuse to act on the power you already have, what's the point in giving more power? If there had been a Liberal-friendly face at the front of this parade, it doesn't matter how much she can act; she refused to.

One thing would set that apart, though, as the member has said, and that's bringing Ombudsman oversight. As those complaints start to come in, an independent third party—the Ombudsman doesn't care if there's a Liberal-friendly face at the front of the parade. The Ombudsman only cares if there are people that think they have been wronged. He will use his power to investigate. But the bill does not include Ombudsman oversight.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Let me thank the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills for making a contribution to the debate this morning on Bill 11.

A couple of things of interest here: Dr. Mazza was originally hired by the then Minister of Health, Mr. Clement, in his role at Sunnybrook Health Sciences hospital. We do know that one Lynne Golding, of course, billed \$9 million for doing work for Ornge during a long period of time.

Interjections.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Look, that was the record that was brought before the public accounts committee.

In fact, what we need here—we've heard from both sides of the House that they want to look at amendments to bring Ombudsman oversight in. The fact of the matter is this is the kind of very productive work that can be done at the committee level. That will be the opportunity to take Bill 11 and get it to committee. Both parties, the opposition party and the third party, will have a slew of amendments they want to bring to the table. The government inevitably will have some other amendments to make. That's the kind of process that we need to get in place—on to committee. Let's listen to those thoughtful amendments, both from the opposition and from the third party, and incorporate them into an amended Bill 11 and get it back to the House, because we all want the opportunity for increased oversight.

We have made some moves. We've done important work: a new board, new CEO.

We're quite privileged in Peterborough: We have a land-based Ornge group in Peterborough that assists Peterborough regional health care centre. We have the helipad there. When the helicopters do come in, we get them from both sides, coming in from Ottawa and indeed from Toronto to provide accessibility often for traumatic situations.

Let's get it to committee, and let's get the amendments in place.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to add a few comments to those which my colleague has already made. There are a couple of things that I think need to be emphasized in this whole process.

The first one is one that I don't think has received an adequate amount of attention; that is that we had a functioning air ambulance service in this province. It was a system that worked well. It provided the kind of emergency services that were needed, particularly in areas of small populations where you had to get people out quickly. They are collateral damage, by the way, in this conversation about the air ambulance process because they had certainly suffered from the imposition of Ornge.

The other thing that I think is important to keep in mind in this conversation is the absolution of this government from taking any responsibility. The fact that they turned the other way, the fact that the auditor provided a scathing report in the fall of 2011 and the fact that they had been asked questions in the House for several years on this file all add up to a complete absolution from taking any responsibility. What we see is a whole series of people through an internal hierarchy that all turned the other way.

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One of the things that is the essence of this bill, in my view, is a demonstration that you can't legislate morality. If people are going to turn the other way, if they're going to pass the buck, if they're going to pretend everything is all right, if they're going to use everything as a photo op and not as anything of substance, then this bill will be no

better than anything else that we have had. It is the measure of the people who are enforcing it—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, I'm standing on behalf of the residents of Timiskaming–Cochrane talking about Bill 11. I think the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills did a fair job of explaining some of the problems that happened at Ornge, but I'd like to spend a moment and talk about what the member from Nickel Belt said, because what she said is at the essence of this whole problem, and she did a really good job of it. What I heard her say was that the problem here is that tools were available for the government to act and they chose not to. Now what they're trying to do is make the tools a lot stronger to act.

Again, in other areas, in Ornge or in the other Ornges that are out there, they can still choose not to act because it took them a long time to act or react. At the end of the day, when they reacted, it was because of media pressure. That tells a lot. Their initial reaction was to sweep it under the carpet. That was their initial reaction.

The fact that they are resisting Ombudsman oversight tells me—and I think the member from Nickel Belt did a very good job of explaining this—that their continued reaction is to avoid, to sweep under the carpet. It just makes so much sense. Why should we be here arguing about whether the Ombudsman should be able to look into things or that someone should be able to call the Ombudsman? Why? It makes no sense. That should have just been put in the bill. It just shows that the government continues to avoid and deflect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It is a bit of a sad thing that we have to spend so much time talking about this problem in this House. We have a second bill to address one problem, which should never have happened. We were prorogued and stopped from doing a thorough investigation into the correction of the problem in the beginning, a problem that never should have happened in the beginning because the responsibility of the government was to oversee and manage this properly and catch it before it got carried away.

We have a manager, Dr. Mazza, who feels he should be paid over \$2 million a year and that his girlfriend should be hired and paid as an executive because she was a very good water ski instructor, apparently. Motorcycles, speedboats, high-living styles, new office buildings and massive amounts of money spent, and we have a billion dollars gone.

I want to digress a little bit. Last night I had the privilege to speak to some fine young men at a reception here, the paramedics of Ontario. I spoke to a young man who impressed me by how professional he was, how proud he is of what he does. They are the front-line troops of the ambulance service of Ontario. They want to have legislation written here to create a licensing body to ensure the integrity of the profession and the work they

do. It's just a shame when you think of those good people tarnished by what happens and what this party has done to them. I think it's a travesty. We have great people in the front lines and in the middle management of Ornge, and yet we have this terrible management at the top that wasted money and delivered poor service, and a government that is unwilling and unable to face the music that they were irresponsible and just didn't do the job.

I would like to thank the other members who commented on my talk—from Nickel Belt, from Peterborough, from York–Simcoe and from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to join in the debate on Bill 11. I'm sure it's going to come as no surprise to any of the members that, like my PC colleagues, I'm very disappointed with this bill. I'm disappointed because, leaving aside everything that's gone wrong at Ornge, this legislation was an opportunity to finally get something right when it comes to—sorry, let me correct that: It was the second time we could have got something right with Ornge; the first time was back before the Premier shuttered this Legislature for four months. At that time, Bill 11 was known as Bill 50, and that's why I'm so disappointed that after four months of having an opportunity to take into consideration what the opposition was saying, this government just went right back, didn't listen to our input and put forward a bill that was exactly where we were before the Legislature prorogued.

That's my concern: that we had some very insightful and constructive criticism that the minister could have taken, but simply what she's done is, she's just changed the numbers of the bill. It's the same bill. It's almost like the debate that we had on the previous bill didn't happen. That's unfortunate, because I think it sends a message to us in the opposition that the minister wasn't listening to those very constructive suggestions that we made.

It's really no surprise, though, I have to say, because a number of bills that this government has put forward are essentially window-dressing bills. It's pretty shocking that a government that really makes such a big deal about being open for input from the opposition would act with such arrogance and disregard to the other side of the room. Really, what it says to me is that the Premier and her cabinet talk a good game about co-operation, but when it comes into practice, there is none.

What we see here is Bill 11. Again, time after time, we see the fact that this government makes these changes; they just change some numbers and the bill gets put back on. It really shows to me that this whole issue with Ornge is really a damning indictment of this government, and the fact that the cupboard is so bare of ideas that, in terms of this bill, we get leftovers—I think we all saw what was on the government's agenda; on their menu, so to speak—when they tabled Bill 50. We talked about this bill, but again, the ingredients of this bill are the same.

I do want to, as part of the debate, go into some comments that I hear frequently about our system from my constituents in Leeds–Grenville. Like all Ontarians, the

residents that I serve have zero tolerance for government waste. They work hard to earn a living, and they demand that the increasingly large portion of their incomes going to Queen's Park be treated with respect. But probably more than any other area, what really gets my constituents upset is when they see their health care dollars squandered on scandals like Ornge. That's because at the same time as they're reading these scandals, they see their access to front-line health care services being diminished. Whether it's home care, waiting times for specialists, dental care for low-income residents and seniors, or hospice service, I have an increasingly large number of calls coming into my office from constituents who are very concerned about the state of health care, not just in Leeds–Grenville, but also in the province as a whole.

When I write to the minister about these concerns, invariably I'm told about the fiscal challenges that the province faces. Certainly, I understand how deep a hole this government has put the people of Ontario into. It's something that, certainly, our party talks about practically every day in this place, and we urge the government to do something and really change the course that this government is on. My constituents have a very simple question when they're told there's no money for health care. They want to know, if funds are so scarce and their access to care is in fact suffering, why have millions of dollars been wasted on Ornge and why has a billion dollars been wasted on eHealth?

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If you're a mom in my riding whose daughter needs an appointment for a neurologist because she's starting drug treatments for MS, and she's told that she has to wait 18 months because there's no money—but if eHealth bureaucrats want to wine and dine someone to the tune of \$120,000, that's no problem. That infuriates those constituents. Or if the former head of Ornge, Dr. Mazza, needs 15 grand for a ski trip to Whistler or 50 grand to have an Orange County Chopper decorate the lobby of the Ornge offices, we can spare no expense, and that's what infuriates people. It's disgusting, and they have every right, through their elected representatives here at Queen's Park, to demand accountability.

But, again, when it comes to Ornge, no one seems to take responsibility over on the government benches. In fact, the Premier has shown she's ready to move on. Not only has she kept the minister in her portfolio, she's promoted her to Deputy Premier, and I think that sends the absolute wrong message after we've had this type of debate, when Ornge and Ministry of Health employees have clearly articulated that the minister had powers of oversight and chose not to use them. I think it's tragic.

I do want to take the opportunity, because he's in the House, to thank our member, the member for Newmarket–Aurora, for really shining a light on what's happening at Ornge. I think he and other of our representatives on public accounts have done a fabulous job. To you, Mr. Klees, thank you for shining the light on this power.

I also believe that we've been very clear on this side when it comes to the powers of oversight. The minister

didn't act, and I think the fact now is that in terms of the Ombudsman, there needs to be a role for the Ombudsman, and I think what I'm hearing is the Wynne government, similar to the McGuinty government, has no interest in providing that level of transparency and accountability that I think we need to see in this bill.

I've heard a lot from government members during this debate about the appointment of the new patient advocate at Ornge. I had to laugh when I read the minister's comments in a recent Toronto Star article as she desperately tried to explain why she was resisting the call for Ombudsman oversight. I couldn't believe this. She actually had the audacity to state that an internal patient advocate would ensure that concerns are handled more quickly and expeditiously. The problem with that scenario, Speaker, is that the patient advocate would be reporting to the exact same folks who ignored the alarm bells the last time around. And as the Ombudsman, Mr. Marin, pointed out in the same article, one of the duties of the patient advocate would be to report compliments about Ornge, hardly a role for someone who is supposed to be the watchdog.

I know that despite opposition calls both when it was Bill 50 and now Bill 11, we don't seem to be able to get the minister's full attention. Otherwise, anything to do with the concerns about mismanagement and patient safety I think would fall on deaf ears, without that extra oversight, and we would need to have that put into place.

I can't really sum up the problems with this oversight as envisioned by the minister better than by quoting a letter that Mr. Marin wrote to her: The patient advocate, he wrote, "would not be independent of government. Far from being watchdogs, they would operate on a ministerial dog leash." If you want to ensure Ornge or eHealth doesn't happen again, you don't put the watchdogs on a leash; you don't do that. I think most people on this side of the House have been advocating that we need to let the watchdogs do their work. Clearly this government ignored us in this process, whether it be Bill 50 or Bill 11, and I take great offence for some members opposite trying to take away our democratic right to debate legislation.

We as members get elected to debate legislation and to provide comments, and I think that the government is losing sight of that. Bill 11 doesn't do anything to provide better oversight. Certainly, I'm not going to stand here, as I represent the people of Leeds–Grenville—I'm not supporting this legislation.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise on behalf of Jeff Yurek, MPP for Elgin–Middlesex–London, to recognize the following constituents in the public gallery: Dan Ainsworth, a

policeman in St. Thomas, and his children, John, Luke and Owen Ainsworth. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: It is my great pleasure to introduce Miss Angelica Garcia-Hennings, who is a co-op placement in my office from Cambrian College in the public relations classes. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have great pleasure in introducing Debbie Osske, sitting in the west members' gallery, a fixture around Queen's Park for many years, my former executive assistant and now doing great work for CANFAR, the AIDS research foundation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? The member from Mississauga–Streetsville. I hope he's not going to steal my thunder.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Well, no, Speaker. I wouldn't dare do that, but I'm just very pleased to welcome back, and indeed welcome home, the former member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're stealing my thunder.

Mr. Bob Delaney: —Jean-Marc Lalonde.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. I'll deal with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville later.

The member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Today our page captain is Annie Lloyd from my beautiful riding of Simcoe North, and we're joined by her parents here today. Jodi, her mom, is a trustee with the Simcoe County District School Board.

M. Grant Crack: Il me fait un grand plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue à l'ancien député provincial de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, M. Jean-Marc Lalonde, et son ami Rhéal Filion. Bienvenue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's another one that's stealing my thunder.

The member from York–Simcoe.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like to welcome back Louis Varrt to Queen's Park. He was a page here last year. Welcome back, Louis.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I may be about to steal your thunder one more time by introducing my very good friend and the great mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, former MPP for Ottawa West–Nepean. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have visitors from Nickel Belt. They're just on their way here, but I'll introduce them as they're coming. It's Neil Haskett with his wife, Tabatha and their four children, Clairice, Natalya, Aedan and William. They're here to support my colleague with the Ombudsman Amendment Act for children's aid.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): For the sake of brevity and redundancy, I would like, as the Speaker is known to do, to introduce all the former members that have visited us here so that we can get a third standing ovation for Jean-Marc Lalonde, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the 37th, 38th and 39th Parliament; and the 39th Parliament, Mr. Jim Watson, MPP for Ottawa–Nepean.

Is there anyone else we can do a standing ovation for? Just let me know.

Interjection: The Legiskaters.

MEMBERS' HOCKEY GAME

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do want to point out that a really good event took place last night. The Legiskaters, for which we had representation from all sides, including the press, saw a crushing defeat to the ODA—well, I've got to be nice to the dentists. There were no teeth lost last night. The final score was 7-2. So we congratulate the Legiskaters for playing hockey for us last night.

We are on the verge of offering ourselves up as sacrificial lambs to the Quebec team. We'll see what happens with that one. Anyways, thank you.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Over the past two weeks, I've asked eight questions in this House. I've written you a letter asking you to simply verify the cost of the OSSTF deal. I've yet to receive any details other than you do acknowledge you've moved money around and that you say that there are no new costs. So can you precisely give me today how much of the so-called savings will be used to pay for the OSSTF deal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to report that we were able to reach an agreement with OSSTF. It has been ratified by 96% of their local presidents. It's currently in the process of being ratified or at least voted on by individual members, and we very much respect that process of working confidentially with our members, or at least our union members.

We're now in discussions with the elementary teachers' federation and are hoping that we will have similar results in terms of being able to conclude an agreement with them. But what I can assure you is that there has been no additional money put on the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think I was pretty clear in English, so I'll say it in French: combien?

We've asked precisely for the details on how much of their so-called savings will go toward this OSSTF deal, not to mention where it goes across the province, so I'll ask you one more time, and I'll be even a little bit more specific. How much of the savings that you're talking about are going to go to the extended mat leave?

Hon. Liz Sandals: What we—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Are you against mat leave?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Apparently.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Apparently, they're against mat leave.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Apparently, they're against mat leave and also sorting out sick leave details.

But what I can report to you is that the savings that were reported in January were \$1.8 billion. That is made up of about a quarter of a billion dollars in the fiscal year that just ended a few weeks ago. It's made up of over half a billion dollars in savings for the fiscal year that we are just beginning on April 1. It includes \$1.1 billion in long-term liability savings related to ending retirement gratuities and also the sick leave banking. That adds up to a total of \$1.8 billion.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They have a chronic problem with truth-telling on the other side, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn, Speaker.

We're going into a budget in, hopefully, less than a month. They've broken that promise of course to have it done by April 1. But they refuse to tell the chamber and the public how much of their so-called savings are going to go to the OSSTF deal and how much of those projected savings, or so-called cost-saving measures, are going to go toward one of the components in terms of mat leave. You can't continue to stand in this House with any credibility when all you want to get out of a deal with the OSSTF are some brand new friends.

The public is asking where this money is coming from. If you have \$1.8 billion in savings, then why didn't it did go toward servicing the debt and the deficit? If you have \$1.8 billion in savings, why doesn't it go to students in the classroom? I don't believe for one minute you have \$1.8 billion in savings, and I want to know how much this deal—

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

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: All I can say is, we had \$1.8 billion in savings in January, and we've got \$1.8 billion in savings in April. What part of that is unclear? What I can also tell you is that \$1.1 billion of those savings went to pay down the deficit, which I think is what she's asking for.

But do you know what else we have? We have peace and stability returning to our classrooms. We have extra-curricular activities returning to our schools. I understand it is snowing out there today, but were it not for the snow, we have soccer practices returning. We have all sorts of great activities taking place in our schools that we did not have a couple of months ago, and that's the difference, the students—

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

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. As your ministry continues to stall on providing an up-to-date detailed budget on the Pan Am Games, let's review what we know to date, Minister.

The organizing committee has grown tenfold, and 23% of them have made the sunshine list, costing Ontarians more than \$30 million in salaries by 2015, not including the bonuses for staying on until the end of the games. Then, you duplicated the bureaucracy by establishing a redundant, cloak-and-dagger Pan Am secretariat, another team of 62 bureaucrats feeding at the trough.

Minister, if you have a team of 140 people already organizing the games, what justification can you possibly have for adding a redundant bureaucracy of 62 more bureaucrats?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question from the honourable member. Our government is committed to supporting the Pan/Parapan American Games, and we are proud that, come 2015, Ontarians will have an opportunity to experience the games.

The salary structure of employees is determined by Toronto 2015. The compensation structure used by TO2015 has been in line with comparable multi-sport games across the world, including the Vancouver Olympics, the Pan Am Games, the Commonwealth Games or Winter games or Summer games of the Olympics. Other jurisdictions have not taken action to make their publicly paid positions open, but unlike other provinces or nations, our government is ensuring that these games will be the most transparent games hosted to date.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rod Jackson: Clearly, this is a minister on the run. You went to great lengths to hide the Pan Am secretariat from the public, demonstrating that even he can't justify the bureaucratic duplication.

In 2011, I asked about the organization of all Pan Am bureaucracies through the order paper. I was directed to various memorandums of understanding, which apparently may or may not exist, depending on the day. Then, in 2012, I FOIed your memorandum of understanding, but the cumulative cost of the memorandum of understanding was \$3,000—not so free, Minister.

Recently, the sunshine list revealed the secretariat staff embedded across no less than three different ministries, rendering them unsearchable without knowing their names, but today the secret secretariat isn't a secret anymore.

Minister, you have serious issues with waste and transparency. Why were you hiding the secretariat, and is it too much to ask to get the real Pan Am salaries?

Hon. Michael Chan: I'm disappointed. I'm truly disappointed by the negative tone of the honourable member.

It's not good to talk down the Parapan and Pan American Games. It's not good to talk down the people of Ontario. It's not good to talk down the people of Canada. It's not good to talk down the athletes of the US. It's not good to talk down the people of Argentina. It's not good to talk down the people from Brazil. It's not good to talk down the people from Grenada. It's not good to talk down the people from Panama. Speaker, it's not good to talk down the people from Mexico.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: Minister, let me make one thing clear: I don't think anybody in this House sits here and talks down to anybody except for you guys, talking down to the people of Ontario, not giving them the right numbers on the Pan Am budget.

Thirty per cent of the secretariat made the sunshine list, costing an additional \$2.8 million in duplication of management salaries. But it isn't clear if the salaries are coming out of the Pan Am budget or if they're coming from another Pan Am add-on like the billion-dollar air-rail link or the billion-dollar athletes' village.

Pan Am isn't going to cost us \$1.4 billion, is it, Minister? It's on track to being the next multi-billion-dollar boondoggle after Ornge, eHealth and the gas plants. We need more integrity from this government for the hard-working families of Ontario who are financing the games and deserve the truth about its costs.

Minister, are the secret secretariat salaries included in the Pan Am budget, or are they just going to cost—

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

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, please allow me to share a few—

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Chan: —the people who talk up the people of Pan Am—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. Let's not do that. And I will jump on that. Once we get quiet, stay that way.

Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, the people who talk up the Pan and Parapan games—

Interjection.

Hon. Michael Chan: —let me share a few with you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, second time for the member.

Hon. Michael Chan: James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages: "We are certain that the 2015 games will indeed be a success for Torontonians and all Canadians."

How about this one? Joe Oliver, Minister of Natural Resources: "Our government is making a significant investment in the 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games, with facilities that will benefit Canadians—"

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

While that will be considered the finish of your answer, the member has to talk to his caucus members who are talking while you're trying to answer.

I'm asking the Minister of the Environment and the Attorney General to come to order. I did speak to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, but he was too engaged and he didn't even hear me: second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe North just did not help that situation at all.
New question.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Premier. Over the last few days, my office has been speaking with patients and their loved ones who still have unanswered questions about the chemotherapy treatment.

Can the Premier assure people in London and across Ontario that hospitals have quality assurance measures in place to test drugs and assure that they are receiving the correct treatment?

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for this question. What I can tell you, Speaker, is that many steps have been taken over the past few days to assure the people of this province that they are receiving the highest quality care.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member for Lambton-Kent, come to order. To make sure you heard it, again, member for Lambton-Kent, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: On the specific issue that the member opposite has raised, Cancer Care Ontario took the step of reaching out to all 77 hospitals in this province that deliver chemotherapy to ask those hospitals to check to ensure that this overflow issue was limited to the cases that had been identified. Of the 77 hospitals in this province that do perform chemotherapy, 69 of them have responded, and there are no other issues that have been raised.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

1050

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, this week I spoke with Kristine Allison, a woman who lost her fiancé to cancer last year.

She wants some answers about the treatment Steve received. When she asked London Health Sciences, they told her they do not test chemotherapy drugs they receive from private suppliers. We followed up with the hospital and they won't say whether the policy has changed.

Premier, do you know whether the hospitals now have measures in place to assure that patients like Kristine's fiancé are receiving the treatment they are supposed to?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite speaks of one of the almost 1,000 patients in this province who have received very unsettling news. Those patients are all meeting with their oncologists to determine what impact this might have had and what change to their course of care, if any, ought to be implemented. It's very important that everyone who has been affected does have that meeting with their oncologist. We know that those meetings are happening, that group meetings are happening and that people are getting the information they need at the individual level, but this does raise questions about the system. That's why we have pulled

together all of the partners in our cancer care delivery system, importantly including Health Canada, to ensure that we can learn any lessons that need to be learned and assure patients—

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, when I spoke to Kristine—she is heartbroken. Listening to her—the fact that she's not receiving answers is really distressing. People don't have a lot of trust in this health care system right now.

I want to ask the Premier again: Our public health care system is our most valuable resource. No one should have to live with the question that Kristine is wrestling with. People have a right to assume that they are receiving the best possible treatment. The hospital assumes that the government is providing oversight; the government isn't providing that oversight at all.

Patients in London and across Ontario want to know: Can the Premier tell us that quality assurance measures are now in place to protect our patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure the member opposite that all of the people and the bodies responsible for oversight are working very hard to get answers to those questions. Health Canada has acknowledged its role and is now engaged in being part of the solution. The College of Pharmacists acknowledges the gap and has offered to fill that gap as we move forward to ensure that all of our patients are getting appropriate care.

