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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Wednesday 19 September 2012**

**Mercredi 19 septembre 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 19 September 2012

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 19 septembre 2012

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

**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 September 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** It's great to rise today to speak to Bill 75, but first I'd like to just say to all members of the House that everyone really cleans up quite nicely after a wet outing at the International Plowing Match yesterday, including yourself, Speaker. You clean up nicely after a muddy day yesterday. It was great to see the bipartisan support at the International Plowing Match, with some ministers helping one of our colleagues out of a bit of a swamp. So, again, it was great to see the bipartisan support at the International Plowing Match yesterday.

Again, Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to discuss Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012. This act aims to change the Electricity Act to allow for the merger of the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority.

I think that it's important to note that this piece of legislation is typical of this Liberal government's approach, because it does not get at the root of the problems in Ontario's electricity sector. Once again, we have a piece of legislation that has quite a fancy title, but really very

little substance, and it really fails to address the concerns Ontario families and Ontario businesses are facing out there.

In Ontario today, we have some very significant problems, which the government is well aware of, or we hope that they're well aware of. Ontario is drowning in debt, a huge debt. We're faced with a debt heading toward \$411 billion, and not much is being done to address this massive tsunami that's headed for Ontario taxpayers. We keep seeing our problems being ignored by this government. Small business owners, families and seniors alike are all looking for relief, and instead they are given legislation that does the complete opposite.

Since being elected back in October 2011, I've joined with my fellow PC caucus members in an effort to get this government to ensure that hydro rates become affordable. We have fought to stop further wind developments until third party health and environmental studies have been completed, and we have strived to ensure that local voices are included in the discussions regarding the further development of green energy installations. We've been advocating for this for almost a year, and a lot further back than that, Speaker. I remember talking about this when I was a candidate in the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, well before the election of 2011. But sadly, not much has changed except that more people and more communities are coming out against these green energy schemes. The people feel robbed and they feel ignored. They want to be involved in decisions that impact their local communities. Instead, they're being completely shut out.

In my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, the people have concerns. Our municipalities have concerns, and in fact Middlesex county a few weeks ago unanimously supported a moratorium on industrial wind farms immediately. The worst part is that this government doesn't want to address these concerns that these municipalities have, these families have, that small businesses and all businesses across the province have. This government completely ignores them. It is fundamentally wrong that the public hasn't been consulted. It seems that this government prefers not to consult the people that they represent. In fact, I can tell you that a number of months ago I held a town hall meeting in Strathroy, close to the Minister of Energy's riding. Actually, our ridings join; they abut each other. We sent the Minister of Energy an invitation at least a month before this town hall meeting. He wouldn't even drive 20 minutes to meet the 300 people who wanted to discuss the intrusion of these industrial wind farms in their own backyards.

The Minister of Energy expressed that he anticipated savings would result from Bill 75. You know, I just don't trust and I think many Ontario families just don't trust this government's numbers anymore. This legislation puts more power in the hands of the minister and puts the minister and his agency under much less scrutiny—both pretty obviously things that I think this minister would enjoy. They're things that the minister actually—in fact, Speaker, as you're well aware of, this minister might be the first minister in Ontario history to be found in contempt of this House. So I can see him obviously advocating for this change to have more power.

We all know that this Liberal government can't be trusted anymore. Just look at how everything has played out with regard to the Samsung deal, the Ornge scandal—and we know about the Ontario Power Authority when it comes to being less than transparent and cooperative. Of course, don't forget the king of all scandals under this government, the eHealth scandal, for which I believe the tally now is about \$2.5 billion. For example, we're still waiting to see what the costs are related to the cancellation of both the Oakville and Mississauga power plants, which some have estimated to be in the \$1-billion range. Now, I guess if we could ever see those documents, if the minister would release those documents to the public, to the members of this Legislature, we would have a clearer understanding of the seriousness and the crisis of this scandal under this Liberal McGuinty government.

We have learned from nine years of experience and the loss of billions of taxpayer dollars that the Minister of Energy is the last person who would be working within a system that requires transparency. Our party believes that the Ontario Power Authority should not be merged, but abolished. It was formed seven years ago as a 15-person transitional body, created by this government to manage Ontario's energy supplies. Today it's a whopping 235-person mega-agency, a permanent entity where 87 people earn over \$100,000 a year and the chief executive officer earns in the neighbourhood of \$600,000 a year. In just seven years it has burned through over \$375 million in expenditures, and its expenses have risen from \$14 million in 2005 to almost \$80 million today. This is just another example of more scandal and more waste inside the McGuinty Liberal government.

**0910**

Just last week, we saw another agency with another scandal on its hands. This time it was MPAC. Of course, we're very well aware of that situation. For a two-and-a-half-hour swanky conference in Toronto, when movie stars were flooding the city, this government agency cost taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. We need leadership by example, and clearly this government doesn't meet that test.

If this Liberal government understood the challenges facing Ontario's families, it would address these unaffordable expenses and it would also address unaffordable public sector salaries. Shifting bureaucrats and creating an arm's-length monster agency further highlights that

the government still doesn't recognize the severity of Ontario's debt and spending crisis. The government has claimed it will save money, but it has yet to show us how it plans to do so or how these savings will come about.

Speaker, this government is clearly out of touch. We're seeing that they're gasping for air from one day to the next, from one scandal to the next. We've seen this over the last number of years, but it's on a daily basis now. There was MPAC last week; there's this minister refusing to release documents that taxpayers clearly have a right to and deserve to see.

I said in the House only a week or two ago that the choice is clear, Speaker: It's bankruptcy or prosperity. The McGuinty Liberals are choosing the path of bankruptcy, a debt of \$411 billion, scandal and waste. On this side of the House, the Ontario PC caucus, we choose prosperity. We're going to create hundreds of thousands of jobs, and we're going to get the books back in balance in the province of Ontario.

The Liberals are more concerned with increasing the size and overall cost of government than creating jobs and growing Ontario's economy. This is not a government that cares for Ontario; this is a government that cares about preserving their rule and appointing their friends and political cronies to important and high-paying positions. Bill 75 is just another example of this. Just months ago, the Auditor General said that we lost \$1.8 billion exporting surplus power to Quebec and the United States, and by 2015, hydro bills in Ontario are going to be higher than anywhere in North America.

With that, I will end my comments, but clearly we aren't going to support another mega-agency.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I enjoyed listening to the comments from my colleague here to the immediate right, as usual. It doesn't mean the comments are right, but anyway, I agree with a lot of what he was saying.

One of the biggest steps this bill does is it actually merges some of the processes that are there, which will be beneficial to a lot of consumers across Ontario. What I was hearing throughout the many days I go through my riding or at events or even at the doorstep was that people are definitely asking for savings, and if this is going to be part of the process where we'll be able to provide them with some savings. I think that's a good step forward.

What concerns me about this particular bill is the step that is being removed out of it. That's what's concerning, and it's not always easy to understand the process that is bringing accountability and insight so that individuals can participate and partake in where those savings or where those mergers are going to take place and how that's going to go forward. We need to make sure that those processes are still there, so that individuals in my community of Algoma-Manitoulin have that opportunity to offer what their ideas might be or where they want to scrutinize the process.

You know, there's nothing wrong with listening to people's thoughts. There's nothing wrong with that, Mr.

Speaker. Actually, we should welcome that process. We should embrace that process. We shouldn't limit our communities and our individuals and our stakeholders from offering their ideas, their insight, their expertise into this particular bill. So it's a small step going forward when we're looking at merging it, but it's a big step back when we're taking out the oversight and the accountability within this process.

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, in response to the remarks given by the honourable members from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Algoma–Manitoulin, it's my pleasure to rise in this House and to contribute to the debate on Bill 75.

As the member from Algoma–Manitoulin rightly indicated in his remarks, this bill is about—part of it, in fact, is about saving the money for taxpayers. We are amalgamating two agencies, and by this amalgamation, we are going to save \$25 million for the taxpayers. Actually, Mr. Speaker, last year, we asked the government agencies to look for efficiencies and savings in their operations, and they all responded by a \$1-billion saving in their operations. This is a huge saving for the taxpayers.

This new agency, which is going to be created as a result of the amalgamation of the two existing agencies, is going to streamline the operation within our electricity system: the Ontario Power Authority and Independent Electricity System Operator. Actually, this amalgamation is in the line of what the NDP has been advocating for some time, to amalgamate all electricity system agencies and corporations. We are not going to do that, of course, but this is a right step in that direction where we are amalgamating two agencies.

The new agency, Mr. Speaker, once it is created, and if the bill is passed, is going to be responsible for market operations in the province in the electricity sector, as a distinct function from the procurement and contract-management function. It's also going to provide opportunities to increase contract efficiencies. It will also streamline the system to reduce administrative burden. That's where we are going to make savings for the taxpayers, and it's also going to create an electricity system which is more efficient.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Pardon my voice this morning.

The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, I believe, summarized exactly our position on this fruitless activity of this government. It sort of reminds me of the issue of moving the gas-fired plants from Mississauga and Oakville. A waste of money—taxpayers' money—is what I'm talking about. He made it very clear that this organization that's being amalgamated, these two organizations that are being amalgamated—one would have to wonder what the exit costs will actually be, because all of those employees in the OPA and the IESO will be severed. They'll receive severance pay and be hired back

the next day if this new organization—which has another acronym; I think it's the OESO.

The real issue here is that our position, and Tim Hudak's in the last election—we recognized that the OPA was a transition agency and, as such, really should have been wound up. Now what they're doing is creating another organization, another bureaucracy and a needless amount of costs. I think the point he made summarized very well. He said Ontario now has the highest electricity costs in Ontario, but also in Canada and in North America. And who is that going to affect most? The hard-working people of Ontario, people on fixed incomes. They're being completely euchred.

As far as I'm concerned, this is another kind of a shell game by this minister and by this government, and it's already an organization that—the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex mentioned that they've burned through almost a half a billion dollars, including all the salaries and benefits. It's shameful. That's why Ontario's in such a mess.

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

The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex has two minutes to respond.

**0920**

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to thank the honourable member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the member from Richmond Hill and also my colleague the right honourable member from Durham.

As I said, this government is more concerned and their priorities are to create mega-agencies, more government, more people working for the Dalton McGuinty Liberals. In fact, we just have to look back to the August job numbers. I think that in itself signals where this government is taking Ontario, and that's down the path toward bankruptcy, toward that \$411-billion debt.

In August, 57,000 jobs were lost in the private and self-employed sectors, yet they hired 33,200 more people to work for the government here in Ontario. Clearly, that's a path that's unsustainable in the economic times that we live in. We need smaller government, not larger government.

Another proof point on that is that when this Premier came to power in 2003, 20,000 people working for his government earned \$100,000 or more. This year, that number is hitting 80,000 people earning \$100,000 or more. That's why we have a \$16-billion deficit and a debt headed toward \$411 billion.

Speaker, we're not going to support Bill 75. This government clearly is hell-bent on taking Ontario down the wrong path, wasting billions of dollars on cancelled power plants, Ornge, eHealth, MPAC, and all their other agencies. The PC Party will stand up for taxpayers.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak to this bill, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act. As a very rough overview, this bill will amalgamate the Ontario Power Authority

and the Independent Electricity System Operator. That is certainly something I favour. In fact, last year we in the NDP campaigned on merging all but one of the various bodies involved with the production and delivery of our electricity here in Ontario. We will all remember that it was Mike Harris who dismantled Ontario Hydro 12 years ago. Breaking it up and privatizing some of it, he created huge, bloated bureaucracies. This approach has been continued by the Liberal government, and the results for stakeholders have been disastrous.

At the end of the day, what counts to the people in my riding of Hamilton Mountain, along with every other Ontarian, is the amount that they have to pay on their hydro bills; it's as simple as that. Those are the stakeholders who every month or two see the bottom line that they have to pay. That's what matters to them, and that's what tells them that this has been disastrous. As I said, we would prefer to see some more mergers, but these two are a small step in the right direction. The government estimates to save around \$25 million. I guess time will tell to see how true that estimate will be.

So, Mr. Speaker, if that's all that the bill was about, we might have few issues with it, other than the fact that it could be merging more of our electricity partners. Unfortunately, that isn't all that this bill is about. Those on the other side of this Legislature aren't saying too much about the other aspects—aspects that are a great cause of concern over here, and should be a great concern to the public.

This act aims to make one huge dent in the ability of the public, of stakeholders, to scrutinize the government's plan with respect to energy. It removes the Ontario Power Authority's power and duty to develop an integrated power system plan 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. Instead, we have ministerial energy plans, and our ability to scrutinize, question and ask for justifications of those plans will be seriously curtailed. Although the minister must consult with the Ontario Energy Board, the proposed process is far removed from the current requirement of an independent review of the IPSP by the Ontario Energy Board.

Under the current process, stakeholders can test in a proceeding before the energy board the government's plan and, importantly for the public, the effect those plans have on our hydro rates. It provides an opportunity to question the assumptions of cost-effectiveness of a long-term energy plan and major procurement in a formal way in front of the energy board. That scrutiny will be lost with this bill, and that can only be bad for the people of Ontario.

As I mentioned, under the bill, the minister must consult with the Ontario Energy Board. It doesn't say that the consultation should be public. It doesn't say anything about public hearings. It deprives everyone who worries about the economic impact or about the environmental impact of our electricity system of the ability to question the minister in public hearings and to test the evidence of the minister and the government.

This is an important part of this bill, and it is the part that the government doesn't want to talk about. They don't want to talk about how they are changing the way the energy planning is done, about how they are severely limiting the way the people of Ontario can review, scrutinize and question the planning. The act leaves almost everything up to the discretion of the minister, and our very recent history has shown us that this just isn't good enough.

It's interesting that this comes from the same minister who refused to provide information and numbers around the decision of cancelling the Mississauga power plant—you know, "that" plant, a plant that had been in the works for years, ditched at the last minute to save a few Liberal seats. Members will remember that the opposition put forward a motion at the estimates committee to get the minister to provide documents in relation to the cancellation of the Mississauga plant. When they didn't get them, the committee passed a motion asking the Speaker to find the Minister of Energy in contempt. Just last week, the Speaker agreed and gave the House leaders until Monday to resolve this issue. If they can't do it, he will step in, and we'll see how that unfolds.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can't help but wonder: When even a committee of this Legislature has such difficulty getting information on important matters from the Minister of Energy, I strongly question the advisability of leaving things to that minister's discretion. If we were to give the minister even more protection against scrutiny, as this act does, how much worse will it get? This is one example that this isn't just about that particular minister; it's about how good government policy is developed.

