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Wednesday 13 June 2012

Mercredi 13 juin 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 13 June 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 13 juin 2012

The House met at 0900.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TOBY'S ACT (RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM
DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT
BECAUSE OF GENDER IDENTITY
OR GENDER EXPRESSION), 2012

LOI TOBY DE 2012 SUR LE DROIT
À L'ABSENCE DE DISCRIMINATION
ET DE HARCÈLEMENT FONDÉS
SUR L'IDENTITÉ SEXUELLE OU
L'EXPRESSION DE L'IDENTITÉ SEXUELLE

Ms. DiNovo moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 33, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to gender identity and gender expression /
Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui concerne l'identité sexuelle ou l'expression de l'identité sexuelle.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I move third reading and ask for unanimous consent to speak later to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Ms. DiNovo has moved third reading of Bill 33. Further debate? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on what definitely has been categorized as—and I will 100% agree—a historic day in the history of our province. I am very excited to speak on Bill 33, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to gender identity and gender expression, in short referred to as Toby's Act, co-sponsored by my colleague the MPP for Parkdale–High Park, whom I will speak a little later about, my colleague the MPP from Whitby–Oshawa and myself from Ottawa Centre.

This is a historic day because we are about to recognize, enshrine and codify the rights of trans Ontarians into our Human Rights Code. The last time we changed the Ontario Human Rights Code was in the mid-1980s. A lot of people will remember the debate that took place at that time because, at that time, we recognized the rights of gays and lesbians in our society by adding the term “sexual orientation” to the code. We were doing something remarkable as well, which opened the doors to

many incredible social changes in our society. We thought at that time that by just adding “sexual orientation” we were covering all kinds of people, but we recognized soon after that that was not the case, that we had excluded members of the trans community from the protections of the Human Rights Code. Today, we're taking that very important historic step forward by adding gender identity and gender expression in the Human Rights Code so that no human being is left outside the scope, the protection, of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The other reason I believe this is extremely historic is because we are on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Human Rights Code. I wish that the member from Parkdale–High Park, the member from Whitby–Oshawa and I had designed this in such a way—not the case. It happened. But historic, indeed, that on the 50th anniversary we are taking yet another important, bold leadership step to modernize our human rights protection so that no Ontarian is left behind.

I want to take this opportunity to really recognize the work and persistence of the member from Parkdale–High Park. She is a great definition of a defender of those who need their voice to be spoken. She never steps back from speaking for the vulnerable in our community and she has used this Legislature—the perfect place to do so—to raise issues that need to be discussed. So I salute you, MPP DiNovo, for bringing this bill not once, not twice, not thrice, but four times to ensure that we protect the rights of the trans community. And thank you for working with the rest of us and bringing us into the fold as part of this debate, as part of this bill, to ensure that we get it done this time around.

I also want to recognize the MPP from Whitby–Oshawa for her courage in standing up for this important issue and putting her name. Too many times we get caught in partisan issues, we get caught in ideological labels and we make assumptions about ourselves and others as to how they will vote or speak on certain issues. I think that the member from Whitby–Oshawa demonstrated today in her work on this particular issue that ideology is of no consequence when it comes to the protection of human rights, and I salute her for that courage. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the members who will be voting in support of this bill for demonstrating leadership, for doing exactly what needs to be done, which is our role, and that is that we always be on the lookout to protect Ontarians, that we be on the front lines of defending the rights of Ontarians. That, after all, as lawmakers, is our

ultimate responsibility, and I am excited, happy and feel fulfilled that we are about to do that with, hopefully, the passage of Bill 33, Toby's Act, which will codify gender identity and gender expression into the Human Rights Code.

But Speaker, most importantly, the people who deserve the recognition, many of them who have joined us today in the gallery, are the members of the trans community, for not giving up the fight, for believing in themselves for who they are, for seeking the recognition that is theirs to have. It's taken us that long to come along with you, to understand you and to do what is so right, but you did not let it go. You deserve the real recognition today when—I have to say “if”; by law I'm required to do that—this law is passed.

There are many among us from the trans community who unfortunately are not here to see the day, and we have to remember them, Madam Speaker. They are not here because they couldn't take the societal pressure that was put upon them. They are not here because they were discarded by society as outcasts, which should not be—is not—allowed in our society. They're not here because they choose not to be here because of how they were looked at.

0910

We need to change that, Madam Speaker. This bill is one step forward to accomplishing that. It's not going to happen overnight. But by enshrining, codifying, the rights of trans Ontarians into the Ontario Human Rights Code, I believe, I hope, that we're sending a very strong message out in the broader community that discrimination of any form against anyone, trans or not, is not allowed. It's unacceptable, and after today it's against the law.

That's something that we need to work on. We need to work on that in our workplaces. We need to work on it in our neighbourhoods, in our community centres, in our schools. I think Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, which this Legislature so courageously passed, is a bold step in that direction as well, so that we protect our children, because we have to start early. We can't wait for later; we have to start early to educate our children to accept everyone and to celebrate everyone. But that responsibility continues. That responsibility is on all of us.

I want to thank the members of the trans community, and a lot of the people who worked very, very hard on this issue are here today. Don't stop the work. We're getting the legal protection today, but we need to do the educating. We need to do the engagement. We need to continue to speak to people, to make them recognize that you are no different. We are all the same. That work, Speaker, I vouch to continue to do, along with the trans community in Ontario and in my community in Ottawa.

I think the other thing we are really demonstrating today is leadership, and hopefully we are sending a message across the country to all other jurisdictions. Hats off to the Northwest Territories for having that kind of protection some time ago. Hats off to other jurisdictions, like Manitoba and the House of Commons in Canada,

also looking at that protection. But there are more places than just these two places, and there are members of the trans community not only across Canada and across North America but across the globe. We need to make sure that these protections are accorded to them as well, because they deserve to be treated like all of us, and they deserve the protection of the Human Rights Code or any other relevant human rights legislation.

Madam Speaker, I will end my comments at that. I am reminded today yet again as to why I entered public service, the kind of things that I wanted to accomplish. This is definitely one big thing off my list of things to accomplish in terms of being a public servant, as a representative of my community of Ottawa Centre. We all have personal reasons that we bring forward when we run and we are elected to this place that motivate us, that drive us to get things done. This is one of the issues. Issues around human rights, making sure that we remain and live in an equal society, is an important one for me, and I will continue to work on this issue. I'm very happy to see that today we are about to make history.

Thank you very much, Speaker. I look forward to hearing the other speakers.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It is an honour to be able to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 33, Toby's Act, for the third and final time. I have to say it's both surprising and wonderful to be here today. It's surprising because it has taken so long, first of all, to get here. There has been so much work done by many of the members who are present in the lobby today—in the gallery, I should say—who have worked long and hard on this, who have faced discrimination, harassment and marginalization as a result of the many misconceptions about trans people. But it's also wonderful that, once we actually got it here, into this legislative chamber, we're able to move it through so quickly. We only went through second reading at the end of May, we had committee hearings on Monday, and here we are for third and final reading. I think it is a testament to all of the hard work that you've put into it, all of the members here in the gallery today.

To my fellow members here in the chamber: I also would like to pay tribute to the member from Parkdale–High Park, who has laboured long and hard on this. On the fourth time, we've finally gotten it to third reading. To the member from Ottawa Centre, thank you for your tremendous leadership on this file as well. I think this is one of those rare occasions when we can come together and actually do something for the people we serve.

I was listening to the prayers this morning, actually, and the second prayer talked about giving us a deeper understanding of the people we serve, and I think that's what we have listened to over these last months and, in some cases, years. We have been educated in this process, and we have a much deeper understanding of some of the things that people in the trans community go through. That's why we're here today: to make sure that we amend our Human Rights Code to properly reflect the

need to protect the rights of everyone in our society, and that's what this is all about.

Here we are on the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Ontario Human Rights Code, and what we're doing here is to recognize gender identity and gender expression as something that cannot be discriminated against. That's something that I believe all of us as parliamentarians want: to make sure that we protect the rights of everyone in our society, and to give a voice to everyone in our communities, and I'm happy to be here to do that.

I would like to just comment on some of the presentations that we heard in committee, too, because I think some of the presenters had some very thoughtful expressions. I would just like to read a few of them. One was from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. I'd just like to read a couple of passages from the verbal presentation that they gave to us. Their presentation indicated that:

"Toby's Act is an essential step in providing full human rights protection for one of the most marginalized, economically and socially vulnerable groups in our society. Advocating for full human rights protection for trans Ontarians through legislation is an ethical and professional imperative consistent with registered nurses individually and collectively seeking to promote justice.

"Strengthening human rights protection enables people to be who they are. As was explained during the House of Commons debate on Bill C-389, a bill to amend federal legislation:

"Gender identity is a person's innate feeling of being male, female, both genders, neither or in between. It is not a reference to people's biological sex or their sexual orientation. Identity is something to be respected and honoured and gender identity is no different. Gender expression is the expression of that inner identity. It is the freedom to be, plain and simple, one's self." Madam Speaker, I agree.

Another group that presented was Queer Ontario, and they indicated that, "Amending the Ontario Human Rights Code to include 'gender identity' and 'gender expression' would not only rightfully extend social recognition and legal protections, but also symbolically celebrate the courage, tenacity, spirit, and resilience of the trans communities in the face of severe discrimination and hostility."

Finally, from Barbara Hall, the chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission: "Later this week, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The code has been amended many times during that period, including adding new protection for sex, disability and sexual orientation. The code has evolved as society's understanding of human rights has grown and evolved. The time is right, now, to amend the code to recognize, promote and protect the rights of transgender individuals." Again, Madam Speaker, I fully agree.

I think what's amazing is that this is happening not just provincially but also federally. As you know, there was a vote taken in the House of Commons last week on

second reading to pass a bill very similar to Toby's law, and I'm very proud to say that it did pass. I'm proud to say it was also supported by my federal member, the member from Whitby-Oshawa, who also supported this bill, so we're certainly *ad idem* at home on that issue. But I think this is something that is important that we recognize at both the federal and provincial levels, and I hope that will happen in provincial Legislatures across Canada—and I believe that's already happening in at least one other province.

Finally, in closing, I would just like to say, Madam Speaker, that we can't lose sight of the fact of the inspiration for this bill, Toby Dancer, who unfortunately is not here to see this bill passed. But in Toby's memory and in thinking about all of the other people whom this bill is meant to support and protect, I am very pleased to be able to stand here today and fully support it. It is, in fact, a historic day. Congratulations to everyone involved in this.

0920

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

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Madam Speaker.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Bien sûr. Madam Speaker, madame le Président—it's a rather extraordinary day. You don't often in your life get a chance to be part of making history. I think this is a first in Canada, and it has been a rather incredible two weeks with Bill 13 last week and with this and making the world safer for a lot of kids.

In my many years of working on the streets of two Canadian cities—the one I grew up in, Montreal, and the one I lived in and was mayor of, Winnipeg—I used to often comment, working with gay and lesbian and transgender youth, that one of the worst moments I ever experienced was what I used to call when a child gives up hope, seeing a 12- or 14-year-old where the light has gone out of their eyes, when they've come to a place where—gay and lesbian and transgender kids come from a minority where, unlike most other minorities, when they go home at the end of the day, they're not going home. If a child is black, they often go home to black parents—not all the time. If they're Chinese, they go home to Chinese parents. If a child is trans or gay or lesbian, they go home often to the most dangerous place in their life. Most of the kids I worked with on the streets that were trans kids and gay and lesbian kids were there because their parents weren't a source of love; their parents were a source of violence and harm and, often, a source of physical or sexual abuse. I would say that was 80% of the kids that I worked with on the streets, and I would say that 80% of them were gay or lesbian or trans kids. I don't think there's a worse moment of my life that I've ever experienced than just seeing the light go out, where that child no longer sees a future. They don't see a family. They don't see a loving relationship. They don't see parents. They don't see children. They don't see love. They don't see a career. They don't see hope. They think

that the world is a place in which they are entirely alone and in which they cannot construct a future. This is why the suicide rate amongst trans youth and amongst trans, gay and lesbian folks is three, four times higher than it is for other folks, which is why this act and last week's legislation and the power of using words like "gay" and "trans" and "lesbian" and other words and calling things for what they are—and what we learned from the feminist movement in my lifetime is that you have the right to define yourself, not to be defined by others—is so important: because we want not just to see the light of hope in children's eyes; we want to hold our children up and celebrate them for their diversity and their uniqueness and make them feel respected and celebrated. What we want for all of the children in our lives—our own children, our grandchildren, our friends' children—is we want them to live celebrated, accomplished lives where they have high self-esteem and an extraordinarily good feeling about who they are.

e.e. cummings said, "To be nobody-but-yourself—in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you like everybody else—means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight; and never stop fighting." I think that pretty much sums up the journey of anyone who chooses a different path.

It's also, I think, important what we do with this piece of legislation now. I think for us as community leaders, we need to be inspired by our many friends from the trans community who are here today, for whom the great credit for this legislation is really deservedly placed. The reason we have gay and lesbian and trans rights, as I've said many times, is not often because of Legislatures. What has been so remarkable over the last two weeks is, this is the first time in my 40 years of activism where Legislatures are leading, not following, the courts in decisions. We are not doing this under the duress of a Supreme Court ruling that is forcing us to change our laws, as happened with marriage, as happened with gay and lesbian rights in the Human Rights Code. And remember that all of the rights that we have as gay and lesbian and transgender people and sexual minorities in this country, we fought for, and we started that fight, for many of us, at very young ages, saying "I" and "we" rather than "they" and "them."

There are still too many gay, lesbian and transgender people in powerful positions in our society who can't come out yet and say "I" and "we" and "they" and "them." We need our role models. There's a responsibility that all of us who are in safe and powerful places in the world have to self-identify. It was a lot harder for me to say "I" and "we" as a gay and lesbian person when I was 14 or 15, and my father decided to not talk to me for three years because of that. I nearly lost my family. That was courage. It's not courage as a cabinet minister to do that. I am in a safe and powerful place I never thought I would be in, and it is my responsibility to make sure that other folks who are not in safe or powerful places have access to the same fundamental rights that we have.

I go out every day and talk about this. Every Friday, I go to one of the various mosques in my community, and I pray with my Muslim brothers and sisters, with the great support of my friend Yasir Naqvi, whom I'm a great fan of. We call it the gay-Muslim alliance that he and I have. I talk to the imams.

I hope that all of us will not shy away from this. The more you are perceived to be a socially conservative person in this House, the more powerful a voice you are for change. Go to your Knights of Columbus; go to your mosque. Explain to people why you voted for this. Do not run from it. Do not hide from it. Do not say, "We just did it on a voice vote." Do not say, "Well, I was forced to by my party." If you really believe in human rights, all of us, especially those of us who are not gay and lesbian or trans, need to stand up in our communities and be proud and understand the positive consequence of this will only happen if this law changes attitudes. This law will only change attitudes if we start our work today with the same non-partisan spirit that brought this bill forward, of putting kids first and deciding that we were going to be Ontarians before we were Liberals or New Democrats or Conservatives, and going out every day and working this.

We know that when we put gay and lesbian rights and sexual orientation in the human rights charter, the world changed—not because it was a dead law left on the books. It was because it started to affect the way people talked. It started to change our rights to be able to be visible, to not have to hide, to be parents and, because people felt that they had the support of the courts and the law, to act with personal courage in changing the way that they worked.

I want to thank my friend the member for Parkdale—High Park. I think it's been mentioned a number of times: One of the major reasons this bill is before us is not just because of her unrelenting work on this but also because she reached out to others, and she played a very catalytic role in this. As my mother always says to me, "If you don't worry about who gets the credit in life, Glen, you'll get a lot more done." I think that was important. I want to thank my friend Yasir and the member for Oshawa—Whitby, Christine. It's so nice that all the people—these are all straight people; a nice, straight woman from the suburbs, you know? She could probably be in one of those Loblaws commercials, behind the shopping cart with the kids, you know? She's a very deceptively agile politician. It's interesting to see two women and a man who do not come from this community play such a pivotal role. I want to thank all three of them. I'm very proud. I'm a little prouder to be an MPP when I get to keep the company of folks like you.

I also want to thank my friends Chris Bentley and John Gerretsen, the past and current Attorneys General, who are in some ways some of the unsung heroes of this. This stuff in government has to go through ministers' files—and advocate for that. It is important that they played a role, sometimes quietly and silently, where their own strong feelings about this sometimes had to be muted, as we do as ministers from time to time, and were

patient. It's never a virtue I've held in high esteem or been able to operate very effectively with, but others do. I want to thank John and Chris for their leadership as well, and Laurel Broten and Eric and so many others in my caucus—Madeleine—who were just very principled, decent people about this, who worked extra hard in quiet ways and gave this an extra nudge when it was needed.

Most of all, I just want to thank all of you who came down here today. You've been activists every time you get up in the morning and put on pants, or nylons—and God knows how you put on nylons. I did it once; I never want to do it again. I'll tell you that story when there are less media around. It takes a great deal of courage to be you and to be you proudly, and it's because of the "I's" and "we's" that you've been saying in the face of violence and hatred, with great personal courage and dignity, that we're here today.

Thank you so much. God bless and keep you all safe. This is a great day to celebrate.

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

0930

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It is my pleasure to rise in the House to speak once again to Bill 33, Toby's Act. I would like to offer thanks once more to the members from Whitby–Oshawa, Parkdale–High Park and Ottawa Centre for coming together to bring this legislation forward.

Not two months ago we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the signing of Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, under which every individual is equal before and under the law and under which every individual has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. These are the dreams we have for our Ontario, our Canada, but we must constantly work to make those dreams real. If we want all Ontarians to enjoy these fundamental rights and freedoms, they should—must—be extended to all Ontarians. Standing in opposition to that notion only serves to reinforce an imbalance; some might go so far as to say "an injustice."

Under the current language of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the equalities and freedoms which most of us enjoy and which far too many of us take for granted are fuzzy, spelled out clearly for some and merely implied for others. Bill 33 looks to change that. It amends the Human Rights Code to specify that every person has a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of gender identity or gender expression.

There was widespread agreement in legal circles that transgender and transsexual persons are implicitly protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code. But if these protection measures are implicitly covered, as some would argue, then there can be no harm in making them explicit. The Human Rights Code was crafted with the express intent of protecting marginalized individuals and disadvantaged groups from discrimination arising from the very characteristics that define these groups. Trans and gender-variant Ontarians represent just such a disadvantaged group. These identities are a reality not

just of modern life but of the human experience. Trans Ontarians come from cultural, ethnoracial and religious backgrounds of all kinds. They live in every part of this vast, proud province. They work in every sector of the economy, and they lead rich lives as children and siblings, parents and grandparents. Trans Ontarians are like us in every way that truly matters. They are strengthened by family, united by community, inspired by hope, restored by faith. They love and are loved. They are not less than us; they are part of us. Yet trans people are not like you or I in one significant way: They are not regarded as being equal under the law.

You can't work in this place and not cultivate some kind of social conscience. In the work we do, we constantly see wrongs that cry out for our attention. We are reminded daily that the world is imperfect and that there are people who need our help. We raise our voices here in service of our communities and in support of what we believe to be right. We do answer for our work here in this place. We answer to our constituents and we answer to history. May it be said of us here today that we were able to recognize an imbalance that we admitted could no longer be denied. Equality must live as more than just a theory if it is to live at all. And may it be said that we took this moment to rise to our best ideas, that we valued our rights and freedoms enough that we extended them to all Ontarians. Call it the golden rule if you like; call it moral courage if you must. When you get right down to it, this is a decision about whether or not to deny our fellow Ontarians the full scope of freedoms, rights and protections that others enjoy as a birthright. It is a chance to affirm that human equality is a fundamental right, not a privilege to be enjoyed by the fortunate.

Thank you so much.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a great pleasure to stand before my colleagues today and speak in support of this Bill 33, Toby's Act. This is the fourth time the member from Parkdale–High Park has introduced this bill, but, as others have mentioned, it's the first time it has been sponsored by all three parties. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park, the member from Ottawa Centre and our own member from Whitby–Oshawa for bringing this forward and spearheading this initiative that stands up for the rights of all Ontarians.

It's unfortunate that even in this age we're still having this debate about whose human rights should be protected in our community when the answer should be that everyone's human rights deserve equal protection under the law in this province.

It's equally unfortunate that even in this age, society still needs to address discrimination and prejudice at all. We should be past this as a society. We should just be past it.

It's the respect for diversity that makes Canadians stand apart from other countries. I've lived in a couple of other countries, and I can tell you we are lucky as Can-

adians and Ontarians to live where we do. It is the fabric of our communities, this diversity, that makes us Canadians and makes us special. Why can't we just expand that and make that—you know, that's a place I want my kids to grow up in. I have two young children, and I want them to grow up tolerant and understanding of people who are different from them, not afraid of them because they look a little bit different or they think a little bit differently. It doesn't matter. What matters is that they have a heart and a soul just like the rest of us, and that's what we need to focus on.

If respecting diversity is one of our core values—and I think that it is—then we should make sure that it's embodied in the wording of our laws. This is exactly what we are trying to do here: We're explicitly stating that everyone's human rights are protected equally under the law in Ontario.

Bill 33 is named for Toby Dancer. Many of us know her as Adrian Chornowol. She was a transgendered person and a musical genius. Since the provincial Conservative Party government, led by Premier John Robarts, enacted the Human Rights Code in 1961, our province has made leaps and bounds in recognizing and protecting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, Ms. Toby Dancer's tragedy is a reminder for all of us that there is still much more we can do in terms of combatting discrimination and treating each other with respect and dignity, no matter what your walk of life is, no matter what religion you are, no matter what sexual orientation you are. That is not what defines us.

If my memory serves, this bill was last introduced in 2010, and then the Attorney General rejected the bill on the basis that transgendered people's rights were already protected under the code. I'd like to argue that this view missed the point of the bill, I think. The purpose of Toby's Act is to explicitly state that transgendered people are entitled to the same human rights protection offered to all Ontarians. Are they not? Like I said, we all have a heart and soul and we have that in common. We all deserve the same protections.