Dr. Jake Thiessen, an eminent pharmacist, has agreed to take on the responsibility of looking at broader system issues. We must always learn. If there are lessons to be learned, we must learn those lessons and we must fix those problems.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. Yesterday, her Minister of Health was unable to answer who should be responsible for oversight of the prepackaged drugs that were brought into our hospitals. We now know that this process of outsourcing of drug preparation has been happening for five years. It would seem that five years is a long time and that no one has been in charge of quality control or regulation.

I would like to know, will the Premier come clean and admit to Ontarians that five years is a long time for her Ministry of Health to fail in their fundamental responsibility of oversight? Five years is a long time to be asleep at the wheel.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health will want to answer on the supplementary, but I want to just be clear that a gap has been identified. It is unacceptable to me, it is unacceptable to our government and it is unacceptable to everyone in this Legislature that such a gap should exist, that this should have happened and that people should have been put at risk. It should never have happened. We acknowledge that.

That is why we've taken action immediately, as soon as we realized, as soon as we found out, as soon as the Ministry of Health knew that there was a gap. We've put in place the experts. We've put in place an interim solution which is that the College of Pharmacists have agreed to play this role. But it shouldn't have happened. We acknowledge that and we need to learn and rectify the situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: What we are seeing in Ontario is a terrifying pattern. In order to save money, a hospital decides to outsource a vital program, a vital service, to the private sector. But it never occurs to this government that checks and balances should be in place to ensure that quality is maintained.

Ontarians are still grappling with corporate excesses at Ornge, at eHealth, and it seems to be becoming a familiar story: A for-profit private company profits while quality of care to the people of Ontario suffers.

Why should patients and why should Ontarians believe that this government will finally do their job?

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the member opposite knows, we have appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to really review what happened in this situation so that we cannot only address the issues raised in this particular situation but that we look at the whole supply chain of our cancer drugs to ensure that all of the right checks and balances are in place. I think it is important that in our health care system—and the member opposite is part of our health care system; she understands this. Every health care system is continually working to improve quality. When an issue arises, it is incumbent upon all of us to identify the problem, fix the problem, look and make sure that there is nothing else in the system that must be fixed. That work is now well under way. And so we will continue that work. It is an important responsibility and one I take very seriously.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, the review that the minister talks about is only looking at what has already gone wrong. But the more we learn, the more questions we have. If it happens to chemotherapy drugs, what assurance do Ontario patients have that it has not already happened to other pre-packaged, outsourced drugs in other fields of medicine?

Speaker, Ontarians have lost faith in their government's basic ability to provide oversight, to oversee our health care system so it is safe for us to trust. They want the assurance that only an independent third party can give them. They want the assurance that if they complain to the Ombudsman, this government will grant the Ombudsman oversight of our hospital system.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I want to make it very, very clear that we demand the highest quality regardless of who is supplying that product. I don't care whether something is done in one setting; or whether it's being

done in a hospital setting, we demand the highest quality of care. Quality will never be sacrificed. It is essential that quality is maintained or even enhanced regardless of the setting.

I also want to make it very clear that Dr. Thiessen is looking forward. He does need to understand what happened here, but then he must look forward to make sure that any lessons that can be learned are in fact learned and those recommendations are implemented.

This happens in our health care system all the time and it should happen all the time. What's important is that when there is a problem, we acknowledge it. Nobody's hiding behind this, Speaker. We're going to understand what happened—

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

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning for the Premier. We want to recap what we've learned so far about your gas plant scandal. We've had senior Liberal insiders—these are men and women, some who are pulling down as much as \$367,000 a year—come and testify. We've heard from them and we've heard from experts who put the cost at close to \$1 billion doing it the way the Liberal government wanted it. Yet no two people have been able to come up with the same number. That in itself implies there are more documents you haven't produced which contain these answers.

1100

Will you settle this, Premier? Will you tell us what you knew about Project Vapour, Project Vapour-lock, and will you tell us how much your gas plant scandal is costing Ontarians and who ordered the documents to be withheld?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I understand there are two parts to his question. One has to do with the question of cost. I'd like to remind the honourable member that we have asked the Auditor General to look into both the Oakville and Mississauga plants. His first report, as members are aware, will be coming out early next week, and my understanding is that the committee will have an opportunity to examine the report and, should they wish, call forward the Auditor General.

The second question, I believe, was who denied access to all the documents in the government on the gas plant? The answer to that, Mr. Speaker, is very simple: The honourable member did, with all his colleagues. When we put forward a motion in front of the committee to produce a government-wide search, much broader than had ever been asked for, he and all his colleagues—I saw it on television—raised their hands and voted against it.

At the end of the day, all parties in this Legislature opposed both these gas plants, and we followed through with that—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This answer is really like being at the committee, where we aren't getting answers, either.

Premier, on Monday, the Auditor General will report to this House on the cost of your Liberal seat-saver program in Mississauga. Now, we know the only reason your committee agreed to the auditor looking into Mississauga is because the bulk of the costs of this entire scandal are really buried in the Oakville plant. We'll get to those later, but I thought we'd give you one last chance, an eleventh-hour confession on Mississauga. What did you know about Project Vapour, Project Vapour-lock, and will you take the opportunity to stand up now and tell Ontarians what you knew to be the cost of the Mississauga cancellation and who ordered the documents to be withheld?

Hon. John Milloy: If I can be bold enough to speak on behalf of the Premier, I think one thing she did know is that the Conservative Party opposed both those plants.

Let me talk a little bit about the justice policy committee this week. We had Frank Clegg, chairman of Citizens for Clean Air, a group that was involved in opposing the gas plant. This is what he had to say on April 9: "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.... Well, I know certainly Ted Chudleigh, who was the candidate MPP from north of Oakville, was very active in his support of cancelling the plant. During the plant battle—I'll use that word—PCs did not have a confirmed nominee but we met with two or three potential candidates, and each of them had said that they would support that."

Mr. Speaker, as I said, a promise they made; a promise we kept.

CASINOS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. The flip-flopping on revenue-sharing for Toronto on a casino deal continues every day. Today, the Premier is quoted in the Toronto Star as stating, "Casino revenue could stretch to tens of millions of dollars—maybe hundreds of millions."

Will the Premier let the people of Toronto know what the revenue-sharing agreement will be, or does she have to change it every day?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The context of that question was that the reporter was asking me whether a casino could generate enough revenue to pay for the transit that's needed. What I said was that my understanding was that the most that casino revenue could generate for the GTHA or for Toronto would be in the hundreds of millions.

I don't know what that number is, Mr. Speaker, but my point was—and I would love to hear from the member opposite on this—that we don't have the revenue stream we need to build transit in the GTHA. We need a dedicated revenue stream. Casino revenue is not going to be adequate to that.

I hope the member opposite is going to support us as we look for that revenue stream and deal with the tools that Metrolinx is going to bring forward, because his constituents need transit built in the GTHA as much as the rest of us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: The flip-flopping continues even in this Legislature.

Premier, other cities with casinos are only getting about 5% of revenues. That doesn't even come close to the tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars that Toronto, and now the Premier, is indicating might be available.

Will the Premier finally come clean with Ontarians on revenue-sharing formulas for the casinos? Tell them what it is now. Tell them what it is today, so that Toronto and other municipalities can decide.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I don't know what the revenue is going to be, because I don't know where the casinos are going to be, I don't know what the deals are going to be. And the formula—as the member opposite knows, I've said to the OLG that the formula has to be the same across the province, that there will be no special deals.

I don't know what the numbers are going to be, but in reference to the quote, what I do know is that there is no casino that is going to generate enough revenue to build the transit that's needed in the GTHA to keep people and goods moving. That's the point I was making. I really hope that the NDP is going to join with us in our advancement of the need to build transit in the GTHA. That's a cause that I hope they will be able to get behind.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question today for the Minister of Research and Innovation. The government committed to continuing to build an innovation-driven economy. It creates jobs, it's going to support strong economic growth, it finds important research-based solutions and it's going to create some new products. Our success in the global economy depends not only on that, but on our ability to build on strengths and to innovate. Information and communication technology is a key area that drives innovation; it generates a large and steadily increasing share of our employment, international trade and gross domestic product.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation, what is this government specifically doing to support the information and communication technology in Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Thank you, member from Oakville, for that question. Technology is changing how we do business, how we share information and how we communicate. Our government recognizes that supporting the information and communication technology sector fuels changes across all sectors. To date, my ministry has invested about \$400 million in communication and information technology and digital media.

Ontario has so much to offer. Ontario is home, for example, to cutting-edge research institutions, a highly skilled and educated workforce and a favourable corporate tax environment. All of this helps us to attract technology initiatives to Ontario, such as the IBM Research and Development Centre. Ontario will remain on the cutting edge of research and development in the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks to the minister for his first answer. Research and development are critical to innovation. They help this province remain competitive in a global economy. IBM, specifically, is a leading company that's doing very innovative work in this province. A number of my constituents in Oakville and around the GTA are employed by this world-class company.

While it's great to hear that our government is making investments that are helping to attract global companies that do important research and development, like IBM, Speaker, through you back to the Minister of Research and Innovation: Would he let us know specifically more about the IBM Research and Development Centre and the specific projects that they are working on today.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I thank, again, the member from Oakville for this question. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the IBM Research and Development Centre here in Toronto. With our government's investment of \$15 million and our federal government's investment of \$20 million, along with the \$175-million investment from IBM Canada itself—with \$210 million of investments, IBM Canada, with the assistance of several leading universities in Ontario, have created a world-class research centre which is called the Research and Development Centre.

This centre, using state-of-the-art computer infrastructure, is focusing on research solutions to health care, water management and energy management. In addition to that, they have created 200 new highly paid and highly skilled jobs here in Ontario.

1110

ARBITRATION

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier. This afternoon, the House will debate the Public Sector Capacity to Pay Act, 2013. This comprehensive plan to fix Ontario's broken arbitration system was introduced by our House leader, Jim Wilson, after extensive consultation. His hard work has earned endorsements from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, the eastern Ontario mayors and many, many other municipal leaders. I'd like to welcome again the mayor of Ottawa here today.

Premier, we've done the work for you. We've had those respectful conversations that you keep talking about. What's finally missing to give municipalities and public sector employers what they want is your support. Premier, will you stand up for comprehensive arbitration reform and vote for our bill today?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I certainly wish that last year, when we had provisions in our budget bill, that this conciliatory tone had been coming from the other side. We thought the changes that we had put in the budget bill, the changes that we made to the interest-based arbitration system—we were sure that the Progressive Conservatives would be supporting those changes, because we knew that they wanted to make sure that there was a fair, transparent system. We put changes in place, and to our surprise, they voted against those changes. I have no idea why—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We're talking about today, but I'm talking about the opportunity that we had a year ago.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The new government. The new government. New.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Renfrew has deserved my attention.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Aw, he deserves everyone's attention.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the member from Nepean—Carleton now deserves my attention.

I just want to make a point about the debate. When it goes between people, it becomes a problem. So the idea and the tradition of this place is to direct your question and direct your answer to the Speaker—as a reminder.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It would have been terrific if the Conservatives last year had responded to the changes that we put in the budget bill, the changes to interest-based arbitration. I really wish that they had supported us at that time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Premier, I can't believe your response. We're a few hours away from voting to solve a problem municipalities have been demanding for years, and she's giving me year-old talking points from Dalton McGuinty.

Premier, since you're so stuck in the past, I'm going to give you a couple of quotes from what people are saying in the present about this bill.

The Windsor Star editorial yesterday closed with: "The Ability to Pay Act is sensible. It must be passed."

On the same day, the Ottawa Sun editorial read: "This bill should be supported by all parties. Stop" the madness.

Again, I'm going to ask you—you're a former Minister of Municipal Affairs—will you keep your commitment to municipalities and vote for this bill this afternoon?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I appreciate the supplementary as well. Our government agrees that reforms are needed, and we are committed to developing an arbitration system that works, is fair for all parties and is constitutional.

Facts are always important in a debate like this. The fact is that this government is a strong supporter of municipalities. In fact, it's our government which has been uploading billions of dollars from municipalities, which the party opposite downloaded. In fact, it was the mayor of Ottawa, then-Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who inked that very important agreement on behalf of this government, and we thank him for that.

That uploading is helping ensure that services that families rely on, like fire and police, are available for them. My advice to the party opposite: Read the budget before deciding whether you're going to vote against it or not.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development. Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Economic Development claimed that the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund is an important part of the government's plan to create jobs. It's been almost a year now since the fund has been created. The legislation establishing the fund requires a board of directors before this fund gets up and running, but no board has yet been established.

Why is this government turning its back on a region with a desperate need for new, good-paying jobs by dragging its feet on getting the fund up and running?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know the member opposite, as she referred to the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, appreciates the tremendous potential and impact that fund is going to have. It was proclaimed, I think, in October of last year.

We have begun to fund important projects in southwestern Ontario. I have no doubt, in fact, that we're going to see the same success that we saw in eastern Ontario over the past years, where I think we have created literally thousands of jobs through that program, leveraging on average about 10 to 1 the investment from the private sector through the funds we get from the government.

I look forward to the supplementary to speak to this more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The potential of the fund will not be realized if you don't have a board to actually get the fund up and running.

The Ontario NDP believes we need to foster job creation in southwestern Ontario, help that was promised by this government a year ago. Jobs are being lost as I stand here today. Just last week, we learned about another 350 families who will be out of work, this time in Fergus at the A.O. Smith plant. In Windsor, the unemployment rate stands at an unacceptable 9%, and in the London area, 5,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs were lost in this past year alone.

Why is this government stalling on establishing a board of directors for the southwestern development fund and depriving this hard-hit region of good-paying jobs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you for that supplementary. Of course, our priority is to make sure the funds begin to flow. Unfortunately, there was a significant delay last year, because of the official opposition's delay of the program, in actually rolling out these programs. So we're going ahead. We're working towards forming that board. It's an important aspect of the program and making sure that the funds respond in an appropriate fashion. I want to say that I think the member would agree, particularly given the circumstances and the stresses that are being faced by many of our businesses and employees around the province, in southwestern Ontario, the priority needs to be to make sure that those funds flow.

We had some delays because it took a long time actually for this Legislature, because of the opposition, to pass the funds in the first place. We're working. We're taking the steps in a responsible way to make sure that board is up and running while we continue to flow the funds.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. One of the frequent complaints I hear from my constituents on consumer issues is the whole problem of door-to-door sales. In my own riding, I've had to get involved with residents on everything from the aggressive nature of some salespeople to misleading information. I am personally frustrated and saddened when I hear about how seniors and newcomers fall prey to misleading, aggressive, high-pressure sales tactics employed by certain door-to-door salespeople.

Of all the door-to-door sales, the most complaints I hear of are those to do with water heater rentals. Minister, what action will you be taking to address these concerns raised about door-to-door sales, not just by my constituents but by all Ontarians?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: If I may, I'd like to wish the honourable member from Scarborough-Rouge River a very happy belated birthday. I understand it was his birthday yesterday.

It's true that door-to-door sales are near the top of the list of complaints my ministry receives. I'm sure members have heard this issue from their own constituents—members from all parts of the House. In fact, an Angus Reid survey found that 57% of homeowners felt pressured into making a purchase, signing a contract, when approached at their door, with 35% of them regretting that decision.

The member is correct to say that of all door-to-door sales, water heater rentals are the most complained about by consumers: 3,200 complaints and inquiries in my ministry last year. That's a 30% increase over the last year. In fact, water heater contracts continue to rank number two in the complaints.

That's why I was happy to announce earlier today that the new Ontario government is looking to introduce legislation to increase consumer protection against aggressive door-to-door sales practices.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm happy to hear of the action the government will be taking in response to the rising demand for action on door-to-door sales. I'm especially pleased to hear that water heater rental contracts will be the specific focus of this particular legislation.

Many of these contracts present consumers with complicated, onerous and hard-to-understand terms. Many consumers, especially newcomers and seniors, are vulnerable and are taken advantage of by these salespeople. Installing water heaters also represents a large risk to consumers because of the high cost involved in undoing the work if they change their minds after signing the contract, making the current 10-day cooling off period ineffective.

Minister, can you please explain how this new legislation will address these concerns?

1120

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: The member is absolutely correct in pointing out that consumers do indeed face high risks in undoing the work if they sign contracts. Consumers currently only have 10 days to change their minds after signing such a contract, and sometimes a company installs a new appliance in that period. That's why any potential legislation here, when introduced, would allow up to 20 days to cancel the agreement after entering into a door-to-door water heater rental contract. We're doubling the cooling-off period to 20 days, providing extra time for consumers. We also want to protect and support vulnerable consumers.

We'll also require plain language in any contracts and we'll require the companies to confirm sales by making scripted and recorded telephone calls to the customer after the contract is signed. There are other provisions that require the supplier to pay cancellation fees if the rules are not observed.

Speaker, this is about protecting consumers in Ontario. It's not about going after reputable firms, but we are going to take an aggressive stance on these aggressive businesses and unfair practices in the marketplace.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question today is for the Premier. Don Drummond, the Auditor General, the Grey-Bruce medical officer of health and even you have said the green act has been implemented wrong. Now today the Fraser Institute has released a scathing report which says you and your government are way off track with green energy.

The Minister of Labour just said that facts are important. Premier, the report said that Ontario now has the highest energy rate in North America, with increases of 40% to 50% forecasted. Your green energy scheme is a job killer.

Premier, the green energy facts are stacking up against you, so next week will you support my Bill 39 ensuring

affordable energy, which will put an end to the unaffordable—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I had a very interesting meeting, Mr. Speaker, a few days ago with folks from the health care community, particularly those who work with children and people with respiratory conditions. I think it would be a really good conversation for the member opposite to have with the asthma society, with the lung association, because clean air is such an important part of what people expect. As someone said to me in that meeting, you can choose what you eat, you can choose the water that you drink, to a certain extent; you can't choose the air that you breathe. We all have to breathe the air.

The Green Energy Act has allowed us to clean up the air we breathe. It has helped us give a generation—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order and take your seat, too.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —the opportunity to breathe cleaner air because we're shutting down the coal-fired plants, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the Fraser Institute report talked about putting scrubbers on coal plants. That doesn't deal with the CO₂ emissions, and so—

Interjection: Shameful.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find it shameful that the person that asked the question wasn't listening to the answer.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I don't need response or rebuttal. It's my gentle way of trying to say stop.

Supplementary? The member from Chatham—Kent—Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the Premier: Families and businesses will not accept your status quo. The Fraser Institute report today said that the manufacturing sector has been the hardest hit by your green energy scheme as employment has fallen 50% but costs went up 29%. The report also said that at the rate your government is going, Ontario will have 10 times the amount of wind turbines we already have installed. Premier, I can assure you that the residents of Chatham—Kent—Essex do not want 10 times more wind turbines, and neither do the people of Huron—Bruce, Dufferin—Caledon, Simcoe—Grey, Haldimand—Norfolk, Nepean—Carleton, Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and many others.

Premier, when will your government face the music, face the people of rural Ontario and admit that your green energy fiasco is all wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've met many people in rural Ontario who are concerned about the issue that the member opposite raises in terms of wind energy. I've been very clear that we need a much better process in

terms of community engagement on the placement of these pieces of infrastructure.

But, Mr. Speaker, the benefits of closing down the coal-fired plants, the benefits to the air, the benefits to cleaning up the pollution in our atmosphere, are just immeasurable. I don't know if the Fraser Institute report talks about the \$4.4 billion in avoided health and environmental costs, but again, I say to the member opposite, I really believe it would be instructive if he had a conversation with some of the people who deal with people who have respiratory conditions, parents of children with asthma, and ask them if they think that it's worth the cost to shut down those plants and make sure our air is clean.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. This week, the Minister of Energy finally acknowledged that the Enbridge proposal to pump tar sands across the GTHA is a "significant" and "serious issue" and that it raises "environmental concerns." He said the government will intervene at the National Energy Board hearings on Line 9, but the National Energy Board has created unnecessary barriers that will restrict public participation.

Will the minister therefore agree to launch a provincial environmental assessment of the Line 9 reversal to ensure full public participation and the protection of Ontario's drinking water and watersheds?

Hon. James J. Bradley: We understand the National Energy Board approved the Enbridge 9A reversal to transport crude oil from western Canada to eastern Ontario. We have received some requests that the province intervene. We are giving very serious consideration to those requests. As you know, municipalities, the province, virtually anybody has an opportunity to make an intervention. It is federally regulated in this particular case and as such it's subjected to the jurisdiction of the National Energy Board.

The Ministry of the Environment worked with the Ministry of Energy to ensure that any potential environmental impacts arising from reversal of Line 9 are considered by the National Energy Board in its decision on the Enbridge application.

Our submission, I should say to the member, also stressed the importance of aboriginal and public consultations. So we will continue to monitor the process and the health, safety and environmental impacts of this proposal and consider those requests which have been made for what the member made reference to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jonah Schein: Back to the minister, a study by Toronto-area conservation authorities concluded that a spill from Line 9, like the one in Kalamazoo, Michigan, would constitute a "significant threat" to drinking water in the GTA. Under new federal rules, the project will not receive a federal environmental assessment, but Quebec has committed to conducting a provincial assessment to protect Quebecers.

Why will the Ontario Minister not stand up for the safety in drinking water of people in our province? Why won't he launch a provincial environmental assessment that allows full public participation and full consideration of the environmental impacts of Line 9?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As I indicated to the member in my initial answer to him, we have received requests from different organizations that we undertake—even though it's under federal jurisdiction—a provincial environmental assessment. I have indicated very clearly that we are assessing all of the information that has been provided to us, the various requests which have come to us. We have encouraged municipalities, various ministries of our government, and the public and interest groups out there to make the representations to the National Energy Board and to the federal government. So we are giving full and comprehensive consideration to the requests which have been made, and we'll be forthcoming with a fulsome answer at a point in time in the future.

1130

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. This government's commitment to infrastructure is unprecedented. Let me give you an example. Last year, this government spent \$13 billion in Ontario alone. Compare that with the Conservative Harper government that spent a measly, paltry \$3 billion across Canada. That just shows you the difference. The reason for that is because the Conservatives don't understand the difference between spending and investment, and we do understand the difference between spending and investment.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is: Recently, MetroLinx came out with a suggestion—just one recommendation of many—of some revenue tools as to how we can go on expanding public transit in the GTHA, and I'd like to hear his comments on it.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member for Mississauga East-Cooksville is quite correct. We're having a very vigorous discussion.

I want to thank the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville and the member for York South-Weston. These are two Liberal members who have asked me questions almost every week about how we're progressing and holding this government to account. I want to thank them.

I have not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, not six, but seven critics in the opposition, and I can't get one question from the members opposite. The leader should be docking the critics' pay, Mr. Speaker—seven critics. We're having the most important conversation on transit expansion, green electrification, and the adult conversations going on outside—

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister, for that great answer.

I also want to talk about something very interesting that's been happening in my riding recently. There's a new sight in Mississauga, and that's the sight of double-decker GO buses. Minister, I'd just like to get a sense from you a little bit about what these new double-decker buses mean for the good people of Mississauga.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is early and quick action on the Premier's commitment to make transit investments a priority across Ontario, particularly in the GTHA and Ottawa.