Give stakeholders an opportunity to question and test what's being put forward. Yes, it will mean some difficult questions; yes, it will require some homework on the part of the government, but the end result is better policy.

A few speakers have mentioned the so-called smart meters. There's another example of policy that could have used a bit of scrutiny, a bit of number crunching, a few tests of assumptions before moving forward. We've spent somewhere in the range of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion across Ontario on smart meters. We've heard many stories that say that maybe they were not so smart. There has been plenty to complain about. According to documents from the consultants involved, it was predicted that the smart meters would likely reduce the amount of power consumed by houses by just 1%. Given that houses account for about 30% of electricity use, that means we would save one third of 1% in the usage at a cost of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion. With a bit more scrutiny and a few more questions being asked, it's hard to imagine that we couldn't have found a better way to spend \$2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, we don't need less scrutiny; we need more scrutiny. The cost of electricity in this province is higher than anywhere else in Canada, and that cost is evident to everyone every time they open their hydro bill. This Liberal government is pushing ahead with plans to invest in nuclear energy at a huge expense to the province. We've been in this nuclear energy game for, what,

50 years? Every time an investment is made, the budget projections have been wildly short of the mark. That pattern is so predictable. We know before we even start that the costs will be overrun. Even before the overruns, we are talking about huge amounts of money, tens of billions of dollars. Do we really want to be going into this sort of long-term planning with less scrutiny? Given the history of these projects, do we really think that's a wise move? I think not.

**0930**

When the minister was asked about the cost of refurbishing Darlington, the response was that the ultimate cost was unknown. This government is making major decisions to invest in our long-term energy strategy, and they don't know the costs. With this sort of approach—when the best option is the one you like the best, with no clear indication of why you like it—is it any wonder that our bills are going up and up? Is it any wonder that the public are up in arms about what they have to pay?

When questions have been put before the minister relating to investment in nuclear power, or to the Mississauga power plant, he has either been unwilling or unable to answer them. I don't know which is better. Either way, it's not good enough.

Now he wants legislation to allow him to avoid the tough questions in a public forum, legislation that allows him to duck scrutiny. Well, Mr. Speaker, that isn't good enough either. Should the bill make it to committee, it needs to be amended to correct this wrong-headed approach. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's again a pleasure to rise in this House and contribute to the debate on Bill 75.

In response to the honourable member from Hamilton Mountain, I would like just to add that she rightly touched a little bit on the fact that our electricity system under the PC government was in a very, very untidy situation. When we came to office in 2003, we overhauled the electricity system. For example, we built and maintained about 5,000 kilometres of power lines, which is the distance from Toronto to Vancouver. It's a huge, long distance of power lines which we have repaired, maintained and rebuilt.

We also added 10,000 megawatts of new generating capacity to our system. This is a significant increase in our generation capacity. In the past, again before 2003, we imported lots of electricity from the US. Actually, the government of the day established diesel generators and they manufactured and produced electricity for the price of \$2.54, and they lost over \$1 billion of the taxpayers' money just on that very point.

Today in our province of Ontario we have 5.2 million customers for our electricity service, and one fifth of these are 60 major industrial users, which are our customers. Our electricity comes from nuclear sources. Fifty per cent of our electricity comes from three nuclear sites—Darlington, Bruce and Pickering—and these used to be the best nuclear reactors in the world. They were

among the top 10 in the world, and they still are the best performers amongst more than 440 nuclear power stations around the world.

Our hydro power, Mr. Speaker—

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:**—we have 200 megawatts—

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Most of us were in Roseville yesterday for the International Plowing Match, and what a great plowing match it will be. Unfortunately, there are some things that we can't control and one is the weather. We all had fun getting stuck in places and pushing people out and giving people rides and whatever else.

But the weather's something we can't control. It's something like this government's energy policy: They can't control it. You'd almost think it's been raining on this energy policy for years. They are stuck. They have come up with ideas that don't work.

It was mentioned before that the bureaucracies are the biggest growth industry that this government has had in the province of Ontario for the last nine years. It worries me that a bill like this is just going to—it's kind of smoke and mirrors, and it's not going to accomplish anything.

We're very fortunate to live in this province. As we saw in the plowing match yesterday, all the exhibitors were in a good mood, even though the weather wasn't, because the economics in agriculture are having a bit of an upturn right now. There are some issues with droughts and everything else. But this energy policy that this government has conducted for the last nine years has been a bit of a drought too. It has just cost us way too much money.

I think this bill here is another bill to slow down some processes with public input and with public access to what's really going on in this government.

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

**M. Michael Mantha:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Ça me ferait plaisir de tout le temps me lever en suivi des commentaires de ma collègue de Hamilton Mountain. Il y a beaucoup de points qu'elle nous a apportés à la Chambre aujourd'hui qu'on a entendus à travers de son discours, qui sont des points positifs et précis. J'aimerais toucher sur un peu de ces points.

Un des points qu'elle a faits c'est que la fusion essentielle de certains des départements et des niveaux va apporter un avantage aux résidents de l'Ontario. C'est certain; c'est un fait. On regarde à comment on peut toujours apporter des frais de récupération à nos gens, et puis c'est la nécessité de pourquoi on est ici.

Elle a aussi touché à où est-ce que ce problème-ci a commencé. Encore, je suis d'accord avec le commentaire qu'elle a fait. Où est-ce que ça a commencé? Ça a commencé avec le gouvernement conservateur pendant les journées de M. Harris. Et puis ça a été continué et, je dirais, jusqu'à un point, encouragé par le gouvernement présent libéral.

Le problème qu'on a avec cette pièce de législation, c'est là où ça ôte le processus où les gens des communautés et puis les gens qui ont un intérêt dans ce sujet peuvent porter question au processus. Comment est-ce qu'on peut poser la question pour faire certain qu'on s'en va dans la bonne direction? C'est vraiment le public et les gens qu'on a dans nos communautés qui peuvent poser ces questions-là. Peu importe si ce sont des questions difficiles à répondre. Il faut qu'on continue à les poser, ces questions-là, pour faire certain qu'on procède d'une bonne façon équitable qui sûrement va sauver de l'argent aux gens de l'Ontario. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Merci. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, this is a very simple bill. It's all about consolidation of bureaucracies. I am frankly amazed that the Progressive Conservatives want to continue to build government bureaucracy; this doesn't make any sense.

Let's look at a few examples where exactly this type of measure has taken place already: the merger of GO Transit and Metrolinx, two bureaucracies into one; another merger, Infrastructure Ontario and the Ontario Realty Corp., two bureaucracies into one.

What this bill proposes is very simple: It is the merger of the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator, two bureaucracies into one, thus providing for efficiency and savings in procurement and market operations, allowing both organizations to align contracts, to streamline the system, to reduce the burden on local utilities and, mostly, to save ratepayers money.

What a lot of people conveniently forget is that, over the nine years in which our government has served, the number of people working in the Ontario public service has trended down continuously. There are fewer people working in the Ontario public service now than there were nine years ago, and this particular bill will continue that. For example, Ontario is now completely out of the business of tax collection. We no longer collect taxes in this province.

What we're going to do with this bill, should it pass, is take two organizations that both deal in the planning of Ontario's electricity system and merge them. They should be merged. They do much of the same work, or they do complementary work. The two organizations serve the same consumer, and it would make a lot more sense if two organizations that serve the same consumer became the same organization and operated under the same roof.

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

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the members from Richmond Hill, Perth–Wellington, Algoma–Manitoulin and Mississauga–Streetsville.

As I said in my previous speech, this is a good thing. The merger is something that we campaigned on, that we agree with, to cut back on the administration costs, because we definitely know that we have way too many administration costs throughout our public services.

**0940**

The problem that we have over here and that needs to be amended, if and when it gets to committee, is public consultation. We need to make sure that there's accountability. We need to make sure that the minister has to take on that public consultation, that the residents of Ontario are included and informed about the process. That's the biggest thing. I mean, we know that merging them is going to be better at the end of the day for the ratepayers, because I know the ratepayers in my city, in my riding and I'm pretty sure across this whole province can't afford the hydro bills any longer. Every time they open that bill, it's a head drop. "Oh, gosh. How am I going to pull this one off?"—maybe not for everybody, but everybody struggles because, no matter what, that extra cost is coming out of something else. Whether it be their play money or whether it be their food money, that money has to come from somewhere.

That's the biggest issue. We need to make sure that people can afford their hydro bills. We're the only province in the entire country with rates at the price that we have. Why is that? Why is it that that happens quite often when we're standing here, in this House, speaking about different issues that go back onto the people of Ontario? We pay the highest rates, whether it be hydro, whether it be insurance. No matter what happens, we seem to always be the ones paying the highest. I think there's something wrong with that.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 75 this morning. Let me first of all begin by saying I understand that people in the province want to see the government and opposition working together. I understand that was the case yesterday at the plowing match when the member from Whitby–Oshawa, a member of the opposition, happened to be stuck in the parking lot trying to leave the plowing match. I happened to see a picture on Facebook of the government doing some good work, finally. They were behind, in the mud, helping to push the member from Whitby–Oshawa out. I did confirm this with the Minister of Health—although she did say that the opposition are just spinning their wheels. But I'm pleased to see the members doing some good work around here finally.

Now back to Bill 75, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 75. It's 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. Essentially, this bill is going to take two agencies, the IESO and the Ontario Power Authority, and create a new agency, the OESO. I think the government feels that this is going to save some money. They claim it's going to save some \$25 million—although I would wonder if, when they do this, there's going to be severance packages involved and what the cost of those might be. Perhaps they can tell us what their plan is for that. We know that when the HST was being brought in, I believe the opposition brought up the stories



about how the tax collectors who were working for the Ontario government and then switching to work for the federal government, without losing any work at all, received a severance package—I believe it was \$50,000 on average per worker—when in fact they didn't miss a day's work and continued to work and just switched offices. Hopefully, that's not going to be the case here.

Certainly, \$25 million is a lot of money, but in light of the money that's being spent on the energy sector—wasted, I would say, in the energy sector—it isn't really that much. I mean, you look at some of the money that's been spent by the government, most recently on the seat-saver plan, the moving or closing of the Mississauga power plant. We know that about \$190 million so far, approximately, has been disclosed for the cost of that move. Then the Oakville plant, of course, is a matter that's kind of before the House right now as the Minister of Energy, despite hours and hours at the estimates committee, has refused to disclose just how much that decision will have cost taxpayers.

In the opposition, our approach to the Ontario Power Authority has not been one to amalgamate it with and create some other new agency. We've said, let's do away with it; let's save all of the money involved with the Ontario Power Authority. That was our position in the last election, in the 2011 election. We say, let's not make it into some other alphabet soup; let's do away with it altogether.

When it started out, it was supposed to be a transitional agency. It was originally 15 people and now it's 235 people, with 87 who are making more than \$100,000 a year. The CEO makes some \$570,000 a year. Over \$300 million has been spent on it in total since it was created by the McGuinty government in 2005, so they've spent an awful lot of money on this agency. We say, let's do away with the whole thing.

It is one small factor in driving up electricity prices in the province of Ontario. There are many others, but the creation of this new bureaucracy is one factor in driving up electricity prices. That is probably the thing, in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, that I hear about on almost a daily basis: someone emailing somebody, calling somebody, dropping in at one of my constituency offices with some other version of concern for higher electricity prices. I have a phone call to make to a business in the Dwight area that is concerned about having security deposits and what it means for the cash flow of their business, and why is this necessary? But more often than not, it's just average people who are either mad about how much their electricity bill has gone up or concerned about their ability to pay their electricity bill.

For example, this is the most recent email I received, and I won't reveal the name, even though it starts out with "My name is.... I am a single mother of two school-age boys and I live in Bracebridge, Ontario. I am very concerned about my hydro bill. During the winter months, I have a higher hydro bill because I have to heat my house electrically." It goes on and on with details, but it concludes: "I am making every effort to reduce my hy-

dro bills, but with [the] security deposits they require and rising bills, it just seems to be getting more expensive." I would say to that writer that it doesn't seem to be getting more expensive; it is getting much more expensive.

Some of the contributing factors to that expense are, as mentioned, the decisions to cancel plants that were half-way through being built, like Mississauga, at \$190 million, and Oakville—who knows, but probably a lot more than that.

The government's Green Energy Act has added significant costs to the electricity system. This \$7-billion Samsung deal—of which, once again, we don't know a lot of the details—is definitely driving up costs. The Green Energy Act, with its feed-in tariff programs, where you're paying very much higher prices, higher-than-market prices, for solar power, for wind power, is very much driving up electricity prices. The Auditor General, in his report, suggests that 60% of the cost of a 46% increase in hydro bills over the next five years is going to be because of the Green Energy Act.

The other really negative effect of this environment of higher electricity prices—not just the effect on the average person trying to pay their electricity bill—is on business and jobs in this province. I'm the northern critic. In northern Ontario, there are huge hydro users in the resource sector, in mining, in forestry and pulp mills.

The most recent example of the negative effects of higher energy prices on jobs in northern Ontario is the Xstrata copper smelter in Timmins, Ontario. I was on the finance and economic affairs committee, touring Timmins and around northern Ontario. The mayor of Timmins, Tom Laughren, came to the committee, and his main point was to emphasize what it means for a community and the tax base to lose 700 jobs, and the effect on the city of Timmins to lose those 700 jobs. You might ask, where did those 700 jobs go? Well, the 700 jobs went across the border to Quebec, where they have cheaper energy prices.

#### 0950

I can see I'm running out of time and I would just go back to Bill 75. I note that our critic, Mr. Fedeli, the member for Nipissing, in his comments said that this bill would enhance the "culture of secrecy" that this government is famous for. I think that's been borne out by the failure to disclose the Oakville plant information.