Why do we want to make this explicit statement? Scholars from academic institutions around the world have produced empirical data and theoretical basis supporting the position that values embodied in laws can promote greater awareness and encourage good behaviour, even if the laws are rarely enforced. By explicitly stating that all and every Ontarian is entitled to the same human rights protection, we can reduce the amount of hidden discrimination facing transgendered people and—you know what?—frankly, everybody else, too, because we need a society where there is no tipping point anymore, that we go over that tipping point and we're at a point where it doesn't matter that we're different.

Once again, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues from Parkdale–High Park, Ottawa Centre and Whitby–Oshawa for bringing attention to this important issue. I'm pleased that the bill has gone through committee and was called for third reading. It has been a long time and a

long, hard battle for the member from Parkdale–High Park and for everyone sitting in the gallery as well. It's one that was hard-fought, and I'm afraid to say that this isn't the end. It's probably just the beginning for everybody, but it's a great start.

It's my sincerest hope that my colleagues in the House would kindly lend their support to this bill. It should be everyone's personal opinion, I think, that everyone's rights are detailed and protected under the law. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Wow. Can you believe this is happening? It's astounding. It's astounding for a variety of reasons, but it's particularly astounding in a kind of slightly humorous way, because Toby, were Toby alive today, was a very private person and would be completely embarrassed by all of this.

I want to start by introducing some incredibly important people, and those are the people who are sitting in our gallery. We have Douglas Elliott from the Ontario GSA Coalition. We know Doug. We have the Rev. Dr. Brent Hawkes—

Applause.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Actually, why don't you save your applause till the end, because there are a lot of them.

We have Rev. Dr. Brent Hawkes; Boris Dittrich; Andrea Houston; Kevin Beaulieu, Luka Sidaravicius—these are Pride people—another, Luka Amona, Francisco Alvarez, Evan Dean, all from Pride; Richard Hudler from Queer Ontario; Lynn Anne Mulrooney from the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, senior policy analyst; Bahar Karbalaee—I'm going to massacre these names—again from the RNAO; Susan Gapka, famous Susan, the chair of Trans Lobby Group; Davina Hader, from Trans Lobby Group; Christin Milloy, from Trans Lobby Group; Martine Stonehouse, the famous Martine, from Trans Lobby Group; Nick Mule, also from Trans Lobby Group; Shannon Hogan and Pamela Bond, who were responsible for putting the stained glass window of Toby Dancer in our church, are here—two good friends; Alex Moakler; Stefonknee Wolscht; Rachel Lewis; Jonathan Mackereth; Dwayne Shaw; Amanda Ryan; Stephanie Williams; my own staff, Susan Rogers, Gerard Di Trolio, Ramesh Rajandram—thanks, staff, for all your work—and also Butila Carpacchi, my EA, who's not here; Emily McDonald and Debbie Wooldridge.

If I left anybody out, we love you too, whoever you are, so thank you.

0940

I can still remember Toby's playing. Every Sunday night, Toby played Amazing Grace. She was our music director at the church. The reason that Toby played Amazing Grace every Sunday night—although she hated playing it after a while, as you can imagine—was that the evening service was and is made up of people mainly on social assistance, people who are marginalized because of mental health and addiction issues. Many of them

didn't have glasses that worked, back in the day when Toby played, and many others had literacy issues. It didn't even work to do overheads for them. So Toby had to play *Amazing Grace*, because everybody knows the words—at least, to the first verse—of *Amazing Grace*.

What Toby would have preferred to have played was jazz. Toby was a John Coltrane fan. She was a phenomenal producer of Ian Tyson albums, as was mentioned, and a great studio musician. I remember that one service we did, which we called John Squared, was the gospel of John and the music of John Coltrane. I think it had an audience of about four people, but that's okay. We had a good time.

A few facts about not only Toby but about all trans folk that I think are really important to hold, that haven't been mentioned yet: 48% of trans people attempt suicide. That is the highest suicide rate of any marginalized group you can imagine or mention. About the same number live in poverty, and Toby represented both those groups: attempted suicide and living in poverty.

Once Toby began to transition, Toby's life went downhill. Certainly, we saw from deputations that not only in employment but in trying to find a place to live, in all of those markers of prejudice, trans folk are the ones who suffer most, out of all of the marginalized groups. What we are doing here today, ladies and gentlemen, is the first step towards saving lives. That's what we're doing. We're making that first step towards saving the lives of those who are deeply, deeply discriminated against, and that's why today is so significant.

Toby was doing really well, we thought, as well as could be expected, considering the facts that I've just given you and the fact that she herself found it extremely difficult just to walk down the street. I hold that image up, Madam Speaker: just to walk down the street.

We had another wonderful trans person who came through our congregation who was the first ordained trans person in the United Church of Canada: Cindy Bourgeois. Love to Cindy—she's out there in Stratford, doing her church work. Cindy is six foot four. She didn't pass very well; looked more male than female; constantly walked down the street to verbal abuse. Imagine walking out your door every day to verbal abuse. Cindy used to joke—she's six foot four—“Come on. Come and get me,” right? But still, that's hard. That's difficult.

Jurisdictionally, this will be the first major jurisdiction in all of North America, not just Canada, to pass this gender identity and gender expression into its human rights code. That is significant. The Northwest Territories has been mentioned. Not to say anything negative about our Northwest Territories brothers and sisters, but there are only about 40,000 people who live there. We have 13 million in Ontario. This is huge. This is a huge, historic step forward for human rights, for all people, because when you stand up for the human rights of a minority of people, you're standing up for the human rights of all people, and that's what we're doing here today.

I've had calls from New York state, from North Carolina. This will have an impact beyond the borders of Canada.

I was in Winnipeg, the mayoral town of the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, just about a week ago, speaking to the attorney general there—and they're copying us, by the way, on the record. They're going to be bringing in gender identity themselves this week at some point. But we still beat them—yay! It was a friendly competition, I said, in which we all win.

Certainly, federally—here's where I want to say, first of all, hats off to the member from Whitby–Oshawa. I have to say that if Toby were alive to hear Progressive Conservatives talk in glowing terms about her, she would have been verklempt. Thank you all, to the Progressive Conservative Party, who really showed your progressive conservative side today. Thank you for being progressive. And thank you for speaking to your husband. Thank you for speaking to the Minister of Finance, who voted in favour of this bill federally.

How amazing, that we live in a country where this bill can go to committee, and I'm sure it will eventually work its way out and be passed federally as well. But again, just to be a little competitive here, I have to say that when we pass it here today, it will cover the rights of more people than the federal bill will, still. The federal bill is a lot more constrained in terms of the numbers of people it covers, so again we're making history for all of Canada here in terms of just the numbers of people that this bill will affect.

You ask, “Well, what will it affect?” I can think of a number of ways. One of the struggles for trans people is around identification. We heard lots of testimony about identification issues. This will help them get an OHIP card, get a driver's licence. It will help them there. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for psychiatrists: This could open up a challenge to that. There are all sorts of ways in which this bill could begin to change the scenario for trans people in the way that trans folk are viewed and the experience that trans folk have.

I mean, just for a moment, can you actually imagine a child—for those with young children who are listening, and those with young children in the chamber, one of them, statistically, may be trans. Imagine the different world that that child will grow up in because of this bill and all that it entails and all that it will unleash in terms of the way we go about our lives in Ontario: who we hire, how easy it is to get hired; who we rent to, how easy it is to get rent; quality of life, income levels, education. Every aspect of one's existence will be affected by this bill, potentially. That, too, is phenomenally historic.

Really, what we're doing is simply one thing, and that is to recognize that trans folk are human beings like the rest of us.

I also want to give a shout-out to the member from Ottawa Centre, to Yasir, and to thank you so, so much for carrying this forward on your side. That's the other aspect of this bill that's quite wonderful. This bill shows how minority government can work. You'll witness in about 40 minutes that we'll all start yelling at each other again, but for this halcyon moment, that's not the case. For this halcyon moment, we're actually all working

together, with a common theme, to a common end, and that's something that really overrides just about everything else, and that's human rights itself, civil rights, which I'm sure inspires all of us to have even run to be here in this chamber. Showing that minority government can work is critical, and I think that's what we were all elected to do. We were elected to a minority government to show that it can work. This is what it looks like when it works at its very best.

Shout-outs, too, to the Attorney General, who's here, and the past Attorney General, who's here as well. Thank you for your offices and for your staff, and thank you for becoming part of the solution and not part of the problem, which is amazing. I know, again, that this will open up all sorts of things, Mr. Attorney General, in your department as well. It's great that we're voting together on this so that that will roll out seamlessly—also good.

0950

What else to say? I want to thank a few people. I want to thank the people from Emmanuel Howard Park United Church. I'm not part of that church anymore. When you leave the pulpit, you leave the church. But it was a phenomenal moment in history, a phenomenal group of people who actually allowed the church to be transformed, wrote a book about it, won a prize about it, but it really was the people in the church who allowed that to happen, who allowed a church to become inclusive and grow because of its inclusion. We have a great member here, the Rev. Dr. Brent Hawkes, who showed how one can do that in church: grow a church based on inclusion.

This is true, by the way, not just of Christians but of all faiths. I've had letters from some wonderful people of faith, including in the Jewish faith, supporting Toby's bill. Again, that shows that all faiths can be open; all faiths can be inclusive.

I want to give a shout-out, too, to members here from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association—Cheryl Fullerton, I see up there. Her name wasn't mentioned. Again, talking about people of faith: a union of Catholic teachers who voted 90% in favour of gay-straight alliances and are also here in support of Toby's bill. The times they are a-changing, no doubt, but true people of faith, people who walk in faith, walk there because they're called to love their neighbours as themselves, no matter what the faith is that they represent. Truly, trans folk are our neighbours, and we're doing the work of faith here, not only the historic work but the work of faith here.

I got a letter from a young trans person that was both tragic and beautiful. I'm going to paraphrase it and not read it. What she talked about in the letter was how she grew up constantly bullied, ostracized by her family, kicked out of the house at 14, lived on the streets, ended up in sex trade work and drug abuse, found her fleeting way back—this is not an atypical story, unfortunately. She found her fleeting way back to a group of caring adults, finally got her feet on the floor, got a job—a minimum wage job—was putting her life back together one piece at a time, and talked about the trials and

tribulations and the horrors of her day. Again, she talked about that searing moment that I described in the life of many trans folk, of just walking out the door into abuse every day on the streets of our cities. She said, "If this bill—Toby's bill—passes, this will give me hope." To extend hope to those who are hopeless is also the job of all of us here as legislators, and that's what we're doing.

Toby, we thought, was doing well, as I say, but, it turns out, wasn't doing so well: had been clean and sober for many, many years and fell off that wagon and died of an overdose. We're not even sure how or why. I want to send condolences and regards to the other organization in Toby's life, which is Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre—a phenomenal organization on Queen Street that feeds 150 people a day; phenomenal social workers who work out of there. Toby was also their music director and led a band there as well, and originally walked into that place to get food—just like she walked into Emmanuel Howard Park, because we had a dinner on Sunday nights. It slowly rolled out from there.

Again, Toby's life was abusive. Her sister also was trans and also died of suicide—a phenomenally musical family; phenomenal success stories. As she transitioned and as her sister transitioned—Starr was her name—it became tragic very quickly. When Toby died, friends of Toby's dressed her before she was placed in the coffin. Toby usually just wore jeans and T-shirts—that kind of gal—but for her funeral, she was dressed in a mini skirt, high heels, a beautiful blouse and full makeup. We hadn't seen Toby as her true self until that moment—profoundly sad and yet profoundly glad at the same time. I know Toby is listening to this and I know Toby is watching.

After that, we put up a stained glass window—I've told this story before in this chamber. We thought we were the only church with a stained glass window of a trans person anywhere in the universe. It was a picture of Toby playing the piano, put up there and donated by Shannon and Pam, whom I introduced earlier. When I said that at the funeral, somebody yelled out, "Yeah, but what about Joan of Arc?", which makes you think of historical trans folk as well. Who knows?

Toby would be embarrassed, shy; probably would not have shown up to this debate if she were alive. But certainly what we're doing here today is to memorialize not only Toby Dancer—and I can't tell you how wonderful it is to have Conservative research do research on Toby Dancer; that's just amazing; it would be amazing—but every other trans person who has died in an untimely fashion. We're memorializing them all. We're giving them a fitting funeral. Not only that; we're providing them with a resurrection story, and that is that from now on, that doesn't have to happen. We will not only pass this bill but we will absolutely commit ourselves to our children and the children of the future that that story is never, ever repeated in quite that way.

We will be at the threshold of a new Ontario, a new Canada, because they're all following suit after us, and actually a new North America, because I know it's going to change south of the border as well, state by state by

state. We're the first. I herald that. Despite the Northwest Territories—as I say, there are only 40,000 people there. We're the first. I'm proud, so proud, to be an Ontarian and so proud to be a Canadian and so proud to be part of an assembly where we're all on the same page about this.

I think back to what I started with: Toby Dancer playing *Amazing Grace*. To that poor, young trans person who wrote me that letter: It's not a hope we're talking about here; it is grace, and it is amazing.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: In some ways, I regret taking the last two minutes, because there are members in this House who deserve absolute credit for making this come here today. But I'm happy to stand and speak to an issue like this in this House, because I think it does speak to the best parts about this province and this country and what people can do.

Sometimes I worry that things don't change, and they certainly don't change fast enough, but it's clear that things do change, that things can change, and I think the ingredients for change are present here today.

Most important in changing things is community activism and bravery, and that's what we see from the folks in the gallery. I think we all, across this province, across the country, owe a huge debt of gratitude to folks here, to activists.

In addition to that, it tells me, it tells my friends, it tells my community that this place also matters and that we do need people to step up and represent people in a way that matters. It speaks to the best parts of the traditions of the parties here today. The true meaning of liberal is reflected here, the true meaning of progressive in the Progressive Conservative Party, and the true meaning of democracy in the NDP. I think we should all be proud of that and remember that more often in this House.

I'll just close with thanks to everyone present by expressing my own gratitude for bringing some hope to me personally, to my community. I just say thank you.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, May 31, 2012, I am required to put the question.

Ms. DiNovo has moved third reading of Bill 33, An act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to gender identity and gender expression. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion is carried on division.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

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

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

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further business, I declare this House recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1000 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Ernie and Janine Petrasovic from Aurora. Welcome.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'd love to introduce today a second-year student from Queen's University, studying political science; she wants to be a politician: Tanya Irwin. Tanya, welcome.

Miss Monique Taylor: Today I would like to introduce a dear friend of mine who's here for the passing of Bill 33: from Hamilton, Debbie Wooldridge.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: It is with great pleasure that I'm pleased to introduce in the Legislature a very well-known singer and a writer: Satinder Sartaaj. I had the opportunity to attend his live concert last Sunday, where he performed continuously for three and a half hours. Sartaaj has made a name for himself around the globe in the Punjabi community, but he gained his prominence right here in Toronto, so I want to extend him a very, very warm welcome.

He is accompanied today by—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like to introduce two very dear friends, Shannon Hogan and Pam Bond—oh, sorry. I thought you were finished, Minister; sorry. He recognized me, so I just jumped in. You know what? I'll do it, then you go after. How about that? It's all good.

I just want to invite everyone to a reception—it's going to be in room 230—for the passage of Toby's Law, which happened this morning. So, room 230, noon and on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the Minister of Government Services. I thought he was finished.

The Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, he actually is accompanied by two very well-known Punjabi media personalities. I want to introduce Iqbal Mahal, who is actually a promoter for Satinder, and also Kuldip Deepak, a good friend. These are really the two founders of Punjabi media in the Toronto area. I'm very pleased to welcome you today.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Joining us in the gallery very shortly is Mr. Boris Dittich, who was a former member of Parliament from the Netherlands, who has come a long way to join us. He was the first openly gay member of the Dutch Parliament. He is with an international human rights organization based out of New York, and he's here to observe the passage of Toby's Law today.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Sitting in the east members' gallery is Jacob Hong, who's working at Queen's Park this summer and is a student from Queen's University.

Also joining us today is somebody who has put up with me for the last 17 years here at Queen's Park. Mary Yoannidis is here. She has always tried to make me look good, and she's here today. She's joined by Judy Bell, who for many years worked with Gerry Phillips.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Today I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature one of my intern students, Mr. Zaya Kuyena. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Do we have any more introductions of visitors? The member for Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to take this opportunity to thank someone who has given her time and talents to making this House run so smoothly. Many of you know that Carol Price is retiring from the government House leader's office to spend more time with her husband, John.

This is not the first time she has tried to escape the clutches of Queen's Park. She left us once before, but we lured her back on a short-term contract. That was indeed eight years ago.

Since then, Carol has worked closely with all our government whips and helped us to navigate the complexities of the House and committees with consummate skill, poise and professionalism.

I hope you will all join me in wishing Carol all the best as she resumes her life beyond this place and in thanking her for all her good work and service.

Mr. Speaker, as a former Boy Scout, you're always told not to lie. People should recognize who the real chief government whip is for this government.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker: I just want it noted for Carol that this side stood up too. Congratulations, my friend.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for oral questions, I need to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Miller, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, assumes ballot item number 59, and Mr. Tabuns assumes ballot item number 66.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: Rather than getting answers or getting closer to answers regarding the scandal at Ornge, through our public hearings we actually are getting more questions. Witnesses are coming forward and they are giving conflicting answers under oath. Ministry officials are evasive in their

responses. The minister continues to defend a dysfunctional organization that continues to put patients at risk.

Now the deputy minister joins in on the obstruction of the work of the committee. This letter was sent to committee members last evening, and it is in response to very specific information that we have requested pursuant to standing order 110(b). I'd like to know: Does the minister know what her deputy has said in this letter, and does she support it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: I think that we should allow the committee to do its work. Not counting this morning and Mr. Fred Rusk, who appeared in front of Ornge, the public accounts committee has sat for 40 hours; 38 witnesses have come forward.

We've learned a lot. We've learned about the dying days of the Harris-Eves government, that the PC Minister of Health, Tony Clement, paid tens of thousands of dollars to prominent Conservatives Lynne Golding, Guy Giorno and Kevin McCarthy to set up Chris Mazza's corporate structure for him. We've found out that Lynne Golding and Guy Giorno, two of the most prominent Conservatives in Ontario, were the ones who in fact advised Dr. Mazza on how he could hide his salary.

We learned about Kelly Mitchell and the thousands of dollars that he was paid to schmooze members of the opposition, including the member who just asked the question.

We heard about the Oshawa airport, and the fact of the matter was that although Ornge said—

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Frank Klees: Once again, it's apparent that the minister doesn't know what her deputy minister is doing and she asked the House leader to answer her questions.

Under standing order 110(b), the committee has requested very straightforward information. One of those requests was that we receive information regarding a proposal that Ornge made to the government in January 2011. The deputy minister's response is as follows: "We wish to clarify that the responsive documents are subject to solicitor-client privilege." No information.

I'd like to know from the Minister of Health: Who is the solicitor, who is the client, who is she representing, and why are they hiding this information from the committee?

1040

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: I know that the honourable member would want to make sure that all members of the Legislature know the overall request that was given, and that was for investigation reports.

I think members of this Legislature understand that an investigation report, by its very nature—all one has to do is cross-reference it with media reports—in fact could contain very, very sensitive personal health information.

What the deputy minister has said is that he wants to work with the committee in a way to make sure that that information comes forward without personal health information being jeopardized.

We are not on some crazy fishing expedition across the way, and I think the honourable member should be respecting the privacy of Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: You're absolutely right. Speaker, the House leader is absolutely right. They are not on a fishing expedition; they are on a cover-up expedition. That's what they're doing.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Mr. Frank Klees: If the Minister of Health is going to have the House leader answer her questions, he should at least get it right. The issue that he's referring to—

Interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes. Because of the response of the House, I have to ask the member to withdraw that unparliamentary comment.

Mr. Frank Klees: Glad to respond, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pardon?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'll withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Continue.

Mr. Frank Klees: But it doesn't change the fact that they are hiding information—information that legitimately the committee has asked for. The House leader has not answered my question. It is not the motion that I was speaking to. The motion that I was speaking to has nothing to do with investigations. Will the House leader get it right? We are asking for background information: all correspondence relating to a proposal made regarding Ornge in January 2011.

Why is that being hidden under this guise of solicitor-client privilege? I'd like to know—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, again, I think that all of us recognize that the place to have these discussions is within the committee, not within the 30 or 40 seconds within question period.

The simple fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker—and the member knows this, as an experienced parliamentarian—there are rules around protecting personal information. There are rules around solicitor-client privilege, and there are ways for ministries to work out with committee to make sure that that information is put forward.

To stand up here today like a cross between Perry Mason and Atticus Finch and try to pretend that we are doing nothing more than following the usual rules and procedures is a disservice to the committee and a

disservice to the fine public servants at the Ministry of Health who are trying to co-operate in a way that protects the rights of the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): New question?

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: The last thing this government is trying to do is co-operate. What we're trying to do in that committee is to in fact do our work, and we are not asking for anything that has never been asked for before—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Who is the question to?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'll ask the question back to the Minister of Health and see if she might answer this time.

I'd like to know from the Minister of Health: Will she look at this letter? Will she tell the House whether she agrees with the way that her deputy is hiding information from our committee? Why will the minister not get on our side, the side of the people who want to find out what went wrong, who was responsible? The only way we'll ever do that is if we get the information that's buried deep in the Ministry of Health that they're now covering up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Two minutes ago, I asked you to withdraw that unparliamentary remark. I need to ask you to do it again.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'll withdraw the word "cover-up."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): You have to withdraw—

Mr. Frank Klees: I will withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: Speaker, saying it louder and saying it with that Hollywood drama doesn't make it correct.

The simple fact is that the committee has asked the Ministry of Health for information. What the ministry has said is that it wishes to work with the committee, to furnish that information to the committee in a way that protects private information and complies with parliamentary tradition and parliamentary and legal conventions. That is all that has happened here.