These double-decker buses carry 81 people. They're very green. They use one driver to carry more people, and while our old double-decker buses, because of their height, could only go on 11 different routes, these can go fully on 45 different routes and connect that. This means—for people, particularly in Hamilton and across the 905—more regular service, more efficient service and better value for tax dollars because they cost a lot less per kilometre to run.

One day, one of those critics is going to ask me a question, Mr. Speaker. I just know it. I can feel it. I'm just on the edge of my seat with anticipation.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: For a half-year, we've been saying that documents have been withheld. You see, Project Vapour has been bugging us, Speaker. It's been referred to in many, many, many emails, but somebody had asked for that document to be withheld. Today, in the fourth document dump we received—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Directed to?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: To the Premier.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Today, in the fourth document dump that we received, we now know why this document was withheld. Premier, do you recall signing the agenda for cabinet when Project Vapour was discussed? This is your signature. You authorized this Project Vapour. Was it you who ordered this document withheld, Premier? Is that why we didn't have this until this very morning?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now that I've got your attention: To the person who decides that once I get the quiet they want to use their moment in the sun, I will warn you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The document that the member opposite has held up was not before committee because it wasn't within the scope of the questions, which is why we had suggested that the scope be expanded. We had suggested—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I will withdraw.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We had suggested that all documents be available, because we suggested that the scope of the committee be expanded. That was rejected by the members opposite, so that didn't happen. But remember, I have said that I am going to come before the committee if I am called, Mr. Speaker. I am perfectly willing to do that.

The other thing that's true is that that document he is speaking of was a document that referred to the Oakville closure. The decision had been made by the government a year before, and we were implementing the closure of that plant.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Cambridge.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, we have a document linking the Premier to this scandal. Her signature is on it right here. She attended a meeting with the trifecta of Duguid, Bentley and Duncan. You are implicated in the scandal. You cannot wash your hands anymore of this mess.

So the question is very simple: We had this document already, but the draft agenda wasn't included. The reason why this draft agenda wasn't included is because your name is on it. So who ordered the withdrawal of that document?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We suggested that the scope of the committee be expanded so that all of those questions could be asked and all of those documents could be brought forward. The members opposite said they didn't want that to happen. I have said I will come before committee.

I was part of a government that made a decision to close a gas plant that everyone in this House agreed should be closed, should not be built in the place that it was being built; we all agreed on that. The decision was made a year earlier; I was part of the government that was implementing that decision. I have never said that I wasn't; I said I was part of the government that made that decision, and I was part of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I said that I was not in the room when the decision around the closure of the Mississauga plant was made, but I'm part of the government, and I stand by those decisions. We all agreed in this House that those decisions should be made, and—

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

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier: Premier, this cabinet agenda document that you have

signed shows the government authorizing proceeding with arbitration agreements—an arbitration process with TransCanada. When you signed that, were you told the scale of risk that the government was taking on, and were you told that the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, had previously said that a long-term process would dramatically reduce the risk to the government? Did you know what risk you were signing for at that point?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I knew that we had made a decision to not go ahead, to relocate the gas plant. That was a decision that everyone in this House agreed with, because nobody believed that the siting was the right siting. So we listened to the residents of Oakville and we listened to the residents of Mississauga to relocate the gas plants. All parties supported this decision.

Since I have been in this role, what I have said is that we need to provide all of the documentation that is asked for, we need to have an open process; and we tried to open the process even more than it already was, and the members opposite decided they didn't want that process opened, they didn't want the scope broadened, they didn't want that full range of questions to be asked. I believe that it would have been a good idea to have that process. It would have been a good idea to broaden that scope. That's not what happened.

I will continue to work with my colleagues to make sure that every question that is asked is answered.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm deciding whether you're up or I'm up. The member on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have a member's statement this afternoon, and I would ask unanimous consent to allow me to wear the Canadian Cancer Society daffodil during that statement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member has asked for unanimous consent to wear the daffodil during his statement. Are we agreed? Agreed.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've been advised that it would be wise if we were giving everyone permission to wear the button. An addendum to the unanimous consent, by members' agreement: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to remind this Legislature that the scope did include this July 29—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is not a point of order, and when I stand, you sit.

VISITOR

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Speaker, I beg your indulgence. I wish to welcome to this Legislature Michele Riel, who

is the mother of a great page with us today, Louis Riel-Brockie from Mississauga South. Welcome to the Legislature.

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

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

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I don't think she's here yet. I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Burlington, Carolyn Scholey, a constituent who was here on September 27 and October 4 to show support for Bill 110, and who has returned today to lend her support to Bill 42. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It gives me great honour today to welcome members of the Canadian Sikh Association here to the Ontario Legislature. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Brampton-Gore-Bramalea.

Interjection: Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd also like to welcome the Canadian Sikh Association here today and thank them for honouring us, all members of Parliament, with presentations to each party. They're here in both the east and west galleries, and I'd like to welcome them all again today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I apologize to the member for messing up his riding, but I would never do that on purpose.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd also like to recognize the Sikh community here today, but I'd also like to recognize some constituents and citizens of Ontario who are here to listen to Bill 42, and they are: Darlene Sine, Nadia Fordham, Joanne Cormier, Kenneth Reid, Curtis Kingston and Samantha Paulin. Welcome to Queen's Park, and I hope we do justice to the cause you bring to the table.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, my very special guests from Nickel Belt have arrived, so I'd like to welcome the family of Neil and Tabatha Haskett, with their four children: that's Aedan, Clarice, William and Natalia who are here with us in the gallery.

They have brought some of their friends with them: Chris York, Kim Shook and Karen Bauer, as well as Pat Hudak—no relationship, I'm told—who are also here to support Bill 42, the Ombudsman Amendment Act for the children's aid societies. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Todd Smith: I would also like to welcome the members who are here from the Canadian Sikh Association, and I look forward to making a presentation a little bit later on their celebration of Vaisakhi. Welcome, folks.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ALFREDO DeGASPERIS

Mr. Frank Klees: I rise today to pay tribute to a great Canadian, an exemplary citizen, a builder of commun-

ities, an inspirational entrepreneur and business leader, a generous philanthropist and a friend to those who had the privilege of knowing him.

Alfredo DeGasperis has left a legacy, not only in the form of award-winning residential neighbourhoods, office towers and business parks, but also through the full-scale cancer wards and heart clinics that stand as a testament to his generosity of spirit. Although his life concluded on March 27, at the age of 79, his influence will be felt for generations to come.

Fred immigrated from Sora, Italy, when he was 18 years old. He and his brothers, Antonio and Angelo DeGasperis, personified the classic immigrant story of the 1950s. A strong work ethic, determination and an entrepreneurial spirit would take Fred from operating Concrete and Drain Ltd. out of a basement in a North York bungalow to overseeing a company that today employs more than 2,000 people and commands a multi-million dollar market share across several different industries.

We extend our condolences to his wife, Teresa; his sons, Jim and Freddy Jr.; his daughter, Carla DeGasperis; and his grandchildren, who were his ultimate pride.

I know that all members of this Legislature will join me in acknowledging the great contribution that Alfredo DeGasperis has made to Ontario and to Canada.

LIBERTY VILLAGE

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I rise today to congratulate the work that the Liberty Village BIA is doing in my community, and also to congratulate the Liberty Village Residents' Association for doing a whole lot of work to represent 8,000 people that live in that community just south of King and west of Strachan—8,000 people that live and work there, and 500 businesses that have established themselves in that community. We're talking about people who work in the music industry, people who work in the film industry, in software, architecture and design. That represents the new vitality of the culture that is coming, not just in my community but the whole of the riding.

We talked this morning, in the meeting that I had with the BIAs, about condominium issues and the OMB—which I have talked about here for a while—but we also talked about casinos. I say to you that the Liberty Village Residents' Association and the BIA have taken a very clear and strong position against the mega casino that would be right next door to where they are. They recognize that that mega casino would destroy the vitality of the Liberty Village that has just established itself in the last five years. They know that a mega casino would act like a vacuum cleaner and steal away much of the vitality that exists in Liberty Village and the surrounding community. I congratulate them for that work.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am proud to rise in the House today to recognize and congratulate three com-

munity leaders that do amazing work in my riding of York South–Weston. Lekan Olawoye, Victor Beausoleil and Shadya Yasin have been selected to serve as members of the first Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities. Lekan will also serve as council chair. These young individuals are doing tremendous work with and on behalf of our youth and have an exciting opportunity to shape government policy through their participation in this council.

I have been privileged to work with each of these three leaders, and I am happy to see these hard-working and inspiring youth advocates be recognized by the Ontario government. Another council member, Liban Abokor, has also contributed to our community of York South–Weston. It is great to have such strong representation on this council, and I know that these individuals are very well qualified for the task at hand.

This council will engage youth, young professionals and community members to learn about their challenges and share ideas on how to best support Ontario's youth, all across the province. I am excited to follow the progress of this council and to see what advice they come up with to improve the delivery and design of youth programs and services. Congratulations, and best of luck to all council members.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. John O'Toole: I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Clarington-area volunteers who have been recognized for their dedication to the preservation of built history.

My constituent Bill Paterson received a lifetime achievement award from the Ontario Heritage Trust. In the past, I sat with Bill on the local conservation advisory committee. Bill restored and preserved the stone house on Bloor Street where he and his family lived for approximately 30 years. It was subsequently moved as part of the 407 built in the east part of Durham region. More recently, he has restored a brick Regency cottage in Bowmanville, and as a member of the Masonic Lodge, he was active in achieving a historic designation for the Jerusalem lodge at 19 King Street East in Bowmanville.

Jennifer Knox of the Knox family farm was recognized for her work in the preservation of the farm's original barn, and also the relocation of the Anthony Washington stone house to their farm in 2005. This house was on the pathway also of the future 407 right-of-way.

1310

The Ontario Heritage Trust has also honoured a group of volunteers for their dedication to preserving and keeping the Enfield United Church in pristine condition and making the church available for community events. Although Enfield United Church has been closed for over 40 years, it is important to our history, our heritage and, indeed, our lives.

I'd also like to congratulate Angela Tibbles, chair of the Clarington Heritage Committee, and the volunteers of

the Newcastle Village and District Historical Society who were also recognized by Clarington council recently.

I tell all members of this House that built history is worth preserving. Thank you to those volunteers who work so hard to preserve it.

COMMERCIAL INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Today, I rise to discuss an issue of commercial insurance. I've raised the issue of personal automobile insurance time and time again, but on the horizon there's great trouble brewing in the area of commercial insurance. Due to increasing gas and insurance costs, taxi drivers are taking home maybe five to 10 cents for every dollar they earn. In fact, taxi drivers are facing policy renewals that are double, and in some cases triple, the premiums they paid last year.

I'll give you an example. In Hamilton recently, a taxi driver was quoted—and this is for a driver with absolutely no claims, no accidents on his record—\$16,000 per year, up from \$5,600 in 2012. That is unbelievable, for their rates to go up by more than triple in one year for absolutely no claims, no accidents.

A key factor to this rate hike is that there's a major insurance company that has withdrawn from the market, which has forced all of these drivers into the facilities market, which is a market for those who are bad drivers with convictions and criminal offences. They're being treated the same way for absolutely no reason. This is something that's happening under this Liberal government's watch. FSCO approves all changes to the insurance industry. They regulate the industry, and it's incumbent on this government to address this issue.

We've been fighting for auto insurance reform when it comes to personal automobile insurance, but now commercial drivers of all types, including taxi drivers, truck drivers and those of other commercial vehicles, are also feeling the brunt of this. We will hold the government accountable to ensure that commercial drivers are treated fairly in this province.

WOMEN PILOTS

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'm thrilled to be able to rise in the House and share with you a story that happened this previous March. In March 2013, the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum in Hamilton, Ontario, unveiled a very unique display celebrating Canadian women pilots, in honour of the women who have led the way bravely, from ferrying aircraft during World War II to flying CF-18s, helicopters and Hercules aircraft, and also serving as air crew in Afghanistan. The Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum saluted those women who over the past century dared to reach for the stars as astronauts.

The display included the original flight suit of Eileen Vollick. She was the first female Snowbird pilot and also the first female commanding officer of the Snowbirds. But when she started to learn to fly, she first had to ask for permission to do so. It wasn't until she was 19 that

she realized her dream. Then she became the first licensed female pilot, and Canada's skies changed forever. Her determination and her accomplishments are an inspiration for young girls and women, and her flight suit is on display. There's now a terminal at the Warton Keppel airport named in her honour, and it is the only terminal in Canada to be named after a female.

We have a long way to go, but we have come a long way as well.

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a privilege to rise during April, Cancer Awareness Month, to help the Canadian Cancer Society celebrate its 75th anniversary. Across Canada and in communities in every corner of Ontario, they are leading the fight against cancer through their fundraising, advocacy, prevention and support activities.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of Canadian Cancer Society volunteers, 62% of Canadians diagnosed with cancer today beat the disease. No greater testament to the importance of this work exists than the fact that the survival rate was just 25% in the 1940s, when the society began fundraising for research.

The sad reality of cancer is, we all know someone who lost their fight, but thanks in part to the Canadian Cancer Society's efforts, we probably know two or three survivors.

In my riding, the backbone of the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society is a dedicated team of 1,200 volunteers, and I have to say, they're true angels for cancer patients and their families. More than a friend to men, women and children in this dark time, these volunteers are a vital part of the health care system. Last year they provided 3,500 free rides to cancer appointments. In total, volunteer drivers in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville drove 300,000 kilometres, taking patients for life-saving treatments. I can't imagine how the system would work without these volunteers.

On behalf of cancer patients, their families and all those in my riding whose lives they've touched, I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved with the Canadian Cancer Society in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville and beyond.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: J'ai le plaisir de parler d'une initiative extraordinaire dans ma circonscription d'Etobicoke-Nord.

Speaker, I'd like to salute both the minister and the Ministry of Health for a \$3.4-million contribution—fortification—of the Rexdale Community Health Centre. This money will go towards new infrastructure investments in the Jamestown satellite. It's going to be an extraordinary addition to the 11 other agencies that are housed at the Rexdale hub—health and social service agencies. As well, this will also support improvements to the Kipling-Dixon satellite that will expand the space available for delivering high-quality health care services.

The improvements, of course, as you can imagine, are across a wide range of services: primary health care, health promotion services and diabetes education, among a number of other programs. As you'll know, community health centres focus on helping at-risk populations and those particularly coping with mental health and addiction issues.

This particular centre will help to bridge the gap presented by poverty, language barriers, geography, culture and even work schedules, and will contribute to transportation, child care and housing. It's ensuring the right care at the right time at the right price across not only my riding of Etobicoke North, with the Jamestown satellite and the Rexdale hub, but of course across Ontario.

We have 101 community health centres, and they're just getting stronger. Merci, monsieur le Président.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.

JAMES CARSON

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize Wasaga Beach elementary school teacher James Carson for his crusade to rollerblade 2,200 kilometres across the province to raise money for the Canadian Cancer Society. On his own initiative, Mr. Carson has begun fundraising for what he anticipates will be a several-weeks-long journey during the summer of 2014. He will travel from Kenora to make his way back to Wasaga Beach, where he will receive a final police escort from Constable Mark Kinney on his return. Mr. Carson is making this selfless journey as a result of a number of friends and family members that have been diagnosed with cancer.

In a news article, he recently explained why he's committed to this cause: "Cancer connects people because everybody has been affected. People usually know someone who is a survivor, has lost someone to cancer, or is going through treatment. Even my students have had personal experiences. It's powerful and it affects people in a lot of ways."

People from around Wasaga Beach and beyond are cheering Mr. Carson on and are extremely proud of their local teacher. Without question, James's upbeat approach to fundraising has gained him an admirable reputation throughout the community and the province. I know I speak for all members of this Legislature in congratulating him on giving so much of himself to such a great cause. He should be proud that he's making a huge difference.

For more information about Mr. Carson's journey or to follow his progress, please visit his Canadian Cancer Society web page or his Facebook page. I posted the details on my website at jimwilsonmpp.com.

Good luck, Mr. Carson.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. I too would like to welcome, in

the east and west galleries, our visitors from the Sikh association. We're glad you're here.

We're glad all of our visitors come to join us at all times, and I do have a special announcement. A very special delegation has joined us now from the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions of Kenya. Please join me in welcoming our guests. Thank you for being here.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE SIKH

Mr. Singh moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 52, An Act to proclaim the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month / Projet de loi 52, Loi proclamant le mois d'avril Mois du patrimoine sikh.

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

First reading agreed to.

1320

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, this would give Ontario an opportunity to be a leader in Canada. If we enact this bill, this would be the first bill in all of Canada which would be an ongoing Sikh heritage bill.

Sikhs have lived in Canada for over 100 years. They represent a dynamic population in Ontario. April is an important month for the Sikh community. In this month, Sikh Canadians celebrate Vaisakhi, which marks the creation of the Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith. Canadians celebrate this across Canada, across Ontario.

By proclaiming the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month, the province of Ontario recognizes the important contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric.

Sikh Heritage Month would give us an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Sikh Canadians and the important role they have played and will continue to play in communities across Ontario.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

VAISAKHI

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to recognize Vaisakhi in Ontario and around the world, which falls on April 13 of this year.

Vaisakhi Day marks the day in 1699 that Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th guru, laid down the foundation for the Khalsa order. It also marks the day that Sikhs were given the distinct identity and code of conduct to live by, which includes the five Ks. This is both a holy time and a time

to celebrate, as members of Ontario's Sikh community mark this significant day with music and prayer.

I am honoured, Mr. Speaker, to be standing next to my esteemed colleague Vic Dhillon, member for Brampton West, who introduced nine years ago the Khalsa Day Act in the Ontario Legislature, which I think all of us here should be very proud of.

Vaisakhi is a time for renewal and reflection of values of the Sikh faith, which include community service, hard work, an honest life and a quest to better one's life for one's children. Vaisakhi means many things to many people. This day is also observed as a day of thanks when farmers pay tribute, thanking God for the abundant harvest and praying for future prosperity.

Let us celebrate the wisdom, humility and contribution of this vibrant and engaged community here in Ontario. Ontario appreciates the vision and values continuously demonstrated by the Sikh community.

This government and the people of Ontario understand that diversity is Ontario's greatest strength. Diversity enriches our culture and nurtures the formation of strong communities. In Ontario we recognize and celebrate our differences, and we are pleased to celebrate Vaisakhi on April 13 of this year with over 100,000 members of the Sikh community.

I'd like to thank the Sikh community and everyone here in the Legislature for recognizing this important day. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's an honour to stand here today. First of all, I'd like to welcome again the members of the Canadian Sikh Association who are joining us here in the Legislature.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'd like to extend my best wishes to Ontario's vibrant Sikh community as they celebrate Vaisakhi.

On April 14, families and friends will gather to mark the birth of Khalsa. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh Ji unified the Sikh faith and did away with the caste system. He created a code of conduct for the faith based on values such as justice, peace, courage and community service. These are values that all Ontarians share, and values that have led our Sikh community to be leaders in business, public service, academia and so much more.

I have had at least a dozen opportunities over the last year to join with members of our Sikh community in Ontario as we've talked about how we can improve the fortune of Ontario's small business owners, and I had the incredible good fortune of celebrating Diwali at various gurdwaras and events late last year.

As I've joined the Sikh community for events, I've found a fierce commonality of spirit with not only my values but Conservative values. They have a powerful commitment to our democratic process, a strong belief in hard work and a great entrepreneurial spirit. On one of my first visits to a gurdwara, one of the members explained it to me this way: A needy man is never turned away, but it is an honour to succeed through hard work.

This year, I'll have the honour of taking part in Nagar Kirtans and will be celebrating with the Sikh community. I've had the opportunity to travel to Brampton and Mississauga to meet with community leaders there and visit their gurdwaras, and I've seen the strong sense of unity that ties their community together.

As a guy who came to Ontario 20 years ago from a very different community in Riverview, New Brunswick, the Sikh celebrations which I've had the honour of participating in have truly ingrained in me the sense of how rich our Canadian tapestry is in Ontario. My first festival of lights opened my eyes to the incredible impression that our Sikh community has left on this great province.

I'd like to recognize the Canadian Sikh Association for all the great work that they do advocating for their community and for their leadership on a lot of issues that matter to Sikhs across Ontario and all over Canada.

In the members' galleries and upstairs as well, here in the public galleries, we have many members of the Sikh community from across Ontario. I'd like to mention just a few of them. We have Baljit Singh Ghuman, the chair of the Canadian Sikh Association. We also have Balkaranjit Singh Gill, the president of the Guru Nanak Mission Centre in Brampton, and Jasbir Singh, president of the Guru Sikh Sangat in Hamilton.

Once again, on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'd like to wish Ontario's Sikh community a happy Vaisakhi. Currently, actually, our leader, Mr. Hudak, is touring the Gursikh Sabha Canada gurdwara in Markham/Scarborough this afternoon.

Vaisakhi di lakh lakh Vadhai.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, again I'd like to introduce and welcome the Canadian Sikh Association members. I'll begin with Baljit Singh Ghuman, the chair of the Canadian Sikh Association, Balkaranjit Singh Gill, the president of the Guru Nanak Mission Centre in Brampton, as well as Jasbir Singh, president of the Guru Sikh Sangat in Hamilton.

Mr. Speaker, Vaisakhi is a very important celebration. On a cultural note, it marks the spring harvest in South Asia, and it is celebrated by many communities across South Asia, but it is a particularly and distinctly Sikh celebration, as it marks one of the most important celebrations in the Sikh spiritual faith. It is the celebration of the creation of Khalsa. The Nagar Kirtans and celebrations that we'll see in the coming weeks and the coming months are also known as Khalsa Day celebrations. The historical significance is that during the Vaisakhi season of 1699, the 10th and last spiritual teacher or guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, created what is known as the Khalsa and the Sikh articles of faith.

A Sikh who wishes to become initiated into the Sikh spirituality is known as an amritdhari and becomes a member of the Khalsa order. The Khalsa order is a unique concept, in that it is one of our principles as Khalsa that it is a human responsibility to not only pursue your own spiritual advancement, but it is a responsibility and duty of all humans to seek justice and equality for all

and to commit yourself to resisting oppression of any sort. That is a commitment that one makes as a Khalsa and is one of the reasons why we celebrate Khalsa Day and Vaisakhi—because it is a celebration of freedom, of justice and of the tireless and relentless pursuit of equality for all.

The term “Khalsa” originates from a language and a word that represents “sovereign” or “free.” When we celebrate Khalsa Day, in actuality we’re celebrating freedom and the concept that all human beings are born sovereign, are born free.

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There was a tradition that existed in South Asia that people were born into a particular family or a particular clan, and that would prohibit them from accessing resources in society. That system was known as the caste system. In the Khalsa, or the Sikh philosophy, one of the essential goals was to eradicate this oppressive system that prohibited people from accessing places of prayer, from accessing resources and from participating in society. Equality is one of the fundamental, bedrock hallmarks of the Sikh spirituality.

One of our essential elements as we celebrate Vaisakhi and celebrate Khalsa Day is that we must commit ourselves to selfless service. The concept of seva is the idea that every human being should commit themselves in their day-to-day lives and in a concerted way to giving back to humanity, to giving back to their fellow brother or sister.