In the last minute I have, I would say simply that what the opposition would like to see is not just the amalgamation and the creation of one new bureaucracy, but a review of all the agencies, boards and commissions of government. There's some 630, and we need to review those; we need to have government that we can afford. We do need to reduce the size and cost of government. The government currently is, again this year, on line for a \$15-billion deficit. Their own adviser said that if they don't change their ways they are heading for a \$30-billion deficit by 2017. They've already doubled the debt in the province; they're spending \$1.9 million an hour more than they are bringing in in revenue. Action needs to be taken. This is one very, very small part of it that may not

accomplish anything. We need a much more comprehensive review.

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

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** This legislation is again another half measure. In reviewing this legislation, it really made me wonder, what does the government have against doing something properly? I really believe that what we have right now is a rare opportunity with a minority government to put all the ideas together on all sides of the House and come up with something that will really benefit people living in Ontario. We can take these best ideas and we can come up with something that's solid—some solid, concrete legislation that will achieve its aims.

This legislation is really akin to a deck of cards: One puff and it just doesn't stand up. So it makes me wonder, why would the government do this if it's not going to do it properly and when the majority of the people in this House don't actually seem to support it? I've been listening to what people have been saying, and it just doesn't sound like the legislation goes far enough in a number of regards.

I respectfully suggest to the government that if they really need to, they could use the minority government as an excuse. They can still puff up their chest and maintain their partisan superiority, because if you listen to them, the Liberals are superior to the other two parties. But the people in Ontario don't care about the political grandstanding. When they open up their bills each and every month, they don't care. What they do care about is they care about their hydro bills.

What we could do—I think there are two considerations. There's the financial ramifications of doing this, and I respectfully suggest we're talking about merging two different bureaucracies, so let's take that one step further: Let's merge all seven bureaucracies. We can save a lot of money. As I mentioned last week, from merging those seven bureaucracies, we can save \$14 million in executive salaries alone. That's not talking about the people who are working on the ground; that's just the executives. The other thing: Let's tighten up the accountability. There are plenty of recent examples where we need to make sure that people have a voice, that we know what's going on. It's a sad day when even the people in this Legislature can't get the answers we seek.

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Again, it's my pleasure to rise in this House and to speak to Bill 75 in response to my honourable colleagues from the other side of the aisle, the members from Parry Sound and Kenora–Rainy River.

I was talking about the work we did in the past nine years, since we came to office, to overhaul our electricity system. I'm just going to touch on one side of the work that we did that's in relation to conservation and green energy, as the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka referred to the Green Energy Act. In fact, the other members from the other side of the aisle voted against that bill, the Green Energy Act bill. But in terms of con-

servation, this is one of the areas that our government was very keen on.

Since 2005, we have saved 1,700 megawatts of power in terms of conservation. This is equivalent to removing half a million homes from the grid. It's a huge achievement, Mr. Speaker, and we have a plan until the year 2030, which is about 18 years from now, to save over 7,000 megawatts of electricity. This will be the equivalent of taking 2.4 million homes off the grid and saving an enormous amount of funds and money for the taxpayers.

Since we brought in the Green Energy Act, we asked the OPA and also the local distribution companies to come up with plans for saving up to—over, actually—1,300 megawatts of peak demand. They have come up with 20 initiatives in order to save electricity in our system, and they have been very successful. These savings, in terms of conservation of power, Mr. Speaker, are saving \$2.4 billion for the ratepayers.

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

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to stand today and comment on the very astute messaging that our esteemed colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka shared with us this morning around this absolutely ridiculous bill that is actually, at the end of the day, going to do nothing to address the very real issue that we have across Ontario.

We continue to have companies that are choosing to relocate outside of Ontario, as my colleague mentioned in his comments, and it absolutely is a drain on our economy. I just don't know when our current government is going to wake up and smell the proverbial roses. Saving 50 megawatts here or saving electricity over there is not doing what we're hearing from small business and manufacturing throughout this province.

I get contacted every week about the escalating costs of electricity and that Ontario, as we know it today, has become unaffordable, so we need to take bold steps. We need to have a government and leadership that shows some—can I say “guts”?—nerve to do the right things. I wish that our government of today would listen to the ideas that the PC Party is putting forward.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka is spot-on when he says we have to get rid of redundancy. People are asking me to give an example, and I will share with you, Speaker, that one of the first things a PC government would do under the leadership of Premier Tim Hudak is actually get rid of the OPA. It's nothing but an extra layer of bureaucracy that, as has been mentioned earlier this morning, ladens this province with extraordinarily high salaries that we can't afford, nor are they realistic in today's climate. We cannot support Bill 75.

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

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, it's always interesting to come here and listen to the early morning debates. Let me just say a couple of things. Number one, there isn't one member in this House, on any side, who doesn't

want to retain jobs in the province of Ontario. That's number one. Number two, I would like to get a list from either the Conservatives or the New Democrats as to how many companies have left this province because of electricity rates. That's what we're talking about here: because of electricity rates. Let's just get a list of that. I don't think there are any. Companies may leave for a whole variety of different—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I think the member from Huron–Bruce should not talk when I'm standing.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I know. I was—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** You're still talking. And I'd suggest to turn it down.

Stop the clock for a second.

I think we should tone it down a bit. I can't hear the Attorney General. Okay? You might not like what he says and he might not like what he hears, but I'd like to hear both of them, and I can't, so keep it down. Thank you.

Attorney General.

1000

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for your great indulgence that you always show in this House on such a consistent basis.

Let's deal with another fallacy: that the cost of renewable energy has spiked our electricity bills. The reality is that renewable energy only contributes between about 4% to 5% of the total electricity supply in this province etc. Let's also not forget that what we're asking those proponents that come up with renewable energy projects is to come up with the capital money that's required for the solar installations, that's required for the wind turbine installations, that otherwise would have had to be paid by the OPA, which is basically the taxpayers and the rate-payers of this province.

Renewable energy is a good thing. It's good for the environment and it's good for the customer and consumer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has two minutes.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the member from Kenora–Rainy River, who talked about this Bill 75 being a half measure; the member from Richmond Hill, who came up with amazing facts to do with the Green Energy Act—I think we need one of those fact-checking systems to go over some of his comments; the member from Huron–Bruce, who talked about bold steps the opposition is taking; and the Attorney General, who wanted examples of how high energy costs have lost businesses in Ontario. Certainly, high energy costs were a factor with the 700 jobs at Xstrata Copper in Timmins that I did give as an example. He was talking about the supply of the Green Energy Act, and talking about 2% to 4%. Well, that's true. It's a 2% to 4% supply, but the Auditor General forecasts that that will mean 60% of the cost of a 46% increase in the next five years will be because of the Green Energy Act.

Mr. Speaker, I say we should all work together, as was demonstrated at the plowing match yesterday. The government could work together with us again—as they did in supporting the member for Whitby–Oshawa to get out of the mud yesterday—when the member from Whitby–Oshawa will have a private member's bill being debated this Thursday to create a select committee to develop a comprehensive development services strategy for Ontarians. I ask the government members to have a careful look at that select committee so that this Thursday, we can all work together to pass that private member's bill.

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

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** It's my pleasure to stand on behalf of the people of Davenport this morning and join the discussion on Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act. As we've now reached day 8 of discussion on this act, I'm sure all members are now very familiar with the positive aspects and some of the noteworthy shortcomings within this act.

Let me start off by saying that I support the idea of merging the two corporations, the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator, to form the Ontario Electricity System Operator. Our party has advocated for the consolidation of Ontario's fragmented hydro agency system to reduce waste and duplication, the costs of which we all know are passed on to Ontarians and contribute to people in our province paying some of the highest rates in Canada. So yes, we believe that the provincial government's intention to reduce waste and eliminate duplication by merging the two agencies is a small but positive start towards consolidating and streamlining our hydro agency system.

While the members of the government are very willing to log this very modest decrease in duplication and the \$25 million in savings, they have not been willing to discuss the significant changes to energy planning and procurement this bill will enact and the implications these changes have for government accountability and oversight.

In the province today, government consultation and oversight are in scarce supply. We see this with the power plant deals in Oakville and Mississauga and the hundreds of millions of dollars they will cost taxpayers. We see it in the way that a lack of community consultation and buy-in has created significant hurdles in the Green Energy Act and the way that it's divided our rural communities. Given the lessons being learned today, I'm surprised that the government is presenting this bill with glaring omissions in oversight and the elimination of independent energy planning and review.

As it currently stands, the Ontario Power Authority is mandated to create an integrated power system plan that provides a long-term plan for our energy needs and usage, how we will produce this energy and what supply mix we will use. Ministry directives and regulations currently determine what this plan should look like and how it should be conceived.

Current regulations state that in crafting the integrated power system plan, the Ontario Power Authority is to

consult “with consumers, distributors, generators, transmitters and other persons who have an interest in the electricity industry, in order to ensure that their priorities and views are considered in the development of the plan.”

The Ontario Power Authority is also “to ensure that safety, environmental protection and environmental sustainability are considered in developing this plan.” The Ontario Energy Board then has the power and duty to review the Ontario Power Authority’s integrated power system plan for economic prudence, cost effectiveness and regulatory compliance, including the regulations I just mentioned, consulting with stakeholders and developing plans that take into account environmental and safety factors.

These regulations provide important guidelines to the planning and review process. They broaden the scope of planning considerations, and they ensure that the public and other stakeholders can be involved in the planning process from the beginning. They also ensure that the public can participate in an independent review of our energy plans.

This is not to say that the integrated power system plan regulations have always been followed or that these regulations are ideal. Currently, environmental sustainability only has to be “considered” by the Ontario Power Authority in developing an integrated power system plan, which is a very far cry from a requirement for environmental protections or sustainability being reflected or integrated within the plan. And this is an even further cry from the full environmental assessment for integrated power system plans originally committed to and then renege upon by this government.

Understanding these regulations is important for us to envision the type of changes Bill 75 will create, and for me and my colleagues, the changes Bill 75 will create raise a number of alarms. Under the proposed bill, the integrated power system plan would be replaced with energy plans created by the minister, not the newly formed Ontario Electricity System Operator. The only legislated requirement for consultation on these plans would be between the minister and the Ontario Energy Board, wherein the board is consulted on “the impact of the implementation of the energy plan on a consumer’s electricity bill and on methods of managing the impact.”

In Bill 75, there’s no mention of consultation with stakeholders in creating this energy plan, and we’ve lost any mention of creating a plan with safety or environmental sustainability in mind. Once the plan is completed, the minister refers the plan to the Ontario Energy Board for review of the estimated capital costs in the plan. The minister can also direct the board to review any other parts of the energy plan in the referral and “impose conditions as the minister considers appropriate.”

This is not an independent review. Essentially, the minister determines what the scope of this review will be, what questions will be asked and what will be answered. It seems highly unlikely that the board will be reviewing the stakeholder consultation or environmental consider-

ations in the creation of energy plans, because the planning process no longer mandates this inclusion. The new arrangement will deprive stakeholders of the ability to test, in a proceeding before the Ontario Energy Board, the government’s energy and procurement plans and the consequent effect of those plans on rates.

This should go without saying, but it seems that my colleagues and I are forced to make this case again and again this year: Ontarians deserve more accountability and more transparency from their government, not less. Why is the government setting the conditions for our long-term provincial energy plans to be created and reviewed in a bubble, away from the public, away from stakeholders and away from oversight? This is a dangerous situation, one we cannot support and one that we absolutely should and can avoid. I understand and appreciate that the government is trying to cut costs and waste in a sector that desperately needs restructuring and consolidation. We absolutely must bring coherence back into hydro planning, and the merger of these two corporations is a small but positive start.

The Harris-era experiment to privatize and deregulate Ontario’s electricity sector was a failure, with consequences we are still dealing with now. But in efforts to consolidate, let us not confuse bureaucratic waste with oversight mechanisms that are necessary to ensure accountability: public involvement, and simply smarter planning.

While members of the government have patted themselves on the back for small savings, I hope that they will look at the bill in its entirety and finally speak to the larger issues within the bill. Why have consultation with stakeholders and environmental considerations been removed from the planning and review process? What is the justification for not keeping the integrated power system plan within the new Ontario Electricity System Operator and turning it instead into a ministerial energy plan?

Are members of the government truly convinced that by limiting the scope of energy planning and independent review, by excluding public consultation and environmental considerations—do they honestly believe that this will result in smarter, more efficient energy policies? I can answer the last question for you, Speaker: It will not. Good policy will save us millions and it will help us avoid disasters that have plagued our energy sector.

I hope a member of the government will take time in the questions-and-comments period following to answer these questions and speak to these aspects of the bill.

Speaker, I’m going to end there in a second, but I’m going to take this moment to have the great pleasure to welcome the family and friends of Catherine Fife into the Legislature. We’re looking forward to Catherine joining us soon. Nice to see you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Could the member from Renfrew take his seat? The member from Renfrew, take your seat, please.

This House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

*The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.*

INTRODUCTION OF  
MEMBERS FOR VAUGHAN AND  
KITCHENER–WATERLOO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has received from the Chief Electoral Officer and laid upon the table certificates of the by-elections in the electoral districts of Vaughan and Kitchener–Waterloo.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** I have received a letter addressed as follows:

“Mrs. Deborah Deller

“Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

“Dear Mrs. Deller:

“A writ of election dated the 8th day of August, 2012, was issued by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario, and was addressed to Alfonso Ruggero, returning officer for the electoral district of Vaughan, for the election of a member to represent the said electoral district of Vaughan in the Legislative Assembly of this province in the room of Greg Sorbara who, since his election as representative of the said electoral district of Vaughan, has resigned his seat. This is to certify that, a poll having been granted and held in Vaughan on the 6th day of September, 2012, Steven Del Duca has been returned as duly elected as appears by the return of the said writ of election dated the 14th day of September, 2012, which is now lodged of record in my office.

“Yours sincerely

“Greg Essensa

“Chief Electoral Officer

“Toronto, September 17, 2012.”

I have a second letter addressed to

“Mrs. Deborah Deller

“Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

“Dear Mrs. Deller:

“A writ of election dated the 8th day of August, 2012, was issued by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario, and was addressed to Richard Findlay, returning officer for the electoral district of Kitchener–Waterloo, for the election of a member to represent the said electoral district of Kitchener–Waterloo in the Legislative Assembly of this province in the room of Elizabeth Witmer who, since her election as representative of the said electoral district of Kitchener–Waterloo, has resigned her seat. This is to certify that, a poll having been granted and held in Kitchener–Waterloo on the 6th day of September, 2012, Catherine Fife has been returned as duly elected as appears by the return of the said writ of election dated the 14th day of September, 2012, which is now lodged of record in my office.