This is a matter that should be dealt with by the committee. This has been going on for years in this place. The committee has got access to information which, because of the nature of it, there has to be negotiations between the two parties to ensure that everyone is protected.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary? The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Back to the Minister of Health: I hope she decides to answer this question. Residents in the city of Ottawa are very concerned with the government's weak response on the Ornge ambulance scandal, a scandal that has put patients' safety and lives at risk.

While the members from Ottawa–Vanier, Ottawa West–Nepean, Ottawa Centre, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, Ottawa South and Ottawa–Orléans want to sit by and watch you dance in this House, the PC caucus and the front-line staff at Ornge will not let you evade questions. We'll continue to press this government.

We want to know, in Ottawa: Will the minister tell this House why air ambulances at Ornge's Ottawa base were unavailable for 7,621 minutes this past year? That's 121 hours. If she can't tell this House why, she has to resign.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be seated, please.

Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, Mr. Speaker, the best-actor awards are coming out, because this drama does not make it right. A question that I would like to ask the honourable member, the question that I would like to ask all members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, is: Why will they not support Bill 50? It is the last piece of the puzzle, to ensure that the problems at Ornge, the challenges at Ornge, which have been identified by the Auditor General, will be addressed.

I think that it is outrageous that she stands here today, as I say, putting on her best Oscar performance, and then will not—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary. The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Since the Minister of Finance won't ask this question, I will. This morning, Speaker, we learned that the Windsor Regional Hospital wants out of the Ornge air ambulance service. This is a scathing indictment of your so-called new leadership.

But don't take my word for it, Mr. Speaker. Listen to the words of Lesley Froome, the aunt of the young girl who died because of the minister's incompetence. She says, "I want everyone held responsible ... I want everybody held responsible. I want everybody to know what they've done. It's about our children's lives. It's about Jamie's life, that was wasted by all of these people."

You know, Speaker, Lesley Froome was right. It's about a life that was wasted because of this minister's incompetence. Don't you dare quote any statistics to me, Minister. This is about a six-year-old little girl. Now a major regional hospital in my backyard wants nothing to do with you and nothing to do with Ornge air ambulance.

Mr. Speaker, this minister simply needs to do the right thing and resign.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be seated, please.

Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm going to echo the words back: Don't you dare stand up with a drive-by smear like that. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health has done an outstanding job—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the official opposition to come to order. The clock is ticking.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Nepean–Carleton, come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Simcoe North, come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Minister of Economic Development and Trade, come to order. Minister.

Hon. John Milloy: The Minister of Health has done an outstanding job in addressing the challenges at Ornge. How dare that member stand up and turn a personal tragedy into some sort of political gamesmanship on the floor of the House? The member should be ashamed of himself, and he should stand in his place and he should apologize to the Minister of Health and to this Legislative Assembly and to the family of that young girl.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. I recognize the leader of the New Democratic Party.

1050

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The government has repeatedly promised residents of Ontario's nursing homes a revolution in long-term care. Can he tell us if all nursing homes in this province are being inspected annually?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. I am extraordinarily proud of the changes that are happening in our long-term-care homes thanks to the superb work of one Monique Smith who, as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, undertook a very thorough review of long-term-care homes, which culminated in the passage of the Long-Term Care Act. Inspections have changed dramatically since that time.

To answer the question: Yes, every year at a minimum, every home is visited by an inspector. We are transforming that inspection process, and the great beneficiaries are the residents of long-term-care homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I beg to differ. The fact is that the government has abandoned annual inspections, one of the many promises to Ontario's elderly and their families that they are breaking. This is a promise that the government is breaking to those people. The government maintains that health care is a priority, but every day Ontarians hear about new cutbacks in health care.

Experts now say that the Liberal government is breaking its own laws to protect seniors in home care and in long-term care. Why has the Premier abandoned On-

tario's most vulnerable seniors by breaking the promise that he made and legislated?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm happy to speak more about the inspection of our long-term-care homes. What I can tell you is that we have zero tolerance for abuse and neglect. We have very big expectations of people who work in long-term-care homes to care for our parents and for our grandparents. The inspections are now unannounced; they vary in complexity; some require more time than others to complete.

I can tell you that in 2003 there were 59 inspectors. We now have 81 inspectors working in long-term-care homes; seven new inspectors were added just recently. In 2011, 2,430 inspections were completed in our 630 long-term-care homes.

I can tell you, Speaker, the other big improvement is that we have a hotline for people to call. We encourage staff members, family members and residents to contact immediately if they suspect abuse or neglect in our long-term-care homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Inspectors are saying that it's going to take them five years to respond to some of the complaints that are coming in, because they simply don't have the resources to do the inspections. The government has made a pretty basic commitment to the people of this province, but it's a very important commitment. Our health care system is supposed to be a priority, yet seniors in long-term care and their families are learning once again that they are certainly not a priority.

When will the government commit to upholding their own legislation? Are they going to uphold their own legislation and begin to have annual inspections of every long-term-care centre in this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, that work is under way. As I have said, there is an inspector visiting every long-term-care home in this province at least once a year. When you hear that we did 2,430 inspections last year in 630 homes, you can do the math. On average, it would be close to four visits per home, per year.

We do respond based on the particular conditions. If there's a serious allegation, we get there very, very quickly. We also do very intensive inspections that take 10 days. They start with talking to the residents, talking to family members, and that's a very thorough investigation. So there's a significant variation, but 2,430 inspections were completed last year.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier, but really, I can't believe the minister who says, "Trust me. Believe me." There's not much trust on this side of the House. What's happening to seniors in long-term care is really concerning to families—that's the point—families who want health care to be a priority.

Despite all of the promises, the front-line care that they rely on doesn't seem to be a priority when they need it.

The government now says that they're planning new changes at their local health integration networks. Will they strike the long-promised LHIN review before they make any changes? Will they do that first, Speaker?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The answer to that is yes. We're looking forward to having a good review of the LHINs, but what I can tell you is that we continue to strengthen LHINs. The next step is bringing primary care under the LHINs. We really do believe that the entire health system, including that most important part, primary health care, should be under the umbrella of the LHINs.

We believe, Speaker, that while we've made enormous progress in getting people access to primary care, there's more we need to do. There are parts of the province where it's still hard to get a family doctor. There are still groups of people, sub-populations, who are not getting access to primary care that they need, so we need the LHINs to be part of that planning process to get the primary care where it's needed the most. We also need primary care to be fully integrated with our whole health care system, with our acute care hospitals, with our home care, with our long-term care.

We've got great aspirations to make health care stronger, and LHINs will be an important part of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, here's what people see: promises to make health care a priority, followed by cuts to the services that they rely on, and disturbing scandals like Ornge and eHealth, where well-connected insiders get rich on money that was supposed to provide health care in this province.

If we're going to tackle the challenges in health care, we need to look at the health care system. When is this government going to finally deliver on the long-promised review of the LHINs?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I have to correct the member opposite. There are no cuts to health care. In fact, this government made a very clear decision. When we were faced with some significant fiscal challenges, our choice—and it was our choice as a government—was to protect health care, to protect education, to protect those core services that the people of Ontario turn to provincial government to provide.

We are increasing spending in health care. We are increasing spending by over 2% this year—not as much as we're used to, but an increase nonetheless. We're being extremely strategic in how we spend that increased funding.

There is no question, Speaker, that what the health care system needs right now is an injection of new resources into the community sector to get people the care they need at home.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, just because the minister says there are no cuts doesn't mean that's what people are experiencing. They are experiencing cuts and reductions in access to health care in this province.

If the government is truly serious about making health care a priority, then they shouldn't be afraid to look honestly at the system. Instead, time and time again, the facts are being hidden from the public. No inspections are being made at long-term-care homes; no oversight in agencies like Ornge; decisions being made behind closed doors. Patients want to know that their concerns are being addressed and they're being heard.

Now the minister is saying she's putting the cart before the horse and she's going to put more responsibilities on LHINs without even doing the review and getting the information that she should have before she gives them more power. When is the government going to deliver on their promise to review the LHINs?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I've already said that we will, of course, be doing the review of the LHINs, but we have also got a lot of work under way in the health care system that is—I'm actually enormously excited about the future, and I'm enormously pleased to see so much support in the health care community for the change we want to make.

Our action plan lays out the road map; it's a blueprint for the future of health care. We are absolutely committed to improving community supports—a 4% increase over the next three years, in each of those next three years. In order to do that, we do have to hold hospital funding at a 0% base increase. We're holding physician compensation where it is. We're not going to spend more on doctors, because we must spend more on the community.

We are moving forward with the improvements to health care. We've come so far, working together. The future's very bright.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, it's nice to see that you've finally decided to reply to the Waterloo region's letter about emergency dispatching, after I raised the issue last week in this House. Unfortunately, though, your letter fails to properly address the issue at hand.

1100

Minister, regional chair Ken Seiling wrote to you four months ago asking for your help to implement a local solution to significantly improve EMS response times throughout Waterloo region. Instead of addressing his concerns, you sent him a token letter to tout your ministry's dispatching pilot project, which, Waterloo region EMS director John Prno said, "does nothing for speeding up the ambulance response."

Minister, how can the people of Waterloo region take you seriously when the only solution you can propose doesn't even improve ambulance response times?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, when it comes to land ambulance, I think the member opposite needs to

understand that we have a responsibility across the province, so it is not unusual that ambulances cross those municipal boundaries to get patients to the care they need as quickly as possible. We need a provincial dispatch system. That's what makes our ambulance system strong.

What I can tell you is that I'm very, very pleased that Kitchener-Waterloo is a pilot site for the EMS simultaneous notification, Speaker. We've got four sites where we're testing something that I think is pretty exciting, where both fire and ambulance are notified simultaneously in the event of an emergency call to get care to people faster. We look forward to launching this later this summer at four sites: Kitchener, Mississauga, Barrie and Guelph. We are, as I say, very much looking forward to the results of these—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, that has nothing to do with the letter at hand.

Our local municipalities, police officers, firefighters and paramedics are all willing to work together now to improve emergency response times. The only thing that's standing in the road is you.

Mr. Seiling indicated very clearly in his letter that the region supports former police chief Larry Gravill's recommendation to bring all emergency dispatching centres under one roof, but your letter doesn't even address this recommendation.

Minister, I know meeting with me personally to discuss this issue wasn't a priority. You'd rather send an army of your staffers to obscure this issue. But would you at least have the courtesy to personally meet with regional officials pleading for your help? Yes or no?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's wonderful to feel the spirit of co-operation in this place, Speaker. The member opposite met with members of my staff and got a thorough briefing. He doesn't need to take cheap shots. This is more important than that.

I would be more than happy to meet with Mr. Seiling. I've met with him before and I'd be happy to meet with him again.

What's important is that we move forward in improving response times when it comes to getting care to people who need that emergency response. The simultaneous notification is a great step forward. As I say, it will be rolling out later this summer. We've committed over \$4 million to this project because we believe that it will provide better care for patients.

EMS operators at other sites will also have a real-time view of ambulance locations, allowing them to make more informed decisions about what services are needed and where. Several municipalities already have—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. Tonight, to balance their budgets, boards in Peel and Toronto will be forced to make what one trustee calls a

“bloodbath” of cuts, cuts that will hit special education, social workers, speech therapists, building maintenance, cafeterias, continuing education, safe schools, teacher education and community access to schools. This is in addition to the 800 staff that the Toronto District School Board let go in April.

Is this what the Premier meant when he said he was going to protect education?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I’m so proud to be part of a government that has made such significant investments in education, Speaker. And despite challenging economic times, I think it’s important for Ontarians to recognize that in this year’s grants for student needs—those grants will be stable despite challenging economic times. That will preserve a \$6.5-billion or 45% increase to board funding across the province since 2003.

When we talk about the TDSB, our record is even stronger than that: a 34% increase across the board, at the same time as seeing student enrolment go down by 12%. What does that mean? That means that since 2003, the Toronto District School Board has seen an increase in per-pupil funding of over 50%.

We have a strong record when it comes to schools in this province. We continue to roll out all-day kindergarten right across the province, and we will see 323 full-day kindergarten classes in the Toronto District School Board next year. We’re proud of our commitment to public education.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister can cite as many numbers as she wants. The reality is clear: There’s a half-billion-dollar reduction in spending on schools. While this minister is citing numbers, Ontario students lose their educational assistants, social workers, psychologists and special education supports, and are denied a fair chance to succeed at school.

The chair of the Peel school board says some of the government’s messages have sounded like we’ve gone back to the Mike Harris era. How can this government claim they’re protecting education?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I think it’s so critically important to have a conversation with facts. Facts are critically important when we talk about what’s happening in our classrooms and right across the schools.

We should all be incredibly proud in Ontario of the education system that we have built. We are recognized around the world as a jurisdiction that is doing well by its students, and we’re doing well by our students in Peel as well. In the Peel District School Board, funding is up 81% since we took office. Enrolment is growing in Peel and we acknowledge that, unlike the Toronto District School Board, where enrolment is down. Enrolment is up in Peel, but it’s only up by 16%, and our funding is up by 81%.

In addition, across the board, we are rolling out full-day kindergarten. That investment is in addition to the grants for student needs. We will fully roll out all-day

kindergarten, with new classes rolling out each and every year up to 2014, and that is the best investment that we can make in our future.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: My question this morning is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, we all know that the past decade has given way to challenging economic times. My constituents in the riding of Windsor West have been wondering what the government has been doing when it comes to creating more jobs in the province, to see that our families remain strong and our businesses flourish.

We know that keeping large companies in Ontario and attracting new investment will help create more jobs. Speaker, through you, can the minister inform us what our government is doing to create more jobs in the province of Ontario for our families, and what we are doing to ensure our businesses continue to flourish?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Reliable and sufficient energy is essential, as the member from Windsor West has said many times. Reliable and sufficient energy is essential for businesses to flourish and thrive in the province.

For the past nine years, we’ve worked very hard to leave behind an era of brownouts and insufficient generation. We’ve made sure that we created sufficient supply in the province of Ontario. In the course of doing that, we’re building a very strong, clean, green industry that’s already more than 20,000 direct jobs in the province of Ontario.

We also now find ourselves, as a result of the world economic recession, with extra power. Yesterday, we launched the industrial electricity incentive, to make sure that we can put that extra power to work to create jobs in Ontario. We’re offering that extra power to those businesses that want to set up large plants in the province of Ontario on long-term contracts and to businesses that just want to expand production as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you, Minister. I know that my constituents will be pleased to hear about this new initiative that will help attract jobs and investment to this province.

Minister, I know that finding ways to give large consumers a break on their electricity prices while protecting the bottom line of everyday consumers can be challenging. I know that while my constituents are pleased to see new programs that will help large customers, they don’t want to see additional costs placed on their bill as a result. We need to help families and businesses while being mindful of the bottom line for both groups of customers, and I know that we’ve been doing that through various programs like the Ontario clean energy benefit.

Speaker, can the minister please tell us how this new program will ensure that there will not be any additional costs placed onto our Ontario ratepayers?

1110

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Speaker, once again the member from Windsor West focuses on a crucial point. This is a great program. It offers extra power so that businesses can set up large new plants, or expand their production, and get a deep discount on the extra power they'll be using.

We designed the program in a way so that we're using the extra power that's already available in the province of Ontario. We're using it more effectively. No additional costs will be placed on families and businesses. That's the design of this program. That's the magic of this program. The incentive lasts—

Interjections.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I know that PCs don't want to hear this. I know that. The incentive lasts only as long as the extra jobs that are created will last.

In addition to that, of course, we've got the clean energy benefit, the energy and property tax credit and the northern Ontario energy credit.

Interjections.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I know the PCs don't want to hear this. They want to go back to the era of brownouts. They want to burn coal. We want to create jobs with a good, clean, strong energy system in the province of Ontario.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Health regarding a serious incident which occurred in Peterborough. Since the member for Peterborough has not raised it, I will, on behalf of his constituents.

On March 10, 2011, a critical care land ambulance arrived at Peterborough hospital, staffed by only one advanced care paramedic. After waiting for two hours, the hospital was forced to transfer the patient by Peterborough EMS, with the Ornge paramedic on board. The minister surely knows that under the Ambulance Act, land ambulances must be staffed by at least two medics.

Mr. Speaker, incidents such as this are now commonplace in Ontario, as the McGuinty government has presided over the dramatic deterioration of our province's air ambulance service.

Will the minister admit to the people of Peterborough that her mismanagement has left them vulnerable in times of emergency?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The first thing I have to say is, the member from Peterborough is an outstanding representative of his community. I can assure you, and I can assure the people of Peterborough, that not a day goes by—indeed, not an hour goes by—that the member from Peterborough is not advocating for his community.

Interjections.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The proof of that is a new hospital in his riding—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —new family health teams, new—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the House to come to order. I can't hear the minister. I have to hear the minister's response.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Indeed, the member from Peterborough is often the one who's advocating for the people of Lindsay, and indeed the people of Omeme.

What I can tell you is that the people at Ornge, those front-line staff, those paramedics who are making split-second decisions, every time do what's best for those patients. They are an outstanding group of people. I am delighted that more people are choosing to join the Ornge team.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Quite frankly, Minister, the people of Peterborough and the people of Ontario deserve answers. They deserve the truth. But here you stand, denying them that right.

Nothing was done to address the issue in Peterborough. The leaked cabinet document confirms numerous examples of Ornge crews arriving understaffed and unable to provide adequate levels of care for critical patients.

Minister, you are well aware of the complaints of issues at Ornge, but you chose to stand idly by while patient safety was compromised, and it is. As much as you deny it, it is compromised.

When will you start telling the truth and do what is right by—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the member to withdraw.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Haliburton, I have to ask you to withdraw.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the members come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Will the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Please come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Oshawa, come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Halton, please come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to recess the House for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1115 to 1120.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): While we have calm in the House, I wish to inform all members that if this behaviour persists, I will have no choice but to identify members by riding, and if necessary, I will name members.

We now return to the Minister of Health for her response.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: A little time has passed and—

Mr. Phil McNeely: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Continue.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Okay. Ornge has had some very troubled times. We all acknowledge that. That's why we put in new leadership. That's why there is a new board in place. That's why there's a new performance agreement.

But progress is being made. I know it's hard for the members opposite to acknowledge that we now have 10 more paramedics working at Ornge than we did a year ago. We're up to 98%. By mid-July, we'll be up to 98% when it comes to fixed-wing pilots, and 95% of our helicopter pilots. We are making progress. It's good news.

I need to say thank you to the people at Ornge for driving this change under very difficult circumstances. I think all of us in Ontario owe a big thanks to the people at Ornge.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, I introduced a private member's bill that would bring Ombudsman oversight to the children's aid society. New Democrats have introduced this bill numerous times, and families across the province have been asking for years for the accountability and oversight that only the Ombudsman can bring.

My question is simple: Will the Premier finally listen to these families and grant Ontario Ombudsman oversight over the children's aid society?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. I know the member opposite certainly doesn't intend to mislead the public into believing that there's no oversight or accountability of our children's aid societies. In fact, she might not know this: Unlike every other province in Canada, where child protection is a directly operated service of government, here in Ontario the system is completely different, where our CASs are community-based, non-profit organizations with independent boards, community oversight and community representatives that are on those boards. It's important here to note that these children's aid societies are accountable not only to the government but to the communities they serve.

I'll speak in the supplementary about measures that we've put in place to increase the accountability.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, but we don't want the minister misleading the public into thinking that there is independent oversight.

Interjections.

Miss Monique Taylor: He said it. I repeated him.

Anyway, Ontario is the only province in Canada that does not have Ombudsman oversight over child protection services. My bill would simply ensure that Ontarians have the same level of accountability that all other Canadians have. Parents, families and New Democrats have been frustrated that this simple change has been blocked by this government.

Can the Premier tell Ontarians how much longer they will have to wait for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of the children's aid societies?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As I mentioned, our government has taken many steps to ensure the accountability of children's aid societies. We've required all the CASs to have clear, transparent and consistent complaint review procedures. We've established the independent Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, which provides an independent voice for children and youth by partnering with them to bring issues forward, and, importantly, we've increased the mandate and the powers of the Child and Family Services Review Board to independently review complaints related to children's aid societies and decisions of children's aid societies and adoption licenses. In fact, the Ombudsman may investigate complaints about the Child and Family Services Review Board and report and issue recommendations arising from such a review.

The Child and Family Services Review Board is fully mandated under the Child and Family Services Act and operates independent of government to hear and resolve complaints brought to it relating to child protection.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Education. Before my election to this House last fall, I was privileged to serve as a Toronto District School Board trustee. This gives me a unique perspective on the current discussion about funding for the school boards.

As a former school board trustee, I also know that the McGuinty government's support for education in Ontario is unparalleled. I know that this government has restored public confidence in our schools after many years of cuts and neglect under the previous PC government.

In spite of the significant investment in education we have seen over the past eight years, I read in the news today that some of the school boards are struggling to balance their budgets. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Minister, can you please share with the House what the government is doing to support the Toronto District School Board this year?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Agincourt for her leadership in this area and her long history of supporting public education in the city of Toronto, in particular the TDSB.

We've been very clear with our message to boards. We've held education funding stable this year, and it is our expectation that they will balance their budgets while protecting the classroom experience for our students.

Our record of support for the Toronto District School Board, the biggest school board in Canada, is incredibly strong. Since 2003, we've increased funding to the TDSB by almost \$700 million, a 34% increase, and that is at the same time as we have seen the TDSB enrolment decline by 12%. So that works out to a more than 50% per-pupil funding increase in the TDSB. In addition, we've provided \$1 billion in capital funding and funding for over 1,600 new teachers, and we're rolling out full-day kindergarten, with more classes this year and next year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Minister. I know that the school board shares your goals and the goals of this government of protecting the gains that we have made in education over the past eight years and protecting the classroom experience for students.