One of the most important things—and I take a pause at this, because it is a continuing issue here in Canada, in Ontario and across the world—is the oppression and the continued subjugation of women that exists across the world. That is something the Sikh faith spoke very, very strongly against—that for any society to progress requires equal treatment of women, requires us to recognize that all human beings are equal regardless of gender, regardless of caste, regardless of colour. That’s an essential, fundamental principle that I’m very proud to stand for today. When we celebrate Vaisakhi, we celebrate that importance—

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: If you look, at the time, there were many injustices occurring against various people, particularly women, and that was an essential element of creating the Khalsa—in which every man or woman is able to participate in any and every spiritual tradition without any barriers. That’s a thing that I’m very proud of, and I wish to share that with the Legislative Assembly.

In Punjabi, I’d like to share a couple of words. One of the most important quotes we talk of when we talk of the 10th guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, was [remarks in Punjabi]—the idea that recognizing the entire human race as one, recognizing that we’re all one brotherhood and sisterhood is an essential element, and Guru Gobind Singh Ji spoke about that very, very often.

When we look at the unique identity of the Sikh faith, it’s something that does stand out. We see the five

articles of faith, dastar, the turban. These elements are all actually signs or flags that the person that you see with those unique articles of faith is someone who stands up for principles of equality, justice for all, resisting oppression—values that we all share as Canadians, as Ontarians. So when you see someone and you celebrate Vaisakhi, remember you’re celebrating these important values that are also Canadian and Ontarian values that we all cherish.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. It is now time for petitions. Let’s change things up and look at a different position by asking the member from Durham to give us a petition.

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very, very much, Mr. Speaker. I’m somewhat surprised and unprepared.

PETITIONS

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Mr. John O’Toole: This petition has been read before, but it does make the point:

“Whereas the United Senior Citizens of Ontario has expressed its concerns over the high costs of parking at hospitals in Ontario on behalf of its more than 300,000 members; and

“Whereas thousands of Ontario seniors find it difficult to live on their fixed income and cannot afford these extra hospital parking fees added to their daily living costs; and

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association Journal has said in an editorial that parking fees are a barrier to health care and add additional stress to patients who have enough to deal with;

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

“That Ontario’s members of provincial Parliament and the” Kathleen Wynne “government take action to abolish parking fees for all seniors when visiting hospitals.”

I’m pleased to sign this, support it and present it to Annie, one of the pages.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I am pleased to present this petition from the people of Nickel Belt. It reads as follows:

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

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

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with Health Sciences

North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

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

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

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, I have received more “Stop the Trades Tax” petitions. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with new membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year;

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

“That the Liberal government stop their job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

I support this petition.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Miss Monique Taylor: “Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas people who feel they have been wronged by the actions of children’s aid societies are left feeling helpless with nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate children’s aid societies.”

I couldn’t agree with this more, Mr. Speaker. I will give it to page Annie to take it to the Clerk—

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

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Frank Klees: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario relating to the Preserving Existing Communities Act, 2013. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the town of Newmarket official plan was developed through extensive community consultation and commits the town council to manage growth based on specific principles;

“Whereas section 1.3.3 of the official plan states that growth should occur in a way that not only increases the quality of life for existing residents but also provides a functional environment for the future by protecting and enhancing existing natural features and systems;

“Whereas a key principle set out in section 2.1 of the official plan is a commitment to protect and strengthen existing neighbourhoods;

“Whereas section 3.2.1 states that the objective of the stable residential area policies of the official plan is to sustain and enhance the character and identity of existing residential communities;

“Whereas the town of Newmarket has received an application from Marianneville Development Ltd. that, if approved, would impose an additional 730 housing units into the existing, long-established Glenway community...;

“Whereas the Places to Grow Act, 2005 and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006 provide for a significant portion of new growth to take place through intensification of built-up areas;

“We the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Preserving Existing Communities Act, 2013 ... that amends the Places to Grow Act, 2005 to provide that a decision made by a municipal council is final and may not be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board if the following conditions are satisfied:

“The decision is to refuse a request to amend the municipality’s official plan with respect to land that is designated for one or more of the following: stable residential area, and parks and open space.

“The municipal council has passed a resolution stating that the requested official plan amendment would not be in the best interests of the municipality.”

Speaker, I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition, and I was pleased to propose this legislation, which will be debated next Thursday, April 18.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support and affix my signature to this, and will present it to page Stacey.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas residents and municipalities across Ontario want the ability to veto and/or plan for industrial wind turbines in their community; and

“Whereas ratepayers in Ontario want all forms of energy generation to be affordable and reliable; and

“Whereas residents of Ontario want the feed-in tariff program to be eliminated; and

“Whereas residents of Ontario want to protect environmentally sensitive areas like the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine from the development of wind turbines;

“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 bill, the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, and call committee hearings immediately on the bill.”

I totally agree with this petition. I affix my signature, and I’ll send it to the desk with Louis.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario.

“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....”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate 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—it’s back to page Kamryn to bring it to the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: This is to the Legislature of Ontario, calling for a 10-year jail sentence for people convicted of possessing an unlawful handgun.

“Whereas only police officers, members of the Canadian Armed Forces or legally authorized persons are allowed to carry handguns;

“Whereas there is no legitimate reason for any person to carry or possess a handgun that is stolen or illegally obtained;

“Whereas handguns are a grave danger to the safety of the citizens of Toronto and Ontario;

“Whereas too many innocent people are being victimized by criminals carrying and using unlawful handguns that they have no legal right to possess;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call upon the provincial government to call upon the federal government and Prime Minister Harper to enact legislation that would impose a 10-year jail sentence to anyone convicted of possessing an unlawful handgun.”

I support this petition; I affix my name to it.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

Mr. Todd Smith: I’m so pleased to be able to present this petition on behalf of a former page here at the Legislative Assembly, Olivia Fox from my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings—specifically, in Prince Edward county. It reads like this:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the decision to prorogue the first session of the 40th Parliament on October 15, 2012, forced 20 Ontario students to retire their posts as legislative pages after just one day on their job. These students prepared months, if not years, for the chance to work as a page in their eighth grade, and it was all for naught after just one day;

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

“For the Legislative Assembly to reappoint these students as pages once the Legislature resumes, to allow them to fulfill their duties and dreams of becoming a legislative page.”

I’m happy to sign this and hand it over to page Sophia.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of the residents of my wonderful riding of Essex.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Avastin is approved for use in the treatment of glioblastoma by Health Canada; and

“Whereas Avastin is currently covered for this treatment by the provincial governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia; and

“Whereas in a clinical study Mr. Kevin Graham had a positive response to this medication and his tumour stopped growing; and

“Whereas Mr. Graham and other glioblastoma patients have not had positive responses to other chemotherapy drugs currently covered by the government of Ontario;

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

“We respectfully request that Cancer Care Ontario be directed to reassess the importance of funding Avastin for brain cancer patients in Ontario to ensure equal access for Ontarians to the benefits of this treatment.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and wish Mr. Graham success in his treatment.

ELECTRICITY GENERATION

Mr. Mike Colle: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Electricity System Operator is poised to procure electricity generation valued at hundreds of billions of dollars in the coming months and years; and

“Whereas community enterprises for electricity generation are democratically controlled legal entities established for the purpose of mobilizing communities and financial resources to consider local electricity generation opportunities with a view to providing benefits to the community and Ontario as a whole; and

“Whereas the commercialization of our natural resources, grid capacity and power purchase capacity can impair Ontarians’ ability to mitigate the impacts of clean energy products; and

“Whereas community enterprises provide for local control over environmental assessment processes; and....

“Whereas the proposed renewable energy on crown land policy may encourage and prioritize community economic benefits from water power development and other clean energy projects;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support a community energy act to help facilitate the mobilization of communities and financial resources for the purposes of developing community enterprises for electricity generation.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here. It was presented by Mike Acton of Acton’s Service Centre in Watford. I have a great number of signatures on it.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship’s eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or” even up to “\$1,311.24;

“Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

“Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to” a maximum of “\$75;

“Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships;

“Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

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

“To suspend the decision to” significantly “increase Ontario Tire Stewardship’s fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs.”

SPRINGWATER PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we oppose the termination of the operating budget for Springwater Provincial Park in Springwater township on March 31, 2013;

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

“We ask that the park remain operating and facilities such as the animal sanctuary, cabins/shelters, playground equipment and ground maintenance remain intact and operating.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I’ll certainly sign it. I thank you for your time.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

MINING AMENDMENT ACT (RESOURCES PROCESSED IN ONTARIO), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MINES (RESSOURCES TRANSFORMÉES EN ONTARIO)

Mr. Mantha moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to amend the Mining Act to require resources to be processed in Ontario / Projet de loi 43, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines afin d’exiger que les ressources soient transformées en Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First I want to thank all those that have joined us here today to listen to this very important debate, which really impacts this province greatly.

I want to set the tone quickly that with this bill, we are not looking at building walls around Ontario; we’re actually looking at opening up walls around Ontario.

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We are definitely not looking at creating problems; we are looking at creating opportunities. This will create benefits for this province—endless benefits—and the jobs are going to be countless. I start that in order to get everybody on the same page, so that we know where we're going with this particular piece of legislation.

Now, I myself am one of those individuals who have been affected by the manufacturing sector and the loss of jobs. I have had some difficult decisions to make with my family. I know many friends, family members—cousins, aunts, uncles—neighbours and communities that have been devastated by certain policies that have been developed throughout northern Ontario in many sectors, specifically in the manufacturing and mining sectors. You know, for years I have seen, unfortunately, that it continues to happen in many communities across my riding and across northern Ontario: closures of sawmills, paper mills, mines, refineries and manufacturing facilities. Without the appropriate public policies in place, the loss of jobs and economic prosperity is likely to continue.

This bill is one step in the right direction to making Ontario a leader in resource refinery and a prosperous place once again. How is this bill going to make Ontario an attractive place to do resource refinery? This bill is going to give Ontario a role in its own destiny and autonomy over our own natural resources. This bill will force the government to recognize infrastructure deficits and realize the opportunities lost right here in our own backyard.

This bill is so simple that it is only a change of one word. Right now, section 91 of the Mining Act states that all minerals and ores mined in the province need to be processed in Canada unless companies request exemptions due to special circumstances. Under this model, companies take Ontario's valuable natural resources and then turn to the government to ask for an exemption to ship resources abroad for refining purposes.

Various levels of governments in Canada now know the challenges mining companies are facing in refining materials right here at home. And while some have granted exemptions and are now making commitments to infrastructure development to address these shortfalls, provinces like Ontario have not shown the same commitment. And that is a shame, because we have unprecedented opportunities with the Ring of Fire right in our backyard. If the province doesn't develop a plan to give companies the opportunity to process resources here, then we will miss out on job creation for the north that is so desperately needed. We need this new hope.

Once this bill is passed, a company taking these precious minerals and ores from Ontario must ask the minister of Ontario's mines if they can have the exemption to process not just outside of Canada but outside of the province. This change is simple and will allow the minister to see the shortfalls and infrastructure challenges and give him the opportunity to address these and make Ontario's economy stronger.

This is not a unique concept, and we're not reinventing the wheel here. This very same legislation has been

implemented in other provinces—provinces that realize the possibility of job creation and stimulation of their economies. It's true that this bill will not create jobs overnight. I won't sugar-coat the serious challenges we face in this province, making Ontario a more attractive place for mining investment and refining.

But what this bill will do is give Ontario the incentive to develop the potential of Ontario to be a leader in mining refinery. If the Ontario government chooses to realize its potential—and hopefully they will—the province will have the possibility to create jobs and reinvigorate an industry that has experienced many job losses.

Ontario used to be the hub of mining refinery. We used to have smelting facilities in Timmins, but 700 jobs lost, and Quebec sends their thanks to the Ontario Liberal government for their Quebec job action plan. Other provinces, states and countries are standing by waiting, pen in hand, just waiting for their job creation plan to come through, either due to action or inaction by this government.

We also have steel plants in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie that used to employ double and triple what they employ now. There is a possibility of updating the facilities in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie to produce stainless steel here in Canada. Currently, there is no chromite mining or ferrochrome production in North America. But there is an established market for both chromite and ferrochrome. The Americas import 250,000 tonnes of chromite ore and 450,000 tonnes of ferrochrome annually. The primary driver for chromite is stainless steel production. China is currently the major producer of chromite.

Instead of mining minerals and ores here, shipping them to China and then purchasing back the final product, Ontario has the opportunity to see the project from start to finish and reap the benefits. Ontario has the skilled labour and the facilities, and we should be taking advantage of the opportunities that come only once in a lifetime. We have the existing infrastructure in this province, and this infrastructure could be used to refine our mining products, if in fact this government wants to enact a job creation policy instead of doing others a favour.

There are endless opportunities to create jobs for Ontario in the mining sector, and this bill is a step in the right direction. This bill will not scare mining investment away. It will not intimidate investors. If anything, the passage of this bill will signal to mining investors that Ontario is ready to take on the challenges in the mining sector and get Ontario back to work. It is simply the change of one word, allowing exemptions to be granted from the province of origin for these precious materials. The burden will not solely be shifted to the backs of companies wanting to invest in our province. The province needs to recognize their part in the mining industry, and that part does include developing infrastructure and lowering electricity costs and barriers to business.

In order to realize these challenges and effectively deal with them, Ontario would benefit by having auton-

omy over our natural resources. This autonomy comes with granting exemptions to the Mining Act. The simple change to the Mining Act will hold the government accountable and put their feet to the fire to create jobs in this sector. Change needs to be implemented. Investment needs to be made and a plan must be put into action. With the province having a role in the decision to allow mining companies to move minerals and ores out of the province, Ontario will have to face these challenges.

It's called "value added" for a reason. As a government, we should be striving to achieve the maximum value for each non-renewable resource we pull from our own land. It's not just traditional jobs that this action will create. There are many spin-off jobs in many sectors in all regions of the province which will benefit from this, from logistics to construction and design, to engineering to business to trades and health care. The opportunities really never end.

This job creation and growth in other sectors of the economy can all be achieved with a direct commitment by this government to support the industry and collaborate with investors and mining companies by making investment, mining, refining and manufacturing attractive to them.

During my time as northern development and mines critic, I've had the opportunity to travel to many different sites, including the Ring of Fire, the Esker camp and the Noront site. In 2007, the Ontario mining company Noront Resources Ltd. discovered large deposits of nickel, copper, platinum and palladium in the Ring of Fire. In 2010, the Ontario government announced they would open a large chromite deposit for development. Touring the site was a very interesting and eye-opening experience for me. I was impressed by the environmentally sound practices I saw and the skilled and diverse workforce that was present.

The Ring of Fire development has great potential for creating jobs and improving northern Ontario's economy. However, we need to ensure that the Ontario government facilitates development by providing incentives to companies to do business in Ontario while respecting environmental assessments, consulting with First Nation communities and protecting jobs—and that starts in our own backyard.

As it stands, mining developments are hindered by government inaction when it comes to building the infrastructure required to transport minerals. For all companies with a stake in the Ring of Fire, it has been detrimental that a transportation corridor has been slow to materialize. We have the infrastructure to refine here in Ontario, and doing so can increase business for our railways—you remember the ONTC?—and create more jobs. All of this can be done in an environmentally respectful manner. If we plan responsibly, we will see real long-term improvements for Ontarians and the northern economy.

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I want to make sure that our government doesn't rob Ontarians of jobs by allowing raw materials to be shipped

overseas for processing to a country which may have poor environmental and worker protections. Again, we should be capitalizing on those opportunities in our backyard.

Processing minerals requires a high-skill workforce and is also a high-energy consumption process. With the high price of electricity, mining companies are at risk of taking high-paying jobs offshore, where the cost of electricity is lower. Several mining companies have made it clear that the price of electricity is too high and that they are exploring the possibilities of moving their operations out of the province.

The average industrial rate in Toronto is 9.59 cents per kilowatt hour. In northern Ontario it's 8.69 cents per kilowatt hour. However, in Quebec, the average industrial rate is 4.56 cents per kilowatt hour, and in Manitoba, 3.59 cents per kilowatt hour. Need I say anything more? The result is that companies are leaving or will not reinvest in Ontario, especially northern Ontario, where industries tend to be more energy-intensive. Electricity rates are also a significant hurdle for municipalities when attempting to attract investment and the value-added parts of the resources in the manufacturing sector, and are a barrier to northern Ontario economic diversification.

The Ontario government needs to provide competitive electricity prices for companies as an incentive to keep the processing jobs in Ontario. I have stood repeatedly in this Legislature to address the concerns over job creation and the challenges that companies face when they operate in the mining industry in Ontario. How many more times will we have to debate before we get serious and commit to creating jobs and developing the Ring of Fire?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to join this debate. Certainly, I agree with my colleague who has brought this forward for debate that it's a very important debate that we're having today. Where we don't agree, I think, is on the implications of the proposed legislation that he's bringing forward. I will do my best to explain that in the time that I'll be using today. I hope to have some time for my parliamentary assistant to say a few words, as well.

But let me begin our government's response, to the MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin's private member's bill by saying, and I think I can say it with some confidence, that I think all members of this Legislature want to see that the greatest value-added benefits are derived from mining activities in the province of Ontario. I mean, this is an industry that already provides over 27,000 direct jobs and 50,000 indirect jobs to the people of this province. Our mineral production sector is worth now about \$11 billion, up from \$5.3 billion in 2003. That makes us the top jurisdiction in that regard, which means we are continuing to see great investment and support.

May I also say, and I say to all my colleagues, that our government's goal of increasing these value-added

benefits is reflected in the work that we have done to establish a diamond processing facility in Ontario, an extremely specialized form of processing where we are now processing 10% of the diamonds that are taken out of the ground from the Victor diamond mine near Attawapiskat. That is certainly a significant move that we want to see continuing to move forward.

That very strong commitment to add value to the mining industry is reflected in the discussions that we are having with Cliffs Natural Resources, specifically regarding their \$3.3-billion proposal which would, among other things, provide for the construction of a ferrochrome processing facility in Capreole, which would be the first in North America and something that indeed would obviously bring incredible economic value-added to the mining sector—so hundreds of jobs in construction and certainly hundreds of jobs on an ongoing basis.

Here we are today: All three parties in the Legislature, I think, have common goals in that regard. Certainly our government is taking very significant action to see those value-added opportunities increase in the province. But we find ourselves today debating a private member's bill by my colleague and the critic from Algoma–Manitoulin that would require, if it became law, that all ores and minerals taken from the ground in Ontario must be treated and refined in this province. For those who are not familiar with the mining industry, it might seem like an interesting, if not a good, idea. Those would not be aware, necessarily, of the thousands and thousands of well-paying Ontario jobs that rely on the free movement of minerals in our country and around the world.

I did get asked a question yesterday by my colleague, and I said to him at that time that what we are debating today would be putting us on dangerous ground. Quite frankly, I meant that when I said it. By that, Mr. Speaker, what I meant was that this legislation—however well intentioned it may be, and I appreciate that you and I are not on the same page on the impact of this. The fact is, if it became law, I really believe it could lose a significant number of jobs in this province.

We all understand—I believe we do—that Ontario and certainly the mining industry is very much a part of the global economy. What I mentioned earlier as the free movement of minerals is a large part of the reason why thousands of Ontarians right now are employed by companies that process materials from other provinces and other countries: the USA, Mexico, Chile and Australia. To put it fairly bluntly, if I may, if we were to enact legislation that required all companies to process all their materials in Ontario, we could very well see retaliation by other jurisdictions blocking our access to those materials, potentially threatening thousands of jobs here in the province. That is something we've heard from many of the industry leaders.

Many Ontarians perhaps don't know this—I'm sure that all my colleagues across the way know this—but four out of five of Ontario's largest mineral processing facilities receive two thirds or more of their feed from outside the province, and their economic viability

depends very much on the import of those minerals into Ontario. There are all kinds of examples, and I'll give you a couple of them. At Xstrata's Falconbridge smelter in greater Sudbury, over 70% of the copper and nickel smelted is imported from outside Ontario.

Interjection.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Xstrata employs 1,200 people—the member for Timmins–James Bay knows that—in greater Sudbury. It certainly is responsible for a significant amount of secondary employment.

Cameco Corp. operates the world's largest commercial uranium refinery in Ontario. They import 100% of their uranium concentrate from mines in Saskatchewan, Australia and the United States. They employ 560 people at the Blind River and Port Hope conversion facilities.

You mentioned the steel industry. You've got three members of your party, the third party, who represent people who work in the steel industry, including the leader of the third party. Whether you're talking about Essar Steel in Algoma or you're talking about ArcelorMittal Dofasco in Hamilton, there are thousands of jobs in the steel industry that rely on the import of their materials to maintain those well-paying jobs.

Again, if we put this piece of legislation in place, I do truly fear we would have retaliation from other companies and other jurisdictions, and that's a kind of retaliation that I don't think we should be in any way risking.

Here are the facts from my perspective, and I do think this is shared by many in the industry, many in the union movement and many of the workers as well. Specifically the mining and certainly the steel industries require the flexibility we presently have in the legislation to maintain these jobs. Let me be clear, too, Speaker: If all the companies were required to process their product in Ontario, it would result in a loss of investor confidence. Again, we don't agree on that, but I feel very strongly that that's the case, based on the conversations that I've had. It could result in potential mine closures, and obviously it could result in the loss of significant employment. I feel very strongly about this.

This legislation has been debated before in the Legislature. There may be a nuance to this piece, but it has been debated before and it has been defeated before.

I want to say to my colleague: There's no question in my mind that you in any way have an intention of putting those valued jobs in peril. We are on different sides of the position on this issue. I do recognize as well, from our conversations we've had over the last couple of days leading up to today, let alone in your remarks today, that you certainly don't see the legislation you're proposing as having the negative impact it would, but I do. I've given this a great deal of thought. I'm standing here, before all members in the Legislature, quite frankly imploring them to vote against this proposed bill, to vote against it, to protect jobs in the province and to support the continued growth and development of the mining industry.

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Certainly, there's no question that we all need to continue to work together to see the greatest value-added

opportunities and benefits for all Ontarians to come, particularly from exciting developments such as the Ring of Fire. But I don't want us to take a bad step back.

I do want to actually reference, if I may—I don't want to take too much of my colleague's time. I had an interesting conversation with Peter Poppinga, who is the CEO of Vale, who reached out to me. He was very concerned about this legislation as well. Vale has made a very significant and strong commitment to the province of Ontario, and has invested I think close to \$3 billion in the province, and more to be invested as well. Certainly, they do the bulk of their processing and refining in the province of Ontario, but the truth is that this is, as much as anything else, about stability and the need to maintain the flexibility that is in their place.

I know you all understand the challenges that one has when one is in government. You were once in government. You recognize that finding that balance—but the fact is, I feel very strongly that we will be taking a step back by supporting this legislation, and a very, very significant one, in fact. Quite frankly, what I don't want to see is us being put in a position where it stops us in our tracks, so to speak, in terms of mining development opportunities, let alone manufacturing opportunities in the province.

Thank you for the opportunity to debate this legislation. I feel, obviously, very strongly that we should not be supporting it, and certainly I will not be. Thank you.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to join in the debate on Bill 43. I'd like to start out by agreeing with my NDP counterpart from Algoma-Manitoulin and fellow northern development and mines critic that the Ontario Mining Act is in need of revision. There's no doubt that there's room for improvement, particularly with the new prospecting regulations that came into effect April 1. In fact, I just recently attended the north-western prospectors' conference. The big thing I heard about at that conference was the uncertainty being created and how a lot of junior mining companies are currently looking for other jurisdictions to invest in because of that uncertainty.