“Yours sincerely

“Greg Essensa

“Chief Electoral Officer

“Toronto, September 17, 2012.”

*Mr. Del Duca was escorted into the House by Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Milloy.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I have the honour to present to you and to the House Steven Del Duca, member-elect for the electoral district of Vaughan, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims the right to take his seat.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let the honourable member take his seat.

*Ms. Fife was escorted into the House by Ms. Horwath and Mr. Bisson.*

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, I have the honour to present to you and to the House Catherine Fife, the member-elect for the electoral district of Kitchener–Waterloo, who has taken the oath and signed the roll and now claims her right to take her seat.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let the honourable member take her seat.

ANNUAL REPORT,  
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER  
OF ONTARIO

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that I have laid today upon the table the 2011-12 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** I'm delighted to introduce a few family and friends that I have with me here today on this special day: my wife, Utilia Amaral; my daughters, Talia and Grace; my parents, Ben and Margaret Del Duca; my siblings, Mark and Michael; and my sisters-in-law, Nicole and Amanda; and lots of other family and friends. Thank you everyone for being here today.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to welcome and introduce members of my family: my husband, Dale; kids, Aidan and Claire; my nephew Leo Shrimpton; and family and friends from across the province.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to introduce a couple of my constituents in the members' east gallery today: George and Emma Barron from Pembroke, here today for the first Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Day at Queen's Park. George suffers from IPF and will be participating in the reception this evening to raise awareness of the disease to MPPs. Welcome, George and Emma.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to welcome George Habib, the CEO of the Ontario Lung Association, and Peter Glazier, the director of development of the Ontario Lung Association. They are here with a delegation to raise awareness about idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

**1040**

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's my pleasure to welcome and introduce today to Queen's Park a resident of my riding, Jackie Bowick from Smith's Falls. Jackie suffers from

IPF and is here today to bring awareness of IPF to members of the Legislature.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise today to welcome a constituent of mine to the Legislature. Robert Alexander-Carew is here today on behalf of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation to help raise awareness amongst all members. Please welcome him to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome a few of the folks from back home who attended the swearing-in ceremony this morning for the newest member: Ian McLean of the KW chamber of commerce, and Georgia Bolger, as well as Margaret Johnson and Lindi Fabi from the Waterloo region school board, Dianne Freeman from the city of Waterloo, and of course our journalist, Liz Monteiro from the KW Record. You look great up there, and I hope you continue to participate at Queen's Park.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to acknowledge in the House today Grahame Rivers, who is my press secretary. It's his last day here at Queen's Park. He has brought his son Jericho to see what he has done here at Queen's Park.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I just want to introduce a constituent of mine from Thorndale. Rachel Ross is here visiting us today.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to welcome Robert and Heather Davidson from my riding, the riding of Markham-Unionville. Robert is the founder and president of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It's a pleasure for me to welcome Ruth Wright and her husband, Don, members of the Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis—or IPF—Awareness Day. They join us from Sarnia-Lambton today.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome the family of Ajax-Pickering's newest page, Katherine Parker, here today. Her Aunt Joyce and Uncle Chris are here. They are joining us in the Legislature to celebrate their niece, Katherine, becoming page captain today. Also in the west gallery, second row up, the gentleman in the grey shirt is her father, her dad John. We welcome them all here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the Public Accounts and Estimates Committee of the Victorian Legislative Assembly in Australia, led by committee Chairman Mr. Philip Davis. Please join me in giving them a warm welcome, and thank you very much for joining us.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. After basically nine years of runaway spending, we've seen the cost of the public service balloon from \$40 billion to now about \$60 billion, a 50% increase in wages and benefits

to the public service, done largely by giving out unaffordable pay and benefit increases that don't reflect private sector realities, and secondly they increased the size of government.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm not going to argue with them. They added to public sector payrolls when the private sector reduced payrolls. It's out of balance.

Part of the equation, Premier, is an across-the-board wage freeze. We stand beside that. We stand behind it 100%. But the second aspect is, you also have to fix the underlying problems that got us here in the first place, to address your runaway spending and secondly to fix a broken Arbitration Act. Premier, will you support the bill standing under Mr. Wilson's name, the Ability to Pay Act, to fix the broken arbitration system?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague. I do want to draw his attention to some important facts. As has been said, we're all entitled to our own opinions but not our own facts, and there are some important facts we ought to give some consideration to.

We have the fewest civil servants per capita in the country. We have the lowest expenses per capita in the country, just so we're clear on that front. We do not apologize for hiring more doctors, more nurses, more teachers, more meat inspectors and more water inspectors. We did that because that serves the interests of Ontario families. We will not apologize for doing what is right for Ontario families.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** You know, it's sad that the Premier does not even show any kind of flicker of recognition of the damage he's done to the finances of the province of Ontario, where he's on track to tripling the provincial debt, heading towards a \$30-billion deficit.

He added on, sure, more health bureaucrats, more spin doctors, unneeded regional health bureaucracies in the LHINs. You know what, Premier? We simply can't afford it, and Mr. Wilson and the PC caucus are fully behind the Ability to Pay Act that fixes a broken arbitration system that has seen agreements out to public sector unions way beyond the ability of taxpayers to pay those bills. It is courageous legislation; it is ground-breaking legislation. It is what municipal leaders have asked for and what university and college leaders have asked for.

Premier, if you truly want to get at your runaway spending problem, will you stand up today and endorse our act, the Ability to Pay Act, to fix the broken arbitration system?

*Interjections.*

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

We are at a point again where I'm hearing talking going on from the same side as the questioner, and on this side, the same side as the answerer. I would ask all of us to refrain from comments on all sides, questioning and answering.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Ontarians, I think, could be forgiven for being a bit confused about the official opposition's position on this matter. Reforming the arbitration system was part of their platform. We put it in our budget. They then voted it out of our budget, Speaker, and now they say, once again, that they are interested in reforming the arbitration system in Ontario. So again, Ontarians could be forgiven for being a bit confused about the PC position when it comes to arbitration.

Speaker, we are prepared to work with the opposition. We have the intention of introducing new initiatives in the not-too-distant future and we would once again try to address arbitration on behalf of Ontarians. We look forward to their support.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** We do see a continuation of the Premier speaking out of both sides of his mouth on the issue. I think that the time for bold leadership has arrived to undo the damage of the last nine years that have driven us into the deepest debt by far in the history of our province, that saw the size and costs of the civil service increase by 50%.

Premier, if you truly do believe that the amendments you brought forward in your budget bill were the right solution on ability to pay, can you tell me specifically what part of your budget bill—tell me the schedule and the section—dealt with ability to pay?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, there were specific schedules that were removed from the budget by the opposition. In fact, I'd refer them specifically to schedules 1, 22, 30, 52, 56 and 68. Those—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. That's not helpful.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Nor that. Thank you.

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, the schedules removed by the opposition would have made arbitration more transparent, accountable and efficient. It would have required written submissions by both parties of arbitration, written rationales by the arbitrator that arbitration be delivered within a specific time frame, and in cases where a decision is not delivered within the time frame, the OLRB would issue the final award to the party. That represented real progress. They decided they would not support that, and that, frankly, is a pity. We're going to try again.

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: I think I actually did get an answer there. I asked the Premier specifically what section actually dealt with ability to pay and the Premier basically said none. He talked about written submissions upon request. Well, that's a no-brainer,

Speaker. Of course, there would be written submissions—not upon request; let's make it mandatory.

**1050**

Second, they had a time frame that was 12 months that was far too long. Then they brought forward amendments, to appease the third party, to move it to 16 months—far too long. We say it should be three months, and that's in our act.

Lastly, Premier, I'm going to ask you one more time, because I think the answer is no: Can you tell me specifically where in your legislation you addressed ability to pay? Or—just be honest—you did not do it in one—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —whatsoever.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think it would be helpful to lift this up just a little bit and understand what it is that the official opposition position is.

They would seek to drive down wages in the province of Ontario. They would seek to break unions in the province of Ontario. That's their position; that's their approach. I understand that, I respect that, but I can't support it.

We have a different approach. We think we should be reaching ever higher in Ontario. We intend to invest more in our people, develop their skills and develop their education levels. We want the best jobs that pay the most money, so our families can enjoy the highest standard of living and have a great quality of life.

That's the difference between our government and the official opposition. They want to bring us down. We want to lift us up.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Here's the clear difference: The Ontario PC caucus is on the side of taxpayers—hard-working middle-class families who are working harder every day, paying more and more taxes and getting less in return.

For nine years, sir, you drove spending through the roof. You say you're reaching higher. You're darn right you are. You increased the cost of government by 50% when the economy barely grew at all. You're reaching higher, all right: record levels of unemployment. You're reaching higher, all right: 300,000 people have lost their jobs in the manufacturing sector.

All we're saying is public sector agreements need to reflect the ability of hard-working families who are struggling to pay those bills. It's clear. It's simple. It's black and white. It's important across the province.

You refused to act on the ability to pay in your budget bill, so you're darn right we voted against it. We brought forward legislation that hits on 13 out of 13 Drummond recommendations. Will you stand up today, Premier, and say that enough is enough, that you'll support this bill and make sure taxpayers can afford the payments that you're giving up?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** It won't come as a surprise to hear me say we will not be supporting the initiative put forward by my honourable colleague.

We believe in a thoughtful, balanced, responsible approach. We think it's important that we address the deficit over time, in a way that enables us to continue to make important investments in our schools and in our health care system, and to find ways to support the growth of business and the development of the economy at the same time.

But we do not seek to drive down wages. The approach that we have brought with respect to our public sector workers is to freeze wages over the course of two years. We think that's thoughtful, responsible and balanced. We choose not to let people go. We choose not to lay off Ontario public servants, in contrast to what they're doing in Ottawa, for example, where they're firing 18,000 civil servants. We think we should freeze wages, protect jobs and protect services.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, there's nothing thoughtful, reasonable or balanced about your approach to throw money at every problem under the sun. You've taken us to record deficits. You're on course to tripling our debt. You don't seem to understand—or else maybe you do understand but you refuse to act on—a broken arbitration system.

Clearly, you did nothing in your budget bill—you've admitted that—on ability to pay. The Drummond commission, the economists they hired, gave 13 separate recommendations on arbitration. In their budget bill, Speaker, they hit on one, barely, still making written submissions optional.

Mr. Wilson's bill, the PC bill, hits on all 13: a bold, innovative approach to make sure that agreements in the public sector reflect private sector realities, that pay and benefits reflect the ability of taxpayers to pay those bills, and with fundamental reform to make sure we balance the books so we can create jobs in the province of Ontario again.

Premier, I'll ask you again: Will you support this bold bill that will help rein in spending and get our economy back on the right track again?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm being snowed under by paper here, Speaker.

I want to say to my honourable colleague that I would recommend to him that he take a look at the Drummond report. He will see that the commission found that the system should not be thrown out, the arbitration system, but it did need refinement. In particular, that's what we are addressing to make the system more transparent, accountable and efficient.

I believe my honourable colleague would take it a step too far. I think it takes us in a direction that would have us drive down wages. We have a different approach. We

think we should freeze wages for a couple of years. We think that's in keeping with family values and aspirations: Rather than driving down wages in Ontario, rather than firing civil servants, we find a way to get through this together. Let's freeze those wages, let's protect public sector jobs, and let's protect public services.

## POWER PLANTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. The Premier stated that he will disclose the details of a cancelled private power plant in Oakville when the government has reached a settlement. My question is simple: When exactly will that be?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Well, Speaker, I hope it's at the earliest opportunity. I understand we have really six full days during which the House leaders can meet on as many occasions as they deem to be appropriate to see if we can come to a resolution of this matter. I've said this several times now, and I know my honourable colleague will have heard it: The issue is not whether we release these documents; the only issue is when. Failing a resolution, then obviously we'll make those documents public in keeping with your ruling, Speaker. But again, I think it's incumbent now upon the House leaders to find a way forward together.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the government started backroom negotiations around this private power deal nearly two years ago. For two years the people of Ontario have been told, "We'll tell you the facts when we feel like it," and not a moment sooner.

If the Premier hasn't made it a priority to tell the people the facts yet, why should anybody believe that he has a plan to do so in the future?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I just want to repeat what I said last week, and of course the Premier has reiterated that we respect your ruling. I think the most notable part of your ruling was the fact that it identified the complexity of the situation and the need for all parties to work together to make sure that the desire of the committee to see these documents is met at the same time that we respect the fact that there are very sensitive negotiations going on and that we don't need to jeopardize these negotiations through the premature release of commercially sensitive information. I am confident that the other House leaders and myself will be able to work together to find a solution to this.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, the Premier says he wants to share the information, but for two years, the government has been scrambling to hide the facts from the public. When we asked the Auditor General to investigate, the Premier would not back our request. When MPPs tried to give the auditor that power at committee, Liberal MPPs filibustered for three days straight, and



they spent another six days at committee fighting against the very disclosure that we are discussing right now. If the government isn't afraid of transparency around these private power deals, why have they worked so hard to hide the facts?

**Hon. John Milloy:** In response to the question, I can only quote the words of Jim McCarter, the Auditor General of Ontario and an officer of this Legislature. On September 5 in public accounts, he said the following: "My sense on the Oakville one"—meaning the Oakville project—"where it's currently in arbitration ... is that it could very well be that some of this information could be subject to client-solicitor privilege, or even if we were to get it"—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, they're heckling the Auditor General of Ontario, an officer of this House. He said, "... some of this information could be subject to client-solicitor privilege, or even if we were to get it, in my opinion"—the opinion of the Auditor General—"it could be damaging to the province's negotiating position." The challenge that the House leaders have is to balance the right of the committee to see these documents as well as protecting the province's negotiating position. That is the approach that we're taking.

#### POWER PLANTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Here's what people see: The government signed private power deals, and the Liberal campaign team cancelled them. Not only are families who are already struggling with electricity bills going to pay the cost of that, but they're not even entitled to the details. Does the Premier understand why this is a problem for people?