I hear from my constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt that good schools for their kids are one of the most important things to them. No one—not Ontario families, not teachers and not school boards—wants to go back to the dark days in education that we saw under the previous PC government.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Minister, what are you doing to protect education in Ontario?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm very proud to be part of a government that always focuses on our students in our classroom and ensuring that they are getting what they need in those classrooms.

We've taken an incredibly different approach than the previous PC government. The PC government closed 500 schools; we've opened 400 schools.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Ontario lost 15,000 teachers under the last PC government, and we've hired almost 13,000 teachers. Students lost 26 million teaching days due to strikes.

I couldn't be prouder of a government that continues to invest in public education. Despite these very challenging economic times, we've increased funding for education by 45% since coming to office, and it is having a real and meaningful impact in our classrooms. And if we focus just on one element, full-day kindergarten in the city of Toronto and the TDSB: 63 classes this year; 323 full-day kindergarten classes in September. What an incredible legacy—

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

New question.

1130

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, this session is drawing quickly to a close, and because the situation with my constituent Liam Reid is far from being resolved, again I have to bring up this matter with you.

As we all know, another child in Ontario has been approved by the Ministry of Health to receive treatment out of country for an eye disorder known as PFVS/Norrie's. This child has received approval for 49 medical treatments in Michigan for exactly the same condition, so a clear precedent has been set by your ministry.

My question to you is, what possible justification could there be for refusing Liam the same opportunities to receive the treatment out of country for him?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I met your little constituent when you brought him here earlier this week, and he's the same age as my grandkids. I can tell you that if it was my grandchild that needed that kind of treatment, I would fight as hard for my grandchild as those parents are fighting for Liam.

The member opposite knows I cannot speak to individual cases, but what I can say is that everyone in Ontario deserves the best possible health care. They deserve to get that care in Ontario whenever possible, and when it's not available in Ontario, then it's up to us to make sure they get that care outside of Ontario.

I can assure the member opposite, as she knows, that I have instructed my officials to look into this case, and that work is under way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Minister, here's the problem with your response: There's already another child who has been approved for treatment in Ontario, and you're suggesting that the Reid family now go back to square one and start this process all over again. Time is of the essence here. This is a child who, within a year, without treatment, may well go completely blind. It's untenable to suggest that you should put this family through this.

The specialist at the Hospital for Sick Children has already indicated that they do not want to operate on Liam anymore, that there's nothing further that they can offer him locally.

Minister, I can tell you what I'm hearing from the people of the province of Ontario about this: Offers to support Liam personally are flooding in. But that's not what our health care system exists for. We should be able to provide this child with the treatment that he needs to prevent him from going completely blind. He is suffering from the brunt of a bureaucratic failure. Will you please recognize that failure and do what's necessary to give Liam the treatment that he needs now?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Be seated, please. Be seated, please.

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I've said, I cannot speak to any specific case. The member opposite knows that. What I can tell you, though, is that we have highly, highly skilled people in Ontario right down the street at Sick Kids Hospital. We want to get the right care to this child, like we do for every child in this province—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Halton.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —so we are doing the work that is necessary. The member opposite understands that.

I also urge her to understand that every case is different. We are doing everything possible, and we must let the system work.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Every Ontarian deserves a family doctor and access to specialist care when they need it.

On Monday, I visited Kitchener–Waterloo to talk to them about doctor shortages in their community. The situation of doctor shortages is a tough enough one, a stressful enough one, for healthy Ontarians, but imagine how hard it is on a family whose loved one is dealing with complex life-threatening issues.

Cody Richards is a brave kid who's falling through the cracks of Ontario's health care system. His mother, Heather, has written to the health minister for some help, but nobody seems to be listening to Cody and his mother.

What is the government doing to make sure that Kitchener–Waterloo residents like Cody and people across the province with complex cases have the access they need to a family doctor and specialist care?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you very much to the member opposite for this very important question. She's asked an important question, and she has made an important statement: that people in Ontario do deserve access to primary care. I could not agree more.

We've actually made tremendous progress. In fact, Speaker, in the Waterloo region, we now have 134 more physicians working than when we took office. That is a remarkable accomplishment: 22.3% more physicians working now than just eight years ago.

We've got 10 family health teams in the Kitchener–Waterloo area. They've hired 168 doctors, 136 health professionals to support the work of the family health teams. They're providing care, those 10 family health teams, to a quarter of a million people in the Kitchener–Waterloo area. Some 48,000 of those people previously did not have a doctor. So we're making tremendous progress, and we will continue to do exactly that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, 20,000 people in Kitchener–Waterloo still don't have a family doctor, and Cody is one of them. Cody has no family doctor, he has no diagnosis and he has no referral to a neurosurgeon. In

fact, 17 Ontario neurosurgeons have refused to treat him, based on the complexity of his case, which is only getting worse day by day.

Cody and his family need to focus on his health and not worry about scrambling to find doctors who are willing to help him. He has lost feeling from the waist down, his vision is failing, he's suffering from seizures and body tremors, and maybe things will get even worse. Cody is losing hope.

Will this government show some compassion and see to it that Cody Richards gets the medical care he so desperately needs and should have access to in a province like Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are working very hard and achieving tremendous results, in partnership with our doctors, to provide the best possible care for all Ontarians, and that includes the people in Kitchener–Waterloo. We do rely on the best advice of doctors. We are working very hard. In fact, we're doubling the number of doctors who are starting to practise, every year.

The system is responding to what frankly was a very, very troubled system when we took office. We had a terrible brain drain when we took office in 2003. Doctors were leaving Ontario to practise elsewhere. They were leaving by the dozens. We've turned that right around in Ontario because it is such a great place to practise medicine. It is attracting people here because they want to practise here in Ontario. That work is not complete, but we have made significant progress.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr. Michael Coteau: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. There's a huge condo community in my riding of Don Valley East. It includes residents who have been living there for years and residents who have recently purchased condominium units.

Many of these residents have raised concerns about the Condominium Act. They feel that the act, which is supposed to address their concerns, is either not applicable to their specific situation or it does not adequately cover their specific concern.

Minister, with many areas in Ontario undergoing an explosion in both condominium development and an increasing number of individuals choosing to purchase condominium units, can you please tell this House how we plan to address their various concerns?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I thank my colleague from Don Valley East for this very important question and for being such a great advocate for his constituents.

The condominium sector has undergone significant changes since the Condominium Act came into force some 11 years ago. In fact, in Ontario, over one million people live in condominiums. It was estimated in 2010 that there were over 525,000 condominium units in this province. It is expected that this year alone, 35,000 new units will be added to the GTA market.

The rapid growth in the condominium marketplace has outpaced the Condominium Act. We all agree that the Condominium Act is in need of modernization to better

reflect the needs of Ontarians, and it must be done in a collaborative manner. Our government recently announced that the Ministry of Consumer Services will be conducting a broad review of the act—

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

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you for the answer, Minister. I'm excited to hear about the proactive action being taken in order to address the issues affecting the overall sector. It is true that it is a growing sector, one that requires not only an effective government involvement but involvement from the sector, which includes both owners and residents.

What I have seen in my own riding is the evolving nature of the condominium market. I find that many who buy condominiums are not aware of all the complexities involved in owning this type of housing, as it differs quite extensively from owning a freehold house.

Some of the concerns I hear from my constituents with their own condos are so wide in different issues and range in different points. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can the minister explain how this public engagement process to review the act will be able to address these wide-ranging issues in the condominium sector?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: The aim of this public engagement process is to identify a comprehensive set of issues and address them through long-term solutions in a co-operative and consultative manner, as were brought up by the member from Don Valley East.

The public engagement approach we are proposing will provide the opportunity to hear the full spectrum of issues the sector faces so we can find solutions that work and that ultimately reflect our goal of providing active protection to consumers.

Mr. Speaker, the key word here is "active"—solutions that work well into the future as the condominium marketplace continues to evolve. Given the complexity of the issues involved, the diversity of condominium types, owners, demographics and the change in landscape of the condominium marketplace, it is important that all stakeholders have an opportunity to voice their input during the process. That is why we will be using a broad public engagement process.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, during your ministerial statement last week you stated about taking "the responsibility for creating a new relationship very seriously, including provision" of building "stronger relationships" with First Nations. Yet during my reply, you were quite upset when I questioned the consultation process dealing with the Algonquin land claim.

Minister, if the consultation process is so well received, then why is it that I'm receiving responses from organizations like the Land O' Lakes tourism, the Canadian Sportfishing Industry and the Archdiocese of Ottawa, claiming, "Please be advised that I do not recall

any formal consultation process?" And these are from your own organizations.

Minister, can you explain why I'm receiving responses like this if the consultation process is being open and fair?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm pleased to talk to this land claim because it is ongoing, and I think the point that the member opposite is missing is that the consultation is ongoing. In order to find a practical settlement, we know that we have to continue to talk with many groups, including elected local government officials, sport, recreational and environmental groups, local businesses, aboriginal communities and many others across the land claim areas.

We're very clear that there are groups that haven't been spoken with. We understand that. We're hoping that an agreement in principle will be able to be reached this year. Being able to reach that settlement will provide certainty for all of those people that I spoke about. But the bottom line is that we do need to continue to consult. That is ongoing, and all of those groups will be included.

VISITORS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Earlier today, we had grades four and five from Queen Elizabeth Public School in the public west gallery. I'd like to welcome the students, the teachers, the parents and grandparents. They certainly enjoyed question period today; no doubt about that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome two of my constituents to the House today. Cynthia Gentle and Ciara Gentle are joining us in the gallery. Welcome. I hope you enjoyed yourselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I hope they enjoyed question period more than the Speaker did.

DEFERRED VOTES

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT ACT (RENT
INCREASE GUIDELINE), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION
À USAGE D'HABITATION
(TAUX LÉGAL D'AUGMENTATION
DES LOYERS)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of the rent increase guideline / *Projet de loi 19, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne le taux légal d'augmentation des loyers.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): On June 12, Ms. Wynne moved third reading of Bill 19.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Schein, Jonah
Chiarelli, Bob	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Sorbara, Greg
Craiton, Kim	Marchese, Rosario	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	McGuinty, Dalton	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

Nays

Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	McDonell, Jim	Pettapiece, Randy
Dunlop, Garfield	McKenna, Jane	Scott, Laurie
Elliott, Christine	McNaughton, Monte	Smith, Todd
Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm	Thompson, Lisa M.
Jackson, Rod	Milligan, Rob E.	Walker, Bill
Jones, Sylvia	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John
Klees, Frank	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff
MacLaren, Jack	O'Toole, John	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 60; the nays are 26.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House stands in recess until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a real pleasure to rise today and address an issue that the McGuinty government may not even be aware of but they are responsible for. The members of the House should know that the McGuinty government has a new tax, and this tax is targeting the most vulnerable citizens of Ontario: seniors.

In 2010, the government passed an act dealing with the regulation of retirement homes through the creation of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority. This organization was given complete power to collect new fees and charges from retirement home residents.

Sure enough, on May 25, this Liberal government slapped retirement home residents with another rate increase of \$10 per month per resident. That's \$120 a year out of their pockets. The minister responsible for seniors will say that this was done to improve safety at retirement homes. Nothing could be further from the truth. Unfortunately, this has turned into another tax on seniors—like electricity.

I would like to thank those who have raised this issue, including my constituents Mike and Karen Ross, who have contacted me on behalf of their father. Seniors are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. How are fixed-income seniors going to afford the cost of living in Ontario? This is simply unacceptable.

The members of the government side should be ashamed of themselves. When you think of it, their mothers and fathers—all of them—will need care. There are no more long-term-care beds being built. They think that retirement homes are going to solve the problem. The average cost at a retirement home is between \$3,500 and \$7,500 a month. It's unbelievable what they're doing to seniors in this province. They can hardly afford to stay in their homes. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

Somebody should stand up for the seniors of the province of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I rise to address the situation of Mr. Gabe West in my riding. Mr. West is a 35-year-old man who has been diagnosed with cognitive impairment, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, cortical blindness and a non-functioning bladder. Gabe requires 24-hour support to meet his health and safety needs.

He has a dedicated group of people in his life, his support team, who ensure that he continues to live in his own place in an independent way and will have strong relationships and connections with the communities he chooses. Gabe's friends have developed a model of support that works for Gabe. They've developed a creative support plan that's built on his gifts and his strengths.

The funding Gabe currently receives is inadequate and poses a barrier to allowing him to exercise his right to live in and contribute to his community. His current funding allotment is not sufficient to address all his support needs. His support team has submitted a proposal for funds to ensure that Gabe has the right supports in place to meet his unique needs, ensure his health and safety and allow him to continue to contribute to the community.

The Ministry of Health needs to make more funding available—adequate funding—to support Gabe and others like him. He needs permanent funding to plan his future.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA HEART INSTITUTE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It's a pleasure to rise today and highlight a fantastic health and research institution based in my riding of Ottawa Centre and serving eastern Ontario. Indeed, Speaker, I'm proud to say today that it is a leader in the whole world as well.

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute has recently been ranked as one of the top research centres in the world. The Scimago Institutions Rankings, or SIR, world report ranks the research impact of institutions and companies worldwide and is the most comprehensive ranking of its kind. The heart institute was ranked 57th out of over 3,000 organizations across the globe, which in total are responsible for more than 80% of worldwide scientific output. By contrast, respected American institutions such as the Cleveland Clinic and the Mayo Clinic were ranked at number 133 and number 154, respectively.

Looking at the results in more detail, the news gets better. The Ottawa heart institute is number two in the world among all heart institutes for research impact. Canada-wide, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute was ranked eighth overall, showing that great work benefiting science, the economy and, most importantly, people's health is happening right here in Ottawa. In fact, Canada, as a whole, can be tremendously proud of the results of this ranking, as 10 of the top 75 rankings are Canadian institutes.

I'm very proud of the work done at the heart institute, both in research and in patient care. I know how important this institution is to the people of my community and in eastern Ontario.

WILLIAMSTOWN FAIR

Mr. Jim McDonell: This summer, on August 10, 11 and 12, the Williamstown Fair will be celebrating its 200th anniversary.

From humble beginnings in the streets of Williamstown, recognized by proclamation and letters patent by Francis Gore, the Lieutenant Governor, in 1808, to the present-day site donated by Sir John Johnson in 1812, the Williamstown Fair continues to be the annual gathering place for thousands of area residents and our rural community, as well as many visitors from afar.

This fair has a glorious history, designated as Canada's oldest fair, and early indications also indicate that it is in fact North America's oldest fair.

The settlers of this region of Upper Canada came to Glengarry county in Ontario from their native Glengarry region in Scotland and as United Empire Loyalists from the United States to start a new life, building farms and villages and looking to create a good life for themselves and their children.

The fair started as a forum to promote and advance agriculture and their community. Today, hundreds of volunteers come together with pride to host this old-time agricultural fair, making improvements to the infrastructure and to the venue.

I wish to congratulate the members of the St. Lawrence Valley Agricultural Society on a job well done and to join them in welcoming one and all to celebrate this historic anniversary.

MEMBER'S APPRECIATION

Mr. Jonah Schein: As this session draws to a close, I'd like to take a moment to give thanks to a number of people. I feel lucky every day that I'm in here, not just because I'm fortunate to have a job, but I have a very good job and have the great honour to represent the amazing riding of Davenport.

I want to acknowledge the volunteers, my riding association and my campaign team. Not a day goes by here when I don't remember what you've done to make sure that I can be here to represent you. Thank you.

To our caucus team, our researchers, our communications folks, all of you—we have an incredible team here in this building working for us. You've been amazing—incredible support every day, and I'm incredibly thankful for all the work you've done.

I want to shout out to Michael Rosenstock and Valerie Fogarty, who are going to be leaving us, which is very sad news for us, but thank you. You folks are amazing.

Our caucus of 17 members: I'm incredibly proud of what we've done in just a few short months. I can't wait to see what we accomplish in the months ahead and, when we have more members, what we're going to do.

To my friends and family: I love you. I miss you. I hope to see you more this summer. Thanks for supporting me.

To our supporters in Davenport, the folks who elected me: Thank you. I appreciate your urgency. I know that there's so much more we have to do. We've accomplished a lot. I'm actually very hopeful that we have a progressive wave that is sweeping this country from coast to coast and this province, but we have far more to do. I promise to keep on bringing progressive values into this Legislature.

WHIRLPOOL CANADA AND AMGEN CANADA

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to tell Ontarians about two outstanding Mississauga businesses, both in the north-west Mississauga neighbourhood of Meadowvale.

Whirlpool Canada's headquarters employs some 250 people. Many of Whirlpool's employees are residents of Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville.

Once again, Whirlpool has won the Energy Star award for manufacturer of the year, achieving a company milestone for Energy Star-qualified major household appliances manufactured in Canada last year.

Congratulations to the hard-working employees of Whirlpool on their recent award and for building and selling the innovative stoves, fridges, washers, dryers, dishwashers and microwaves and many others that we all buy and use under many brand names to help us save energy and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

1510

Amgen Canada's Spotlight on Science Learning is a recent initiative in partnership with Let's Talk Science. This study analyzes the key public indicators of science, technology, engineering and math learning starting in elementary and secondary school, moving on through post-secondary education and going into the workforce.

Ontario's competitive edge in an increasingly knowledge-based economy is a large and versatile pool of science-based talent to build and manage science and technology businesses right here in Ontario. Whirlpool and Amgen both do important work in building tomorrow's Ontario.

FRIDAY THE 13th, PORT DOVER

Mr. Toby Barrett: As you will know, Speaker, what began in 1981 with half a dozen bikers has grown to next month's Friday the 13th in Port Dover. It's expected to draw 170,000 people. I know there were 150,000 last August.

On Friday the 13th, you find doctors, mechanics, librarians, Hells Angels and Orange County Choppers. A few years ago, George Smitherman got into the spirit with a ride from Toronto to Norfolk General to tour our local hospital.

I invite all to Dover. Park your Harley-Davidson. Go for a stroll. Take in the sights; smell the leather and the fumes. There's a lot of "show and shine" and unique fashion.

This year, bikers have been blessed with three PD 13 events: January, April, and July, which is expected to be the hottest in more ways than one.

Kudos to those who work well ahead and on the day itself. Public safety is critical, and it's not always easy. With bylaw officers, OPP, paramedics and firefighters, PD 13 will be well in hand again.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the Port Dover Kinsmen Club and the Port Dover Board of Trade, the backbones of Friday the 13th as, again, they help realize the valuable tourism dollars.

So, Speaker, saddle up and come over to Dover, Friday the 13th.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll do that.

Mr. Toby Barrett: See you there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do I have to wear my chaps?

Mr. Toby Barrett: You might want to wear more than that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I earned that one.

HONG FOOK MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Members' statements? The member from—

Ms. Soo Wong: Scarborough–Agincourt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agincourt, right. Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to stand in this House to recognize the 30th anniversary of Hong Fook Mental Health Association, headquartered in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. For the past 30 years, Hong Fook has been a model organization in promoting mental health and providing essential support among the Asian communities of Toronto, North York and Scarborough.

Hong Fook has four main goals: promote the development of healthy mental status; increase public awareness and knowledge of mental health and mental health illnesses; provide culturally competent, community-based social support services; and improve the quality of life of and assist persons with serious mental health issues.

We all know that social stigmas around mental health issues cause some of us to keep silent, further perpetuating the issue. This isn't right. One in five Ontarians will experience mental health issues in their lifetime. That is why organizations like Hong Fook are important. They reach out to the community and provide a safe place for people to come to, and educate others about mental health.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Hong Fook executive director Bonnie Wong; the founding members, Dr. Peter Chang, Raymond Chung and Dr. Ted Lo; and the hundreds of volunteers for their 30 years of tireless work in providing essential services, support and training to those in need. Thank you for your dedicated services and for being a model organization for others to follow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I apologize to the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. I was too focused on wearing my chaps, so I apologize.

McINTOSH UNITED CHURCH WOMEN

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The community of McIntosh, located in Howick township in Huron county, has one landmark building, and it proves to be representative of the heart, pride and bond that holds the entire community together. This building is the McIntosh United Church. I rise today to recognize the 50th anniversary of the McIntosh United Church Women, UCW. It was celebrated on June 3 with a special service.

The women's association joined the women's missionary society to form the UCW. The groups joined together to efficiently accomplish many great things, as the church is the centre of life for many people in the McIntosh community. Again, the UCW unites the women of the congregation in the total mission of the church and provides a medium for ladies to express their loyalty and devotion to the church. The McIntosh UCW was created in 1962 so that women could share in a meaningful way in all the work of the church.

The UCW has charter members who are still active, including my own grandmother Laurine Wright and other members of the community, including Helene Haskins, Alberta Fergusson, Ellen Harkness, Margaret Woods and Mary Renwick. Laurine's children, no strangers to the

McIntosh choir loft—Winona, Sandra, June, Janette and Rod—provided the music for this special occasion.

Best wishes to the McIntosh UCW on your 50th anniversary, and may you continue to follow the way of witness, study, fellowship and service that is your heritage.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: On a point of order—I'm sure this is a point of order—I did forget to thank my office staff: Jen Barrett, Sam Spady, Victoria Marshall, Andrew Pickles and Shirley Alvarez. You guys are truly amazing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You are right, that is not a point of order, but I'm going to let that one go through, for sure.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (BINDING ARBITRATION), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (ARBITRAGE EXÉCUTOIRE)

Mr. Natyshak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to binding arbitration / Projet de loi 113, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui concerne l'arbitrage exécutoire.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: From the explanatory note: The act amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995, to provide that where certain collective agreements have expired and a strike or lockout has been in progress for more than 180 days, either party to the expired agreement may ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to direct the settlement of the provisions of a new collective agreement by binding arbitration. The board may only direct binding arbitration if the board determines that the party making the application is bargaining in good faith and that a new collective agreement is unlikely to be concluded within 30 days of continued bargaining. The bill provides that when the board notifies the parties of its direction to settle the provisions of a collective agreement, the employees shall forthwith terminate the strike, or the employer shall forthwith terminate the lockout. The employer is also required to reinstate the employees in the bargaining unit in accordance with the applicable provisions of the act.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I rise in the House today to provide members with an update on our government's commitment to establish a personal support worker registry. I am delighted to be joined in the east members' gallery by Susan Thorning and Monica Testa-Zanin, from the Ontario Community Support Association; and PSWs Maureen Hylton, Roger Dilhamohamed and Alex Bikov. They are here with Doug Brodhead of my office, Speaker.