With this in mind, I don't believe that Bill 43 will help the Ontario mining industry or keep more jobs in the province, as the NDP have claimed. When implementing legislation such as this, you need to consider the Ontario mining industry as a whole. It is complex, and one seemingly insignificant change, substituting "Ontario" for "Canada" in the current act, by no means provides the comprehensive and in-depth thinking that is needed to make a difference for mining and refining operations in Ontario.

The province of Ontario cannot afford protectionist policies. You can't gamble our economic recovery on untested strategy. Our economy is inextricably linked with our neighbouring provinces and the United States. Our steel mills, as just one example, already rely on feedstock from other jurisdictions to ensure that they run

at full capacity and are able to maintain their production and their jobs.

While the consideration of cross-border trade and avoiding a potential trade war over such policies are a concern, to say the least, what is even more important, I feel, is the negative message that would be sent to the international business community. Mining companies in particular make investment plans that are contingent on stable political climates. A stable business climate, free of political unpredictability, was a historic strength of Ontario. It is what helped us rank as the number one mining jurisdiction in the world back in the year 2000, back when our leader, Tim Hudak, was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Since then, under the current government, we have steadily slipped. We're currently now at number 16, and life has been made harder for the mining industry in Ontario. Many will remember the famous diamond tax that came into effect in 2007—just, I might add, as the De Beers Victor mine was about to open. Just after they spent a billion dollars, the current government brought in a brand new tax. Imagine running your own business and then having a 13% cut from your profits, from your budget and your projected business plan, all with the single stroke of a pen. That is exactly what happened in the diamond industry in Ontario back in 2007. It had a ripple effect and undoubtedly made companies more wary about investing in Ontario, especially over the long term.

The diamond tax should serve as a cautionary tale against implementing short-sighted policies that end up having industry-wide effects. If Bill 43 were to be passed into legislation, the industry-wide impacts would be significant. And in the long run, once companies have adjusted, would Ontario really come out ahead? I think not, and nothing the NDP has offered provides any evidence that it will.

There's mention of the job-creating potential of the Ring of Fire. I assure you that its great potential will be realized in Ontario without protectionist policies. We instead need to focus on creating an environment that business wants to be a part of, a place where mining companies compete, choose to locate their operations and provide stable, well-paying jobs.

The last time we debated this bill, Xstrata Copper had just pulled the plug on its Timmins smelter and moved some 670 jobs to Quebec. Many critics pointed to Ontario's high hydro rates as the deciding factor in the eventual relocation. We instead focused our efforts on tackling the uncompetitive hydro rates in northern Ontario and across the province.

Couldn't we achieve the same goals while still allowing companies the flexibility they need to compete and operate? We have to work to make Ontario more competitive in order to attract business, not simply pass legislation that will attempt to force companies to locate and work here in Ontario.

Bill 43 is not good business and will continue to make it harder to do business in the province of Ontario. Mr.

Speaker, the PC caucus will not be supporting this private member's bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's a privilege to be able to rise and speak in support of Bill 43, which will ensure that the mineral resources that are extracted in Ontario are processed here, unless the company is granted an exemption from the minister.

I believe the passage of this bill is essential to enable us to maximize the benefit of our natural and human resources in Ontario. We are never going to be a "have" province again unless we take immediate steps to protect Ontario's jobs. This means saying no to the outsourcing of Ministry of Natural Resources jobs to Tennessee. This means making sure that the federal government closes the loopholes it created that allow foreign workers to literally take away our jobs. And it means ensuring that our mineral wealth, something that is owned by each and every one of us in Ontario, is used to create jobs in Ontario, not in the United States, not in Mexico, not in China and not in another province.

This is mineral wealth that is going to make large corporations billions of dollars in profits. These corporations want our resources, but they absolutely cannot be given away without us asking a fair price in return. That fair price is us saying, "Only if those of us who collectively own these resources have a fair share of the benefits." Nowhere is that more important than in the northwest's Ring of Fire, where the mineral wealth is overwhelming, yet so many of the communities in whose traditional territory the riches lie are living in overwhelming, abject poverty.

Premier Wynne wants to be known as the social justice Premier. To me, social justice means fairness, it means equality and it means ensuring that everybody has the resources they need to succeed. It means ensuring that people living in poverty have access to the jobs and skills training that can help them get out of poverty; it means ensuring that they have access to clean, safe drinking water; and it means ensuring that they have access to basic infrastructure, such as the electricity grid, mold-free schools and safe housing. It means ensuring that people living in communities like Neskantaga, Webequie, Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout, Ignace, Dryden, Emo, Rainy River, Red Lake and so many others know that there's a job waiting for them.

How do we accomplish this? By saying very firmly and very clearly that these are our resources, and we will use them to accomplish our collective goals as a community, as a region and as a province.

Speaker, that is what this bill does today. It takes important steps toward restoring this province to the economic glory it once enjoyed and becoming a "have" province again. I urge each and every one of the MPPs in this House today to support this bill.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Just briefly, I do, like the minister, appreciate the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for bringing this forward, because I think it really highlights mining, which isn't highlighted enough. Not enough people in Ontario understand how critically important mining is to the economic well-being of this province.

All you have to do is, if you go, as the member said, to the PDAC conference just down the street here—32,000 mining industry individuals come here from all over the world every year. They don't get one line of print from the local newspapers—some 32,000 people who want to invest in Ontario, want to invest in the mining industry. The other connection is just the number of direct and indirect jobs in mining: 27,000 direct jobs, 55,000 indirect jobs. Mining is really a powerhouse.

There are obviously some serious situations that we're dealing with, a lot to do with what's happening in Europe and a number of other issues. But I think the member is bringing up a very valid point: Can we find a way of getting that value-added here in Ontario? I think the minister agrees. I think the real issue is about the impact and how the industry will react and will there be retaliation? I think that's something that both of them can work on, because I think you have basically the same goal: to get the jobs, the secondary jobs, the value-added jobs to stay here in Ontario as much as possible—to find a way of doing it without sending the wrong signals to the investors and to the industry.

As I said, the member has an excellent point he's bringing forward about keeping the jobs here. The minister is also trying to make sure the jobs stay here. I think you're both working to the same goal, but how to get to it is maybe something we need to work on.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address Bill 43 today. In my riding of Nipissing, we have nearly 70 mining-related companies, including two of the largest exploration firms in the world, headquartered right in North Bay, so the importance of mining to Ontario's overall prosperity is certainly paramount to me.

I can also tell you, Speaker, that the member from Oshawa and I both share an unusual trait: We both hold prospector's licences, so I can tell you the significance of mining in Ontario is not lost on either of us. We have enjoyed the fun and excitement and—I don't know about prosperity of individual prospectors in Ontario, but I sure enjoy gold-panning in Temagami, I can tell you that.

It's obvious we need to encourage mining and mining-related industries in Ontario, but we can't build that industry on the basis of protectionist legislation, and thus, I cannot support this bill.

Let me give you some context, Speaker. In 2009, when I served as mayor of the city of North Bay, I led an international push to oppose the Buy American provision adopted by the Obama administration. That provision shut out northern Ontario companies, and indeed Canadian companies, from bidding on work on American government contracts, whether they had the best expertise or not.

History has shown that these types of protectionist policies hurt everyone. In the end of our battle, our American counterparts saw the light. We had many meetings down the street from here with the trade commissioner and the US ambassador, and we were able to claim an international victory. That lesson should be brought here today.

The simple fact that we cannot ignore, but that the third party would like us to, is this: The Ontario economy is integrated with other provincial economies and the United States', and we cannot implement protectionist policies and risk failure.

One of the considerations this bill fails to realize is that it could hamper the operations of existing manufacturers in the province. I know the member from Parry Sound spoke about Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie—the steel industry—and surely the member proposing this bill would not be in favour of a protectionist outcome in the steel industry.

Let me bring it a little closer to home. I spoke with Roger in Cobalt, who works at one of the smelters there, and Roger told me that almost all of the mineral that they process in Cobalt comes from the United States. So, Speaker, I would ask you, what happens to Roger and the men and women he works with in the municipality of Cobalt? When we put this bill in and the States retaliate with a similar bill, Roger has no more work in Cobalt. I think that we need to stand up for Roger and his family today and make sure this protectionist bill does not pass.

I know that the member's intent is sincere, but the bill would simply not benefit the Ontario mining industry as a whole and would send a signal of instability that we cannot afford.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak.

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

The member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What a silly argument. Currently, the Mining Act says that if you ship ore outside of Canada, you need to have ministerial permission to do it. Some of the facilities you talk about get ore from outside of Canada. Do you see them retaliating against the Canadian government or the Ontario government for having that in our legislation? What a silly argument.

The issue here, quite simply, is that we should do all that we can in this province in order to add value to our natural resources. If you look at countries around the world, Ontario is one of the few jurisdictions that don't try to do that. Look at Norway, look at Denmark, look at South Africa—look at many countries around the world. Look at the United States. What they try to do is they say, "Listen, when you have natural resources that are finite resources, that are owned by the people of the province or the state or whatever it might be, you should try to process that ore in your jurisdiction as much as humanly possible," and that is exactly what this amendment is saying. This amendment is saying that where it makes some sense, we need to make sure that the province has the hammer to be able to say to companies that

are just going to ask for an exemption, a ministerial permit to ship it to Quebec or Manitoba, that there is a requirement for them to look at how they can do it in Ontario.

Now, I agree that one of the reasons that Xstrata closed in Timmins was because of the price of energy. I agree that one of the reasons that the copper smelter is shutting down in Sudbury and we're going to be shipping all that ore outside of Ontario, all of that copper that comes out of Inco, is because of some of the regulations that were put in place by this government.

But I say to you, my friends, what you need to do is to come at it the other way, to say, here we have the Ring of Fire, we have Noront, we've got Cliffs and we've got KWG. Let's work together at looking at what the provincial government can do, what the federal government can do and what the private sector can do by coming together and saying, "How do we position this finite resource of chromite, iron ore, gold and other things that are out there so that we can add value to them?"

Why shouldn't Ontario try to become a jurisdiction that is able to get into the stainless steel business? There are thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to be had if we can take the chromite from chromite all the way to stainless steel. By allowing companies like Cliffs to say, "Oh, maybe we'll put a refinery in Sudbury, and we'll process less than half our ore here"—the rest of it is going to be put on a train and it's going to be shipped to China, and they're going to add the value in China when it comes to what they want when it comes to our natural resources.

So why don't we, rather, say, "We'll help you with electricity, we'll help you to develop infrastructure, we will help you with training as an exchange for you to follow our Ontario requirement that says you must process here in Ontario"? That way these companies get to mine, they get to reduce their costs because the infrastructure is lower, and Ontarians are able to benefit to a greater degree from what the resources can give, and that is jobs and much-needed investment in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I want to applaud the member from Algoma—Manitoulin for bringing Bill 43 forward with best intentions. He's trying to protect and promote jobs in his riding. Ontario as a whole has over 600,000 Ontarians currently unemployed. I understand why this bill would be brought forward.

However, there are certainly some unintended consequences that I do have some concerns with. The bill amends the Ontario Mining Act, subsection 91(1), by striking out the word "Canada" and substituting the word "Ontario." Well, currently, all ores or minerals raised or removed from lands, claims or mining rights that are patented, leased or otherwise disposed of must be treated and refined in Canada. This amendment would mean that such ores or minerals must be treated and refined in Ontario.

1430

In and of itself this may sound like a novel idea, but there are many negative effects that this change could in fact have. This is, in essence, Speaker, a protectionist policy. Ontario is not an island but part of a confederation of provinces and territories. While we often compete with each other, we must work together with our counterparts in Legislatures around the country toward a common goal. Ontario's economy is in fact integrated with the economies of our provincial cousins and our neighbours to the south. During a time of economic crisis, we cannot afford to implement protectionist policies and risk triggering a trade war. This will only drive up the cost of goods in Ontario. Our refining operations already rely on feedstock imported from outside of the province to run at their full capacity.

The change proposed in this bill could actually end up hurting the steel industry in Ontario. For example, members from Hamilton and the member from Sault Ste. Marie can surely tell us just how important that industry is—or, sadly, was.

Speaker, the fact that we are resorting to debating protectionist policies is reflective of just how bad things are and how things have gotten in this province.

Ontario used to be the envy of the country, an economic juggernaut that drove Canada forward. Now we're lagging behind, in case the member from Timmins–James Bay may have missed that. The Ontario I believe in is the better Ontario, the one that can break down barriers to stand alongside other provinces of this great country and to engage in a little friendly competition, not put up walls to hide behind them. I believe in a better Ontario that can attract investors from around the world, ones that will create jobs all over the province, from Algoma–Manitoulin to the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex.

We in the PC Party feel that there are more effective ways of stimulating growth in the mining sector. Let's cut the red tape that gets in the way of businesses looking to set up shop and hire Ontarians. Let's make energy rates affordable so that businesses can thrive and their employees can thrive with them.

Speaker, Ontario is broken, so let's get it back working again.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour for me, coming from a mining constituency, to support the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, and I'd like to also thank the member for Timmins–James Bay for championing this cause for a long time.

I'm surprised, because I expected the Tories not to read it because they don't read anything—but I'm surprised that the Liberals didn't actually read this bill, because it's not what they're saying this is. What this is, is—

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, but what this is, is, before the government signs off on exporting minerals, the provin-

cial government has to sign off, so they have to justify their decision. To my neighbour in Cobalt—I'm a proud Cobalter. That's all this is. This isn't protectionist. This is forcing the government to sign off on their decisions. When you have a board of a mining company, you expect the board of directors to be responsible to the shareholders and justify their decisions.

The government, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: We should expect the same thing from him, so when he signs off to export ore from out of this province, he has to sign off and justify his decision. If he signs off on exporting ore from the Ring of Fire, then he would be responsible to stand in this House and say why. We're not saying he can't; we're saying that he has to justify why. That's the purpose of this House. It's not about stopping; it's about justification. When and if the government signs off on the Ring of Fire and half of it goes to China instead of going—oh, it could go on rail and maybe have something to do with the ONTC, to my friend Roger in Cobalt. When we ask him, "Well, could it be that you played around way too long to actually get this thing going, or you didn't actually look at processing in Ontario?" he would have to stand in this House and explain why. If he had a good reason, that would be—that's how this works. But he would have to stand in this House and justify his reasoning.

That's what this bill does. It doesn't stop the movement of ore; it makes the minister and it makes the government accountable for its decisions in the mining sector.

We are blessed here with an abundance of wealth. We didn't create it; we were given it. It's here, but it's our responsibility to make sure that that wealth benefits all Ontarians, including the First Nations, and including the people here in Toronto and the people in Hamilton who could benefit from processing it here.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was quite surprising to hear the debate this afternoon about this one-word bill. You have to realize that if you look at everybody—because mining is international. You come to Sudbury; we have over 250 mining supply companies right there in my riding. I talk to them all the time. I see them every week. Mining has gone international.

All of those companies know that the law exists, that if they're going to ship out, they're going to have to have conversations with the government, and they do this. Ore comes in and gets processed at the smelter in Sudbury, and ore leaves Sudbury and gets processed all over the world. They've had that conversation with the government. They've had that conversation with the federal government. The only thing we are changing is that this conversation—this adult conversation—will now take place with the minister sitting in front of me, with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines here in the province of Ontario.

That's all that's changing. This is not protectionist. This is not going to change investors' behaviour. You're

reading way too much into one word. The way it exists right now is that there's an adult conversation that takes place with the federal government. We are saying that given that this is a provincial resource—because mining is our responsibility, not the responsibility of the feds; because it is our responsibility, as it is the responsibility of the people of Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia to look after their own natural resources—let's have this conversation right here with our very competent Minister of Northern Development and Mines, not at the federal level.

Nothing else will change. We're not creating something that doesn't already exist. We're just saying that given that those are our natural resources, we want to have this conversations with the provincial government, which may be a whole lot more of a willing partner to make sure that the ore is processed here, because we have a stake in this. We have a stake in making sure that our ores are processed, milled, smelted and all the rest of it in Ontario. Maybe, as my colleague from Timmins–James Bay said, we will put offers on the table that our federal cousin is not interested in but that we are, because it is our natural resources and because it is our responsibility. This is a one-word bill. It's not going to change the world; it's going to create jobs in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for debate. The member for Algoma–Manitoulin has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to thank the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for having stayed for the entire debate. I really enjoyed your views and your comments, along with the members from Parry Sound–Muskoka, Kenora–Rainy River, Eglinton–Lawrence, Nipissing, Timmins–James Bay—thank you for your tireless efforts on this particular issue—Chatham–Kent–Essex, Timiskaming–Cochrane—just an amazing summary of what this bill actually is—and the member from Nickel Belt—you just hit it right on the head.

It is something as simple as that; I have to say it is. We need to take the appropriate actions. We need to empower ourselves. I was really disappointed when I heard “protectionist” and a really dramatic statement of how this is going to hurt us. It's going to empower us. It's going to force us to look at what we have in our own backyard. It's going to tell us that, “Wait a second; we have an opportunity here.” Why aren't we looking at the infrastructure that we have here? Why aren't we challenging our own policy-makers and our bureaucrats to come up with the ideas that we need to develop those resources? First and foremost, why aren't we making that decision? It's mind-boggling for me to stand here and say, why wouldn't you want that responsibility? Why wouldn't you want to have that opportunity to make that decision?

1440

Again, I started with this: This is not building walls around the province. This is not restricting flow to come in or flow to go out. This is empowering the minister in

order to justify a decision that rightfully has to be made with the resources of Ontario, responsible for Ontarians. This is what this is, and we should move on it. I implore everybody to support this bill. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the debate on ballot item 13.

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'OMBUDSMAN
(SOCIÉTÉS D'AIDE À L'ENFANCE)

Miss Taylor moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 42, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act with respect to children's aid societies / Projet de loi 42, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman en ce qui a trait aux sociétés d'aide à l'enfance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order number 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Miss Monique Taylor: Today I rise to speak on an issue that has been before us many times. Over the years, it has been the subject of Bill 88, Bill 93, Bill 130, Bill 131, Bill 183, Bill 110, and now before us as Bill 42. This request to amend the Ombudsman Act has seen many variations, but today we will speak directly to the children's aid societies.

I know the importance of the amendment to the act for other sectors, but as the critic for children and youth services, I chose to focus directly on the CAS portion. There can be no doubt, with the amount of times that this amendment has been before us since 2005, and the public outcry for this allowance, that it is time for this House to move forward, hear the people of this province and pass this bill.

The children's aid societies play one of the most critical roles in our province. Their mandate is to care for our most precious and sometimes our most vulnerable assets: our children. Through the Child and Family Services Act, they are charged with the responsibility to ensure the well-being and safety of our children. Under that act, they must investigate allegations that children may be in need of protection. They must provide protection where necessary. They must provide guidance, counselling and other services. They must provide care.

With this huge responsibility has come an empire of extraordinary powers. They have the power and the ability to act first and ask questions later. In some cases, that's exactly what needs to be done, but in other cases it's questionable. Mistakes can be made, mistakes that have devastating consequences to children and their families. Mr. Speaker, in a child's life there's no turning back the clock.

There can be no doubt about the difficult job performed by many dedicated professionals, and those who are doing a good job can only benefit from the protection

of independent investigation. I have met many great people who work hard and are working in the best interest of children and families. But I have also heard stories from families and former children in care who have felt threatened, bullied, harassed and coerced by children's aid societies.

Through the transformation agenda, the focus was to shift from children in care to keeping children in families and providing services to ensure healthy outcomes. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, the hundreds of people that I have heard from have felt that this has not been the case. When issues are brought to my attention, it is often because their rights as parents have felt threatened with custody or less access, or they're already jumping through so many hoops. I have met mothers who have left their spouses and their homes because they are being told that they are okay but their spouses are not, only then to be told that the story has changed and that's not going to happen. I have met other mothers who have completely cleaned up their lives with the assistance of the CAS, only to not have their children returned. They are left with nothing but a carrot dangling in front of their face for the next hoop.

Just in the past month, we heard yet again of a very questionable decision regarding the placement of a young girl. This child was placed in a home of a man who repeatedly abused her, both sexually and physically, until she was able to escape at the age of 15. She had been removed from that home at the age of six, after reports of prostitutes and drug use in the home, only to be sent back. Her own file that she read at the age of 17 said that there were flags of concern from babysitters and others of sexual abuse at the age of 7. How could we have made this decision? How could we have failed this child?

After this story, another woman contacted me stating that she too had suffered similar situations, now to only find herself with an open case file for her own children. The CAS's concern was that she may have issues later in life due to the trauma that she suffered as a child. Trust me when I tell you this woman is a survivor and she is a respected member of our community, yet this is what she's facing.

The visitors in the gallery here today are people who have been fighting this battle for so many years, some of them probably a lifetime. I would really like to thank them for their participation and hard work in encouraging families to contact their MPPs in support of Bill 42. Thank you. No one is arguing that sometimes a child has to be removed from a home. In the best interests of a child, sometimes that's the only possible outcome. But when that happens, we need to get it right; we need to make sure that we are doing what is best for the child and fair for their families.

So we have talked about experiences of individuals. Now let's talk about the processes and the procedures that people find impossible to navigate. I'll start with the Child and Family Services Review Board. Yes, this is an option if it is a procedural issue. Only those seeking and receiving CAS services can register a complaint. The

board cannot hear from grandparents or other concerned family members. They cannot hear serious issues of conduct, policies or practices. They cannot investigate allegations of abuse or neglect. The only resolution is to have the CAS respond or provide reason. If you've seen the paperwork that goes with this process, it's very complicated and confusing for many.

Other forms of oversight: the family courts—not a very user-friendly environment. It's very time consuming and very costly.

The coroner's office and the Pediatric Death Review Committee—obviously, both play a very crucial role, and their work is greatly valued. But by definition, they only get involved once the ultimate price has been paid. Then it's too late.

I recently received a response from the minister to the hundreds of petitions that have been submitted to this House. In that letter, she stated that the CAS was accountable to the community in which it served, which has been another question that has been brought to my attention: "How do I get on this committee? Where are the postings saying where and when this committee sits?"

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Just last week I heard from a lawyer who wanted to complain about the abuse that a young client had been receiving from a children's aid society, and was told by the society that the complaint process was only open to direct clients of the society. So, Mr. Speaker, if a trained lawyer—and she is not alone—is so frustrated about having to deal with a complaint, what hope is there for families who are already at their wits' end trying to deal with this system?

By giving the Ombudsman the capacity to oversee children's aid societies, we get the broad and general authority and respect that comes with that office. We get skilled investigators and achieve an ability to receive analysis of the problems.

The most recent figures from the Ombudsman are absolutely overwhelming. In the last 11 months, it's 415 complaints. Over the last eight years, it's 4,000 complaints registered with his office. But of course, he can do nothing about it. Clearly, despite the mechanisms that are in place, there is a serious gap when it comes to accountability and oversight.