1100

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In the matter of the Mississauga gas plant, when that matter had been resolved through negotiations between parties, we made that documentation public. What we're doing now, of course, is waiting for the House leaders to come together on the matter of the Oakville gas plant, to see if we might come to a resolution there with respect to the appropriate timing for release of these documents. We continue to look forward to the outcome of that process, Speaker. I would encourage the House leaders from the three parties to come to this with a sense of perspective, a sense of goodwill and a sense of responsibility in terms of our accountability to the greater public interest. If we can do that, and if we come to that undertaking with those sentiments in mind, I know that we can find a solution working together.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, if the Premier was sincere about sharing the facts with the public, he could have done so by now. He could have done so long ago. Instead, we've seen the same old cynical politics that this Premier once railed against. He promised that private

power deals would make electricity more affordable in the province of Ontario. They haven't. He promised that the deals would be transparent. They're not. He promised to stop cynical political games, and he is the one now playing them. The public has been waiting for two years for some basic information about how the Premier spent their money. When does he think that they should be able to get their answers, Speaker?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the leader of the third party, and indeed all members, to review your ruling and to review the facts that were made at the estimates committee, where I think it was made very clear that there are ongoing, commercially sensitive negotiations related to the Oakville power plant. Although we certainly acknowledge the right of the committee to see these documents, we also want to protect the interests of Ontario taxpayers. The challenge that you have given to the three House leaders is to find a way to balance it. We still have several days left until the deadline, and I'm confident that in working together, we can find a way to balance those interests.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, how anybody in this chamber could keep a straight face while that government says they're trying to protect the interests of the taxpayers is beyond me. Again, here's what people see: The Premier, who came to power 10 years ago promising not to put politics over principle, made a cynical move to save a couple of seats and stuck the public with the bill. The Premier says that we should trust him now. Why doesn't he actually start earning that trust by coming clean with the public?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Auditor General, an officer of this Legislature, has acknowledged the fact that there could be aspects of this document that could be damaging to the province's negotiating position. The government took a position in terms of the Mississauga and the Oakville plants, one which was supported by both opposition parties. We are now in the process of finalizing the negotiations and we are trying to find a balance between protecting the interests of the taxpayers and the rights, which we acknowledge, of the committee to see these documents. Again, Mr. Speaker, I am confident, based on the ruling and the direction that you've given us, that the three House leaders will find a way to move forward in this matter.

#### POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My question is for the Premier. Speaker, the Premier has recently shown disdain for this House and for your authority. In the media he has repeatedly expressed his intention to defy your ruling on the Minister of Energy's breach of privilege and to thumb his nose at the people of Ontario. Despite the Liberals' spin, they are solely to blame for the hundreds of millions

of dollars that they've squandered on the Mississauga gas plant just to save a couple of Liberal seats.

The Premier is used to putting his own political interests ahead of the interests of Ontario taxpayers. Will he get used to the idea of accountability as well, and table those documents we seek today?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think if there's anyone who is undermining your ruling, it is the member opposite from Cambridge. The fact of the matter is, your ruling acknowledged the fact that this was a complex situation, acknowledged the fact that there were competing interests, and charged the House leaders to come to the table in good faith and find a way to move forward. That is the approach that the government is taking, that is the approach I'm taking as House leader, and I challenge the member and his party and his House leader to come to the table with that same element of good faith, to realize that there are competing interests in what the Auditor General himself acknowledges is a very complex situation which could put taxpayers' dollars at risk.

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

**Mr. Rob Leone:** Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Premier to answer. Quit side-stepping, Premier. Take responsibility; take ownership. This isn't Don Guy's fault. This isn't Greg Sorbara's fault. This isn't the Minister of Energy's fault. This isn't the government House leader's fault. This is your fault; it's you.

I know the Premier is getting tired in his job, and we get that sense over here—that he doesn't want to answer sensitive questions. But it's still the Premier who has to take ownership. If the Premier won't acknowledge that his selfish political interests are what guided his decision-making and not the interests of Ontarians, will he at least put the province first? Release those documents today without delay.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, let me quote from Hansard—members will want to hear this. The member from Halton, during petitions, stood up and said, "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them." The member from Halton in a press release, September 14, 2010: "Minister, will you move"—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Some people are defying me now.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, the member from Halton in a press release, September 14, 2010: "Minister, will you move the Oakville power plant?... I am asking the minister to consider moving this plant."

But you know, it doesn't stop with the Progressive Conservatives. The member from Hamilton Centre, as she was at that point, October 18, 2010: "New Democrats actually have thought for a long time that that plant should never have been built and we've said so."

## JOB CREATION

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. People in Kitchener–Waterloo are concerned with whether the job they have today will be there tomorrow. They're worried about whether their kids will have jobs when they finish school.

Andrea Horwath has a plan to create well-paid jobs in Ontario through the job creation tax credits. It's a simple plan: You create a job, you get a tax credit. Will the government commit right here to working with Andrea Horwath and New Democrats and implement a job creation tax credit now?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I want to take the opportunity, Speaker, to personally congratulate the newly elected member, to welcome her to this Legislature and wish her the very best. I know she's here today with her family. They're very proud of her, and well they should be.

I know that she has as a personal priority, near and dear to her own heart, education. We think that the foundation for a strong and dynamic economy that creates great jobs is to invest in our people by giving them the necessary skills and educational levels. I know my honourable colleague will want to acknowledge the great work that we've done in terms of building that foundation of an extraordinarily competitive workforce all the way from full-day kindergarten through post-graduate work, through apprenticeship programs, through our Second Career program as well. We will continue to find ways to invest in our people because the best people get the best jobs.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, workers at Schneiders in Kitchener know their plant is moving, and lots of the folks who worked at Kitchener Frame, Ornamental Mouldings or other manufacturers are still looking for work.

But Kitchener–Waterloo is full of innovators and hard workers. A job creation tax credit is targeted to the job creators and the companies investing in Kitchener–Waterloo and across Ontario. This government's blank cheques to already profitable businesses have created what Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of Canada, calls "dead money."

Will the government commit today to Andrea Horwath's plan to create a job creation tax credit?

1110

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, again, I welcome the question and the priority my honourable colleague is placing on the need for jobs in her community and indeed throughout the province.

I think it is important to acknowledge that overall we are moving in the right direction. We have created 325,000 jobs since the recession. Overwhelmingly, those are good, full-time, well-paying jobs. By way of perspective, the US has recovered 45% of their jobs, the UK has recovered about 71% of their jobs and we've recovered about 125% of our jobs. So, clearly we're going

in the right direction. Obviously there's more to do. We look forward to working with the honourable colleague opposite and her party, as well as the official opposition, in this regard.

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted that my first-ever question here in this chamber is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care regarding the Vaughan hospital. My recent campaign platform had a focus on ensuring that Vaughan residents continue to have access to a strong and top-quality health care system locally. Vaughan has been one of the fastest-growing areas in Canada over the last decade, and we are home to a significant number of both young families and seniors. As a result, folks in Vaughan need to be able to access quality health care close to home. They need to be assured that in their time of need, there will always be high-quality health care nearby. More to the point, we need our own hospital. Vaughan is one of the most populous areas here in Ontario that still doesn't have a hospital.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister: When will Vaughan's hospital become a reality for our residents?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I know that all members in this House join me in congratulating the new member on his election victory, and we welcome him to this wonderful, wonderful place, Speaker. I know that his strong work ethic and his collaborative approach will serve his constituents well.

I am very pleased to confirm that Vaughan's new hospital has been approved and it is moving forward. Here's what we're going to do in Vaughan: Planning is under way now for state-of-the-art emergency services; new, modern surgical services and operating rooms; medical in-patient and intensive care beds; advanced diagnostic imaging; and specialized outpatient services that may include oncology, cardiac, eye and diabetes care. Eighty per cent of the rooms will be single rooms, because we're committed to reducing infection rates. This project is scheduled to begin in 2014-15, and I know the new member will make sure we keep on track.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Until the new time that the hospital is built, I need to make sure that my constituents continue to have access to health care services in a timely fashion. This includes getting access to more family doctors and other health care services that they need. Because Vaughan has such a large population of seniors, as well as young families, having health care close to home is incredibly important.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister: How will you ensure that these services will be accessible to Vaughan residents so that they have the health care that they need until the hospital is built?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member is absolutely right—astute, as we would expect. He represents a growing, thriving part of this province, and we are committed

to making sure that all residents, young and old and in between, have access to the health care that they need. Ninety-two per cent of residents now have a family doctor, and there are doctors there taking new patients today. There's been a 42% increase in the number of doctors—382 more than when we took office in 2003. Health Care Connect connects patients looking for doctors with doctors; 96% of those with complex conditions have been attached to a primary health physician. We're continuing to support Mackenzie Health. It is leading the development of the Vaughan hospital. As they have responded to the needs of their community, we have responded, increasing their funding by 72%.

### POWER PLANT

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, you announced the cancellation of the Oakville power plant two years ago. We have been waiting all this time for you to tell us what you're spending to save a Liberal seat. The members of the estimates committee have demanded these documents. The Speaker has spoken, yet you're defiant.

We say to you, no more games, no more hiding, no more stalling; deliver those documents now, and we insist they be unedited and unredacted. Ontarians deserve to know.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, what the member said is not true. You have made a ruling which acknowledges the complexity of the situation, that we are, in effect—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm listening carefully to all of the comments that are being made, and some of them are going down a road that I feel a little bit uneasy about. In this case, I would ask that you don't say indirectly what you can't say directly. I caution the member on how he responds, in that manner.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the honourable member, and indeed all members of the House, of your ruling. Your ruling acknowledged the complexity of the situation, and indeed the debate and discussion at the estimates committee acknowledged the fact that we are talking about a case where there are sensitive commercial interests at work, and at the same time we need to balance that with the committee's absolute right to produce the documents.

What your ruling said, Mr. Speaker, is that the three House leaders should meet and find a way to balance these interests. The government is firmly of the view that we can find a way forward through co-operation with all the parties.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Again to the Premier: Premier, you and your ministers aren't hiding commercially sensitive materials; you're hiding Liberal-sensitive materials. Let's be fair about that. And after two years of hiding these, there must be something awful in those documents.

On July 11, the member from Richmond Hill excused the energy minister's contemptuous act, saying, "I think this whole motion is frivolous"—hundreds of millions of dollars, frivolous. Premier, you obviously agree with him.

The Speaker has spoken. You've been called out on the seat-saver program. Will you uphold the rights, the powers and the privileges of the members of this House and deliver those documents today?

*Interjections.*

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

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think there are two facts to put on the table. The first is that we are complying with your ruling. We are attempting to work with the House leaders to find a way forward. The second, Mr. Speaker, is that the honourable member should consider his question in light of what the Auditor General said on September 5—and I'll remind members again: "My sense on the Oakville one, where it's currently in arbitration ... some of this information could be subject to client-solicitor privilege," and more importantly, "or even if we were to get it, in my opinion"—the opinion of the Auditor General of Ontario—"it could be damaging to the province's negotiating position."

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General acknowledges the complexity of this situation, you acknowledge the complexity of this situation, and we're going to work to find a way forward to make sure that we balance both of these issues.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Ontarians are horrified by the senseless death of Jayesh Prajapati, a Toronto gas station attendant who was tragically killed after the theft of \$112 worth of gas. Since his senseless death, his family has been raising concerns, asking whether he was concerned about the cost of stolen gas from his paycheque and whether that led him to take the tragic actions that led to his death.

What is this government doing to enforce its own Employment Standards Act?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank the member for the question. I, too, was saddened and shocked to learn of this incident, and my thoughts are with the family of this gentleman, who lost his life in such a tragic and unfortunate way. As the Premier said earlier this week, we owe it to the family to take a long, hard look at what lessons we might draw from this incident.

I'd like to acknowledge the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, who has expressed his interest to assist with finding a solution to the "gas-and-dash" issue. We have a shared interest in ensuring that this doesn't happen again, and I look forward to working with him and other members of the House on this issue.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Labour has begun a health and safety investigation into this workplace fatal-

ity. At the same time, my ministry is also looking into whether or not there were any employment standards violations taking place at the station.

**1120**

Any employee who feels that their employer has made deductions that contravene the ESA may file a claim with the ministry. The ministry does take enforcement of the ESA very seriously and investigates all claims.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** The ministry's own website states that a deduction from wages is not allowed if there is lost or stolen property; for example, if customers leave without paying the bill. That seems pretty clear to me and to us on this side of the House.

Will this government start enforcing its own employment standards laws or are we going to see more tragic deaths, such as Jayesh Prajapati's?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Let me be clear: The Employment Standards Act states it is illegal for an employer to dock an employee's wages for the company's lost or stolen property. That means that if a patron at a gas station gasses and dashes, the employee cannot be docked wages for the loss to the company.

There are very many vulnerable workers across Ontario, we need to protect those individuals, and gas station attendants are included in that group. One of the risks we need to address is this issue. We need to be clear in that regard and we need to do more to protect the health and safety of employees.

A similar incident occurred in 2011, and my ministry looked into what could be done to prevent this kind of workplace fatality from happening in the future. At that time, the ministry consulted with stakeholders in other jurisdictions. What we learned from that was there are significant concerns from stakeholders about the feasibility of the pay-at-the-pump laws and, further, other jurisdictions have not seen the expected results or uptake after passing the legislation.

We're going to work with our stakeholders to prevent tragic events like this from happening again, and I look forward to working with the member from Eglinton-Lawrence in finding a solution.

#### ARBITRATION

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, like you, I have read the news over the past few months and I've noticed a number of stories coming out all over the province on interest arbitration. It seems municipalities are concerned about the transparency and the timeliness of arbitration decisions. I imagine this was an issue that was brought up to you at AMO in August in your delegations with many municipalities.

Lately, I've been hearing some rumblings from the official opposition on interest arbitration through a private member's bill. Minister, I also like to follow what goes on inside the Legislature and in committee. I do believe our government put forward a series of very respon-

sible reforms to six statutes governing interest arbitration in the budget last spring.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you give us a status update on what our government has done in terms of interest arbitration?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Thank you for the question. Our government actually listened to municipalities from across Ontario that brought forward recommendations with regard to interest arbitration, and in our spring budget, we proposed some interest arbitration reforms that would have increased accountability, transparency and timeliness within the interest arbitration system.