Personal support workers, or PSWs, play a crucial role in our health care system. They make an enormous contribution to the health and well-being of Ontarians. There are an estimated 90,000 PSWs working in Ontario. They are performing essential services for their clients. They help with daily activities such as personal hygiene and delegated health procedures like changing dressings, among others. They help people of all ages recover from illness, live with a chronic disease or disability, and live at home with independence and dignity as long as possible.

1520

One year ago, I committed to establishing a personal support worker registry to better recognize the work they do for Ontarians while helping to meet the needs of the people they care for.

As Yvonne Greaves, a personal support worker, said, "I feel the role personal support workers play in the health system is finally being recognized in this province."

I'm very happy to report that the PSW registry is now online and open for registration in Ontario. This is an important milestone and an initiative that will better help meet the needs of seniors, people with disabilities and those with complex needs, along with their families. Once the personal support workers register, employers, clients and family caregivers will be able to confirm that their PSWs are registered. The registry will promote greater accountability and transparency and will validate the contribution of PSWs.

I'd like to thank the Ontario Community Support Association and all members of the PSW registry steering committee for their leadership in the development and implementation of this registry. The steering committee is made up of a wide range of experts, including PSW advocacy organizations, client and family advocacy groups, unions, employer associations, educational associations as well as several front-line PSWs. My heartfelt appreciation goes to everyone who has worked so hard to make this registry possible. We will continue to rely on their advice as we move forward with the implementation of the registry.

I'm pleased to say that our government has already taken a number of steps in supporting our PSWs. We invest \$10 million a year to train PSWs for work in the community care sector in areas such as palliative care,

acquired brain injury and mental health. Since 2006, we have provided \$27.4 million to increase the base wage of qualified PSWs and improve travel compensation, training and other benefits.

I am very pleased to report to the Legislature that the registry, pswregistry.org, began registering PSWs on June 1, starting with PSWs in the home care sector. Hundreds have already registered, and by August of this year we hope to have the majority of the 26,000 PSWs in the home care sector registered. This registry will continue to expand and will eventually include PSWs working in hospitals and long-term-care homes.

PSWs play a critical role in bringing our government's action plan for health care to life. The plan is a blueprint for health care transformation and addresses both the demographic and fiscal challenges that we face. A big part of the transformation involves a shift away from acute care towards more home and community care.

Our goal is to make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old in, and we will get there by focusing on wellness, by providing faster access to family care and by providing access to the right care at the right time and in the right place. For our seniors, the right place to receive care, whenever possible, is at home in their community, close to their friends, their family, their neighbours. Better access to home care services allows seniors to age in dignity and with independence at home. Most of this care will be provided by personal support workers.

We are driving real change at an accelerated pace because we simply must provide better care for an aging population while achieving better value. Last month, our government announced that we will be adding an additional three million hours of care by PSWs over the next three years, including an estimated one million more hours this year.

We're taking strong action by choosing to freeze total compensation for our doctors so that we can afford home care for 90,000 more seniors. This investment is part of our budget's commitment to increase funding for home and community care by 4% over each of the next three years. That's an additional \$526 million annually by 2014-15.

As we implement our action plan, we know we can depend on personal support workers to provide vital services that make such a difference to the quality of life for so many Ontarians. No matter the setting in which they work, personal support workers make an enormous contribution to the health of their clients and to our entire health care system.

I want to say a heartfelt thank you to Ontario's dedicated personal support workers for all that they do on behalf of Ontarians, and now, thanks to this registry, they're getting the recognition they so richly deserve.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Today I am pleased to provide an update on a very important set of negotiations that will affect the future of our agri-food sector.

This sector, as members of this assembly know, is a strong contributor to Ontario, our way of life and our economy. Our farmers grow and raise more than 200 commodities. We have about 3,000 food and beverage manufacturers—more than any other province in this nation. We have an innovative and growing bioproducts sector, with more than 30% of these kinds of businesses located right here in this province.

Overall, the sector is important. It is responsible for \$33 billion of the provincial GDP and accounts for more than 700,000 jobs. That is why current negotiations with the federal government are so important.

Growing Forward is an agreement with Ottawa to help this sector manage risk and respond to market demands. It is set to expire on March 31, 2013. The federal government is looking to sign a new agreement in September of this year so programs can be ready for an April 1, 2013 start—a seamless transition, if you like. Under this agreement, there are business risk management programs that provide for farm income support and production insurance against weather-related losses.

There are also strategic initiatives that help the industry adopt best practices related to business development, food safety, biosecurity, environmental stewardship, and research and innovation. Under the national framework, programs are jointly funded, with the federal government paying 60% of the share, so the stakes are very high. We stand with our stakeholders in insisting that the federal government maintain an efficient and effective suite of this kind of programming. Farmers need the stability these programs provide to be able to make long-term investments in their operations.

On strategic initiatives, we want to get our fair share of federal funding in order to have as much flexibility as possible to meet the needs of the entire Ontario agri-food sector, including food processing and bioproducts manufacturing.

I want to assure everyone that we are engaging stakeholders every step of the way. We want as much input as we can get to inform our position, support our efforts and implement the activities we need to implement as we move forward.

Rest assured, we will push for the best possible deal for our Ontario stakeholders to advance our goal of successful and sustainable agri-food and agri-products businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It's a privilege to rise today to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC Party as we celebrate personal support workers across Ontario.

1530

Personal support workers embody the very best of our communities, as well as the future of our health care system.

While PSWs play a significant role in traditional care settings, your valuable work stretches beyond the hos-

pital, providing care in schools, community centres and of course the home. You are the eyes and ears for the persons that you are supporting, and you provide the essential link in communication between the other health care agencies that are involved in providing care to that person. Simply put, these dedicated, hard-working members of our health care community provide front-line care and support wherever it's needed.

Not only is your industry on the cutting edge of delivering patient-centred, compassionate care, but your dynamic profession is vital to effectively and efficiently facilitating recovery.

Personal support workers are instrumental in the daily activities of every kind of individual in our society, from children to adults to the frail and everyone in between. In this capacity, you play a critical role in personal recovery and community prosperity.

I'm also very pleased that the PSW registry is now online and open for registration. I'm sure that's going to continue to assist in the very effective and important work that you do.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'd like to thank each and every personal support worker for the phenomenal work that you do in our communities and the phenomenal contribution you make to our province. I wish you every success as you continue in this noble work.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs.

Minister, it is your job to ensure our farmers have the programs they need. There are two important programs under review: AgriStability and the risk management program.

Changes to AgriStability are negotiated. If the agreement isn't in the interest of Ontario farmers, your job is to negotiate to make it better. The provinces must agree on changes, and we expect, as do farmers, that you will not sign a new agreement unless it benefits Ontario farmers.

Your job is also to ensure that the provincial government works for farmers. Just before the election, the McGuinty government announced a permanent risk management program. Already, you are reviewing the program and are proposing changes to what was supposed to be a permanent program. We recognize that this government has spent their way into a huge financial problem, but Minister, the situation wasn't that different a year ago when you made the promise.

Before the election, your party also promised farmers a one-window approach to cut red tape. Now you've backed away from that commitment too.

Ontario farmers are watching. They're watching to see if this minister will show leadership in negotiations to reach a positive agreement for Ontario farmers. They're also watching, and still waiting, to see if this government will actually keep its campaign promises. Finally, they

are watching and still waiting to see if this government will stand up for rural Ontario.

On issue after issue, this government has failed rural Ontario. If this government can't stand up for rural Ontario, I can assure the minister that we will.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. John Vanthof: It's my pleasure to respond to the statement by the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Growing Forward, a federal-provincial framework of agriculture programs, is set to expire in March 2013. The sequel to this set of programs, Growing Forward 2, is currently being negotiated by the federal and provincial agriculture ministers. Through the years, these programs have gained a catchy title and heavy doses of buzzwords like "innovation," "competitiveness" and "environmental sustainability." But in our consultations with the agricultural sector, there are a few principles that the Minister of Agriculture must keep in mind in his negotiations with the federal government, other provinces and at his own cabinet table.

At their core, these programs are a partnership between producers and governments of all levels to help insulate the agricultural sector from some of the risks that are inherent in the industry, from crop production failures to wild fluctuation in world commodity prices. This suite of programs has evolved to maintain some stability in the industry and the rural economy which supports much of the province. While Growing Forward has its limitations, overall the program had a positive impact for farmers in Ontario.

Grain farmers like Norm Koch and cattlemen like Matt Bowman are concerned about the direction that governments of all levels are taking. The agriculture sector is currently in the high part of the commodity price cycle, while governments are currently looking for ways to slash budget deficits. This perfect storm could lead to the cutting of long-fought-for solid program funding, to be replaced by heartwarming but empty buzzwords.

When the low part of the price cycle returns, as it inevitably will, and the chickens come home to roost, the question will be: Will they still have a real framework to rest on, or will it collapse on empty promises?

The Ontario NDP will remain vigilant to ensure that provincial and federal programs like AgriStability and business risk management are maintained and that governments of all levels will work together instead of blaming each other. On behalf of the 700,000 people who work in Ontario agriculture, we urge the minister to do likewise.

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is always a good day at Queen's Park when representatives of personal support workers come to visit us. I'm really happy that they took time out of their busy schedules to come to Queen's Park. We all know how busy they are.

PSWs, as they are called, work in hospitals—9,000 of them work in hospitals—the majority of them work in the long-term-care system—they are the backbone of our long-term-care system—and 26,000 of them, as we've heard, work in our home care system. Those are people who work hard and certainly deserve to be praised for the good work that they do.

But to me, recognition could go a whole lot further, because if you look at all of the 26,000 PSWs working in the home care system, most of them make wages barely above minimum wage. Minimum wage in Ontario is \$10.25. You will see many PSWs who don't make \$2 more an hour than minimum wage. Many of them work for \$12, \$12.25 an hour.

To add to this, if they are in the home care system, they travel on their own time. A PSW who works in Nickel Belt showed me her mileage sheets: close to 700 kilometres every two weeks. Just think of how long it takes, on the bad roads of Nickel Belt, to travel over 700 kilometres. In your wildest dreams, it will take you at least 14 hours to do this. That's 14 hours that you put in to work but that you don't get paid for, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to recognize PSWs by making home care jobs good jobs. Make home care jobs good jobs, and all of a sudden a big chunk of your problem with emergency rooms will be completely resolved. Look at the 4,000 people who are in hospital beds who would like to be home. Fix the problem. Make home care jobs good jobs, make PSW jobs and home care jobs good jobs, and a lot of those beds would be empty, would be available for a hospital to do their work, because those people would be safe living in their own home, where, as the minister said, they are better looked after. And this is where they want to go.

I kind of always knew this, but it was a PSW who really drove it home for me: Never, never underestimate the power of home. People who are frail, people who need support—you bring them back home with the support of a PSW and they bloom again. They're interested in life. They want to continue. They heal themselves and certainly are happy to be there.

I'm happy to recognize PSWs. You do fantastic work. Thank you for being there.

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

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to share this petition that I totally support. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care unilaterally introduced cuts to the ophthalmology funding for physician services and diagnostic testing, retroactive to April 1, 2012; and

"Whereas the legislative cuts to the funding for ophthalmology diagnostic tests are up to 80%; and

"Whereas these cuts were implemented without consulting physicians about the impact such cuts will have on the health care of patients;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect ophthalmology services and consult with the physicians before making cuts to our health care system."

I totally support it and affix my signature.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise: I have 4,000 signatures for an auto insurance petition. The petition reads as follows:

1540

"Auto insurance reform needed: Protect consumers.

"Whereas auto insurance rates are too high in the province of Ontario and continue to increase;

"Whereas families across the greater Toronto area (GTA) are facing unfair insurance premiums that have more to do with where they live than their accident history or driving ability; and

"Whereas insurance premiums across the GTA differ by as much as 150% for drivers with the same driving record;

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

"That the Ontario Legislative Assembly undertake auto insurance reforms that protect consumers, ensuring that premiums are based on a fair assessment of a driver's known ability and history, rather than unfairly targeting drivers on the basis of where they live."

I strongly agree with the petition. I will hand it to Daxime, who will present it to the clerks.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas all Ontario students have the right to a school environment where they feel safe, welcome and respected;

"Whereas school boards must take preventative measures against bullies and issue tougher consequences for those who participate in bullying;

"Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

"Whereas all schools should support students who want to lead activities that promote acceptance and respect for all, including a group named a gay-straight alliance;

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

“That Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, 2012, be adopted so that students across Ontario are protected from the harmful effects of bullying and given every opportunity to succeed in school.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Katie.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas certain commercial operations known as ‘puppy mills’ have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

“Whereas dog breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

“Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure that the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected;

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

“That the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Petitions? The member for—I think I’ve done rotation here. The member for Essex.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to present petitions on behalf of members of my community.

“To the Honourable Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for the province of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned residents of the province of Ontario, hereby implore you to return to the table to negotiate an agreement for fair compensation to doctors in the best interests of taxpayers of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition, will submit my name and present it to the clerks’ office.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further petitions? I don’t know where he left off. The member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

FAMILY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition from my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas recovering from injuries or illnesses at home can enhance recovery, reduce the strain on our health care system and provide comfort to patients;

“Whereas family caregivers need to focus on what matters most—providing care and support to their loved one—without the fear of losing their job;

“Whereas Ontarians who need to care for seriously ill or injured loved ones need job protection;

“Whereas the Family Caregiver Leave Act, if passed, would build on existing family medical leave to provide up to eight weeks of unpaid job leave for employees to provide care and support to a sick or injured family member;

“Whereas the PCs have pledged to vote against the bill, and permanently kill the legislation;

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

“That all parties recognize the importance of health, family, and job security by supporting the Family Caregiver Leave Act to protect the jobs of working Ontarians who need to care for seriously ill or injured loved ones.”

I fully support this petition, I affix my signature and ask page Annaleise bring it to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

“Whereas Ontario’s cardiologists provide accessible, efficient, and cost-effective diagnostic testing services that save, and improve, the lives of thousands of people each year; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s unilateral, punitive changes to the OHIP fee schedule will result in the elimination of these crucial services, thereby leading to a reduction in patient access to care, the lengthening of waiting lists for services, the eradication of high-quality health professional jobs, and an increase in preventable deaths; and

“Whereas the Ontario Association of Cardiologists has presented an alternative, namely, the implementation of new, rigorous standards, which would ensure that cardiac diagnostic tests are done on the right patients, at the right time, by appropriately trained people, in accredited facilities, thereby reducing the number of inappropriate tests and leading to significant financial savings for the government; and

“Whereas the proposal has the endorsement of the highly respected Cardiac Care Network of Ontario;

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

“Direct the Ontario government to repeal the OHIP fee schedule regulation changes filed on May 7, 2012, and instruct the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to work with the Ontario Association of Cardiologists to implement proposed cardiac diagnostic testing standards across the province.”

This was brought to me on behalf of cardiology patients across the province.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this very, very short petition for you today:

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

"Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty take the unfair HST off of hydro and home heating bills."

I will send it to you, Mr. Speaker, through page Kendra.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from members of my community.

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

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

"Whereas the Toronto Catholic District School Board has placed St. John the Evangelist third on the urgent capital priority list for 2012," and actually it's now first, Mr. Speaker;

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

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

I agree with this petition, will sign it and hand it over to page Gopi.

USE OF CONSERVATION RESERVES

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

"Whereas the proposed preliminary management statement and proposed additions for Clear Lake Conservation Reserve and Dawson Ponds and Plastic Lake Conservation Reserve, dated 9 February 2012, has been issued without consultation, is based on factual inaccuracies and would ban the existing use of this area by cross-country skiers, snowshoers, anglers and residents;

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

"(1) Recall the proposed management statement to correct the factual inaccuracies;

"(2) Eliminate the 45-day consultation period to allow full and fair discussion with community groups; and

"(3) Require ministry staff to engage in an open discussion with local groups to negotiate fair terms of responsible community use, including the use of groomers to allow the historical trails to continue to be accessible to community users."

I affix my signature to that and pass it to page Colin from Peterborough.

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a stack of petition post-cards in front of me which read:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas tourism plays a vital and irreplaceable role in northwestern Ontario's economy; and

"Whereas the decision to close travel information centres in Kenora, Fort Frances and Rainy River was made without notice or consultation;

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

"To immediately reverse the decision to close the travel information centres in Kenora, Fort Frances and Rainy River until such time when an alternate plan can be reached through consultation and discussion with members of the tourism industry, municipalities, chambers of commerce and other stakeholders across the northwest."

I proudly support this and have affixed my signature, and I will give this to page Kendra to deliver.

KIDNEY DISEASE

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm very delighted today to present a petition on behalf of John Doble, who lives at 332 Mary Street West in beautiful Lindsay, Ontario.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, Canada, draw the attention of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to the following:

"Whereas kidney disease is a huge and growing problem in Canada;

"Whereas real progress is being made in various ways of preventing and coping with kidney disease, in particular the development of a bioartificial kidney;

"We, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make research funding available for the explicit purpose of conducting bioartificial kidney research as an extension to the research being successfully conducted at several centres in the United States" of America.

I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Angela.

1550

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Jim McDonell: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

"Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry;

"Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

"Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.1 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

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

“Call on the Ontario government to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I agree with this petition and will be signing it.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: It is with great pride that I present this petition on behalf of Mr. Dwight Graham and Ed Mack, both from Elliot Lake, who have worked to collect over 2,500 signatures. The petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers are asking why this was not addressed at the time the debt was retired;

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

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

“How much of the debt remains?

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

I agree with this petition and I will present it to page Gopi.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Helena Jaczek: It’s quite amazing how many of these petitions are coming in.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all Ontario students have the right to a school environment where they feel safe, welcome and respected;

“Whereas school boards must take preventative measures against bullies and issue tougher consequences for those who participate in bullying;

“Whereas creating a safe and positive learning environment is an essential part of helping students succeed in school;

“Whereas all schools should support students who want to lead activities that promote acceptance and

respect for all, including a group named a gay-straight alliance;

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

“That Bill 13, the Accepting Schools Act, 2012, be adopted so that students across Ontario are protected from the harmful effects of bullying and given every opportunity to succeed in school.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Annaleise.

GREY BRUCE HEALTH UNIT

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

“Whereas residents of Bruce and Grey counties do not support the closure of the Walkerton office of the Grey Bruce Health Unit; and

“Whereas board of health members have not been consulted regarding the closure; and

“Whereas the Grey Bruce Health Unit administration has failed to release the cost-benefit analysis used to determine why the Walkerton office of the Grey Bruce Health Unit should be permanently closed;

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

“To direct the Grey Bruce Health Unit’s medical officer of health to keep the Walkerton office of the health unit open and fully operational.”

I understand this petition and affix my signature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over. Orders of the day.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I request five minutes of unanimous consent to let the member from Durham—

Mr. John O’Toole: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Denied. Have a seat.

Orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ D’EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU D’ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 12, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l’électricité pour fusionner la Société indépendante d’exploitation du réseau d’électricité et l’Office de l’électricité de l’Ontario,

modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hope I don't hear that "take a seat" while I'm speaking, but sometimes it's necessary, isn't it?

It's a pleasure on what is one of the last days—you know, that petition delivered by my colleague from Huron—Bruce is the last petition we're going to hear in this Legislature until we reconvene on September 10. That will be one that we can be putting in the books. This is the last one. There are no petitions tomorrow, and of course there will be no petitions on Wednesday.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to join the debate. My colleague from Nipissing, Mr. Fedeli, spoke eloquently on this bill some time ago. Of course, the government has recalled it for debate today, and it's my pleasure to join the debate. It's Bill 75, and I'll read the title if I may: An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts.

That's what the government calls this bill. I have a different title for it.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Uh-oh.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. It should be called "An Act to deflect attention away from the absolutely deplorable mess we have made of the electricity file here in the province of Ontario and to further deflect people's attention from the scandal at Ornge; therefore, we bring in this new electricity act to try to kind of shift the attention away from other matters."

Why I say "deplorable"—actually, it is a sickening mess; it is a criminal mess that they have made of the electricity file, and I say that to the Minister of Energy while I know he's paying attention.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: You can't use the word "criminal."

Mr. John Yakabuski: Of course you can. Speaker, I just want to put it into perspective here for the purpose of the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure so it's crystal clear.

In 2003, when Dalton McGuinty came into office, you, your family and everyone else were paying 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour for electricity. Today, if you've got a smart meter, right now you're paying 11.7 cents. From 2003 to 2012, that is a staggering, mind-blowing 172% increase in your electricity here in the province of Ontario—172%. I had to say it a second time, Mr. Speaker, just for people to absorb the gravity of that. Is there anything on the revenue side in your home that has gone up 172%? I think not—certainly not in mine, and I think I could speak for the vast majority of Ontario families. So let's ask where that came from. How did we get there, 172%?

Well, it started with the birth of the OPA—or hatching. It may have been hatching, it may have been

birth; we are not sure exactly what it was. But I'll tell you, the brainchild was hatched over there. Something was hatched over there. It was a thought. They thought, "Is there any way we can relieve Ontario families of a little more of their hard-earned money? Well, you know what we could do? We could come up with a power authority. It's going to be a virtual agency. It's going to be a transitional agency of a few people." That's how they sold it here in this Legislature under Bill 100. Dwight Duncan was the Minister of Energy then.

Here's what this virtual transitional agency has become: It's now about a \$400-million boondoggle, with 235 to 250 people, and over 90 of them make over \$100,000 a year and therefore are on the sunshine list. Four are making over \$300,000, and the CEO is making close to \$600,000. So that was step one.