Ontario is the only province that does not allow their Ombudsman to oversee the child protection services. BC, Alberta, Yukon, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador have all recognized the wisdom of giving their Ombudsman the responsibility to oversee their child protection services, but not Ontario, and perhaps that is because of an accident of history. Children's aid societies were set up as private institutions, but in 2013 Ontario's children's aids are funded to the tune of \$1.5 billion by the Ontario government. They're governed by the Child and Family Services Act. They act on behalf of the government. The government must hold them accountable to an independent body.

In the previous session, before prorogation, Bill 110 passed second reading. I'm hopeful that the new Premier

and the new minister will still find value and pass this bill. It is my hope, as well as thousands of families across this province, that this bill not only pass second reading but that this bill be moved through committee, be brought back to this House for third reading and receive royal assent.

Having an independent, arm's-length body protecting our children should not be a question any longer. We have heard way too many stories of horrific situations that just should not have happened and could have been prevented. I urge every member of this House: Please listen to the voices of the people who sent you here and pass this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House again to talk about this bill. I believe I did so the last time this bill was before us, and I do want to acknowledge the member for her hard work on this issue. As she knows, I'm the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and I want to be very, very clear that our government shares concerns whenever it includes the safety and well-being of children in Ontario. Our most vulnerable children are of the utmost importance to our government, Speaker.

I don't just say that as an MPP. I don't just say that as a parliamentary assistant to the ministry of children and youth, a former PA to that ministry, but I am someone who has followed the work of CASs closely, and I am a mother. I'm very involved in my community and know about the work of children's aid societies, and I know how this kind of work is governed in our province. So I just want to spend a few minutes, if I may, talking about the setup in Ontario.

I am going to be sharing my time with the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as the member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

I'm very happy to speak on behalf of the government on this. The one thing that is very, very important for everybody to understand is that in Ontario we have a system that is different and unique, and structurally completely different than the other provinces that the member from Hamilton Mountain speaks about.

Children's aid societies are not run centrally by our province here, as I'm sure she knows. They are run by independent, community-based and, I would add, legal entities.

I'm not sure—this is the question, because I'm not sure—if the member is suggesting that CASs in Ontario be brought into the Ontario government the way they are in the other ministries she cited. That's something I'm interested in understanding a bit more, if that's how she sees this going, because structurally, it is quite different.

There are other oversight mechanisms in Ontario. First of all, I talked about the board and their accountabilities and legal obligations to allow for cases to be dealt with in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to local context.

It is important that local CASs provide local context, but that does not free them from compliance requirements from Ministry of Children and Youth Services standards.

When a child comes into contact with the CAS, our foremost goal is to ensure safety of the child, and I think everyone can agree with that. There are steps our government has taken to improve oversight, and I won't get into too many details about that because I will be sharing my time with the other members.

But I want to acknowledge that children's aid societies are mandated to have an internal review complaint process. It must be timely and transparent. If that doesn't yield the desired result, we have the Child and Family Services Review Board, an independent third party that has an understanding of the sector and can look into any complaints. Since 2008, we've expanded those powers of the CFSRB. The board provides alternative dispute resolution services to help bring opposing parties together to resolve cases in children's best interests, and it's accountable for its decisions.

In fact, the Ombudsman already has the authority to investigate complaints about the board and issue recommendations, so there is a current role for the Ombudsman in Ontario.

I just want to mention a couple of other things. Our government established the independent Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, who provides an independent voice. And, of course, there's support, Speaker. There's the Auditor General, the coroner's office and there are other bodies involved. In 2006, the government implemented a differential response approach to deal with the different types and severity of child maltreatment.

I want to summarize by saying there are many, many review mechanisms in place:

- (1) the internal review I spoke of;
- (2) the specialized independent review board;
- (3) Ombudsman oversight of the board;
- (4) if a case goes before the court, the children's lawyer providing input and advice; and
- (5) the Auditor General and the coroner also serve oversight functions.

Could some of these things be better? Perhaps, Speaker, perhaps. I think we can have some good conversations about that; I think we can. But let's recognize that Ontario has a completely different structure, and we need to look carefully about any future changes.

I'll end on that so I can allow sufficient time for my colleagues to speak, and thank you for the time, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: As PC critic for children and youth, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill 42, Ombudsman Amendment Act (Children's Aid Societies). I'd like to commend the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing the legislation forward once again.

Bill 42 would give the Ontario Ombudsman authority to investigate and report on complaints to our children's aid societies. The Ombudsman has been asking for this

authority for some time, and in light of the critical work that children's aid societies do, his request seems entirely reasonable.

We know Ontario's children's aid societies are doing tough work under less-than-ideal circumstances. In Peel and Windsor-Essex recently, we've seen the impact that provincial budget pressures can have.

We also know that this government likes selective transparency and that its ministers are somewhat totally oblivious to what's going on in the ministries.

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Now, more than ever, we in the Legislature need to ensure that the public has a higher level of trust in the system, and that we are doing everything in our power to make sure that all our children have the best possible shot at a happy, healthy life. Our children's well-being should be a non-partisan concern; it's that simple. The Ombudsman's office has powerful tools to investigate and report on complaints. He can identify the systemic problems that may be at the root of those complaints.

Right now, complaints against children's aid societies are dealt with by applying to the Child and Family Services Review Board. The board's annual report tells us that during 2010-11, they received 246 applications to have complaints about children's aid society decisions reviewed. In the same year, 17 cases were heard, and in 11 of those orders were made in favour of the applicant. So there was a problem with the original children's aid society decisions in well over half the cases reviewed.

In 2010-11, there were also 229 open cases of kids improperly placed or unfairly removed from their families that have complaints about their current situation. That's 229 cases waiting to be heard.

Bill 42 isn't going to remove the need for children's aid societies. It isn't going to make the complaints go away. What it will do is provide us with an objective investigator who will boost transparency and accountability. I am happy to support Bill 42, and I look forward to hopefully moving this along to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's an honour to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 42, brought forward by my colleague from Hamilton Mountain. I want to commend her on bringing this forward, as she did before.

This bill, if passed, will allow the province's Ombudsman to investigate decisions and recommendations made by children's aid societies. Ombudsman oversight of children's aid societies is a major concern all across the province, and has been for years. Since being elected, I have spoken to many individuals who have had difficult experiences with children's aid societies and who have felt there was nowhere else to turn for help. This is an issue people on both sides are very passionate about. We're talking about decisions that are being made that impact entire families, and making the wrong decision can have permanent negative impacts.

But I want to be clear: I don't believe that by supporting this bill we're demonizing children's aid societies. I

believe there is overall recognition among everyone here, and even the families who are calling for this oversight, that the work children's aid societies do is invaluable. The people who work for these organizations are professional and caring individuals who do their best to make the right decisions. Most of the time, those decisions are right, but sometimes they are wrong, and sometimes the decisions can be right at the time but circumstances change, and this is an extremely difficult system to navigate for people who are caught up in it.

In my professional career, I have seen families torn apart. I've seen the grief of family members who have had a relative taken away from them, never to be seen again. I've worked with parents who have battled substance abuse problems but have cleaned up their own lives and are ready to move forward, but are not being allowed to see their children. I've seen the scars inflicted on many First Nations people who have had a family member taken away or who have been taken away themselves. We need to do everything in our power to ensure that people aren't taken away from their homes unnecessarily and, if they are, that there is recourse for those who are affected.

Each and every one of these people has a different story to tell. They are rarely alike, but the one thing that is the same in all these cases is that these individuals feel helpless, they feel frustrated and they feel as though they are facing an uphill battle in a very complex system that is very difficult to navigate.

What we're saying today is, let's give them a little more clarity; let's give them a process that each and every province, with the exception of Ontario, has in place; let's add some balance to the system, one more check to ensure that the right decisions are being made and that these families have a place to turn when they need it most.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I am pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 42, and I appreciate the work being done by the member from Hamilton Mountain.

We have to understand, what is this bill about? This bill is about amending the Ombudsman Act so that he can have more powers to investigate the children's aid societies. But at the same time it's very important to recognize that the children's aid societies are accountable not only to the government but also the communities they serve. And let's be clear that the structure of the children's aid societies here in the province of Ontario is completely different from other provinces in Canada where the child protection is operated directly by the government. Here, children's aid societies are community-based, non-profit organizations with independent boards, and our government funds and monitors them as a part of our commitment to support the well-being and the protection of our children.

The children's aid societies are already under the oversight of our court system. If children's aid societies believe that a child needs protection, they have to appear

before the judge to show just cause. And if someone has concerns or problems, they can always discuss them with the children's aid worker, their supervisors and their program managers.

The Child and Family Services Act requires that all children's aid societies in the province of Ontario have an independent complaints review procedure, which is there, Mr. Speaker. Next, a person can apply for a review to the Child and Family Services Review Board. If the person is not satisfied, they can seek a judicial review. If still they are dissatisfied, they can always file a complaint with the Ombudsman's office in the province of Ontario.

So that oversight is already in process, Mr. Speaker. The opposition's rhetoric about accountability is empty rhetoric, and Ontario has a unique child protection model.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: First of all, I'd like to recognize some people in the audience today who have made their lives involved in this situation: Darlene Sine, Nadia Fordham, Joanne Cormier, Kenneth Reid, Curtis Kingston and Samantha Paulin. These people find themselves engaged in the system, amongst many others whom I've heard from, and have not found satisfaction.

I would also say, in opening, I want to respect the work done by Durham Children's Aid Society and the volunteers. I believe, in fact, they all try to do their very best. But there's no organization that should be exempted from oversight and qualifications. We see that every day in the House, whether it's on eHealth or other issues that are before us. Dozens of emails I have heard from are calling for this Ombudsman oversight, and I support the member from Hamilton Mountain and her passion. Miss Taylor, I take great pride in saying I support your bill.

I also agree that there must always be an appeal process, and in fact there really is. But just how effective is the Child and Family Services Review Board or the very expensive Family Court process or the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth? These do not seem to have solved the problem, and they're the institutions of appeal today. Unfortunately, families often find there's no place for them to turn if they feel the CAS has acted inappropriately or is in error or must address some other pressing concern.

Let me share with you very briefly, in the time I have, from two cases in my riding of Durham. Of course, out of respect for confidentiality, I will not provide any names.

In one case, a very young child was abruptly taken from a classroom and interviewed by two CAS workers for almost an hour without any notification at all to the parents. The child was traumatized. Apparently, this was the result of an anonymous complaint to the children's aid. The parents were never given any clear details of who made the accusation and particularly why. The parents were not able to ascertain the qualifications of the interviewers. It is their understanding that the interviewers did not have the credentials of social workers who would be trained to work with a child in that setting.

The interview and investigation revealed no grounds for concerns about the well-being of the child, but when the parents asked for accountability and an explanation, there was nothing in place or a forum for them to be heard. Parents and family members need to be assured that they are not alone when they raise concerns or complaints. They really feel victimized.

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I'd also like to briefly mention one other situation some of you may be familiar with. An individual who presented himself as a fully qualified psychologist and worked with Durham Children's Aid for a number of years on contract was later proven to lack the credentials of a clinical psychologist. In fact, the psychologist was registered with the Ontario College of Psychologists as a psychological associate. As such, the limitations of his practice prevented him from making independent diagnoses, which he did. The lack of credentials as a psychologist was discovered when a family member involved in a custody case found out through their own personal investigation.

Mr. Speaker, individuals shouldn't have to conduct their own investigations, and that's why we're calling for the Ombudsman. Investigation is one area in which the Ombudsman excels in. An investigation process should be followed by the Ombudsman in a thorough and professional manner dedicated to the discovery of facts. Opening actions, decisions and recommendations of the children's aid to the scrutiny of the Ombudsman I believe—this is important—will assist the CAS in achieving to be more effective, more trusted and, most importantly, respected.

I support this bill because it will benefit not only children and families in Ontario, but also the children's aid themselves.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: C'est un peu décevant d'entendre les membres du Parti libéral nous dire que les mesures en place fonctionnent et qu'on n'a besoin de rien d'autre. Si les mesures en place fonctionnaient, pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a 4 000 Ontariens et Ontariennes qui ont communiqué avec le bureau de l'ombudsman? Pourquoi est-ce qu'il y a tant d'Ontariens et d'Ontariennes qui sont tellement désespérés que, même après avoir utilisé tous les mécanismes qui sont déjà là, ils se tournent vers l'ombudsman parce que ça ne marche pas? Pourquoi ne pas donner aux Ontariens et Ontariennes ce qu'ils veulent? Ils veulent être capables de téléphoner à l'ombudsman, de savoir qu'il va faire une investigation et qu'il va leur donner des réponses. C'est tout ce qu'on demande—c'est tout ce qu'on demande.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: This is an issue in my life and my family's life that is very important. I was a foster child; I was adopted. I've been a ward of a province, a provincial government. My children were crown wards before I raised them, and I've served on the board of a child and family service agency.

I cannot support this bill. As a matter of fact, I think it's one of the most wrong-headed pieces of legislation presented in this House in a long time. The member from Nickel Belt talks about 4,000 parents waiting for that. Walk out two blocks over here—I spent 10 years of my life working on the street—and count the hundreds and thousands and thousands—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Did I interrupt you? I did not interrupt you. I listened very carefully, and we can hopefully have respectful debate on something this sensitive.

There are thousands of children on the streets of downtown Winnipeg who have been raped, sexually abused and beaten, and they're not crown wards, and they have secrets. Having been someone who for 10 years worked in a community health centre, who had more children disclose to me abuse at home in nice, middle-class suburban houses with parents who were executives, and the kinds of stories I carried around through all of that, of the children that I would look—and they knew no one would believe them. Their parents were powerful.

We always think that child abuse comes from someone in a white van or some criminal in jail or somebody. The sad reality is that 80% or 90% of children that are raped, sexually abused and physically abused never get there, and they're abused and raped by people who are powerful. The first thing the children who disclosed to me used to say was, "Please do not tell my parents."

Trying to find a safe place for children is critically important. My mother was 16. She struggled in poverty. She decided, after giving me away on conditions and then getting me back, that she just could not support me. But a lot of my friends who went through that and a lot of kids that I fostered had horrible, horrible stories. To me right now, Mr. Speaker, the weight and the risks are on protecting children before anything.

The CAS ICRP program: If the member was proposing reforms or to strengthen the internal review, I would roll up my sleeves and work with her on that. To me—I only have a minute, sadly—any kind of review or further review of child and family services should be by someone who has the qualities of an office that is mediative, discreet, values prudence and sensitivity, shows respect and the ability to work to resolution. The Ombudsman is someone who is on the front page of the paper, whose tactics are to advocate for an individual, and hardly an office that shows that kind of discretion.

When this came forward, I had many young people—because I do mentoring right now at Covenant House—who came to me and said, "I know about the Ombudsman. This is not the kind of officer that I'd want out there." They need a place where they know the stuff isn't going to be in the media, even if it doesn't involve their name.

The Family Court is expensive, but it should be. This should not be easy. I can't imagine there wouldn't be complaints. Can you think of anything more difficult this government does than try to protect children? Often they

have to protect them from their parents. Can you think of a dynamic that wouldn't generate complaints? Can you think of a more difficult thing?

This is a simplistic answer to a complex problem, and it's simply wrong.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: It is my pleasure to stand in support of this bill. Bill 42 is the seventh attempt to give Ontario's Ombudsman investigative power over the province's 47 children's aid societies. It is a good bill and should be supported by all.

The Ombudsman is an officer of the Legislature who is independent of government and political parties. The Ombudsman's job is to ensure government accountability through effective oversight of the administration of government services. He responds to complaints from the public, with the help of 80 staff members. Members of the public have been complaining to the Ombudsman for years about the children's aid societies, but his office has never had the power to investigate these complaints. His hands have been tied. Let's untie them for the benefit of children and families.

If a child is in distress due to physical or mental abuse, that child's safety and best interests must be our first priority. The rights of parents must be properly upheld as well. We cannot continue to ignore the mistakes and bad decisions arising from the activities of the children's aid societies.

Right now, complaints are resolved through the Child and Family Services Review Board, which is ineffective, biased and backlogged. Urgent, unbiased investigation of complaints is particularly important when it deals with a child and their family. Mistakes can last a lifetime. Increased oversight should always be promoted. Increased oversight leads to more efficient service delivery, which leads to cost savings.

The Ombudsman has the power to identify how our government services are actually working for Ontarians, and when those services are not working, he has the power to outline a path to make them work. In my opinion, the Ombudsman should have the ability to look into any service delivered or mandated by the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to congratulate the member from Hamilton Mountain for her tenacity. I also want to congratulate the people who come to support these bills each and every time that we have presented them, for the last seven years. They are, in my mind, the real heroes behind this, because they come from all over the province—all over.

It speaks to the tragic incidents that they have had to survive over the years and the passion they feel to seek some justice and to seek someone who can help them, someone to whom they can go when there is a problem. At the moment, they have no one to go to.

These bills are not an attack on children's aid societies, these bills have not been an attack on the government, yet when I hear the Liberal members speak with timidity and such defensiveness about it, one wonders how we can hold back from criticizing them, because I do not accept the arguments you make that we have a unique system, and I do not accept the arguments from the Minister of Transportation, who said this is a simple answer to a complex problem. I do not accept that. And I don't accept the argument from the member from Mississauga-Brampton South when she says this is empty rhetoric. It blows my mind when I hear those arguments. I understand the Minister of Transportation is making different arguments that are valid, but it does not take away one ounce from this bill—not one ounce.

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Every Ombudsman across this country has this power, and not just oversight over children's aid societies but oversight over many other areas.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Hospitals.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Hospitals included—but not this government.

It speaks to some timidity and fear, and I wonder why. This is about not just transparency and clarity, but it's about accountability, and it's about giving people who have suffered some form of abuse a place to go to, to register a complaint and to then seek some solution to that problem. It's not just about an individual problem; it's about systemic problems that exist in the system. It's about investigating them and speaking to solutions. That's what this does.

There appears to be tremendous fear of this Ombudsman. When the Minister of Transportation says that this man is about front-page news, that may be, because what he uncovers is about strong issues that attract the media to it. This is not about André Marin; it's about the work that he does and the problems he exposes and the recommendations he makes to governments in particular, and parliamentarians in general, to fix them. That's really the point that we're talking about.

When various members, including the minister of consumer affairs, talk about there being other mechanisms—she is not the only one who has made this argument. Other members have made the argument historically here. There are many other areas of supervision around this issue and/or oversight. The fact of the matter is that they are not working. Neither the independent provincial child advocate, who is a good person, neither the child and family services review act, nor the courts—none of these places have the power that the Ombudsman has to be able to subpoena people and do an adequate investigation of a particular problem, no matter where that is. That's all we're asking the ombudsperson to do.

I don't understand why we oppose it, except that we are afraid of him, it seems, but more importantly, we are afraid of the things that he would uncover. I say to you, why would we be afraid? The arguments we have made traditionally, historically in this House are that we should allow this person the power to be able to go investigate

individual cases and systemic issues, and bring back recommendations.

The argument I've made to the previous Premier is, take charge and be a leader and say, "I want to know what problems exist in the CAS, because if there are problems that are unresolved, I want to know, and I want to fix them." That's what leadership is about. Yet each and every time that we present a bill in this House, we have members who find different arguments to oppose it.

The fact that this is a unique thing in Canada is irrelevant in the scheme of things. It doesn't preclude having an Ombudsman having the power to go in and investigate. It does not. They're not related. Whether it's unique or not unique, giving this person the power to go in and do an investigation is something that we should welcome as parliamentarians, not hide and run away from, because what you do in making those kinds of arguments is to say, "We are afraid of what that person may uncover because his solutions may put us on the defensive." But if you lead as ministers and as a Premier in this discussion, people will thank you. They will thank you. There is nothing at all to fear in this—nothing whatsoever.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And I'm not sure, Minister, what you're saying because I can't hear you, but I don't accept your arguments. I don't accept any of the arguments the members have made. They're too defensive, and you're all afraid, it appears. It appears most of the arguments are almost against the Ombudsman, which is very, very puzzling. I understand that some of you are upset about many of the recommendations he has made with respect to many of the investigations he has brought forth to you. I could understand that, and I do. But if you want to lead this debate, then what you should be doing is saying, "We accept that there are many oversight bodies, but there is not anybody that has these investigative powers the Ombudsman has. We want to be able to give him that power to go search out what the problems are and recommend to us what we could do."

I recommend this bill. I commend the member from Hamilton Mountain for bringing this bill forward. I hope that some of the Liberal members will change their minds and support the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this bill. I think it's certainly a subject that requires discussion and consideration. Any time we have a bill that comes forward or any discussion that talks about increased oversight or increased accountability on the government, I think that's a good thing.

The fact remains that the CAS receives the vast majority of its funding through the provincial government, through the taxpayers of Ontario. For the taxpayers of Ontario to ask for and receive oversight over such financed bodies I think is fairly legitimate.

Having said that, I think that what we really need to do is look at the core of the problem here. The core of the

issue is that some CASs in Ontario—not all of them—have issues. Many of them will admit that they have issues that need to be resolved. Is the Ombudsman the best way to go about resolving all of these issues? Maybe not. Maybe there's a whole bunch of other different things we need to do. I think we really need to be touching the core of these issues so we're actually making sure CASs are doing what they're supposed to be doing and helping individual children.

I have a unique perspective on this. I know several children that have grown up through foster care. I know what they can achieve if they get the right sort of care and they're cared for as a ward of the state. It can happen. They can have success. There are successful children out there that have had a really good experience with a CAS. There are lots that haven't. There are lots of families that have suffered because of some of the actions of a CAS.

Is the Ombudsman the right way to go about it? I'm not sure. Is it a step in the right direction? I would say yes.

I think the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure had some really good points. There are some children that will have issues that they can't and shouldn't feel safe to go to an Ombudsman to to put on front page of the Toronto Star. That's not the right angle to take. If we really want to look at helping the individual kids that are at the CASs, then we need to look at further fixes for CASs.

I think it's a little disingenuous for any members to suggest that all the arguments should be discounted in this. That's patently unfair to say. I think it's safe to say that children need to be looked at first. We need to make sure that our children are safe in our communities and that they're safe in the homes that they live in, whether they're foster homes or homes with their own biological parents. The number one thing here is that children need to be safe.

The Ombudsman is not the catch-all for any issue, and we've got to stop talking about that. Every time there's a problem in government: Go to the Ombudsman. Guys, that's part of our job over here: to bring awareness of government, to actually have oversight over the government. They expect that from us. The people expect that from us. That's what we get paid for. Let's do our jobs better, and we may not have to go to the Ombudsman for every little thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

The member for Hamilton Mountain, you have two minutes and a couple of seconds for a response.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the members who spoke in favour of this bill.

I'm sorry to hear of the members who spoke against this bill, especially when some of those members whom I ran into at an event told me that, "If I win leadership, I will bring your bill and make it law." Today the wheel has spun again. So it's interesting, to say the least, but I guess I can't be that shocked.

Today I'm joined by families across Ontario. I'm joined by children who are now adults who have been through the system. The Ombudsman himself has been calling out for this for years—and not just our current Ombudsman, who we all know is very vocal, but for Ombudsmen going back as far as when they were first started, in 1979. They felt that their mandate should be expanded to all provincially funded organizations.