But, last spring, when it came time to vote on these proposed changes, the official opposition elected to join forces with the third party and vote them down. That tells me they're confused on this issue. The leader of the official opposition seems to constantly say one thing and do another. Judging by the reaction that I heard recently at AMO, their inconsistency on this file is clearly noticed by municipal leaders from across the province.

This is the second private member's bill that they've brought forward on interest arbitration, and I'm really puzzled why their labour critic isn't the one speaking to this issue anymore. The fact remains: They can introduce all the private members' bills—

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

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** —they want, but when they had the chance to take real action—

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

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Time.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** —and vote on changes to help municipalities, they failed.

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

Two observations: I'm beginning to hear some comments through the interjections that are very close to being very personal in nature, and I'd like to remind you that it's not something that I endorse.

Also, I don't need to be reminded of the clock; I'm on top of that. For those who are worried about it, everyone would do their best to stop when I say, "Thank you."

Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Minister, thank you very much for that insightful and thoughtful response. But, Minister, I'm confused, and municipalities across Ontario are confused. It seems to me like the reforms that the official opposition are asking for are very similar to the ones that we proposed in the spring. So, Minister, based on what you've said, the official opposition is teaming up with the third party to scrap our reforms that they were showing no support for. To me, it seemed then, and I'm reminded now, that despite campaigning on interest arbitration reform and making the same promise to municipalities at multiple AMO conferences, the leader of the official opposition and his party are inconsistent and extremely confused on this issue.

Speaker, through you to the minister, could you please provide some clarification of what the official opposition and Changebook is all about?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will make this observation: that if the question had been different, there may not have been concern from me. Talk about the issues at hand from the government policy. I will provide for the minister to talk about government policy in the answer.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Leader of the Opposition's speech this summer at the AMO conference. I heard him say that he wanted tight timelines for arbitrators to issue their decisions. I heard him say he wanted written decisions—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** You need to hear the answer. The member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order. I'm trying to hear the answer to ensure that she's doing what I asked her to do, and the member from Leeds–Grenville will work himself towards a warning if he says another word.

Minister.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Mr. Speaker, I also heard the Leader of the Opposition say he wanted rewards that reflect local budget conditions. These seem like entirely reasonable proposals that sound very familiar. I think I heard those ideas before because they were included in those changes in our budget last spring. The curious thing is that despite the Leader of the Opposition's insistence that he wants these changes, when he had the opportunity to support those amendments, he voted against them. Mr. Speaker, we want increased accountability, we want to increase transparency, and we want proposed timelines within the interest arbitration system. It's puzzling that, when the official opposition votes against interest arbitration, that's what they campaigned on before.

## POWER PLANTS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier, and I respectfully request that he answer it. The Minister of Energy has been found in breach of the rights and privileges bestowed upon all of us as members of this Legislature. This is made worse by the government's refusal to accept responsibility for saddling Ontarians with hundreds of millions of dollars in new debt. In cancelling the two power plants, the Liberal government put its own selfish political interests ahead of Ontarians'. It is now proceeding to obstruct the work of this House to hide the true cost of its actions.

I ask the Premier, when can we expect him to accept responsibility to this House and own up to the full cost of the Liberal seat-saver program?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, I'm a little disappointed by that question. I have a great deal of respect for the honourable member. The honourable member knows that you made a ruling in this House several days ago in which you acknowledged the complexity of the situation and asked the three House leaders to sit down and find a way forward. That is what's happening

right now, Mr. Speaker. We are not defying any ruling by the Speaker. In fact, we're following the rules coming forward.

As to the latter part of the question about the reasons why we were hesitant at the estimates committee in making these documents move forward, I refer him again to what the Auditor General, an officer of this House, said when he talked about the Oakville project: Releasing these documents, "in my opinion ... could be damaging to the province's negotiating position," which reinforces the fact that this is a complex situation which requires all three House leaders to sit down in a spirit of co-operation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Back to the Premier because, on this one, the buck stops with him. I'm compelled to remind the Premier that on October 11, 1995, in this House, he offered the following advice: "Your accountability, like that for all of us here, is to all Ontarians, including those who happen to be taxpayers." After nine years in government, it appears as though the Premier has disavowed the principle he espoused 17 years ago. He now leads a government that flouts the standing orders, breaks the Legislative Assembly Act, ignores the authority of the Speaker and has shown contempt for this House.

So I ask the Premier, how does he rationalize what he said in 1995 with what he's doing today? When will he own up to what he did and table the documents?

1130

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, if anyone is defying a ruling by you in terms of the release of these documents, it's the opposition member in the question that he has asked today. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, you have made a ruling that was clear. Your ruling has given the House leaders until next Monday at 6 o'clock to come up with a way to release these documents, and at the same time also respect the fact that there are some sensitive commercial interests that have been recognized by the Auditor General of Ontario. That was your ruling. We want to comply with that ruling, and we look forward to working with the opposition parties to find a way forward.

I know that the honourable member would never want to leave the impression that—your ruling was nothing short of a call on all parties to sit down and find a way to move forward, based on the complexity of the situation.

## HUNTING AND FISHING

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Ontarians are losing jobs, and just yesterday your government encouraged us to spend more on local products. Yet the MNR is not practising what its own government is preaching, by outsourcing jobs to the United States while reducing programs and cutting staff levels.

A company in Tennessee now handles Outdoors Cards and fishing licences for Ontario. The moose tag draw happens in Tennessee. Deer and other big-game licence applications also have to go through Tennessee.

Minister, how many other jobs are Ontarians missing out on because they are being contracted to other countries?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** There are so many inaccuracies in that, I don't know where to begin, other than to say that we have rolled out a new, modern system that makes it easier for anglers and hunters to get their licences. It offers more options for renewing licences online. You do it from your home; you can do it by phone.

Active Outdoors, from Tennessee, was awarded the contract in a fair procurement manner. Certainly, all I can tell you is that since December, more than two million licences have been issued to people in the province of Ontario. Currently, all 69 ServiceOntario locations and hundreds of other private sector locations are also issuing those licences by working through the company. The fact is, this has been helpful in terms of the fishing and hunting community.

Yes, I'll acknowledge that there were some glitches in the process of moving through it, but it is now moving slowly and certainly in terms of jobs. The Outdoors Cards centre in Peterborough continues to be the focus point for us in terms of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Minister, hunting season is here. We've heard from a number of hunters who have told us they've noticed a change to the automated response when they call the licensing and draw application 1-800 number. The Ministry of Natural Resources now seems to be going out of its way to show frustrated hunters that their concerns about the storage of their private information will be fielded in Peterborough by the Ontario Outdoors Card team. Yet the system is still in Tennessee, still outsourced to the United States and still subject to the laws of the jurisdiction where it is sourced, regardless of any contractual obligations imposed by the government upon the private company.

Minister, won't you admit that outsourcing is not the right thing to do? It costs taxpayers more money, it causes privacy concerns and it's taking good jobs away from Ontarians.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I'm actually rather surprised that the member would bring up that issue, particularly as she knows full well that Ontario's privacy commissioner has made it very, very clear that indeed the private information of Ontarians is absolutely safe.

We've got an ironclad contract with the company. The privacy commissioner expressed real confidence in the work we're doing on ensuring that privacy remains secure. We've implemented all the recommendations put forth by the privacy commissioner in her report.

I think I need to actually quote what the privacy commissioner said to us when this issue first surfaced in the spring. She said, "There's a very tight contract. There are very tight service provisions.... And there's an audit provision so that their use of data will be carefully audited.... I have no concerns about that whatsoever."

This continues to be an important issue to us. We'll always be sure that we protect the privacy of Ontarians, and indeed that is the case.

## EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. As you know, Speaker, this House recently passed Bill 11, Attracting Investment and Creating Jobs Act, 2012, which makes permanent the eastern Ontario development fund, or the EODF. Since 2008, when the program began, the EODF has seen tremendous success in leveraging private sector investment and creating jobs in eastern Ontario economies.

With this track record, the government has received a range of support from municipal leaders across the province for Bill 11 and the economic benefit they see for their communities. In fact, the city of Ottawa recently passed a motion calling for all provincial parties to support this bill, and it's a shame that the official opposition did not.

The city council is also requesting that the boundaries for the EODF include both the urban and rural parts of Ottawa, which was not the case under the previous program.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: When will the boundaries be determined, and will he expand them to include all of Ottawa?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** We are aware of the motion from Ottawa city council, and of course we take their request seriously. We're giving it proper consideration as we determine what the perimeters for the eastern Ontario development fund and southwestern Ontario development fund will be.

Speaker, the eastern Ontario development fund has been a great success. To date, we've invested \$57.7 million to leverage \$595 million of private sector investment. That's over a 10-to-1 private sector leverage ratio. This fund has created and retained over 13,200 jobs in eastern Ontario, and we plan to apply that success, the success we've seen in eastern Ontario, to southwestern Ontario's development fund. We're working hard to get these programs up and running, get the funds flowing to communities and worthy businesses, and create much-needed jobs in eastern and southwestern Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm glad to know that the investment we have made in this program has proven to be such a success, and I sincerely hope that the minister will strongly consider the request of the city of Ottawa to include all of Ottawa within the parameters of the fund. As the MPP for Ottawa Centre, I hope that my constituents and businesses will have the same opportunity to grow our regional economy and create jobs that have been available outside of Ottawa since 2008. It's especially imperative given the thousands of jobs that are being lost in Ottawa because of the job cuts that are taking place by the federal government.

I find it passing strange that two of my colleagues from Ottawa on the opposite side of the House have remained silent on this issue and in fact voted against this measure, given that their communities benefit from the EODF.

Speaker, through you back to the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation: Why did it take so long to pass Bill 11?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The fact is, it really didn't need to take this long, and it shouldn't have. This legislation was introduced for third reading at the beginning of May. It had a total of seven and a half hours of debate. It was one thing for the PCs to oppose the fund—they have that right—but it was quite another for them to deliberately delay this money. Money that could have been flowing into eastern Ontario and southwestern Ontario this summer was delayed needlessly. Even the opposition members from the Ottawa region failed to speak out when they should have for jobs in their community.

I'm pleased, after the PCs got hammered all summer long in their ridings on this, that they finally decided to give up their needless delay. I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker: We're committed to flowing these funds as quickly as we possibly can. We know the communities want the jobs. We know the communities need the jobs. We're going to get on it as quickly as we can, in spite of the opposition from the PCs.

## ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, I'm sure you remember that the estimates committee passed a motion on July 19 ordering you to release all documents relating to eHealth contracts, expenses, invoices and correspondence from 2009 to 2012. But here we are, two months after the motion was passed, and you still haven't responded to the committee or the clerk.

Minister, clearly there's a pattern emerging here. Your government continues to hide critical information from Ontarians, even at the risk of being found in contempt of this House. Minister, I have to ask: Are you going to follow in the footsteps of the energy minister and block the release of these documents, or will you do the right thing today and disclose the information on your botched eHealth program?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question from the member opposite. I can assure you that we're working very hard to refer the thousands of pages of documents—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. Should a member, at this particular moment—and I haven't quite figured it out—whose identity I don't really know, like to withdraw—

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I'll do that, sir. I withdraw.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I'm very impressed.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you. What I can say, Speaker, is that I do support the decision by eHealth Ontario to cancel the diabetes registry contract. This is a decision that saves taxpayers \$46 million. I think it is the right decision.

I can assure you, Speaker, though, that we remain committed to supporting people with diabetes, making sure they get the care they need. I look forward to the supplementary.

1140

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Back to the minister: I'm sure you're working hard, but again you continue to ignore the clerk here. I'm just not sure what's taking so long with these documents. I do want to make it clear that, in committee, I want a paper copy, not an electronic copy, because let's be honest: We all know how long it takes the Liberal government to deliver electronic records here in the province of Ontario.

Minister, seeing that the Liberal government will stop at nothing to prevent the release of critical information to Ontarians—in fact, the energy minister has shown that he's even willing to risk being found in contempt of this House to stop the release of documents relating to the Liberal seat-saver decision to cancel the power plants in Mississauga and Oakville—I have a simple question: Will you release the eHealth documents requested by the estimates committee today, or are you willing to risk being found in contempt of this House like the Minister of Energy has been?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think the member opposite would be very interested in knowing, Speaker, that we've got 9,000 doctors now with electronic medical records. The most up-to-date version of those records collects 30 different indicators related to diabetes care.

We're moving forward with electronic medical records. We're very, very proud of the progress. We're proud of the increasing number of physicians who are getting electronic medical records, and we're also proud of the advancements in the EMR package so that doctors increasingly will have all the information they need to provide the highest possible quality care to their patients with diabetes and with other conditions.

#### CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety. Minister, the situation at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre has been escalating. It took two inquests into conditions at this facility for the ministry to introduce plans for around-the-clock nursing, which is not scheduled to start until 2013, while lives are at stake now.

Yet the facility still faces severe overcrowding problems. Guards are not able to monitor inmates from the ranges, and assaults continue to rise. Conditions have deteriorated to the point that inmates have been forced to hire lawyers in hopes of dealing with these safety issues. When will the minister do her duty and bring the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre up to basic standards?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm very proud of what we have done in the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. I know that there have been issues at this detention facility, and I've worked very closely with the staff there, the

staff at the ministry and community leaders to make sure that this situation has been redressed.

We have developed an action plan to redress the situation, and yesterday I was very happy to announce that we will implement the recommendations from the coroner in two of the investigations, and we will now have 24-hour nursing service at this detention centre.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Minister, two weeks ago the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre was under another lockdown after the staff issued a refusal to work because of ongoing unsafe conditions. The inmates remained on lockdown for an extended period of time, and staff did not feel safe to enter and perform searches, adding stress and uncertainty to an already tense situation.

We know that inquests into the facility have called for increased staffing levels, yet the minister has refused to address the recommendations of those inquests by proposing to add cameras rather than staff. Will the minister give correctional workers the respect they deserve and give them the tools to perform their jobs safely and properly?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I have invited the member of the opposition to visit that detention centre, and as I said, we're working very closely. We always review the staff complement in our detention centres, in our jails, in Ontario. Our main objective is to make sure that both the workers and the inmates are very safe—that the workers are very safe in their workplace, and the inmates also. We have an action plan that was put together, and we will continue to implement it. This was from recommendations from both the health and safety committee and the staff.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Question period is over, and there are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** In the west members' gallery is my friend Pino Didiano, who is a constituent in Thornhill and also a businessman in the riding of Vaughan. Welcome.