1600

But at the same time that they instituted this OPA, part of their reasoning was, "We want to be able to have a vehicle to get more money out of people's pockets, but we've got to have a way of transferring it to the pockets of our friends in the power business." So they used the OPA as that vehicle. It was also used as a shield, if you want to call it that, so that when people didn't like an energy policy coming out of this government, the Minister of Energy simply said, "We don't really get involved in that. That's the OPA."

Where I'm coming to is, what followed was, of course, the Green Energy Act. While Ornge is the biggest scandal to hit this province since Confederation, the Green Energy Act is right up there, because it was built and based on falsehoods. It was built around false pretenses. It has led to the most egregious increases in the price of electricity for Ontario families in history.

Let me put some meat on the bone there. People wonder why they're paying 172% more for electricity today than they were in 2003. If you've got a smart meter today, the price of electricity at low periods, like on the weekends, is 6.5 cents a kilowatt hour, 10 cents during the mid-peaks and 11.7 cents during peak times.

What's part of the bill now is what they call the global adjustment. It used to be called the provincial benefit, and even the Liberals couldn't keep calling it a benefit. You just can't keep putting your hand in people's pockets and taking out more until there's nothing left but lint and then convince them that they're getting a benefit. It just wasn't working, so they started to call it the global adjustment.

This month, the global adjustment is 5.34 cents a kilowatt hour. The high was in April, at 7.47 cents a kilowatt hour. Let me tell you what that means.

The wholesale price of electricity, the average market price of electricity in Ontario, since January 1, 2012, is right around two cents a kilowatt hour. You see, what has happened is, they've pretty well killed all the jobs in this province. Nobody is working. The factories are closed or closing. Capacity is still good. Yet they've, on top of that, signed all kinds of exorbitant contracts for new power, such as wind, where they pay 13.5 cents a kilo-

watt hour for whatever those wind generators produce. You know those gigantic monstrosities that are a blight on the landscape in rural Ontario? People from rural Ontario understand what they are. People from Toronto may not because they don't have them here, other than the tiddlywink one down at the CNE. Half the time, it's just being spun with an electric motor to make it look like it's producing electricity.

You see, all of those contracts that they signed with these gigantic companies, many of them multinationals, many of them American—the biggest deal is the \$7-billion boondoggle they signed with Samsung, which is going to cost—and not the Samsung here, but Samsung. That's the one that's going to cost the people in Ontario the most at the end of the day.

This global adjustment—what it is is that every time you pay for a kilowatt hour, there's a market price, which has hovered around two cents. The government has to find a way of paying for all of those contracts that they've signed with these companies. They came up with this scheme called the global adjustment. This month, for every kilowatt hour that you're paying for at home or in business, business gets it as a direct charge, and for the rest of us it's hidden in the bill. That's why it's 11.7 and 10 cents a kilowatt hour for anything that's not on off-peak times. So the business then gets a bill that says, "This is the amount of power you used and this is the cost of the global adjustment," because we've got to be able to pay for those gigantic contracts that are excessive and exorbitant by anybody's standards.

On top of that, Mr. Speaker, then we have the issue of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could I ask the government, if they want to talk loudly, to take it outside. If you want to whisper, that's fine, but it's a little loud. I'm having trouble hearing him.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Or resign.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): And I could do without those comments too.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say to the folks over there, if they want to learn something, they should listen. If they want to get the propaganda from the Minister of Energy, they should pay no attention here and just get the government gobbledygook.

The contracts that they've signed with these gigantic wind developers also guarantee that we will buy the electricity, whenever it is produced, at those huge prices—as I said, 13.5 cents—regardless of whether we need it or not. So if Ontario's demand is low, which is the case at night or on weekends—very low—we still buy all that power and we pay them 13.5 cents when the market price sometimes dips below zero, where it's actually in the negative. But we still pay, as a result of the decisions of this government, 13.5 cents for that power that's being produced. Is that crazy or what? But that's the way it is under Dalton McGuinty and his Feed-in Tariff program.

Further, we have a problem then: We have to get rid of that electricity, because the system is designed so that

you cannot produce more electricity than you can use at any given time. When you produce a surplus, you have to find a place to put it. For us, in those slow times, in those times when we don't have a large demand, it tends to be New York or Quebec or some other jurisdiction. Here's the best part of it, Mr. Speaker: During the spring, when demand is low, because the air conditioners haven't come on yet, the heating is over and you have a time at night when there's no demand, we're in a situation where we're actually paying Quebec, of all places, with their massive hydroelectric capacity, to take our surplus electricity, paying them because there's no use for it here but the wind generators keep generating, because the wind blows sometimes more consistently at night. So we have to buy it from them, pay exorbitant prices and give it away or actually pay Quebec to take it.

Here's what it amounted to. The auditor, in his report, said—and this is \$1.8 billion. This is eHealth electricity. This is e-Health. It's another boondoggle, another scandal. Since 2005, Mr. Speaker—don't take my word for it. Here's what Jim McCarter, the Auditor General said: "Based on our analysis of net exports ... we estimated that from 2005 to the end of our audit in 2011"—so it will have gotten worse by now—"Ontario received \$1.8 billion less for its electricity ... than what it actually cost electricity ratepayers of Ontario." So you out there paying your hydro bills have paid \$1.8 billion more for electricity than Ontario sold it for elsewhere. Again, is that crazy or what?

They don't really want to talk about the mess that is the electricity system here in the province of Ontario, but we do. Our party released *Paths to Prosperity: Affordable Energy*, a white paper that is a basis for significant and real discussion about where Ontario needs to go in order to have a safe, sustainable, affordable supply of electricity long term here in the province of Ontario, not these crazy, cockamamie ideas that you pay somebody eight, 10 times what it's worth just to—the subsidies of this FIT program, Mr. Speaker; think about it.

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These guys go on and talk about how they need to be responsible, so they talk about the deal with horse racing tracks, the horse racing industry in Ontario. They signed an agreement in 1998 to share revenue with the tracks. It was a win-win situation. The government brings in over a billion dollars net revenue a year.

Here we have an electricity system of \$1.8-billion net loss in the trading of electricity since 2005. Why? Because there are billions being paid out to subsidize an unsustainable, failing program that will never amount to anything but a boondoggle here in the province of Ontario. But they cannot admit that they're wrong because they're Liberals. If they could, we wouldn't be talking about Ornge every day in this House because they would have admitted it was a colossal, egregious mistake, a colossal, egregious breach of trust on the people of the province of Ontario. The minister would have resigned. We would have begun to clean up that mess. They cannot do it. They will not do it.

Just think of the different standards that others were held to. My friend Bob Runciman, now the Honourable Bob Runciman, senator of Canada, uttered—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member might want to stick to Bill 75. He's drifting.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, yes, thank you very much.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm speaking of electricity. One of the harshest critics of the electricity policy in the province of Ontario was my former colleague, now the Honourable Senator Bob Runciman. Now, you will recall Bob Runciman. I think to speak of a member of this Legislature, or a former member, is always, I would hope, in order; that we have that much respect for people who sat in this House.

Bob Runciman was a cabinet minister in a former government and he inadvertently uttered the name of a private citizen, a youth. One slip of the tongue and Mr. Runciman had the honour and decency to resign his cabinet post. Boy, hearken back to the days of honour. One slip of the tongue and that man resigned his post. That used to be the way things were in the province of Ontario. But you know what? There used to be an electricity policy in the province of Ontario that was bent on trying to offer affordable, safe, sustainable power to the people of the province of Ontario, not subsidizing those you want to ensure are going to be there when the cheques are written near election time.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: And we need affordable energy to get jobs brought back in to this province.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs as a result of not just the energy policy—we understand—all of the policies of this government, including their economic policies and their taxation policies etc. One of the significant nails in the coffin of manufacturers in this province has been the energy policy of this government. The energy policies of this government have costs hundreds of thousands of jobs. If the brakes aren't put on, it is an absolute Armageddon that they're facing. They are speeding down the tunnel and a freight train is coming the other way.

Mr. Speaker, they don't get it. Somehow they have to admit they're wrong and reverse this course that they're going on. It is destructive for the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I always enjoy listening to my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He started off quite on the button, on the topic, to talk about the bill. This bill proposes to shield the government from some of its inadequacies when it comes to our energy system and the delivery and production of hydro in this province. What he neglected to touch on were any of the significantly historic events that happened under the previous government prior to the Liberals coming into power, which really set the stage for the disasters and boondoggles that we see within our power generation system and distribution system today.

A massive exercise in privatization that they now rail against in terms of the windmills—and I agree. Those

things are massive power plants, private power plants, given to private corporations. As the member mentioned, in many instances they are multinationals. But that's the ideology that governs the Conservative Party's outlook on power generation. It has been adopted, at least under the Green Energy Act, by the Liberals.

I will also point to the fact—and maybe the Minister of Energy can validate this for me—that the precursor to the Green Energy Act was the Standard Offer Program. Minister, can you validate that? That was devised by Mike Harris. That plan was in place by Mr. Harris, Mr. Eves, and then ultimately repackaged, rebranded as the Green Energy Act, and adopted by the Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from York West.

Mr. Mario Sergio: I have listened very carefully to the comments made by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on Bill 75. Let me say this: If we were to lose the immunity that this House offers its members, we wouldn't hear 1% of the things that we hear in this House. It is very unfortunate, Speaker, that we are allowed to say practically whatever we want, and the public does not benefit from what they see or hear, what's coming out of this chamber. Most of the time it is incorrect information, half-truths, the wrong things.

Let me go back to some of the comments that we have heard, scams in hydro and what have you. I remember the Harris–Eves times. I was sitting on that side of the House. I remember when the biggest scam in the history of the province of Ontario was gifted away—gifted away, the 407 highway. It was given away. It was not sold. Do we remember those years?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, folks. I hear we've had a rough day here. I missed it this morning. It ends here, the yelling across. If you want to talk, go outside and talk. If you want to talk quietly and gently, no problem. But I don't want yelling across. No more. Last warning.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Thank you, Speaker. I am addressing hydro issues and Bill 75. I remember that past government—

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

The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise and to support my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who was, for the majority of the time since I've served here, the energy critic for the Ontario PC caucus, and, I might add, one of the finest energy critics I've ever come across. He held his own in a very important file in this province, particularly at a time when this government ushered in probably the biggest scam in Canadian history, the Green Energy Act, which has soaked rural Ontario families, small businesses, seniors and farmers to the tune of millions upon millions of dollars. I must say the biggest scam came in that Green Energy Act in the form of a \$7-billion untendered contract to Samsung.

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If that member across wants to talk about scams, I can one-up him on the 407 with the Green Energy Act. I can add eHealth. And of course, let's not forget my favourite: Ornge.

This is a government that has lost its way. You only have to look at the OPA sunshine list, as my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke mentioned during his remarks. This year, 91 OPA employees made over \$100,000 a year, compared to just 75 last year. Four are making over \$300,000, and the CEO, Colin Andersen, is making \$573,000 a year. The average salary at that commission, that agency, is \$152,000—more than almost anyone in this chamber makes. For what? To market the scandals and the scams and the rip-offs that this government has come up with.

That's why my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is speaking on behalf of the people who don't sit in this chamber and who can't speak for themselves in it.

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

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Can't have two hits, eh?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Apparently not.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Don't fault me for trying, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Nice try.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm a pinch-hitter for the member from Essex today.

I would like to comment on the comments from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. His comments, to start, focused on the bill and on energy, and as it got on in the comments from the other players, it seems we started hurling who could come up with the biggest scandal.

As far as fire sales, I'd like to throw the ONTC in there, because that's going to be a big fire sale that's happening right now. I know, Mr. Speaker, it hasn't got a lot to do with energy, but it is a big fire sale.

One of the things about energy that I didn't hear the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talk about is not only sometimes do we give power away to Quebec, but sometimes, and this happens in my riding, we've had plants close down because hydro is too expensive. There are times when we let the water go over the dams because we don't know what to do with the hydro. There are specific times of the season where we actually make the turbines turn backwards with compressed air to use up our power.

I'm not a power expert. I'm not the energy critic. But I do know that if you're wearing out your equipment to burn your own hydro, something went wrong in the planning process. It would be nice if we actually could all get together and see what's going wrong.

I would like to comment on the program that was announced that there would be some energy relief for

companies. That energy relief has been in place in northern Ontario for a while, or a version of it, and I think that it's a good idea for that to be brought across the province. All companies that create jobs should have a break and should have competitive energy prices.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has two minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments from the members from Essex, York West, Nepean–Carleton and Timiskaming–Cochrane on my address today on Bill 75. It certainly seemed to raise the ire of the member from York West. I can only say to the member, what used to be said years ago when somebody was getting to somebody and they would get upset; they would just say, "Well, you know, the truth hurts."

The mess that this government has made of energy policy is a scandal. Anything I said in this chamber today, I would be more than happy to repeat outside the chamber. I have on many occasions talked about the rip-off and the sinful crime that you have perpetrated against the people of Ontario with your green energy policy in this government—an absolute sin, an absolute shame. Grandmothers can't afford to pay their hydro bills because of what Dalton McGuinty has done to them. It's a shame about what they have done in order to line the pockets of their friends in the energy business—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): To the member, that's a bit of a stretch. Would you retract that last statement?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, I'd be glad to say that one outside because everybody knows it's the truth. The people in the business know it's the truth, too, because that is what has happened here, and it's not direct subsidy from government—no. It's easy to do because it goes directly on the hydro bill of people, consumers in this province. It doesn't come off the revenue and income statement of the government. No, it goes directly on the hydro bill of the people of the province of Ontario. That is the scandal, that is the crime, and this bill today is nothing but an attempt to deflect away from that. They should be ashamed of themselves over there. It's time to reverse this policy—an absolute disgrace.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate. The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: All right; I got my time back here. I didn't need that extra two minutes, but thank you.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join the debate today, and pleased to hear some passionate commentary from members around the House today, because it is an important issue. We're talking about one of the more fundamental aspects of our economy: the ability of our province to generate power and distribute it to consumers, businesses and constituents, members of our community.

But we've been doing this for a long time in this province, some 100 years, ever since we figured out how to produce hydro—and we call it "hydro" because when

we first started, it was derived from hydroelectric dams. It's something that sort of makes us uniquely Canadian, that we call it hydro here. In the States, they call it power, electricity; in other jurisdictions they call it whatever they do. But we call it specifically hydro here because there was a time in this province that that's where we got all our energy from: hydroelectric dams that turned those turbines and fed that power through the grid to small communities. But they did it in a specific way. They did it as a public good, as an entity derived from the province to the people for their benefit.

Now, we all paid into the system, we all paid for the system, and for a very long time that system worked incredibly well. It paid for upgrades. It paid for the distribution. It paid for the workers, the linemen—the line-people. It paid for the continuation of the system and the expansion of the system.

I'll note that the forefather of the NDP, Brother Tommy Douglas, electrified—not only did he electrify people in the province of Saskatchewan, but he also brought electricity, public power, to all points in Saskatchewan under the CCF government.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Didn't he think that was the single most important thing he ever did?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It was one of the single most important things. Thank you, to the honourable Minister of Agriculture. It was one of the best things—as well as bringing in our public health care system, universal health care system, and our public—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): If the minister wants to go down memory lane, he might want to talk outside instead of yelling across the floor. Thanks very much.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I was just so impressed—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): By the way, if you want to say anything, you go through me.

Interjection.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): And the member from Essex should sit down when I stand up.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Are you up? Down? Okay. We've done it so many times today. I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

I don't mind going down memory lane when it comes to talking about some of the achievements of New Democrat governments across the country in different jurisdictions, and I don't mind pointing to those good pieces of public policy that led to the betterment of the constituents that we represented in those various provinces.

Back to the issue at hand: Public power was a method and a system that was implemented for the good of the people—not for profit, essentially. We didn't have multinationals that were infusing their profit-driven agendas into the regime. They were purposely excluded

because we knew it was too important to tamper with and too important to mess up.

But, lo and behold, as we go through the 1980s and massive nuclear power projects come online, costly initiatives that were sort of the be-all and end-all at that day—you know, clean, limitless power with a shelf life of tens of thousands of years in terms of radioactive material—everybody jumped on the nuclear bandwagon. We saw it as the saviour to our economic and energy woes at the time.

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Nobody told us, nobody was out front with the massive costs and overruns that these systems were going to burden us with, and to date we still pay for a large majority of those upgrades to our nuclear system.

I would point to one, being Darlington. Darlington was started by the Tories, completed by the Liberals, and then we landed on it in the 1990s at a cost just around \$14 billion—in 1990.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Actually, the NDP finished it.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: We did finish it, because it was already done. You know, you guys had already signed the cheques and given it away. What were we to do?

What this government has proven is that they will not shy away from decommissioning a plant, as we saw in Oakville, that was fully constructed, ready to go, ready to flip the switch to start to produce power through gasification. Yet, for a seat-saving exercise, they cancelled the project, decommissioned it, and we are going to be stuck, on the hook, for \$1 billion because of a failed policy and a failed initiative—failed because they failed to consult with the people in that area. They didn't talk to anyone. The community was fully against the project, yet the powers that be, that saw that they were going to make—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Chair, we don't have a quorum in the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'll ask the clerks' table to check for a quorum, please.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Speaker. I hope that more members come in to hear this invigorating speech, obviously.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I do too. That's why I called for a quorum.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much.

Where was I? Could someone remind me of where I was?

Oh, yeah, we were in Oakville, at the cancellation of a gas-fired plant that's going to ultimately cost us a billion dollars. Why did they cancel it? Well, they had to back-track on this program, on this planned gas plant, because they did not consult with the residents of that city and the communities that were to be affected.

You would think that they would learn from the mistake here. Not only is it going to cost us \$1 billion, but it has obviously put another black mark on their ability to manage our electrical system here.

That brings me to, obviously, the bill that is before us today. It's G75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act. What it proposes to do is meld two of the five entities that were derived by the Harris privatization plan. What we have are the OPA, the OPG, Hydro One, OEB and the IESO. What it proposes to do is to amend the Electricity Act to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator—the IESO—and the Ontario Power Authority—the OPA—into one non-share capital corporation called the Ontario Electricity System Operator. So we'll have another acronym—I'm going to write that one down—OESO. We almost have every letter in the alphabet here for our electricity system. We're missing a couple of Zs. But here we are—it's a blending, something that New Democrats, in general, are supportive of.

We have long advocated for the amalgamation back to a single entity that could generate, produce, distribute and maintain our electrical system here in the province. So you're going to take two of these, with a cost savings I have seen of roughly around \$25 million. There would be an estimated savings of \$25 million—just a fraction, a sliver, of what was vaporized. That's the only thing that went up in smoke with this gas plant in Oakville: a billion dollars vaporized. We're going to get \$25 million back in savings. We'll see how far that goes. I don't think it will go that far to saving the consumers, the businesses, small businesses, manufacturing centres and residents of our various ridings—it won't save them very much at the end of the day on their hydro bill.

There's another provision to this bill that we are concerned about. I talked about Oakville and Mississauga, where there was no consultation. You had to backpedal; you've blown a billion dollars. What you're doing now is taking away the OPA's power and duty to develop an integrated power system plan, the IPSP, for approval by the Ontario Energy Board, and the OEB's power and duty to review that plan for economic prudence, cost-effectiveness and regulatory compliance.

The IPSP is replaced by ministerial energy plans. The minister must consult with the OEB on the impact of the energy plan on consumers' electricity bills and on methods of managing that impact. The minister must also refer the plan to the OEB for review of the estimated capital costs in the plan in accordance with the referral.

What it does do—that's a lot of words mixed together there—is it eliminates the public review procedure, where the public has the ability to talk about and ask questions about these transformations in our system and any initiatives going forward. Any new generation initiatives, any changes in policy—those are all by ministerial decree.

That might sound good on that side of the House, being in government. Some of you may, in fact, look to be the Minister of Energy someday. You may aspire to be that and hope that you have this power at the tip of your

fingertips. We, on this side, particularly New Democrats, are frightened by that, and so are stakeholders in the environmental realm and also those who understand the real pitfalls of privatization and consolidating our system under one single ministerial provision, where just one minister makes these decisions. It's unaccountable, not transparent and hidden from the purview of the public. It's frightening stuff.

Imagine, Minister of Agriculture: Let's say six months down the road we get into an election, hypothetically speaking; let's say, spring of next year. Let's say, April 20 of next year. Let's just pick that one out of the hat. Let's say the Liberal Party loses the election. Let's say, hypothetically, you're reduced to third party status—hypothetically. Let's say that Bob Rae is your new leader too. We can say that hypothetically. Why not? Let's say that someone in the PC caucus becomes the new Minister of Energy. Now you've given them carte blanche to make these amendments that we already know—I gave you the cautionary tale of what happened under Ernie Eves and Mike Harris. They had an agenda. The only difference between their agenda and what you're doing here is that theirs was not hidden. It was clearly articulated.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: You were in government, then, when it happened.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Absolutely not. It was absolutely clear to us that they wanted to deregulate, privatize, open the system to the market and dismantle the public power regime that we had in this province for nearly 100 years up until they got their hands on it. What you're going to do is you're going to open the doors to them being able to do that again, under any regime. That's the way we read it here. Don't take my word for it; take the word of many of our stakeholders whom we individually meet with who are concerned about this provision as well.

It's similar to what you've done under schedule 28 in the budget bill that opens the doors to privatization of all ministries and of all ministerial services.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We heard you on that. We changed it.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: This is another one that you should change, too, as well.

We understand on this side of the House, as New Democrats, that we need some consolidation. We've advocated for that for quite some time. But hidden within the context of this one is the ability to give the minister outright carte blanche without any public input and without any oversight—something we need to address.

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I'd just like to get to, for example, what's happening in my riding of Essex. Many of you know I come from southwestern Ontario, the manufacturing heartland of Ontario. We were and have been the economic engine of the province. I say "economic engine" because any mechanical engineer will tell you that an engine is a combustion mechanism. It's a combustion system. They call Detroit the Motor City, but motors are electric.

Wouldn't it be great if we could get to that, where we were and I think we are?