1530

The child protection services in our province are funded by the Ontario government to the tune of \$1.5 billion. We need to ensure that we are getting it right. I agree with the member, where he's not the be-all and end-all catch-all. That's not his place. That's not the place and the role that he wants to play, but when an investigation is needed, he has the tools and the abilities to do that investigation. He has the ability to bring it back to us in an analysis form and say, "This is what went wrong, and this is what we need to fix." That is the key to having the Ombudsman have the oversight of the children's aid.

I know very well that there are good people who are working in the system. Like I have said over and over and over again, it is not an attack on the good people who are doing a good job, because they will also benefit from this investigation. But when we have children who have suffered abuse and are being sent back to the exact same home—back to that abuser, who not just physically but sexually assaulted this child from the age of two until the age of 15, with concerns and concerns and concerns over the years—there's got to be an answer. So I—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker; I just realized that the time didn't—yes. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll vote on the item at the end of regular business.

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY TO PAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CAPACITÉ DE PAYER DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

Mr. Wilson moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 44, An Act to deal with arbitration in the public sector / Projet de loi 44, Loi traitant de l'arbitrage dans le secteur public.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I am delighted to rise in the House today to debate my private member's bill. The short title of the bill, actually, is Public Sector Capacity to Pay Act, 2013; most people just refer to it as the capacity to pay act.

If this bill is passed into law, it would amend 11 separate acts dealing with interest-based arbitration in the

broader public sector. I am honoured to say that numerous stakeholders were engaged at almost every major drafting stage to provide feedback and give advice, to ensure that we captured the crux of the needed changes in Ontario's broken arbitration system. Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus, along with many of our stakeholders, believe that the time has come to modernize public sector interest arbitration in Ontario.

The capacity to pay act before you today is one of the most comprehensive private member's bills that I have ever undertaken. Unlike the Liberals, who just retable their government legislation that they killed with prorogation, without considering input from others—and I'm thinking of the ambulance act, Bill 11—the capacity to pay act is an evolution of my Ability to Pay Act that I tabled in the last session. Working alongside our stakeholders—

Interjections.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Guys, this stuff, actually, is pretty dry.

Working alongside our stakeholders, we ensured that this bill incorporated feedback and innovations suggested by engaged stakeholders, while also holding true to the 13 recommendations made by Don Drummond.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to tell you that the core elements of the capacity to pay act include:

- a newly created roster of qualified, pre-approved arbitrators;

- a fair and impartial process to appoint those arbitrators;

- an elimination of boards of arbitration and a move towards a simpler single-arbitrator model;

- a new legal requirement for pre-arbitration hearings, along with full disclosure by both management and employees on all issues;

- a new, detailed and revised set of unbiased economic criteria that arbitrators must use to consider the capacity of a community, or the province, to pay for a decision; and

- a specific legal clause for arbitration decisions to be based upon a no-tax-increase assumption, which is a huge departure from what we have today.

This act also dramatically shortens the time lines that arbitrators have to make a decision. They're limited to no more than nine months from the time an arbitrator is appointed. In the past, workers and employers had to literally wait for years to have a decision on an arbitration process. That was years without a raise for employees, in many cases. That was years in which employers, in many cases municipalities, were unable to budget appropriately. And it meant years for taxpayers to find out what could potentially be massive tax increases to pay for decisions that were delayed. I think of the case of the township of Scugog. Recently, their firefighters were awarded 26.7%, I believe, backdated four years—that's six firefighters. It caused an automatic increase of 2% in property taxes and the elected officials, the elected municipal councillors, had no say in that whatsoever—all caused by an arbitrator out of control.

Another major innovation in the capacity to pay act is the requirement for arbitrators to issue mandatory written reasons when they render a decision. It is not uncommon that massive arbitration decisions cost ratepayers, taxpayers, millions and millions of dollars, and it's a two-page decision. The first page is the covering page, and the second page has two paragraphs saying, "Here's my decision." No rationale whatsoever is required under the current law. It will be required under this law.

I want to go back to the issue of creating a qualified list of pre-approved arbitrators. This was a core recommendation of the McGuinty-Wynne government's own report issued by Don Drummond. Our act would create a cabinet regulation and set high standards and qualification for someone to be named to this list.

Of course, while the PC caucus always prefers that parties reach an agreement to labour disputes or contract negotiations through collective bargaining, in the event of an arbitration dispute, this act will empower the Minister of Labour to present a list of available arbitrators drawn from the roster to help the parties reach a resolution.

Also unique in this bill is a special process that allows parties to jointly propose a special arbitrator based upon a request to, and approval of, the minister. This particular provision is the result of feedback and input from stakeholders, so that they could nominate their own special arbitrator in unique circumstances.

Also, I'm proud to announce that the capacity to pay act contains another key innovation based upon stakeholder feedback, which is the new requirement that arbitrators convene pre-arbitration conferences. These pre-arbitration conferences are akin to pretrial hearings in court. This innovation will not only reduce the time spent by lawyers arguing a hearing, but will reduce the costs for all involved, and ultimately the taxpayer.

The pre-arbitration conferences will ensure that all the issues are on the table and all the parties engage in the fair practice of full disclosure. This innovation is a major benefit to both employers and employees. Not only would it help the overall arbitration process run more smoothly; it will prevent either of the parties from gaming the system by delaying deliberations.

In addition to the pre-arbitration hearings, there's another safety valve in the act around delaying tactics. This is a new clause that prohibits new issues or presenting new evidence after the hearing or arbitration conference has ended. This is the same way courts of law work.

Another element of the bill is the namesake for the act, and that is the capacity-to-pay provisions. Contained in this act are new criteria for arbitrators to consider when undertaking hearings. The criteria are fair, objective and apply to both employers and employees in the municipal sector and in the broader public sector as a whole.

To highlight some of these criteria, I want to outline the following:

When an arbitrator looks at the arguments of the parties involved in arbitration, they will now by law have

to consider a series of tests, including the wages and conditions of employment of other people outside the bargaining unit. This is included to address fairness to other workers in the same organization, so that one group of workers aren't making a lot more money or getting better health benefits or better pensions than others in the same organization. So there has to be a consideration of that, which they don't have to do now—there aren't any criteria now.

A comparison of wages and conditions of persons working outside the public sector in the same municipality or geographic region, to address numerous reports—the most recent one, I think, is the Fraser Institute's—showing that in many cases public sector workers, including wages and benefits, are making 25% to 27% more than people doing the same job in the private sector. So we want arbitrators to take that into consideration because, you know, again, it's the taxpayer and the private sector that has to pay for all the bills of the public sector, and there needs to be fairness.

1540

Arbitrators will also now be required to measure against the consumer price index for Ontario, as published by Statistics Canada, and arbitrators will need to look at the overall decline or the improvement of the fiscal health of the municipalities relative to comparable municipalities in Ontario or the province as a whole.

For municipal employers, arbitrators will have to look at the total property tax assessment and weighted tax assessment per household as well as the actual tax revenues of a particular community—for example, Windsor, which isn't doing very well economically. Their police were recently awarded, I think it was, close to 9% over three years. That's 3% a year—just a little under that, I think it was. The economy isn't growing even at 1%, so they're getting over three times each year what the economy is doing.

Six hundred thousand men and women woke up this morning without a job, Mr. Speaker. We think there are another 400,000 Ontarians that don't show up in any statistics and aren't able to find a job, but they're not in a government program, they're not on UI. We can only guess, but the economists tell us there are probably another 400,000 people. Those people have to be taken into account as part of the criteria. It's not only local unemployment rates and employment rates, but also—you know, it may be anecdotal, but council may very well know that there's a whole pile of people in town that simply don't have a job and aren't showing up in the statistics. There's actually a clause in here for that, too.

In general, the arbitrator will need to look at the economic situation in Ontario as a whole and how that compares to the municipality to the extent that that has not been addressed in other areas. Additional job security of employees compared to the job security of others employed in the municipality in the public sector and outside the public sector will also be measured.

Mr. Speaker, if passed, the legislation will be the first of its kind to require arbitrators to look at other factors

when the employer is a system-wide or provincial employer, such as national, provincial and local employment rates; economic growth rates; personal income rates; comparisons between employees and others in the public and private sectors in similar jobs, as I said; inherent advantages in bargaining enjoyed by employees because there's a monopoly on services because the activities are not carried on for profit or for both reasons. We're talking in terms of numbers: fire, police, paramedics, employees in the municipal sector, for example, that aren't allowed to strike—nurses in nursing homes, both publicly owned nursing homes, homes for the aged, and private nursing homes that may belong to OPSEU or something like that. Those are the types of people we're talking about. It affects hundreds and hundreds of thousands of people.

They have a right to collective bargaining, but if that process breaks down they go to arbitration. Unfortunately, what we've been finding in many cases is that a lot of people don't put a lot of effort anymore into the collective bargaining process because they know the arbitrator will give them a better deal than they're going to get if they negotiate. That has been the case. It has gotten out of whack. Again, we've had arbitrators say that they don't have to list any criteria. They don't have to consider any capacity or ability to pay of the employer, and we're seeing arbitration awards on average over the last three years of 3% a year. That's the average. I don't know how many friends I have, including my sister, who was telling me yesterday that she doesn't know if she has a job with Pfizer tomorrow. There are lots of people waking up every day without the job security, the health benefits, the pensions, folks, that these people have. Now all of that will have to be taken into consideration.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that I do believe that, in spite of this Liberal government, the economy will grow again. Tim Hudak's plan will grow this economy again and employees will see the norm which we had under previous Conservative governments. You got 2% wages every year, and that was considered fair because the economy grew and inflation was low, and we'll be back to those days. But this act needs to bring fairness now because we need to get our books in order in the province. Municipalities need to be able to plan, and taxpayers are tired of taking it in the gut every time an arbitrator walks into town. It's unfair. I ask all members to bring some fairness back to the system.

This is exactly what AMO wants. They've endorsed it. The Ontario police services boards have endorsed this. Eastern Ontario mayors have endorsed this. We had a meeting in London and St. Thomas, in Cambridge. All the mayors down there and deputy mayors endorsed this. I know that one of my other members, Mr. Harris, is going to talk about that later on this afternoon.

So we'd ask the government, come to your senses. It helps you. We're doing your dirty work. It helps you to get your books in order, and it helps your municipal partners do the right thing.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sit down, please. Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, what a difference a year makes. I remember a time when Conservatives and New Democrats got together and challenged the government and took down the government in regard to the issue of what they were trying to do with wage-based arbitration last spring. In the budget of last year the Liberal government came forward and said, "We are going to make changes to the wage-based arbitration system" that we as New Democrats thought were unfair. At the time, we had the Conservatives work with us in partnership, the coalition of New Democrats and Conservatives, to work against the Liberal government and to try to bring them to their senses and not move on this wage-based arbitration.

But something happened. Something between last year and this year has made it that the Tories are now back at it, and they want to undo all that great work that we did in that Conservative-NDP coalition last spring where we stopped the government from being able to move on wage-based arbitration.

I'll leave it to others to figure out why, but I do want to put on the record a couple of things. The first part is that wage-based arbitration is there for a reason. Police officers, firefighters and others who are deemed to be essential servants have the right to belong to a union and have the right to be able to bargain. But we've said to them, "You don't have the right to strike." We've made it illegal for those particular people to strike. The trade-off was, "Okay, we'll give you wage-based arbitration." In the wage-based arbitration act, it already says that the arbitrator must take into account the ability to pay when coming down to a settlement.

If you look at the settlements of the firefighters, for example, which I have looked at—I've sat down with local firefighters back home. Myself and Peter Osterberg and a few others looked at what the wage-based arbitration settlements were for the past while. There's a difference of 0.02% in the arbitrated settlements that were given by arbitrators than what was freely negotiated by private sector unions and others when you take the average. So when you take the average of private sector bargaining and public sector bargaining, and you look at what wage-based arbitration has given to firefighters, there's a 0.02% difference between the two.

So which crisis is this Tory converted coalition—they're not part of our coalition anymore, obviously. But I've got to ask, what is it that they're trying to do? I think this is just more of the same. These are our Conservative friends who have decided they want to create chaos in this province. They say, "Should we be elected as a government, we're going to make so many stupid changes that we're going to have this province in total chaos. We're going to say to the union sector, 'Hey, let's kick you guys in the teeth'"—so all of those guys are mad. Then they're going to go to firefighters, and they're going to go to police officers, and they're going to go to all of those people who used to be traditional Conservative supporters, who are becoming less so today, and

they're saying, "Let's create chaos over there." That doesn't make any sense. Quite frankly, what the Tories are trying to propose by way of this legislation and by way generally of what their white papers are doing doesn't make any sense.

I would argue that New Democrats are a more sensible choice when it comes to this issue because we're saying that you have to respect the right of workers in a democracy to belong to a union. That is something that we say is important in a democracy; workers should have that right. But if we're going to take away the right to strike, at least give those workers the ability to have wage-based arbitration. We're saying as New Democrats, we do not support this legislation, no more than we supported what the Liberals tried to do last fall. We will vote against this bill today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I begin with some sympathy for the issue that this private member's bill is intended to address. The status quo on interest arbitration is not fair to municipalities and it's not fair to taxpayers.

What we in Ontario wish to avoid or correct is a state in which the table is demonstrably tilted in favour of either party when engaged in collective bargaining. Right now, outcomes from arbitrated wage settlements show a trend that, if the labour side digs in its heels, arbitration awards favour labour and thus trigger tax hikes.

I would agree with the assertion that tax decisions properly belong in debate at the city or regional council table and not determined in secret by an unelected and unaccountable arbitrator. That said, the cure to an unbalanced status quo is not to tilt the tables the other way. It's to bring balance to collective bargaining in the municipal sector.

1550

Now to the problems with this bill. In recent years, the Ontario PCs have brought forth different bills with sharply different proposals to try and accomplish this objective. As with gas plant cancellations, they just don't know how to do it.

For the Ontario PCs—I'm going to echo the comments of my colleague from Timmins—James Bay—this is not about solving the problem. This is about pushing emotional hot buttons with a poorly thought-through legislative proposal.

As proposed in the bill, arbitration would, when everything else is stripped away, be reduced to an algorithm in which local variables are plugged in, and if the result is less than a certain threshold, it's okay, and if not, the arbitration award would either be invalidated or set aside. Not acceptable. It is this algorithmic nature of the proposal in Bill 44 that is in fact its Achilles heel. In the event that legislation like Bill 44 is ever enacted, it will almost certainly give rise to a court challenge on its validity, legality or constitutionality. Given the strong predetermined nature of the bill's proposal, it is very likely that legislation of this type would be struck down. The choice before this Legislature is to either vote this bill down here or see it struck down in the courts. The

only work that this bill will actually create will be of billable hours by lawyers.

Now there is a better way, and it is a way that the PC Party itself supported just 18 months ago. Last year, I chaired the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Our committee's signature work was the 2012-13 Ontario budget. Last April, May and June, the Ontario PC Party had an opportunity to largely enact a piece of their own 2011 election platform. The 2012-13 budget proposed a balanced and fair set of proposals that would have returned a level playing field to interest arbitration. In 2011, the PC Party sought tighter timelines on arbitration findings, and the 2012-13 budget proposed such timelines.

Now if you're watching out there, you may think, "Well, I send my MPPs to the Legislature to support good ideas." So if the Liberals and Conservatives agreed on the principle and on the result, then certainly the PC Party supported that part of the government's budget, and if you felt that way, you would be disappointed. The PC Party, and indeed all of the opposition majority, voted down those sections on interest arbitration.

They voted down a new legislative requirement for both parties in an interest arbitration proceeding to make written submissions—imminently reasonable—and to provide a requirement for the arbitrator to provide written reasons for an award. They voted against a reasonable timetable for issuing an arbitration award. They voted against reasonable and balanced provisions that would have benefited both sides in collective bargaining for ambulance services, fire protection, hospitals, provincial and municipal police and transit workers. We could have done better last year.

I do agree with the objectives of this bill, but the means it proposes to achieve its ends are both unworkable and legally unsupportable. I think as a House, we can do better and one of the ways to do better is to defeat this bill here this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon. Off the top, I just want to take a moment to commend the member for Simcoe–Grey. I'm not sure that anyone here understands the incredible amount of work that Mr. Wilson has put into this comprehensive arbitration bill. His efforts are reflected in the content of the bill, which is excellent and really gets to the heart of the problem that municipalities and other public sector employers have been dealing with for years. I think the true measure of its success, though, is the incredible amount of support that he has received to this bill. As was mentioned earlier this morning, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the association of police service boards and the OHA have all said to us that we've got it right with this bill.

As AMO president Russ Powers said right after Mr. Wilson's bill was introduced, "Municipal leaders with diverse political views support this bill. AMO hopes that members of the Legislature will work together, seize this opportunity and pass much-needed legislation."

Nothing sums up the difference between the McGuinty-Wynne government and the Ontario PC official opposition more clearly than the debate that we're having this afternoon. This government has known for many years that arbitration reform is a top priority of municipalities, and they've talked a lot about trying to change and do something. But when Dalton McGuinty gave us a four-month hiatus, this government obviously used it for a vacation. We here didn't take that time off. We worked with municipalities. We decided that taxpayers can't afford the out-of-control wage settlements being forced on them by arbitrators. So we spent four months consulting our stakeholders and listening to them. The result is the arbitration bill that we have in front of us today.

Ladies and gentlemen, I had an opportunity for a couple of days last week to spend some time with Mr. Wilson talking about this bill. We met with the mayor and deputy mayor of Ottawa, the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Committee in Prescott, and municipal leaders in the London area and also in Kitchener–Waterloo. The overwhelming reaction from everyone was that it was met with a sense of relief. Finally, regardless of political stripe, someone has put together a bill and crafted a bill to address this problem.

Ironically, the day after we met with Mayor Jim Watson and Deputy Mayor Eli El-Chantiry in Ottawa, an arbitrator awarded the city's police association retroactive pay hikes of nearly 6%. In response, the Ottawa Sun reported, "El-Chantiry said the decision gives even more reason why politicians should support a PC proposal on arbitration reform."

Just in my last few minutes, Speaker, I also want to take a moment to thank one of my local mayors, Prescott mayor Brett Todd, who is chair of the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Committee. It's the first time that Prescott has had that honour, to have a chair of that organization. Mr. Wilson and I met with eastern Ontario mayors last Thursday in the Prescott town hall. After listening to the presentation, he said this: "This is pretty much exactly what the EOMC was looking for in terms of interest arbitration reform that addresses the broken current system that has put our taxpayers on the hook for wildly escalating public sector salaries."

In closing, I want to say something to members opposite, from Ottawa, London, Windsor and everywhere else in between: Don't take my word for it, or Mr. Wilson's, when this bill is up for support; listen to your local mayors and councillors. This is the bill that they've been looking for. We've consulted them. We didn't take a holiday for four months when Dalton shuttered the Legislature. This is a bill that they want action from today. Thank you, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Let's get to the point: This bill and the other bills that the Conservative Party has tabled in this Legislature this session—there are many of them—basically are an attack on collective bargaining, an attack on unions. That's what this is about. It's not

about standing up for cities; it's about attacking workers' rights. That's what it's about.

The Progressive Conservatives would have us become a right-to-work state. That's what they're after—those great states like Mississippi and Louisiana, where people are doing so well, and the economy is so strong, not like jurisdictions like Sweden, that has an 85% unionization rate, where there's virtually no poverty and no homelessness. No. They want to take us on a Hobbesian race to the bottom so that we don't have collective bargaining rights, which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, are simple democratic rights. So not only are they attacking workers' and collective bargaining rights and unions; they are attacking civil rights and democracy. No less than Martin Luther King talked about right-to-work laws and attacks on unions as an attack on basic civil rights and democracy—and that was back in the 1960s.

1600

Let us make no mistake: Without unions and collective bargaining, we wouldn't have a five-day week, we wouldn't have a middle class; we would have child labour—I'm waiting for that bill to come forward. We certainly would not have the economy we enjoy today, and we would not have the economies we see that are doing so well that are grounded on civil rights, democracy and collective bargaining.

And I'm sad to say that they have found, at times, a willing partner in the Liberal Party across the aisle. With Bill 115, which was an attack on teachers' right to collectively bargain, they were the new coalition, the coalition of Progressive Conservatives and Liberal Party members fighting against workers' rights. That's not what we need; that's not what this province needs.

We already have a 50% precarious job rate; 50% of our workers in the GTA say they don't know if they're going to have a job next year. We need more unionization. We need more collective bargaining. That will help our economy. It always has. It's what built the States and it's what built Canada. Let's return to the roots of democracy, civil rights and collective bargaining, and let's not give this the time of day.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm pleased to speak to Bill 44 today, from my colleague from Simcoe-Grey, the capacity to pay act.

Many have long advocated in this Legislature and across the province that the arbitration system in Ontario is indeed broken and it's time to fix it. Take, for example, the dispute between the city of Stratford and the Stratford firefighters. An arbitrator in that case awarded a retroactive pay increase going back over three years—it was estimated that the cost to the municipality was \$1.5 million—and a 20% pay increase, with zero explanation from the arbitrator and no consideration of Stratford's capacity to pay.

The real impact, however, is felt across the entire community, not just those firefighters or those who sit on the local council. The real impact is felt when property

taxes skyrocket as a result, when a young family who purchases a home needs to reallocate their money that they might have intended spending on upgrading their home, and it has to be reallocated to higher taxes instead. That impact is felt again when the contractor who would have upgraded the family home never gets the call and never gets the job, and again when the local Home Hardware owner doesn't sell the contractor the supplies he would have needed to upgrade the family's home. This is the unseen, which is rarely spoken of and too often never realized.

When the arbitrator made that decision, he thought only of the two parties involved. The arbitrator only took into consideration the union's demand for wages and disregarded the impact that this would have, not only on the municipality's budget but the economy of Stratford as a whole and all of Ontario.

The problem is the way the law is written in this province. Technically, the arbitrator did nothing wrong. We allow arbitrators to be hand-picked; in essence, they're patronage appointments. We do not require that they publish a public report nor do we require them to explain or justify the award. I believe that must change. It's about showing taxpayers the respect they deserve. It's about creating a legislative framework that protects the taxpayers, not burdens them. The late Margaret Thatcher once said, "It is your tax which pays for public spending. The government have no money on their own. There is only taxpayers' money."

Last week, the member here from Trinity-Spadina, the coalition member, spoke out in this House about "our money," he said, and how we in this House must protect "our money." Well, it's not our money; it's the taxpayers' money. That money belongs to that young family I spoke of earlier, and when we take more money away from that family to pay for arbitration awards that the municipality can't afford, we are burdening that family even further. Yet that is what has happened in Stratford and is repeated daily across this province—like an arbitrator's decision in the small town of Smiths Falls, a town of less than 9,000 people, that has six of their policemen now on the sunshine list earning over \$100,000 a year.

Just as concerning is that there are no time limits to settle disputes. A disputed contract that requires an arbitrator often isn't settled until the next contract in question has already expired, sometimes two or three years later. What if instead of padding that sunshine list with another million and a half dollars—maybe if we didn't do that, we could afford proper care for those who are truly in need, care for a family that has an autistic son or daughter or a disabled man or woman who cannot provide for themselves. Sadly, instead, we choose to enrich a few and cause significant and further hardship for far too many.