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

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### ROSH HASHANAH

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Shana Tova, Happy New Year. Today is the first day of the year 5773 in the Hebrew calendar. It is New Year's Day here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, so happy new year.

Over the past several days, the Jewish community has celebrated the High Holy Days of Rosh Hashanah to welcome the new year.



My riding of Thornhill, as everyone knows, is home to the largest Jewish community in Ontario and perhaps the largest in Canada. It is a strong and tightly knit community that has contributed greatly to Ontario's growth and prosperity.

Rosh Hashanah brings our community even closer together. It is a time to take a pause out of our hectic lives and spend time with family, friends and neighbours and to reconnect with our faith.

I know that as families in Thornhill, in Ontario and across Canada celebrated this important holiday, their thoughts, as mine, were also with family and friends who are observing these High Holy Days in Israel. In these uncertain and turbulent times in the Middle East, the High Holy Days are an important opportunity to look forward to our future with renewed optimism and determination and to work towards stability in that region.

Today, as we take our first steps into this new year, I wish my constituents and the entire Jewish community a very happy and sweet new year, filled with peace, health, hope and promise.

L'Shana Tova Umetukah.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shalom.

#### CASINOS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, the people of Toronto–Danforth overwhelmingly reject any proposal to locate a casino in their community, in the port lands. A majority reject any new casino on Toronto's waterfront. Today, I'm tabling a stack of letters and emails from my constituents, voicing their opposition to the McGuinty government's gambling plans.

Over the summer, I've had the opportunity to talk to many residents in my riding. They see a proposal that will increase addiction problems and increase crime, a proposal that will take business from our local main streets and cause even more traffic problems in the south end of Toronto–Danforth.

There are good plans in place to develop the port lands in a way that will boost the film industry and reinvigorate our waterfront. A new casino will damage those plans, damage our community and must be rejected.

#### TELEMEDICINE

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** On Monday, I was pleased to participate in an announcement at St. Joseph's Health Centre in Guelph of 12 new telemedicine nurses who will be working at sites throughout the Waterloo Wellington LHIN.

Using telemedicine, health care professionals are able to deliver clinical care using live two-way video conferencing systems and related diagnostic equipment.

These nurses will expand access to care, reduce patient travel and improve access to specialized health services.

For example, elderly patients in rural Wellington can access Guelph's specialist in geriatric medicine from the office of their local family health team in Mount Forest or Palmerston. Residents at St. Joseph's Health Centre in

Guelph can access specialists in Toronto or Hamilton without leaving their residence. And mental health patients throughout Wellington and Waterloo can access specialized psychiatrists at Guelph's Homewood psychiatric hospital or Toronto's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health without leaving their community.

Telemedicine used for clinical services in the Waterloo Wellington LHIN expanded by almost 350% last year. Last year, the use of telemedicine throughout Ontario resulted in an estimated \$44 million in avoided travel costs.

The Ontario Telemedicine Network uses the latest technology. It's a smart way to improve access and quality of care for Ontario patients.

#### PETER LOUGHEED

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I rise this afternoon as our party's critic to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs to pay tribute to one of our finest Canadians, who passed away last week. Peter Lougheed was one of the most consequential Premiers that this country has ever seen. I was privileged to meet him once at an event in Toronto in the late 1990s, along with our now Halton region chair, Gary Carr.

As a political leader, Peter Lougheed was moderate, sensible and practical. Last week I heard former Alberta Premier Don Getty interviewed on CBC Radio. He described his colleague Mr. Lougheed as someone who was great to work with and who inspired everyone around him by his example.

When Peter Lougheed assumed the leadership of the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party, it was a minor party with limited prospects. He transformed it into one of the greatest political dynasties in Canadian history, holding power in Alberta without interruption since 1971.

He was a statesman who was widely respected across the country and was influential in the patriation of the Canadian Constitution. However, he was forthright and resolute in standing up to the federal government in fighting for his province's interests.

He presided over the transformation of Alberta into the booming energy powerhouse that we know today. He was a good steward of the province's resources. He did not squander his province's new-found oil wealth but instead had the foresight to establish the Alberta Heritage Fund to put money away for a rainy day.

Peter Lougheed was a man of honesty and integrity. He was a true leader who always had the best interests of his province at heart. Peter Lougheed exemplified the kind of leadership that every province would hope for.

All across Canada, we lament his passing, and our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I rise today with enormous pleasure to recognize an important celebration that occurred in Lakeshore in my riding of Essex recently.

The Knights of Columbus Council 2775, in partnership with the town of Lakeshore and Seasons Lakeshore, paid tribute to couples in our area who embody the values of patience, family and community; 113 couples were recognized for their enduring commitment to each other in marriage.

In an era where the stresses on families are great and the challenges many, these couples stand as a testament to unconditional love and mutual respect, the hallmarks of any long-term relationship. They serve as role models to me and to my generation that, despite adversity, true love can indeed conquer all, and that the greatest achievement is not found in personal wealth or status but in a lasting partnership to share in life's joys together.

It is my great pleasure to congratulate all of this year's honorees and to wish them many more years of health, happiness and marital bliss.

#### WAR OF 1812 RE-ENACTMENT

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Last weekend, I joined some 10,000 residents of western Mississauga to watch more than 100 re-enactors recreate a battle of the type fought during the War of 1812, on the island at Streetsville Memorial Park. Ward 11 Councillor George Carlson, Mayor McCallion and my overlapping member, MP Brad Butt, were also on hand to watch British, US and native Canadian forces clash.

No actual battle between the sides was fought in or near Streetsville at the time. However, in the re-enactment, to the clear favour of the spectators, the British and Canadian militia halted and then reversed the advance of the American regulars and militia, who, after a 40-minute skirmish, offered their honourable surrender.

Fellow Streetsville Rotarian and organizer Duncan Willock did a terrific job and brought the re-enactment to historic Streetsville, along with help from a government of Canada grant.

The Streetsville cemetery on Queen Street is the resting place for three Canadian 1812 veterans and one American who fought in the war.

The War of 1812, which lasted until 1815, was the only land war that was fought on Canadian soil after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec in 1759. Royal Canadian Legion Branch 139 Streetsville also joined in the re-enactment at Streetsville Memorial Park.

1510

#### AVON MAITLAND DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to rise today to make everyone in the Legislature aware of the great things that are happening in schools across the Avon Maitland school board in my riding.

Avon Maitland can be viewed as a very innovative board. For instance, they have an international student program, and most recently, the board has adopted a new progressive strategic plan for the next four years called Always Learning. They knew the vision would make

them more successful, but they had no idea that it would turn into such a musical hit as well.

The new hit, Always Learning, by Matt Hussey, has taken the region by storm. The song was originally written by Matt to help the board launch its new strategic plan, but the song and the music video became an instant hit.

Matt got together with iAM Productions and pulled together some Avon Maitland students to record what is now being described as the board's new theme song. iAM could also translate into "intelligent Avon Maitland."

School choirs across this district are learning to sing Always Learning. Schools are playing the song on their PA systems, and the music video has set a new board record for most-watched Avon Maitland video of all time. The song has become so popular that they have released it to iTunes for the low cost of 99 cents, with all proceeds going to the Foundation for Education Perth Huron.

If the song is downloaded once for every student in the Avon Maitland board, it would be equal to over \$11,000 extra that could be used for programming, workshops, funds and grants just this year.

I urge all my colleagues to go out and download Always Learning.

#### OTTAWA LITTLE THEATRE

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It's a great opportunity for me to talk about Ottawa Little Theatre, which is celebrating its remarkable 100th season this year.

The celebration was this past Saturday, with the grand opening of this special session. The Ottawa Little Theatre seeks to put "a little theatre in everyone's life." It has been offering popular, entertaining community theatre for 50,000 to 60,000 Ottawans each and every year, and it is one of the longest-running community theatre companies in all of Canada. In fact, Speaker, it has produced a remarkable 770 plays in its history to date.

It was founded in 1913 as the Ottawa Drama League. Some of its early performances were actually held in the Museum of Nature, which is located in my riding of Ottawa Centre and, during the First World War after the fire on Parliament Hill, also served as our temporary House of Commons as well.

It moved to a permanent location on King Edward Avenue in 1928 that unfortunately was destroyed by a fire in 1970. The new building opened at the same location in 1972.

Speaker, all directors, designers, actors and stage crew are volunteers. A big thank-you to them for their service over the years, and special thanks to board of directors president John Mark Keyes, Geoff Gruson, Margaret Coderre-Williams, Joe O'Brien, Ann Scholberg, Jane Morris, Klaas van Weringh and Paul Hession. Congratulations on your 100th season.

#### IPF AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Bill Walker:** This September is the first Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF) Awareness Month in

Canada. Established to increase awareness and understanding of this rare disease, this important day is a reminder to all Canadians of this debilitating and ultimately fatal disease that has no known cause.

It is estimated that up to 30,000 people in Canada are currently diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, with 6,000 more being diagnosed annually. Today, approximately 5,000 Canadians die each year from this deadly disease.

This progressive and life-limiting disease is characterized by scarring in the lungs, hindering the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the body, making it extremely difficult for patients to breathe.

In 2009, Dr. Robert Davidson founded the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation, CPFF, to raise funds, finance research and find a cure for pulmonary fibrosis; raise public awareness about this rare and fatal disease; and offer support to those affected by pulmonary fibrosis.

Today, Dr. Davidson; George Habib, president of the Ontario Lung Association; Dr. Charles Chan, IPF researcher; and patients suffering with IPF will be at Queen's Park to educate MPPs about IPF.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, I'd like to welcome Robert Davidson and all members of the CFPP delegation to Queen's Park and thank them for their tireless work and leadership on this important issue.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### FIRST RESPONDERS DAY ACT, 2012

#### LOI DE 2012 SUR LE JOUR DES PREMIERS INTERVENANTS

Mr. Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to proclaim First Responders Day /  
Projet de loi 123, Loi proclamant le Jour des premiers  
intervenants.

**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. Frank Klees:** Mr. Speaker, if passed, this bill will designate May 1 of each year as First Responders Day in Ontario. Members will know that I introduced a similar bill just last week. The reason for the reintroduction, or the introduction, of this bill is that it now adds the term "emergency managers" as part of the definition of first responders.

## PETITIONS

### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition—I have thousands of them actually—from my riding

of Durham, and in fact from across Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario's automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

"Whereas the stringent application of" current "emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

"Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

"Whereas car collectors typically use their" vintage "vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old vehicles by amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced" aggressively "by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Maya, one of the pages here.

## ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

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

"That the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately."

I fully agree, sign my signature and give it to page Leo.

## ELECTORAL REFORM

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

"Whereas it is the right of every Canadian to vote once in each election for the candidate of his or her choice and have their vote fairly counted and not offset by faulty voter registration or any sort of illegal practices; and

“Whereas credible allegations of voting irregularities exist for the most recent election, including non-citizens voting, persons voting multiple times at various voting stations and errors on the permanent register of electors list; and

“Whereas the practice of ‘vouching’ has been practised in polling stations where it is not permitted, such as non-rural polling stations, and does not require verified proof of a person’s age, citizenship and residence in a riding;

**1520**

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

“To support Bill 106, Prevention of Electoral Fraud Act, 2012, by Bas Balkissoon, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, that would require that voters present proof of Canadian citizenship; require the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario to appoint an independent party to conduct a review of the permanent register of electors within six months after the bill passes and subsequently every five years; allow scrutineers to monitor the process by which voters add their names to the voters list on election day; and forbid vouching, which currently excludes the requirement for legitimate identification.”

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

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Premier McGuinty has imposed fee schedule cuts to family physicians and proposed wage freezes unilaterally, he has therefore alienated the province’s family doctors. These actions threaten the future of health care in Ontario and will compound the existing family physician shortage. As wait times for primary care will inevitably increase, so will the frustration of millions of Ontarians;

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

“We ask that the Premier reconsider his decision and return to the negotiating table with the Ontario Medical Association and the province’s doctors, thereby working alongside patients and their primary care providers.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition.

#### REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

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

#### RADIATION SAFETY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** I have petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is in serious need of modernization;

“Whereas the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) is not in harmony with all the following acts, regulations, guidelines and codes: the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, the radiation protection regulations of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the safety codes of Health Canada and the radiation protection guidelines of the International Commission on Radiological Protection;

“Whereas dental hygienists need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

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

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by Reza Moridi, the member from Richmond Hill, that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations, make recommendations on how to modernize this act, and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I fully agree with this petition, sign it and pass it on to page Sashin.

#### AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

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

“Whereas the Office of Consolidated Hearings, a panel made up of two members of the Ontario Municipal Board and a vice-chair of the Environmental Review Tribunal, heard evidence for 139 days over the course of 39 weeks, where they heard from 36 experts, seven lay witnesses and numerous participants; and

“Whereas the evidence at the hearings made it overwhelmingly clear that the proposed Duntroon quarry would create and maintain 32 direct and over 150 indirect jobs and contribute significantly to the local economy; and

“Whereas the proposal has been studied for nine years and represents the continuation of a long-established land use in the area, where an existing quarry has been operating for over 40 years without significant negative impacts; and

“Whereas Walker Industries has entered into agreements with Clearview township and the county of Simcoe to provide substantial benefits to the municipalities that are above and beyond those required by the Aggregate Resources Act, the Planning Act and the Municipal Act; and

“Whereas the haul route along Simcoe County Road 91 has been used for this purpose for more than 40 years, steps have been taken to minimize environmental impacts, and there has been no opposition from the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the county of Simcoe or Clearview township;

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

“That the McGuinty government respect the decision made by the Office of Consolidated Hearings and allow the Duntroon quarry to move forward so that our environment can be protected and good jobs can be maintained and created for local families in need of work.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

“Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

“Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

“Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

“That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

“That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

Of course, I agree, and I'm going to give it to Leo to be delivered to the table with my signature.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is presently an interprovincial crossings environmental assessment study under way to locate a new bridge across the Ottawa River east of the downtown of Ottawa;

“Whereas the province of Ontario is improving the 174/417 split and widening Highway 417 from the split to Nicholas at an estimated cost of \$220 million;

“Whereas that improvement was promised to and is urgently needed by the commuters of Orléans and surrounding areas;

“Whereas the federal government has moved almost 5,000 RCMP jobs from the downtown to Barrhaven;

“Whereas the federal government is moving 10,000 Department of National Defence jobs from the downtown to Kanata;

“Whereas over half these jobs were held by residents of Orléans and surrounding communities;

“Whereas the economy of Orléans will be drastically impacted by the movement of these jobs westerly;

“Whereas additional capacity will be required for residents who will have to commute across our city to those jobs;

“We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation to do their part to stop this environmental assessment; and further, that the new road capacity being built on 174 and 417 be kept for Orléans and surrounding communities in Ontario; and further, that the province of Ontario assist the city of Ottawa in convincing the federal government to fund the light rail from Blair Road to Trim Road, which is much more needed now that 15,000 jobs accessible to residents of Orléans are moved out of reach to the west.