We need to have a government that actually is doing it for the right reasons, for the public good, under that lens, and working with our automotive companies to bring those new systems about, not for the sheer politics of it.

We call it greenwashing. I think that that's what the Green Energy Act actually was. It was a massive exercise in timing—it was good timing, because at that point we were just prior to the recession. I agree that transitioning our energy system to a new, green-focused energy system is a good way, and it was a good way to also stimulate. But the way in which it was done—I think there have been changes to it. I know that there have been some changes to the Green Energy Act. The way in which it was done, by opening up the Green Energy Act to the massive capital, corporate interests that were the only ones that had the money to make those investments—we're talking about the Enbridges and the huge power companies, many of whom are involved in other areas of energy production, oil and gas, across the country. Those guys, and the Samsungs, were the only ones that had the money to infuse into the huge systems—solar panels, solar firms, as well as the wind turbines.

There has been minimal economic impact in terms of regional development, minimal in the sense that some farmers have benefited, some have lost. Municipalities, by and large, have not capitalized as much as they could have, given a different system, given a system that actually took their priorities and interests first and foremost. How do we develop a system that benefits regional municipalities, co-operatives and groups, instead of singular entities like the massive corporations that we see that dominate the new Green Energy Act? Those are the ones that are benefiting from it. I understand the concept: You wanted to jump-start it. But you created a gold rush that actually created a disaster.

I will not agree with the Tories in the sense that they will point to the Green Energy Act as being the major point of cost increase on our utilities, on our electricity bill. It's not right; it's false. That argument is false. The major costs are the ones that we're still paying for, the massive exercises in nuclear production and nuclear energy; the deregulation of our industry. As I said, if you want to talk about the Green Energy Act, the precursor to it, the baby, was created by Mike Harris under the standard offer program. He had the same idea as the Green Energy Act: "Let's get private industry involved. We'll let them bid on these contracts. We'll contract out the power to them. They can make all the profit, and we'll wash our hands of it." That's just the simplest explanation for it.

It delegitimizes the argument that we hear on green energy. It could have been done in a different way. I've seen many examples. There are many jurisdictions that actually have done this right and have maintained a public system and maintained the accountability and transparency within their system. Typically, those are the more progressive, developed, First World countries. But

actually, Third World countries are getting on board with public power and actually developing co-operative models that bring in green energy technologies and allow them to be self-sustainable, for the benefit, for the good, of their communities, not for massive profit-driven motives.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the time to add my comments to the debate. As I said, G75 does one thing right, by blending the IESO with the OPA. We think that could result in some efficiencies.

But it does another thing massively wrong, which is shielding the government from oversight and transparency by giving the minister purview by ministerial decree, ministerial directive, for any new generation deals within our energy sector. Energy plans—it says the minister must consult with the OEB. He'll consult with the OEB, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the public will have any input as to what those systems will be going forward.

I appreciate the time, as I said, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry I didn't acknowledge you when you were standing up. I will never do that again; I promise.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Never say never.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I will never do that in the 14 seconds remaining in this 20-minute speech. I am not going to do that again. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did take the opportunity to listen intently to the remarks made by my colleague the member from Essex.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You guys weren't even here. We had to call for quorum.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Indeed, I was able to listen to the speech in a couple of venues, so I did listen to it very carefully.

Bill 75: I think the member addressed a number of key concerns. The fact is this bill is at second reading; it will be going to the committee in the not-too-distant future, an opportunity to hear from many of the stakeholders in Ontario's electricity system come forward and provide their viewpoints. One of the strengths of a minority government is an opportunity to amend the bill, and no doubt Bill 75 will be amended before it comes back to this House for third reading.

We've been pretty clear: We'll keep Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One in the public's hands, as they should be, representing in excess of 75% of activity in Ontario's electricity sector. But I want to remind people that the Harris-Eves government proposed what I would call the grand scheme. They broke up the old Ontario Hydro into three distinct areas: Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One, and they very interestingly, Mr. Speaker, transferred all the debt to the new Ontario Hydro Financial Corp. They did that for one reason, and one reason only: to make sure the two other entities would be free of debt so that they could be sold. Interesting entities like Credit Suisse might have been inter-

ested in acquiring those assets, or other capital companies around the world, so that was done. Of course, that was done to facilitate privatization, which we'll never look at.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the comments that my colleague from Essex shared. They were very reflective; and it's an interesting perspective, always, to hear from our NDP colleagues.

But I have to point out today that when we talk about nuclear power, we have to recognize that today it's the most reliable, affordable source of energy for consumers and industry alike here in Ontario. It produces 57% of our power, and our good folks in Ontario, as well as our industries, benefit from that reliable, affordable energy. That is where we need to get back to.

Bill 75, unfortunately, is just smoke and mirrors to hide the fact that we have a real crisis in our province today. We have to get to the crux of it. That is the fact that, just like our colleague from Essex commented on failed policy, the crux of the matter is the most paramount failed policy in my tenure to date that we've spoken about has to be green energy. The Green Energy Act just isn't working, and it's the epitome of failed policy. I can't stress that enough.

If you were to come into my riding of Huron-Bruce and see the countryside pocked with towers and see communities ripped apart and see municipalities struggling over the loss of their voice on such an important issue, everyone visiting my riding would agree that the Green Energy Act has been a dismal failure.

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We have to also take a look at where we need to go. That's why I really am proud of the direction that our PC Party in Ontario is taking. We've taken time to talk to stakeholders; we've talked to individuals in terms of what they need. Our white paper, *Paths to Prosperity*, has certainly captured the vision that we need to get back to prosperity in this province.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: In general, this is a step in the right direction, and I think that's a repeated message that you're going to hear from many of my colleagues here in our party.

I just wanted to comment on a few of the points that were raised by my Conservative friend across the way—her riding eludes me. I've got too much paper to dig under—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Huron-Bruce.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Huron-Bruce. Thank you very much.

If we're going to throw numbers out there, 45% of today's hydro bills are directly attributed to the refurbishment of nuclear plants—45%. That's where your hydro bill is going. That's a staggering number. This is where the Conservative Party wants to go—in that direction—going forward. I don't hear that the Liberal govern-

ment is not going in that direction either. So let's make that clear.

I believe where we need to go and where we're starting to take that path is, we're going down through a green energy path. I enjoy some of the moves that were made. I like some of the initiatives that were made by the Liberal government, but how they got to where they are today could have been easily and vastly improved. The green energy, which is on our hydro bills today, actually contributes 6% to 8% of the total bill, compared to the 45% due to the refurbishment of nuclear plants. So really, let's look at those numbers before we make a decision as far as where we're going to go in the future.

Interjection: Great union jobs.

Mr. Michael Mantha: You're absolutely right; they're great union jobs. There is a transition period where we can look, there are options in Ontario, where we can move to greener pastures. Those individuals—I'm one who actually transitioned from the forestry sector to the mining sector. There is no reason why we can't grab that same workforce and transition them into green energy jobs going forward. There's no reason why that can't happen, and I'm going to love talking to that at a future date.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I was very impressed with the words so eloquently spoken by my colleague from Essex. Tommy Douglas was a very good friend of mine. You sounded almost Douglasish over there; it was very good. Tommy and I used to chat for hours about some of the things he was engaged in. He often said that he felt the single most important thing that he did in Saskatchewan was in fact to electrify the province. He electrified us all in many ways, to his—rest his soul—everlasting credit.

I thought the remarks from the other side were very fair and balanced, and that's good. I thought there was a general recognition of the importance of green energy. I want to tell you, if Tommy Douglas were standing in this House today, he'd be applauding the Green Energy Act. He'd be raising some of the same concerns that the member from Essex raised, but he'd be talking about nukes; he'd be talking about, perhaps, moving in some other directions; but he'd be saying something else—and I say this respectfully and I raise this as an offer.

Tommy used to always say, "If you want to predict your future, you have to create it." I like the co-operative model; I like the community power model. I don't think there's enough reaching across the floor and working together to develop some of those co-operative community-based possibilities. I'd like to see us work together on that. We have a lot in common, you and I, I think. I'd be quite prepared to sit down with you over coffee; I'll even buy lunch, and we'll talk about some of the ways we can work together.

I was pleased with the comments that were made, and I appreciate them being said here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before the member from Essex has his two-minute response, I'd like

to thank him for his genuine, heartfelt apology for standing up. Thanks.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm really good at the apologies, Mr. Speaker, as my wife will attest to. I've had lots of practice. But it was heartfelt and I learn something every day.

Thank you to the members from Peterborough, Huron–Bruce, Algoma–Manitoulin, and, of course, the Minister of Agriculture.

It is so complex. It's interesting; it's important. I talk of course of our energy system as a whole, and it's gone through many connotations over the years and it will go through more after we're all gone from this House. Hopefully, it will go into a greener future with technologies that we can't even fathom today, technologies that are clean and affordable and are actually a net benefit, but unfortunately we're not there today.

What I think the system could use the most of, the absolute most, isn't more nukes, isn't more wind turbines, isn't more solar panels or hydro or gas plants or more money or less money. What the system needs today is transparency, it needs truth, and it needs public input and dialogue, more so than it ever has, because we've gone through—no pun intended—a dark era in our hydro system.

People are frustrated. They want to know what green energy is about. They want to know what a Samsung contract means to them. How does it benefit them? How does it benefit the province? They want to know, and they need to know. That's a major contention with this Bill 75, that it eliminates that. It backs that public oversight even further away from them. It's not the right direction to go, and it's one that I think Tommy would speak about, to bring that to the forefront: the ability to present our ideas and to present them truthfully, honestly and under full scrutiny of the public.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my pleasure to stand up today and speak on Bill 75. It has a long title. I don't know if I want to read it, but basically it has to do with improving energy in Ontario, more efficiencies in Ontario.

I'm going to start with a little story. I was in southern California, just outside of Palm Springs. It was probably about 20 years ago I was there, and I remember seeing windmills for the first time—not one but thousands of windmills. I thought to myself, what are these windmills doing here?

Lo and behold, here we are today, debating about energy. We're not talking about coal. We're not talking about the old way of burning wood. We're talking about new technologies, and we have to move in that direction because if we use coal, it's dirty. If we use similar things—I don't mean to offend the PCs, but they relied heavily on coal when they were in power, and coal produces by-products in the air, especially—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Folks, we have six sidebars going on, and I'm trying to listen to

your member. So I'd appreciate it, if you want to have discussions, that you might want to go out to the lobby and do it.

Interjection: Then we don't have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, that's your problem, if you don't have the people here. It's not my problem. All right? So, please, could you cut it back a little bit? Thanks.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about the use of coal, and I'll get into that more in a few minutes. But the overall purpose of this legislation in front of us today is to make sure that the people of Ontario have reliable, clean jobs supporting and producing affordable energy.

As I was saying, before October 2003, we had brown-outs, shortages of electricity and of power. We saw production of energy go down, but the demand for electricity go up. So if you have a basic—I'm not trying to use a prop, but you have a graph, and on one side, up and down, you have production, and at the bottom you have demand. There are two curves. The demand curve went up higher and higher over the years. Meanwhile, the production curve went lower and lower and lower. That's not a good curve to have, because at some point in time the demand got higher than the production.

I remember hearing on the radio and on television warnings saying that "There may be a brownout today" or "There may be a shutdown of power for a few hours," especially in the summertime when people had their air conditioners running, when they would come home from work and start cooking at 5:30 or 6 o'clock. It was a possibility. We were warned there was a possibility that there could be a brownout or a blackout.

1700

Since the Liberals got into power, we don't hear those announcements anymore. We don't hear every year, especially in the summertime, around this time of year, in June and July, in the past few summers—we haven't heard, "Lower your air conditioning, cook later on or earlier in the day, because if everyone is doing it at the same time, there will be a blackout or a burnout."

So we began to improve things. We still have increased demand, but we have also increased production, and we've done it in a clean way. We've done it by doing a number of things that help reach the demand that's required but, at the same time, produce clean energy.

Clean energy: I'm talking about hydro, for example, the waterfalls, Niagara Falls—we now have more turbines down there than before; we have solar panels in a lot of locations; natural gas, which is lower on emissions but still produces significant amounts of energy; and wind. Wind, as I was talking about earlier, can produce a significant amount of energy.

When I was in California and I saw those windmills—as I said, not hundreds but thousands of them—I realized at that time that wind was a good alternative, because all you're doing is tapping out resources that already exist here and around the world. You have wind everywhere, so you tap into that resource—the Dutch were doing it

centuries ago—and create a windmill which produces energy. The Dutch were using it to grind certain things or used their plants to be able to reduce the size and create smaller portions that could be eaten or fed to certain animals, especially domestic animals.

Wind has become popular, not just in California, not here in Ontario, but also in other places. So, besides California and Ontario, we have it in Denmark. We've seen some huge windmills, some even out into the sea. I saw it recently. I was in Europe. I saw it in Italy. They have windmills, but they have a lot of solar panels, because in Italy, the sun comes out pretty well every day, at least when I've been there. It comes out, and so the panels start producing energy.

These are all clean sources. We're focusing on that, and this bill in front of us helps to simplify all the different rules that are in place, simplify them so that we don't have duplication, but also so we can continue to produce energy in a clean and efficient manner.

I want to talk about coal before I move on. Besides coal causing problems in our atmosphere—when the Conservative government was burning coal, we had a lot of problems with asthma days or smog days. I certainly remember these days. Seniors and even young children were warned to stay indoors because the smog was so powerful, especially here in Toronto. It was so bad that they had to issue a warning, saying, "Today's a smog day. Stay inside. Put your air conditioner on so you don't inhale all the pollutants that come from coal." As a result, some people who had asthma suffered quite a bit.

So we phased out, shut down or reduced the use of coal by 90%, which is significant, and we created more clean and efficient energy: nuclear, hydro—as I mentioned earlier—solar, wind and natural gas. It's not that we want to move in that direction; we must move in that direction. We can't be depleting our natural resources here and trying to use the simple way of burning coal.

In England, during the Industrial Revolution, the skies got so dirty—I remember reading about it in a Charles Dickens novel and several other novels that were written back in the 19th century—that they would describe how bad cities like Manchester in the north and other northern cities in England would be. It would basically be dark during the day. The sun couldn't shine through because there were so many pollutants in the sky caused by coal.

We can't use that. We have to reduce that and move in the other direction more and more. And it's difficult. Government always has red tape. We have various acts in front of us, different boards in front of us, regarding energy that make things more complicated. We're trying to simplify the process. We want to make it easier for entities out there to produce energy, mostly clean energy, and continue to focus in that direction.

Who knows? Ten years from now, with the Green Energy Act in place, with various pieces of legislation in place, perhaps we can rely 100% on clean energy and continue to phase out the last 10% of coal and other sources that are not as clean.

I think it was just a few days ago that I read that smog can be so bad that it can be bad for people's health. There

was something in the news this morning—I forget which paper it was in, but basically it said that it could actually cause cancer. They've discovered now that smog can cause cancer. So you cannot continue to move in that direction. Especially smog generated from diesel—diesel engines and the by-products they produce are extremely bad for one's health. You have to move in a different direction.

I'm not going to reread the minister's speech. He outlined this very well. The minister outlined very well what the bill was about and made a lot of good remarks. I'm not going to go through that. Rather, I'd like to focus on the overall purpose of this bill and certain sections that I'm concerned about.

Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012—I guess it's the best name for it—was introduced in April of this year. It would amalgamate two of Ontario's electricity agencies, the Independent Electricity System Operator, IESO, which is the system operator, and the Ontario Power Authority, which is the system planner. We'd bring them together and they'd start working together and try to improve the overall system of energy. I wanted to focus on that.

I think I mentioned—if I didn't, I apologize—that I was going to share my time, and I want to share my time with the member from York West.

In closing, the bill is very important to all of us. It affects every single one of us and the way we breathe and the way that we function in Ontario every day.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: I'm delighted to have a few minutes on Bill 75. Bill 75 is an important bill, introduced by the minister to make some changes to our agencies, these very important agencies—the so-called hydro.

It's quite right that every time we tend to make some changes, there is some apprehension. I don't have to tell you the importance that hydro occupies in our province, in our daily life, in our economy. It affects everyone and everywhere. Our economy, our industries, cannot function without hydro. Our homes cannot operate without hydro. Of course, we all have to pay for that, for this particular service. But it's there. It is there, Speaker.

I believe that there is no government that wants to bring some changes to such an important agency as hydro knowing that something is going to go wrong. I think that it's a normal apprehension that we have, as the public, and even as politicians, and sometimes for good reasons as well. But deep down, I believe, Speaker, that there's no government at any particular time that wants to bring some things, some changes, that later on they will regret. I think they all have good intentions.

Depending on the times—I mean, we cannot look at 20, 30, 40 years ago, when coal was the order of the day in providing electricity, because still today it's the cheapest power but it's not the best; it's not the cleanest. Then, of course, we move on to later years and we'll see that everybody wants this clean energy, so we are moving in that direction. We have looked at the Euro-

peans, for example; they were well ahead of us, eons ahead of us, with solar panels, solar energy, wind turbines and all kinds. So we figured, "Okay, let's move in that direction."

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Everyone wants clean energy. We know our youngsters, especially those affected by asthma, love clean energy. Who doesn't? Who doesn't want to breathe easier and cleaner, Mr. Speaker?

But it's expensive. It's more expensive. As we're finding out, some of the other provisions, such as wind turbines and solar panels, are not that cheap as well. They were expensive as well. But let me say that unless we move on and bring some changes—and let me say again the energy, hydro, is one of the most important and largest agencies that we have. But at the same time, Speaker, even though we may have apprehensions, unless we move on—and hopefully we get it right, okay? We cannot live in the past or the present. Otherwise we're going to miss the future, JFK once said.

The thing is that we are here to debate Bill 75, exactly to see that we're going to get it right. I hope that we can move this bill out of this House. I think tomorrow or next week we're going to be adjourning, if you will, for the so-called summer, even though there is committee work going all over the place. We hope that by September or October, when we come back, we can bring a different bill, if you will, that will incorporate a lot of the ideas that we may be hearing from the various industries, individuals, organizations, entrepreneurs and our fellow politicians on the other side. I certainly hope that when it comes back, it will come back in such a form that everyone can say that it's a better bill, it's a good bill, it's something that should be done, and we should move on with it; because, as I said, I believe the minister has introduced this particular bill with good intentions, with fully the intention to have something better than what we have now.

I have to say, because I have been here a few years—on June 8, I celebrated 17 years in this House here—I have seen a couple of government changes, if you will. There was apprehension when my former colleagues Premier Mike Harris and Premier Ernie Eves were saying, "We're going to split hydro and we're going sell it. We're going to do it in three or four pieces and we're going to sell it." Luckily, I'm glad that they saw the light and they didn't do it. The only thing they did was clean up, refurbish it, and sell the Bruce nuclear plant to an English firm, I believe. But that was it. They realized in time that it was not in the best interests of Ontarians to do whatever they wanted to do—split it in so many ways and start to sell the individual parts.

So what do we have today? I think we all realize the necessity and importance of hydro to be and to remain in public hands. We hope it's going to be done, and I believe that this independent review that's under way, combined with the public hearings, indeed will bring forth some things back into the House, through the various consultation and committee, something where we

really say, "We can support this. This is something good for us. It's going to be good for the economy."

Speaking of economy and jobs, I think a couple days ago the minister introduced a new program. I don't have the details, unfortunately, but I know it has got to do with some hydro rate reductions. If people, companies and individuals were to establish a large—some things that will provide jobs, if you will, Speaker, an investment of some \$250 million, I believe, and they would be gaining a lower rate. And why not? I think it's part of doing two things. One is to say, "Okay, you create jobs? We want to help you at the same time." I think this has been done in the past and this will be done in the future. Other governments will do it. We have said in the past, when companies wanted to establish in Ontario, "Fine. If you come to Ontario and provide jobs, we are going to give you free municipal services. We're going to give you 10 years of free hydro service or free development charges."

I think this is part of negotiation and consultation. It's part of government doing its job and saying that, for the time, this is the best thing that we should be doing. When the government does it, Speaker, it doesn't do it for the government, it does it for the people of Ontario.

I think that here today we should realize that, yes, the minister has proposed Bill 75, which calls for the amalgamation of two or three agencies. The only hope now is that this will be travelling and we'll be hearing from those individuals who have an interest and will make some comments, and, together with the independent review which is under way, we can come back to the House and offer something to the people of Ontario—those who, on a daily basis, open up the door. They want to make sure that the hydro is there; they want to make sure that the machinery will be working for them today and tomorrow.

I remember, Speaker, when we were buying power from Manitoba or Quebec or from the States, paying high dollars—not when our dollar was at par but when our dollar was at a much lower rate. Is it fair to say, "Now we're creating more energy than we need"? Maybe. Let's find the balance.

As I said before, every government tries to do the best for the time, and I think this is a time when we have to look at Bill 75, really have a good look at it, and say, "This part, I am not happy with." We heard the opposition saying, "There are areas that we don't like." Granted; let's delve into it. Let's take a look at it. Let's hear from the people outside and let's come back with a better bill.

I thank you for the time, Speaker.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to comment on the speech of the member for York West on Bill 75.

I had a chance to speak a little earlier. You can't cover everything. Bill 75: Let's talk about what the government claims it will do and then ask ourselves whether this is the priority issue here for the province of Ontario.

The minister claims that this is going to save \$25 million a year—not a paltry sum, but not very significant

when you put it into perspective and compare it against what this government has cost with some energy decisions.

We know that they decided to build a power plant in Oakville and then cancelled it a couple of years later. They decided to build one in Mississauga and actually started building it. In fact, it's there. You've got all kinds of infrastructure there that cost hundreds of millions of dollars. They cancelled it. For those two power plants—for the one alone in Mississauga, they made an offer of \$82 million to get out of it. That's the minimum that it's going to cost. But experts out there are saying that it's going to cost maybe \$1 billion for either one of them.