I'm proud that we are the only party in this Legislature that realizes the consequences of these actions and are standing up and taking action to fix it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm so delighted to speak against this bill. So many other bills that the Conservatives have been bringing forth in this Legislature each and every week—God bless them; they are consistent—and they have a theme that they're developing each and every week. What's that theme? That theme is about attacking the unions, of course, or attacking civil servants, making sure that we cut their salaries, cut their pensions and/or eliminate them. This is the theme that runs through each and every one of those bills. God bless you, I give you 101% for consistency.

If only they devoted a little energy to those one- or two-percenters of Canadians and Ontarians who have a whole lot of money in their hands that Tories are happy to give them each and every year—Harper is so happy to give more and more to the two-percenters, and the Liberals have helped out in the last 10 years giving more and more to the one-percenters—if only they devoted just a little energy to take some of that money back that belongs—yes, to the people, to the taxpayers, to the little guy you defend each and every day—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Trinity–Spadina, I'd ask you to speak through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If only you spent just a little ounce of that time.

The member from Simcoe–Grey says the economy will grow again in spite of the Liberals. Well, it ain't gonna grow by cutting people's wages. It ain't gonna grow by cutting people's benefits. It ain't gonna grow by cutting people's pensions. It will grow if you go after the one- or two-percenters that you people feed on a regular basis each and every year. Maybe if we take some of that money back and give it back to the taxpayers, the ones the Tories pretend to support, then we would bring about a much more fair and just society.

What do the Tories want to do with this bill? They want to introduce a capacity to pay division, create a bureaucracy that they so much hate, who will be well paid, more than well paid than what arbitrators are likely to give out by setting up such a structure. These are the very people who want to bring down bureaucracies, but they don't mind creating yet another bureaucracy—the capacity to pay division—and give them huge sums of money to be able to contain the arbitration decisions that are made. God bless the Tories. You deserve applause.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jonah Schein: As always, it's an honour to speak on behalf of my constituents and to follow my colleague from Trinity–Spadina speaking to Bill 44.

I will absolutely not be supporting this bill. I think at the very heart of the question is the fact that our system is not broken when it comes to arbitrated settlements. They're on par with negotiated settlements; that's a fact that's out there right now.

So as my colleagues have pointed out in this House this afternoon, this is clearly an issue about pushing down wages, about beating up on our public sector, about beating up on unions. It's not something that I support. I don't think it's something that my constituents support, and that's why I won't be supporting it today.

1610

We are talking about members of the civil service, some of the people who do the most important work in my city and my community, and people who don't have the ability to negotiate through a strike. They negotiate their wages through arbitration, and this party would like to do something that's fundamentally undemocratic and doesn't actually make any sense. It absolves people in this Legislature of doing the job that they're sent here to do, which is to set priorities, make tough decisions and look out for the public interest. We're talking about our transit workers; we're talking about our police officers; we're talking about our firefighters; we're talking about our paramedics.

I met with paramedics yesterday, right here, and they told me about their daily lives. Their principal interest was not about themselves; it was about the public interest. They were talking about how we can deliver better health services, actually in more affordable ways, in this city, but they also told me that 25% of them are suffering with injuries, about the difficulties in their careers to actually retire, and I think the last thing we need to do is to kick our public servants in the teeth at this time.

There is an issue around municipalities here, and I think we need to address that. It's the fact that the PCs, when they were in government, and the Liberals as the current government have downloaded so many costs to our cities that our cities simply cannot pay the bills. Our cities are left without the resources to provide services, and that is an extraordinary problem. That issue is something that needs to be resolved today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Cambridge. No? Further debate? The member for Kitchener—

Interjection: Conestoga.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to take this opportunity to address the capacity to pay act, a thorough, well-thought-out, well-consulted bill by my colleague from Simcoe–Grey, Mr. Wilson. I'd like to thank him for his efforts in that.

Over the last few months, this important bill has received a number of significant endorsements. To start, we have gained the support of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. In fact, the police services board encouraged all parties to collaborate as Bill 44 worked its way through the legislative process.

The board's support is echoed by the editorial team at the Windsor Star. They wrote just on Tuesday that this

bill “must be passed” to “put a stop to the outrageously generous arbitration rulings that are crippling communities all across Ontario.”

The Ottawa Sun equally praised the work of the PC Party on developing a comprehensive solution to fix the province’s arbitration system. In fact, the Sun’s editorial team called on the NDP and the Liberals to stop the nonsense and to support the much-needed reforms contained in this important bill.

Columnist Luisa D’Amato with the Waterloo Region Record agrees, saying, “The only way to fix this situation is a change in the rules of provincial arbitration.” She continues by explaining that “we’ve got a fiscal crisis and a sluggish economy on our hands. We’ve got to restore some sanity to the cost of public services.”

So many voices in government, municipalities, business and the media get the challenges we face. It’s time that the NDP and the Liberals get a grip on things as well. For years now, local governments have been waiting for the province to take steps toward serious arbitration reform, and every year they ask for the same thing. In fact, just last year, when the mayors of Waterloo region laid out their demands during the Waterloo region by-election in Kitchener–Waterloo, they specifically called on all candidates to do the right thing if elected and support a fundamental overhaul of our broken arbitration system. Waterloo mayor Brenda Halloran characterized the current system quite well when she said, “We have an overburdened taxpayer, and they can’t take a lot more.”

This cannot continue, so I hope the members to the left and the members opposite—including the member from Kitchener–Waterloo to my left, as well as the member from Kitchener Centre on the government side—will oblige the mayors’ request by standing up for local taxpayers and supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate? The Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on a very important issue. I’m glad that this debate is taking place in the House because I think a lot of people did not hear this debate last year in the committee.

Let me get the government’s position out first, which is very important. Our government agrees that reforms are needed within the interest arbitration system, and we are committed to developing an arbitration system that works, is fair and is constitutional. I think those things are very important. In fact, in the speech from the throne, which was passed by this Legislature, this is what was stated, that the government “will sit down with its partners across all sectors to build a sustainable model for wage negotiation, respectful of both collective bargaining and a fair and transparent interest arbitration process, so that the brightness of our shared future is not clouded by the indisputable economic realities of our time.” That comes straight from the speech from the throne, which was passed by this Legislature, highlighting the government’s commitment to working with partners from our

municipal sector and our labour partners to ensure that we create a fair, transparent and timely interest arbitration mechanism.

It’s very interesting to note that this is the third PC bill on this topic, and if you read every single one of those bills, as I have done, they are all three different, which clearly highlights to me that the PC Party has no position on this issue. They’re trying to find a parade to jump in front of. In fact, a year ago, in 2012, through the budget process, where we had very specific proposals to create a system that was fair, timely and transparent based on a bill, actually, that Mr. Hillier, the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, had presented—very close to that; in fact, a lot of the language came from the official opposition’s election platform—they voted against it. As the member from Trinity–Spadina said, they got into a coalition with the NDP and voted against it—clearly, playing politics with this issue from the beginning.

I can tell you, from my conversations with the municipal partners, they are extremely disappointed with the official opposition because when the rubber hit the road, when the work needed to get done, when a year ago we could have resolved this issue in order to create a fair interest arbitration process, where were the Conservatives? Well, they were voting with the NDP, Speaker, and they were, one by one, taking all the schedules out dealing with this very important issue. We could have resolved this. We could have solved this issue for our municipalities one year ago, but that official opposition missed the boat because they thought politics were more important than siding with our municipalities, and that is regretful.

Now what they are proposing in this particular bill today will result in an extremely prescriptive mechanism. Essentially, what they are proposing is binding the hands of the arbitrators and unabling the arbitrators from being able to do their job. They’re actually taking away the neutrality or the fairness from the interest arbitration system, which seriously undermines the constitutional validity of the scheme that is proposed in this particular bill.

What we need to do is ensure that the interest arbitration system is a fair one, ensure that the interest arbitration rules are neutral so that both parties can be part of the process, and if they are unable to get a negotiated settlement through collective bargaining, which is the best way of getting an agreement done—but if they fail to do so and they are in a situation that they’re an essential service, then they are in a similar place through an interest arbitration mechanism as they would have been through a free collective bargaining process. That is the essence of the system, and it is incumbent upon us, the legislators, to respect that balance, to ensure that the fairness within the system is essential.

1620

Mr. Drummond’s name and his pronouncements in the report that was commissioned by the government are often cited in this regard. One thing which is not cited is where he said, “The need to reach a balance between the

rights of workers and the needs of employers is a key component of our labour relations system.” That’s key, Speaker, because we need to make sure that we maintain fairness in the system, that we do bring reforms to the system so that it is timely, so that it is transparent. That’s exactly what we presented a year ago.

There are some significant challenges that are outlined in this particular bill. The overly prescriptive nature of the bill is, I think, creating a lot of doubt in many, many people. I, as the Minister of Labour, and this government are very much committed to ensuring that we do bring balance, that we do bring fairness, that we do bring transparency, and that we do bring timeliness to this process. I am engaged in those conversations, to ensure that we come up with reforms that will ensure all those key things, because in the absence of fairness and balance, we will have a system that favours one party over the other.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe–Grey, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Jim Wilson: From the number of tweets that I’m receiving, and our excellent critic of municipal affairs, Steve Clark—and I do want to thank Steve Clark. It was a pleasure going on the road with him and actually listening to municipalities, police services boards, the Ontario Hospital Association, mayors, deputy mayors, councillors across the province.

Look, Minister of Labour, you are so wrong in what you say and so out to lunch in terms of what’s going on out there.

The economy will grow again. We will have prosperity again when Tim Hudak gets to be Premier and we get to implement our jobs plan for the province.

In the meantime, we have to bring some sanity. We can’t continue to allow unelected arbitrators to give awards that are at three times the rate of growth in the economy and inflation combined. It’s an average of about 3% a year—600,000 men and women woke up this morning without a job. They’ve had a 100% pay cut. They’ve lost their jobs under your government, and they cannot afford to be paying, on their property taxes, 3% a year for employees who are already well compensated, who already have good pensions and health benefits; they’ve got the works.

We appreciate our police and our firemen and our paramedics and the nurses in our nursing homes, but even they realize that they’re getting a very good deal under arbitration, because they just kind of skip through the bargaining process now, and everybody waits for the arbitrator to come to town.

AMO is non-partisan, and they agree 100% with this bill. If you really wanted to do something with the arbitration system—yes, you mentioned it in last year’s budget. You prorogued the Parliament, you never brought a bill in, and you don’t intend to do a damned thing.

So don’t be fooled out there.

MINING AMENDMENT ACT
(RESOURCES PROCESSED
IN ONTARIO), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES MINES
(RESSOURCES TRANSFORMÉES
EN ONTARIO)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Mantha has moved second reading of Bill 43. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it. We’ll take the vote at the end of regular business.

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETIES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L’OMBUDSMAN
(SOCIÉTÉS D’AIDE À L’ENFANCE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Miss Taylor has moved second reading of Bill 42. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I thought I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We’ll take the vote at the end of the next bill.

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY
TO PAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CAPACITÉ
DE PAYER DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Wilson has moved second reading of Bill 44. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1625 to 1630.

MINING AMENDMENT ACT
(RESOURCES PROCESSED
IN ONTARIO), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES MINES
(RESSOURCES TRANSFORMÉES
EN ONTARIO)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Mantha has moved second reading of Bill 43.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Gélinas, France | Prue, Michael |
| Bisson, Gilles | Horwath, Andrea | Schein, Jonah |
| Campbell, Sarah | Mantha, Michael | Singh, Jagmeet |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter |
| Fife, Catherine | Miller, Paul | Taylor, Monique |
| Forster, Cindy | Natyshak, Taras | Vanthof, John |

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Hardeman, Ernie | Moridi, Reza |
| Arnott, Ted | Harris, Michael | Munro, Julia |
| Bailey, Robert | Hillier, Randy | Murray, Glen R. |
| Barrett, Toby | Hudak, Tim | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Jackson, Rod | Nicholls, Rick |
| Bradley, James J. | Jaczek, Helena | O'Toole, John |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Jeffrey, Linda | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Chan, Michael | Jones, Sylvia | Pettapiece, Randy |
| Chiarelli, Bob | Klees, Frank | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Kwinter, Monte | Sandals, Liz |
| Clark, Steve | Leal, Jeff | Scott, Laurie |
| Colle, Mike | Leone, Rob | Sergio, Mario |
| Crack, Grant | MacCharles, Tracy | Shurman, Peter |
| Damerla, Dipika | MacLaren, Jack | Smith, Todd |
| Del Duca, Steven | MacLeod, Lisa | Sousa, Charles |
| Delaney, Bob | Mangat, Amrit | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Dhillon, Vic | McDonnell, Jim | Walker, Bill |
| Dickson, Joe | McKenna, Jane | Wilson, Jim |
| Duguid, Brad | McMeekin, Ted | Wong, Soo |
| Dunlop, Garfield | McNaughton, Monte | Yakabuski, John |
| Elliott, Christine | McNeely, Phil | Yurek, Jeff |
| Fedeli, Victor | Miller, Norm | Zimmer, David |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Milligan, Rob E. | |
| Gravelle, Michael | Milloy, John | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 18; the nays are 70.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Open the doors, please.

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'OMBUDSMAN
(SOCIÉTÉS D'AIDE À L'ENFANCE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Miss Taylor has moved second reading of Bill 42. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

| | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Horwath, Andrea | O'Toole, John |
| Arnott, Ted | Hudak, Tim | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Bailey, Robert | Jackson, Rod | Pettapiece, Randy |
| Barrett, Toby | Jones, Sylvia | Prue, Michael |
| Bisson, Gilles | Klees, Frank | Schein, Jonah |
| Campbell, Sarah | Leone, Rob | Scott, Laurie |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | MacLaren, Jack | Shurman, Peter |
| Chudleigh, Ted | MacLeod, Lisa | Singh, Jagmeet |
| Clark, Steve | Mantha, Michael | Smith, Todd |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Marchese, Rosario | Tabuns, Peter |
| Dunlop, Garfield | McDonnell, Jim | Taylor, Monique |
| Elliott, Christine | McKenna, Jane | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Fedeli, Victor | McNaughton, Monte | Vanthof, John |
| Fife, Catherine | Miller, Norm | Walker, Bill |
| Forster, Cindy | Miller, Paul | Wilson, Jim |

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Gélinas, France | Milligan, Rob E. |
| Hardeman, Ernie | Munro, Julia |
| Harris, Michael | Natyshak, Taras |
| Hillier, Randy | Nicholls, Rick |

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Duguid, Brad | Milloy, John |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Moridi, Reza |
| Bradley, James J. | Gravelle, Michael | Murray, Glen R. |
| Chan, Michael | Jaczek, Helena | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Chiarelli, Bob | Jeffrey, Linda | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Colle, Mike | Kwinter, Monte | Sandals, Liz |
| Crack, Grant | Leal, Jeff | Sergio, Mario |
| Damerla, Dipika | MacCharles, Tracy | Sousa, Charles |
| Del Duca, Steven | Mangat, Amrit | Wong, Soo |
| Delaney, Bob | Matthews, Deborah | Zimmer, David |
| Dhillon, Vic | McMeekin, Ted | |
| Dickson, Joe | McNeely, Phil | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 55; the nays are 34.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Miss Taylor?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Government agencies? The member has requested that the bill be referred to government agencies. Agreed? Agreed.

Please open the doors for 30 seconds.

PUBLIC SECTOR CAPACITY
TO PAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA CAPACITÉ
DE PAYER DU SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Wilson has moved second reading of Bill 44. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted | Jackson, Rod | Nicholls, Rick |
| Bailey, Robert | Jones, Sylvia | O'Toole, John |
| Barrett, Toby | Klees, Frank | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Chudleigh, Ted | Leone, Rob | Pettapiece, Randy |
| Clark, Steve | MacLaren, Jack | Scott, Laurie |
| Dunlop, Garfield | MacLeod, Lisa | Shurman, Peter |
| Elliott, Christine | McDonnell, Jim | Smith, Todd |
| Fedeli, Victor | McKenna, Jane | Thompson, Lisa M. |
| Hardeman, Ernie | McNaughton, Monte | Walker, Bill |
| Harris, Michael | Miller, Norm | Wilson, Jim |
| Hillier, Randy | Milligan, Rob E. | Yakabuski, John |
| Hudak, Tim | Munro, Julia | Yurek, Jeff |

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Albanese, Laura | Fife, Catherine | Moridi, Reza |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. | Flynn, Kevin Daniel | Murray, Glen R. |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Forster, Cindy | Naqvi, Yasir |
| Bisson, Gilles | Gélinas, France | Natyshak, Taras |
| Bradley, James J. | Horwath, Andrea | Prue, Michael |

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Campbell, Sarah | Jaczek, Helena | Qaadri, Shafiq |
| Cansfield, Donna H. | Jeffrey, Linda | Sandals, Liz |
| Chan, Michael | Kwinter, Monte | Schein, Jonah |
| Chiarelli, Bob | Leal, Jeff | Sergio, Mario |
| Colle, Mike | MacCharles, Tracy | Singh, Jagmeet |
| Crack, Grant | Mangat, Amrit | Sousa, Charles |
| Damerla, Dipika | Mantha, Michael | Tabuns, Peter |
| Del Duca, Steven | Marchese, Rosario | Taylor, Monique |
| Delaney, Bob | Matthews, Deborah | Vanthof, John |
| Dhillon, Vic | McMeekin, Ted | Wong, Soo |
| Dickson, Joe | McNeely, Phil | Zimmer, David |
| DiNovo, Cheri | Miller, Paul | |
| Duguid, Brad | Milloy, John | |

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 36; the nays are 52.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1643.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|---|--|---|
| Albanese, Laura (LIB) | York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston | |
| Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP) | London–Fanshawe | |
| Arnott, Ted (PC) | Wellington–Halton Hills | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée |
| Bailey, Robert (PC) | Sarnia–Lambton | |
| Balkissoon, Bas (LIB) | Scarborough–Rouge River | Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président |
| Barrett, Toby (PC) | Haldimand–Norfolk | |
| Bartolucci, Rick (LIB) | Sudbury | |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB) | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest | |
| Best, Margaret R. (LIB) | Scarborough–Guildwood | |
| Bisson, Gilles (NDP) | Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James | House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu |
| Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB) | St. Catharines | Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement |
| Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB) | Etobicoke–Lakeshore | Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine |
| Campbell, Sarah (NDP) | Kenora–Rainy River | |
| Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB) | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre | |
| Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Markham–Unionville | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015 |
| Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB) | Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean | Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie |
| Chudleigh, Ted (PC) | Halton | |
| Clark, Steve (PC) | Leeds–Grenville | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle |
| Colle, Mike (LIB) | Eglinton–Lawrence | |
| Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est | Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration |
| Crack, Grant (LIB) | Glengarry–Prescott–Russell | |
| Craitor, Kim (LIB) | Niagara Falls | |
| Damerla, Dipika (LIB) | Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville | |
| Del Duca, Steven (LIB) | Vaughan | |
| Delaney, Bob (LIB) | Mississauga–Streetsville | |
| Dhillon, Vic (LIB) | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest | |
| Dickson, Joe (LIB) | Ajax–Pickering | |
| DiNovo, Cheri (NDP) | Parkdale–High Park | |
| Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB) | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre | Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités |
| Dunlop, Garfield (PC) | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord | |
| Elliott, Christine (PC) | Whitby–Oshawa | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle |
| Fedeli, Victor (PC) | Nipissing | |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP) | Kitchener–Waterloo | |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|--|---|
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) | Oakville | |
| Forster, Cindy (NDP) | Welland | Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu |
| Gélinas, France (NDP) | Nickel Belt | |
| Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles | Attorney General / Procureur général |
| Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC) | Oxford | |
| Harris, Michael (PC) | Kitchener–Conestoga | |
| Hillier, Randy (PC) | Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington | |
| Horwath, Andrea (NDP) | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario |
| Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) | St. Paul's | Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi |
| Hudak, Tim (PC) | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario |
| Jackson, Rod (PC) | Barrie | |
| Jaczek, Helena (LIB) | Oak Ridges–Markham | |
| Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB) | Brampton–Springdale | Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement |
| Jones, Sylvia (PC) | Dufferin–Caledon | |
| Klees, Frank (PC) | Newmarket–Aurora | |
| Kwinter, Monte (LIB) | York Centre / York-Centre | |
| Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB) | Peterborough | Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales |
| Leone, Rob (PC) | Cambridge | |
| Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB) | Brant | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative |
| MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB) | Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est | Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs |
| MacLaren, Jack (PC) | Carleton–Mississippi Mills | |
| MacLeod, Lisa (PC) | Nepean–Carleton | |
| Mangat, Amrit (LIB) | Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud | |
| Mantha, Michael (NDP) | Algoma–Manitoulin | |
| Marchese, Rosario (NDP) | Trinity–Spadina | |
| Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB) | London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord | Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée |
| Mauro, Bill (LIB) | Thunder Bay–Atikokan | |
| McDonell, Jim (PC) | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry | |
| McGuinty, Dalton (LIB) | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud | |
| McKenna, Jane (PC) | Burlington | |
| McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB) | Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale | Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires |
| McNaughton, Monte (PC) | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex | |
| McNeely, Phil (LIB) | Ottawa–Orléans | |
| Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB) | Ottawa–Vanier | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones |
| Miller, Norm (PC) | Parry Sound–Muskoka | |
| Miller, Paul (NDP) | Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Milligan, Rob E. (PC) | Northumberland–Quinte West | |
| Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre | Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement |

| Member and Party / Député(e) et parti | Constituency / Circonscription | Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités |
|--|---|--|
| Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB) | Richmond Hill | Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation |
| Munro, Julia (PC) | York-Simcoe | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative |
| Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB) | Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre | Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports |
| Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB) | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP) | Essex | |
| Nicholls, Rick (PC) | Chatham-Kent-Essex | |
| O'Toole, John (PC) | Durham | |
| Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Sault Ste. Marie | Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles |
| Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) | Oshawa | |
| Pettapiece, Randy (PC) | Perth-Wellington | |
| Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB) | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest | Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse |
| Prue, Michael (NDP) | Beaches-East York | |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord | |
| Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) | Guelph | Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation |
| Schein, Jonah (NDP) | Davenport | |
| Scott, Laurie (PC) | Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock | |
| Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB) | York West / York-Ouest | Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille |
| Shurman, Peter (PC) | Thornhill | |
| Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) | Bramalea-Gore-Malton | |
| Smith, Todd (PC) | Prince Edward-Hastings | |
| Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) | Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud | Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances |
| Tabuns, Peter (NDP) | Toronto-Danforth | |
| Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB) | Mississauga-Erindale | Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP) | Hamilton Mountain | |
| Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) | Huron-Bruce | |
| Vanthof, John (NDP) | Timiskaming-Cochrane | |
| Walker, Bill (PC) | Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound | |
| Wilson, Jim (PC) | Simcoe-Grey | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle |
| Wong, Soo (LIB) | Scarborough-Agincourt | |
| Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest | Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario |
| Yakabuski, John (PC) | Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke | |
| Yurek, Jeff (PC) | Elgin-Middlesex-London | |
| Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) | Willowdale | Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones |
| Vacant | London West / London-Ouest | |
| Vacant | Windsor-Tecumseh | |

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Dipika Damerla, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day (pro tem.)

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong
Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Gilles Bisson
Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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