Here we have a government that claims that this bill—they say, "Oh, we've got to get this bill passed"—might save \$25 million through amalgamation of two agencies, the IESO and the OPA, against possibly \$2 billion that those same people who are paying the hydro bills—meaning your mother, your father, your grandmother, your grandparents, your aunts, your uncles, your daughters—will be paying for those costs. Those are the numbers we should be talking about. Plus, that's what the minister claims this will save. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, any time Liberals tell you they're about to save money, watch your wallet.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: You know what? I listened to the words that the member from York West utilized in his speech. It's one of the reasons why I chose to come here, where a like-minded individual could actually sit down and bring change, have a discussion, listen to the points coming from everybody around the table. If you and I could sit down at a table, heck, we could do more for Ontario than a lot of the people could do in this House, I'm sure, but it takes a lot more than just me and you. It takes everybody else to participate at those discussions at the table.

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I look forward to those discussions when they go out to the general public, having chats and meeting up with individuals, but the day that you are going out, when you do go out and you have those discussions with individuals—because there are some concerns in here. There are changes, the elimination of the integrated power system plan. That opportunity is for the public and stakeholders to give their suggestions, and the planning suggestions that they might have will be greatly reduced.

I don't have to look too far. I look at a community like Wawa, and I know that the mayor up in Wawa, Mrs. Linda Nowicki, will have a lot of comments to say in regard to some of the deregulation and the privatization that has happened in the past in regard to Hydro One. Wawa is surrounded by a wealth of dams, but unfortunately, a few years ago that wealth was taken away from them. It was due to the deregulation that was done by the Harris government regime that was here then.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Whoa, whoa.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Oh, yes, it was. I was living there. I was working in those sawmills when electricity

rates went up—one of the other reasons I'm sitting here—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I hope the residents of Peterborough riding had tuned in this afternoon because they got to witness two dynamic speeches delivered by the members from York West and Scarborough Southwest. They certainly, in very clear terms, articulated the benefits and issues that are associated with Bill 75.

We all know that a good electricity policy has great impact on the economy. I just happened to pick up this morning the report from Robert Hogue, who is the senior economist with RBC research. Here's what he had to say: He talked about real GDP in Ontario accelerating to 2.5% in 2012, just shy of 2.6% projected for all of Canada. That's up from an estimate of 1.9% in 2011.

He said with the rebound of the auto sector—less drag. We know that the auto sector, the major operators in Canada are certainly very dependent on a very safe, secure, reliable and consistent electricity supply. That's what is incorporated in Bill 75: to bring two organizations together, the IESO and the OPA, in order to provide solid direction for the future of the electricity system of the province of Ontario.

As I said, it was clearly articulated by two outstanding speeches this afternoon. The members from York West and Scarborough Southwest, I think, clearly laid out the parameters that we're talking here. We're looking at the new agency. It would provide responsibility for procurement and market operation, providing opportunities to align contracts and market rules to benefit all consumers of the province of Ontario—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I salute these members this afternoon.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's been a long afternoon so far, Speaker. I apologize.

This bill is just another bill to deflect attention off this government's failed energy policies. It's a bill to deflect from their failed Green Energy Act.

I'm sure the people of New York and Quebec are happy as anything about the Green Energy Act and this failed policy that this government has. In fact, I'm sure there's an energy producer of the year award in New York state, and we should maybe put the minister's name on it. I'm sure he'd win the contest. He's giving away electricity to other places at very heavily subsidized prices, and the people of Ontario get to pay the difference. Aren't we lucky? I'm sure that the people over there in the States and Quebec are just saying, "Go, Ontario, go. Send it over here. We appreciate your efforts."

We had introduced legislation to put a slowdown to the Green Energy Act provisions, especially when it came to wind turbines. It was interesting to hear from the NDP that maybe we should have looked at that a little more. It would have been nice if they had supported us

there, and maybe we wouldn't be in the position we are today.

The government says that we're going to save money by this bill. I haven't seen the government save money yet in eight years. Look at the deficit we have. Look at the debt we have. I'm certain this program is going to fall short of saving anybody any money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Scarborough Southwest has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just wanted to respond briefly to the members from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Algoma–Manitoulin, Peterborough and Perth–Wellington.

I just want to say one thing that I think will resonate more clearly with any opposition to this bill. We've established a panel of experts who are going to work with the Electricity Distributors Association and identify potential efficiencies and ratepayer savings. The people involved are panel chair Murray Elston and panel members Floyd Laughren and David McFadden. The panel will consult broadly and look at a lot of issues, including long- and short-term financial savings associated with consolidation, benefits for ratepayers, long- and short-term operational efficiencies, and potential risks. This Ontario distribution panel will report back to the Minister of Energy within a year. So we're looking at the whole system. We're not just looking at one part of the system; we're looking at very different parts. They're going to report back to the Minister of Energy. They are a very well experienced panel, and they are going to be able to point out where the efficiencies are, where the savings will be found, and where we can deliver better energy.

Don't forget, Mr. Speaker, that we as a government have tried and are continuing to try to rebuild an old system: new wires, new transmission locations and other things that were constructed almost 100 years ago. We're doing that. They're aging; either we leave them alone and let the whole system fall apart or we fix them. It's like owning a house: Either you take care of it, or you let it fall apart.

So we're doing that, and we've created a panel to deal with the most important issues. I think it's important that we listen to this panel and move forward to make sure our system works properly.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act. As we all know, it amends the Electricity Act to allow for a merger of the IESO, the Independent Electricity System Operator, and the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority.

From the outset, I feel this Bill 75 should probably meet the same fate we continue to pursue for the Ontario Power Authority: Both should be scrapped, both the bill and the OPA itself. I won't be voting for this one.

We hear comment of a \$25-million savings. That's fine, but it doesn't go nearly far enough. We really have to get on with the business of fixing that which has

driven unaffordable electricity rates. It has driven unsustainable green pricing and a constant and ever-increasing onslaught of wind towers across rural Ontario, across my riding.

Speaker, we have seen the unprecedented growth of the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, under Dalton McGuinty. I consider this a bureaucratic success story, and I say that facetiously. It was formed 17 years ago; 15 people were meant to be a transitional body created by the government to manage supply. It quickly empired.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Empired." That's a good word.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'm not sure if that's a word. I have made it a verb. It has empired to a 235-person permanent entity at this point—things are obviously going to change—where something like 87 people are on the sunshine list and make over \$100,000 a year. The CEO—now there's an example of an empire or a pyramid—makes \$570,000 a year.

1730

Over those seven years, the OPA has taken over \$370 million of taxpayers' money, expenses have risen from \$14 million a year in 2005 to well over \$76 million a year today. It's all part of the McGuinty dream, if you will, to lay the foundation of an unelected, bureaucratic, decision-making pyramid. Sit back and watch the empire grow, as it provides, in this case, more public sector jobs, while siphoning ever more from the indebted government coffers and from electricity ratepayers.

When the Ontario Power Authority, the OPA, was hatched, if you will, in 2004, the energy minister at the time told us that it would not become a "massive bureaucracy" that increases families' electricity bills. In fact, he told us it would depoliticize Ontario's energy sector. Despite Minister Duncan's promises, the "transitional," the "virtual" OPA has indeed bloated to the massive bureaucracy we have today. Despite the promises that Ontario's electricity bills would not be impacted, we all know the fact that Ontario families' bills are skyrocketing. It's clear they cannot afford Dalton McGuinty's bloated energy empire and bureaucracy, as we see in the OPA, let alone the IESO.

They certainly can't afford the FIT program. That's been mentioned in debate this afternoon. That program will continue to play a key role in driving up rates. I certainly hear that at the door. Quite honestly, people cannot afford to pay the bills.

The Feed-in Tariff program, again, brought to you by your friendly neighbourhood OPA, is rolling out the green carpet for unwanted and unsustainable wind towers that take up residence in our fields, our shorelines and our neighbourhoods, not only in my riding across Haldimand county and Norfolk county, but across much of rural Ontario. The OPA's FIT program—Mr. McGuinty's FIT program—has set up a system: We see the green energy developers are being paid unsustainable subsidies, 20-year contracts, and we all pay the bill under what I consider an ideologically driven program.

The problem we have in Ontario is too much wind and too much solar available, mostly when we don't need it

and at unrealistically high prices. There are rules that say wind and solar must get preference on the grid, which means we either have to waste cheaper green hydro-electric—the water electric power—or nuclear power, or sell it at a steep loss, and we've heard about that this afternoon.

To prevent the oversupply problem from getting worse, we have some ideas. We propose cancelling the FIT program for both large and small power generators. We would immediately halt all the new projects still in the approval queue. We would also end special deals with Samsung and ensure that any future power deals are the result of competitive contracts, not secretive, one-off, knock-off arrangements. All the existing projects that are presently connected to the grid remain in place, but we can't keep contracting for power when we don't need it and when people can't afford it and our economy cannot afford it.

While the government has recently lowered the rates for future wind and solar contracts a little bit, they're going more slowly down a path they shouldn't be going down in the first place. It's a path that does not lead to a solution to our energy woes.

Any future industrial wind or solar projects must meet a number of criteria—three tests, if you will. First of all, do we need the power? Secondly, is the price competitive? Thirdly, is the host community willing to accept the project?

As the cost of electricity climbs because of these green schemes, people continue to fight what I consider to be a conga line of industrial wind turbines that the OPA, the FIT, and Mr. McGuinty have unleashed on rural Ontario.

In my riding, so many companies have arrived. There seems to be no planning or oversight other than through their corporate boards. We have Samsung, Capital and NextEra.

Very recently, the opponents to NextEra's Summerhaven wind project in Haldimand county have been pursuing a legal challenge. Haldimand Wind Concerns and a fellow named Bill Montour, of Six Nations—this is the other Bill Montour, not the elected chief—have appealed the MOE approval for this wind project. That's one route. We also see the protests, the petitions that are endlessly read in this House, the pleas for change that are echoed from all corners of this province as the OPA's plans, Mr. McGuinty's plans, drive costs higher and impose mammoth industrial structures in farm country, cottage country.

In two years, Ontario will have the highest household power rates in North America after Prince Edward Island, a province that has a population of a little more than most of our ridings, actually. According to the reports, an average household will see the electricity cost on their hydro bill jump by something like \$72.

We hear from the Ontario Energy Board, the OEB, that prices are changing due to the replacement of coal-fired generation. How's that working out? We've had smog for the last several days in this part of North America.

Replacement of coal; natural gas, nuclear and renewable energy: all key to the OPA's energy plans. This is kind of understandable, considering the unaffordable green energy rates that McGuinty and the OPA first committed to under the Feed-in Tariff program—in some cases, 20 times the going rate. You don't have to be a mathematician to figure out that paying 80.2 cents per kilowatt hour in a five-cent-per-kilowatt hour market will continue to drive, and has already driven, sky-high electricity rates. That's when a green energy scheme comes up against economic realities.

The truth is, the OPA has helped Mr. McGuinty turn what was once the strongest manufacturing sector in the country, built on economically attractive energy rates—something we've had at least for the last 100 years—into one of the weakest sectors in the Dominion of Canada. As green-powered energy rates rise, manufacturers are looking for the exit doors, resulting, as we know, in the loss of something like 300,000 manufacturing jobs. The Auditor General commented and stated that for every one green job, we lose between two and four jobs in other sectors. Even those green jobs that the McGuinty team have crowed about—and many are here this afternoon—are also beginning to wither on the vine.

It comes as no surprise. We all understand that power is a major input cost for business. Steadily increasing that cost, therefore, leaves less money to reinvest in business, in research, in innovation to foster business. There's less money to allocate to plant and equipment, and less money for job creation.

I think most people in Ontario recognize the sucker's bet, if you will, on the subsidization of electricity producers. The writing has been on the wall for a number of years. Certainly in Europe and the United States, they've tried and they've failed with respect to some of these very uncannily similar green energy gambits.

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Again, the result: job loss and piling up of debt. We see it in Germany; we see it in Spain, in Texas. California was mentioned earlier this afternoon. These jurisdictions all have well-documented war wounds resulting from their failed green energy schemes. And yet we see the continuation, under OPA planning and programming, that will further our descent down that same road.

Even the esteemed C.D. Howe Institute has endorsed what we have been saying, something we've been saying all along, actually: Expensive energy experiments are the wrong way to go. None other than the former CEO of OPA, Jan Carr, who is now with C.D. Howe, noted that government green energy subsidies amount to \$179,000 per job per year, and that's locked in for 20 years. Carr went on to state that the McGuinty job estimates fail to take into account the many employed in construction that would have had construction jobs anyway, and again she made reference to increasing green electricity rates, the negative impact on the cost of doing business, and the impact on unemployment. That's the former CEO of OPA, Jan Carr, who very clearly recognizes the road we're down.

Even the government itself has indicated that power prices will increase by 46% by the year 2015. Again, if you look at the overall picture, it's a very, very pessimistic picture, both short term and long term.

Roger Martin, who in 2010 chaired a task force titled Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Progress, estimated the Green Energy Act and its FIT program would cost ratepayers \$32 billion over the next 15 years.

This government's own economic consultant, now a household name, Don Drummond, said in his report that "the inextricable link between electricity prices and economic performance requires us to review possible avenues to reduce long-term costs to electricity consumers." Again, the bottom line is, our power bill shouldn't be funding failed job creation and green energy subsidization programs.

This government—a bit of advice—should take steps to make sure that our power system is more efficient, is sustainable and delivers power at the lowest possible price. Consumers need more choice, and they need a system that's more competitive. That's so important, whether we're using electricity to charge a battery or to charge an electric drill or to run a welder or a grinder or to make steel or to refine metal or to heat one's home. I heat with electricity. Maybe I have a vested interest in where things have been going recently in Ontario.

So we do need a fresh approach, one that recognizes that affordable energy is fundamental. It's fundamental for our economic success. We need policies that will keep prices under control for industry, for entrepreneurs, for households, and obviously a system that's not only reliable but also sustainable.

Affordable energy has always been the cornerstone of this province's economic success over the years. Other provinces have taken the right steps to ensure a steady supply of power at fair rates, and those provinces are now well positioned to capitalize on that. Then there are provinces like Ontario where power rates are being driven by, again, expensive energy subsidies.

A fresh approach is required. We need an infusion of new ideas, of access to new markets, both to buy electricity and to sell electricity, new ways of doing things—new blood, if you will, and new money. We need new ideas and new money, new markets that any asset needs to go on to the next level. We need that kind of change. Government must get back to its proper limited role: provide strong and independent regulation, obviously; provide that oversight, the oversight I do not see with these private wind corporations; conduct long-term planning, obviously; and establish a system where the power that is provided by companies is offered on a competitive basis where the best prices and the most efficient technologies win out. Government does not need to micromanage this file. I'm concerned: Even with this legislation, I see an opportunity for just a continuation of micromanagement.

So we've heard that Bill 75 will remove the OPA's power, their duty to develop an integrated power system, and be replaced by ministerial energy plans. We've seen

this trend: more government control in the sector, more government control over the activities of the existing OPA and the OEB by a combination of directives and policy imperatives. Again, the door was open and is open for undue political influence, influence that often outweighs any factual evidence.

We've got a local situation I want to touch on with respect to Samsung and yet another deal that nobody seems to be aware of between Samsung, Six Nations and the Ontario government. The elected chief of Six Nations—this is the other Bill Montour—talks about this letter, although the government indicates they had nothing to do with this. In fact, the energy minister was quoted as saying this agreement, the Samsung-Six Nations agreement, had nothing to do with the government. Elected Chief Montour in the media said, "He indicated a letter from the Minister of Infrastructure states that the lease from the land surface will be turned over to Six Nations." This is for the electricity contract. He goes on to characterize the letter as unprecedented and indicated, "They have always maintained we have no right to that land." So now electricity policy that has intruded so much on our area has been mixed in with the land issue, the land rights crisis that is bubbling—continues to bubble—in my area. Just to wrap up, I ask this government for a copy of this letter. People in my riding have had it with being in the dark about some of these machinations.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's my pleasure to comment on the remarks made by the member from Haldimand-Norfolk and to talk a little bit about Bill 75. He spoke about some issues in his own riding, and I'm going to digress a little bit.

In my riding—I brought this to the minister's attention, and I trust that he's working on this—I have a mine opening up, and they can't get power. They've been dealing so long with Hydro One that they had to bring it to my attention. I brought it to the minister's attention, and I'm sure he's working on it. They want to start production in September, and they're still putting in the posts to see where the line is going to go.

So it's an incredibly complex situation. You have on one hand—and my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk spent a lot of time talking about it—we pay so much for power in this province, and a lot of people can't pay for the power, which is true. On the other hand, this province was built on economical power sources, and that's how the industrial engine of this province was built. What he didn't mention was that they were public power sources. That was how this province was built: on affordable public power.

What we are seeing now is that—and we don't want to get into the argument about whose government actually started it. But the Green Energy Act is the ultimate of—a decision was made at some point to switch from making the province run on industrial to making the province try to run on selling power as what made this province go;

the selling of turbines. They tried to kick-start that, and we are paying a massive price for that.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: I wish to compliment the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for his contribution on the debate on Bill 75, as he has touched on a number of issues around hydro, not only the bill which is in front of us but on the hydro issue itself.

A couple of things that I paid particular attention to was that we have to find a new approach, a new way. I think this is exactly the intent of the bill. It is out there and we are debating it today and we already hear some debates, some pros and cons. I have to say, with respect to the member, he has already announced his intention on how he's going to vote on this bill. I would hope that, as the bill moves along to public hearings and comes back, he may see it in a different way. I hope that indeed he and his colleagues will be able to support the bill.

He also mentioned the cost of hydro we have to buy and we have to sell. Again, this is the reality of the times. Some of those issues are not within our powers. The good Lord has not given us yet the knowledge how to store this extra power.

I have to say that the intent of the government was good, very noble. We are looking to increase jobs. When you increase jobs, you need new structure, new factories and new equipment, and they need extra power. So the intent is good. The reasons behind it are good.

I hope we can continue to build on that and provide Ontario with clean, good electricity for future generations and for our economy as well.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk, the Duke, because he shoots from the hip and tells it like it is and he shares facts. The Duke shared a number of thoughts: how inefficient and poorly managed the energy sector is under this Liberal government. He shared how costly the system is and that energy costs are driving hundreds of thousands of jobs out of Ontario. He shared that the Green Energy Act and the energy experiment of the Liberals have been a complete and abject failure.

One item that particularly caught my attention was the duplication. We have an IESO, the OPA, the OEB—all bureaucracies that, in essence, do the exact same thing, which is different words around them, and they've built—I think the word he used—empires out of each of these. This is on top of the Ministry of Energy and all those qualified, capable staff there.

He shared with us that there were 15 transitional jobs in the OPA when it started. This has ballooned to 235, with 87 of those earning an unbelievable one hundred—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's up to 92.

Mr. Bill Walker: Is it even higher?—\$100,000. Unbelievable that we have to have that much bureaucracy and administration. It starts to make me think that maybe

it was a precursor to the Ornge scandal that we're actually speaking about in this House every day—the layers and the layers of empires and schemes and scam that goes around and around.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not as bad as the LPO, the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Mr. Bill Walker: Exactly, Mr. Yakabuski.

The energy minister purports that this bill will cut spending by \$25 million. However, in the estimates tabled by the Minister of Finance, it suggests that there will actually be a \$5-million increase. Speaker, which one of these ministers do we trust or can we believe? I'll leave that—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Neither one of them.

Mr. Bill Walker: Correct.

This bill is tinkering, playing on the margins. It's a missed opportunity, and I will not support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before the next speaker, I'll remind the member from Renfrew that he seems to be out of his seat. If you want to make loud comments, I suggest you go back to your seat. Thank you.

The reply from the NDP, please.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I just wanted to comment on a few of the words that the member from Haldimand–Norfolk brought up. Yes, it is an expensive experiment that has come forward, in particular the Green Energy Act. Not all of the act is bad. There is room for it here in Ontario. There is room for solar. There is room for wind. The problem that we're having in a lot of our communities is that the consultation process is the difficult part. It infringes on the properties of individuals. It infringes on a community. It causes a community to divide. That's one of the biggest problems.

My friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane actually brought up another point: He doesn't have enough energy in his area. And you know what? Having 125 jobs in northern Ontario is like having maybe about 10,000 of them in southern Ontario. That's the importance of getting that project going forward. I hope that the minister was listening to my friend and the point that he brought up.

The other point that my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk brought forward is that we need to have new ideas. He's absolutely right: We do need to bring new ideas in regard to what we are going to do, how we are going to strike the right balance for the province going forward. Unfortunately, in the white paper plan that the Conservatives have brought forward are old ideas—old, failed ideas that are looking again at more privatization in the province where it's proven that it has caused more expensive things going forward. It has contributed to higher bills for all Ontarians.

On behalf of the NDP, where First Nations make the decisions as far as where they're going with the economy—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. The member from Haldimand–Norfolk has a two-minute reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Maybe just to follow up, the member from Davenport made reference to the white paper, but he also made reference to a region of Ontario that can't get electricity and has a lack of electricity in a province that has a surplus of electricity. You would think if there was any role for government, it would lie there.

The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane talked about mining. Mining requires a lot of electricity. The smelting of the product of mining requires a tremendous amount of electricity. I think of Xstrata in the Timmins area, one of the largest users of electricity probably in North America. Where did Xstrata go? They left Ontario; they could not afford the electricity in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Bill Walker: That sounds like GM.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I just heard the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound speak up again, and I thank the member for his summary of what I presented. I agree with everything that you said. This guy needs a nickname as well. But he points out in estimates that the \$25-

million savings that we hear about is reversed; it's going to be a cost of \$5 million.

The member for York West talks about a need for a new way. We heard the call for new ideas and mention of the white paper. For a start, we wish to open up both Hydro One and OPG to investment, as many in this House will know. The first step is to negotiate a partial sale to the major pension plans in the province of Ontario. These funds are the largest in Canada. They need a secure, long-term investment. Then we can follow that with a public offering, institutional and retail investors, and invest some capital in both these organizations—well-respected organizations.

Thank you, Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being two minutes to 6, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh
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