“We, the undersigned, support this petition and affix our names hereunder.”

One of the petitioners here, Jean-Marc Lalonde, is well known in this House.

I agree with this petition and will send it to the table with Mathilde.

#### HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition which reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

As a senior, it's kind of a conflict. I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Jenna, one of the pages.

#### ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over northeastern Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north's economy; and

"Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

"Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire";

They petition the Legislative Assembly to immediately "halt the planned cancellation of the Northlander and the sale of the rest of the assets of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission."

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and ask Page Zakhar to bring it to the clerk.

1530

#### ELECTORAL REFORM

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly on the electoral fraud in Ontario.

"Whereas it is the right of every Canadian to vote once in each election for the candidate of his or her choice and have their vote fairly counted and not offset by faulty voter registration or any sort of illegal practices; and

"Whereas credible allegations of voting irregularities exist for the most recent election, including non-citizens voting, persons voting multiple times at various voting stations and errors on the permanent register of electors list; and

"Whereas the practice of 'vouching' has been practised in polling stations where it is not permitted, such as non-rural polling stations, and does not require verified proof of a person's age, citizenship and residence in a riding;

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

"To support Bill 106, Prevention of Electoral Fraud Act, 2012, by Bas Balkissoon, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, that would require that voters present proof of Canadian citizenship; require the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario to appoint an independent party to conduct a review of the permanent register of electors within six months after the bill passes and subsequently every five years; allow scrutineers to monitor the process by which voters add their names to the voters list on election day; and forbid vouching, which currently excludes the requirement for legitimate identification."

I fully support this petition and will have Anna bring it to the Clerk.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

"Whereas the Dog Owners' Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law."

I'll affix my name to this petition.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION TAX CREDIT ACT, 2012

##### LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 12, 2012, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? Further debate? Last call: Further debate? The member for Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've spoken on this, but I would allow the member from Lanark to speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Sorry. You've already—sorry. Okay, can we get our act together, folks? The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is speaking.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you, Speaker. I was intending to speak to another bill today, but Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit, has been called.

Speaker, I'll say a few things on Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, and start with a simple premise: We know that our province is in deep and dire financial straits. Of course, we saw that just recently, when the government recalled the Legislature two weeks early to debate Bill 115 on the wage freeze for the teachers in the province.

I find it interesting: It was during that emergency recall of the Legislature that Bill 2 was brought forward for debate before Bill 115 was. And of course, here's the

great contradiction of the present government: The Legislature gets recalled in an emergency fashion to deal with the very significant challenges on our finances in this province, but at the same time they bring forward and debate a bill which will increase expenditures and costs to the province. I think we should all be asking ourselves, “How can this be? How can we be in such dire financial straits that we need to freeze the wages of teachers but at the same time the provincial government is looking to spend more money with the healthy homes renovation tax credit?”

What truly is not just interesting but also appalling: This new bill—we don’t know what the cost of it will be. We don’t know what the take-up will be, so there’s no way for us to know to what extent it will impact the finances of the province. We have no idea. We have some estimates that it will be over \$100 million, but there is no cap on that program. It all is determined by how many people take advantage of it.

So I want to ask the Liberal government: How can it be that capping teachers’ wages was so, so important we had to recall the Legislature, but we debated an expenditure bill beforehand and we’re still debating this expenditure bill on Bill 2?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Well, maybe the member from Guelph will explain that contradiction. I know she was just interjecting here—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington knows that we don’t have cross-debate with another member. You go through me, all right? Thank you.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Yes, Speaker. Maybe you could ask the member for Guelph to expand on her interjections at a little later time, then, through the Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you for your assistance, member. Her turn would come up in a two-minute response, and she’ll take care of it at that time. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Anyway, Speaker, this bill is not about helping seniors; this bill is about continuing to try to cozy up with the Working Families Coalition and the building trades unions that have been so, so generous in their charity to the Liberal Party and to this government. Of course, some of that charity from some groups has been on the wane recently with Bill 115, and I guess they’re doing everything possible to try to curry favour with those remaining members of the unionized Working Families Coalition that provide such healthy contributions to the Liberal Party.

We do know that it is not untrue that our finances are in significant difficulties in this province. Even most Liberals would agree to that: that we cannot continue to spend like drunken sailors in this province. Even drunken sailors know when they run out of money, and I think the Liberals are beginning to understand that they’re running out of money. But it’s just a beginning of that understanding, because once again, they’re spending more and they’re taking us into a program where we have no idea

just how much it’s going to cost. Unlike the development funds that the Liberals also brought forward for debate before Bill 115, when the Legislature was recalled, we knew that there was a fixed amount to those programs—\$80 million of new spending by this government, which, again, you might wonder: Why did they debate an additional \$80-million expenditure during that recall session when we were recalled to cap those wages? Why? I think even the Speaker would see that there’s a bit of a contradiction there: that we’re going to spend more money, we’re going to debate bills for further expenditures during an emergency recall on the dire straits of our finances in this province.

**1540**

I would like any member from the other side during their comments to explain that contradiction. Explain that contradiction not just to me, not to the opposition side; explain that to the people of Ontario. Explain how you can bring back the House on a recall measure to deal with the terrible, dire financial predicament you’ve put us in, but during that recall you bring in more bills and you debate bills to engage the taxpayers, to burden the taxpayers with additional money.

It’s interesting. I did count those up. I believe there were eight bills and motions debated during that recall session—during that emergency—before we got around to debating Bill 115. They actually debated and voted on 11 other items before they got to the subject of the recall, Bill 115. I am going to be looking forward, through the Speaker, to members of the Liberal government explaining that to the people of Ontario.

How did you get yourselves into such a predicament that you debate more spending during an emergency recall to deal with the teachers, and why would you ever saddle the Ontario taxpayer with an open-ended expenditure such as Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act? An open-ended expenditure in these times is just a foolhardy measure by this Liberal government.

Of course—speak to anybody—this bill is just another facade. Those people who can afford to do those renovations—upwards of \$15,000 in renovations—will be able to apply for that tax credit. Where we really need to be focusing first is on those people who don’t have the \$15,000 to make those upgrades but need assistance and help. If we’re going to do any program, that’s where it would be, and that’s someplace where you could also cap the expenditure limits.

You could put in place how much the program was going to be ahead of time, instead of this foolhardy way of creating a program that’s open-ended and could cost the treasury \$100 million, it could cost us \$200 million—it’s unknown. Nobody on that side of the House in the Liberal government can give us an amount because of the way this program is structured.

Speaker, with your indulgence I look forward to listening to the Liberal government in their response.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Here we are with Bill 2 again, the second one that was introduced in the Legislature

since October of last year. It's the song that never ends; it's the bill that never gets passed. Let's just pass it.

Of course, I'm pleased to speak to it. I think my record on this would show that I am in concurrence with the intent, in agreement with the intent of the bill to address the situation that seniors face in this province when upgrading and retrofitting their homes so that many of them are able to stay in their homes longer.

I believe that's what the intent is, yet I have argued, as has our party, that the mechanisms within the bill don't go far enough. There are other jurisdictions, like Quebec, that do a far better job of aiding seniors to retrofit their homes and make them more accessible as well as safer for seniors. I believe they contribute upwards of 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 on a home renovation, whereas this is giving you 15% to a maximum of \$1,500 on a \$10,000 renovation. Of course, the criticism is: Which senior in this day has that disposable income?

I canvassed this weekend in my riding of Essex, and it seemed as though it was seniors' day in Essex because every person I spoke to, whether they were a senior or not, was concerned about the future for seniors in our province, whether it be the viability of CPP and the fact that we have to make sure that we raise that, or OAS, or the increased costs of hydro and home heating—various costs that affect our seniors day in and day out—or the fact that pension plans are under attack not only in the public sector but the private sector as well.

There's lots more we have to do, Mr. Speaker, but I believe we should support this bill, get it through and get it done.

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

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to be able to respond.

It's interesting: The reason this bill was called—because it was called, as was identified, last fall, but because, I think, 17 members of the Progressive Conservatives wished to speak to the bill, obviously that's why it has taken so long to get through this House. That is the choice that they have and they're quite happy to be able to have.

Having said that, I'm sure that if the member had read the bill, he would know that, in fact, the savings will be found internally, and—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Order. The member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I know folks talk about the fact that there's a \$10,000 limit. Remember: You could put grab bars in for just over \$500, and you'd get a tax refund on this as well, so you do not have to spend a maximum amount of money. You have to be able to provide the receipts for a credit for a significant amount of the work that's being done.

Also, there was reference, Mr. Speaker, to a great deal of, "There's nothing else out there for a lot of other folks," and I'll just refer you to—there are three or four: winter warmth, home weatherization, golden age service,

budget billing, Live Green, the Toronto atmospheric fund. There are a number of energy retrofits for buildings and houses. The Ontario Power Authority has fridge and freezer pickup, saveONenergy, and save on heating and cooling. There are a significant number of programs that are available for a whole wide range of folks, and that's exactly what this is: another program to help people.

When you look at the issue of cost, it comes down to cost deferral. When you ask people who are older, one of the major reasons why they leave their homes is because of the fact that they can't get in and out of their bathtubs. This is a major issue. So having the new ability to put in a walk-in tub allows them to stay in their home, stay out of a retirement home or stay out of a long-term-care facility. That's the reason why this is a good piece of legislation.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There are two things: The member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, I believe, did the very best he could in the limited time he was allowed.

I will take exception with the member from Etobicoke Centre. She said—this is the seniors she's talking to, and this tells you a lot about how Dalton McGuinty and his caucus think. What she said is that you could put a grab bar in for \$500 and get the tax credit. Here's the truth of it all: They have difficulty paying their energy bill. You know that, Speaker, yourself; I've heard you say it. But also, if you did look at it and you get 10% back, that's \$50. But you have to spend 13% in tax, so on \$500, you're actually paying \$65 in tax, and they're giving you \$50 back. What's that all about? It's a shell game. It's shameless what she's doing here. It's completely unacceptable.

She said we shouldn't be discussing this. I'm a senior. I'm worried what he's doing to Ontario. I can hardly afford to pay my energy bill.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's true. All of a sudden, they know best, and that's the father-knows-best syndrome. The worst thing that has ever happened to Ontario is, they got this guy elected again. I can't believe it. The people had the wool pulled over their eyes.

I really will say this to you: This is time to discuss. Bring in important—I try to make this point, Mr. Speaker. Could I have more time? Because I'm running out of time. Here's the deal: There's an article here. This is from the Toronto Star. I'm going to file this report. It says that Ontario is worst for inequity. It goes on: "Ontario is the worst in Canada when it comes to growing poverty, increasing income inequality and financial support for public services...." That's Ontario after nine years; it's shameful.

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

1550

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, it's a pleasure to speak on Bill 2, the healthy homes renovation tax credit.



I'd like to comment on something that the member from Etobicoke Centre said, I believe, that the inability to access a washroom is one of the major reasons people leave their home. I would agree with that, but it's one. There are a lot of reasons: inability to pay the bills, inability to fix the roof.

While we as a party agree with this bill, in our opinion, the intent is not so much to further seniors as it is a good press release for the party. We would hope it would be something bigger. We are hoping for something bigger—we are hoping. I truly believe that the members across the aisle want to do their best. But once again, they are going for the little picture.

I would like to disagree with the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington that you have to stop spending everything. The trick is to spend money in the right places. You can't stop spending all over because then the economy will collapse—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Nobody's suggesting that.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** That's what I hear. That's what I hear.

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

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** When I stand, you stop.

And I'd like to remind the official opposition there are six sidebars going on. I cannot hear the speaker. One of the people was standing up and shouting to his members when he could go over and talk to them. Well-behaved on this side, I might add. I would ask that we cut it down a couple of notches. Thank you.

Continue.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I will try to pay more attention to the Chair.

One thing I heard the government across say is that this is a job creation project. You have to make up your minds, because keeping seniors in their homes isn't necessarily a job creation project. If you're going to put grab bars in your bathroom—where are the calculations? How many grab bars equals one job? Once again, it's just an assumption.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has two minutes.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** First off, to make reference to the member for Etobicoke Centre: I think she's looking more for grab bags and grabbing on to anything, along with the grab bars.

I will have to say to the member from Durham, he had such a—

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Excuse me?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Point of order.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** Mr. Speaker, I think that's a slur and I think that's unnecessary. It's offensive. I understand he has a particular opinion but I also think that he has to be respectful to the members in the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I think the member—I can understand her concern, and he certainly was skimming around the edges of being out of line. I will remind him—because he didn't define what he meant by the one comment and he didn't get into any detail about it, but I would suggest that he be very careful about how he handles an individual's performance.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd also have to mention the member from Durham; even with laryngitis, he has such a presence with his voice in the House. I hope I didn't offend anybody with that one.

Let's go back. I did ask the Liberals to explain. I asked them to explain that contradiction that is so apparent and so clear, and of course, the member from Etobicoke Centre did not explain that. She skated around my question to the Liberal Party.

I do believe, referencing the members from Timiskaming and Essex, there are some tricks, but the tricks are over here from the Liberal Party on this bill.

They have got us into a dire financial predicament in this province, and they continue to take us down that path. They cannot recognize that the time to stop spending money is not just when your pockets are empty but when your credit cards are loaded up and there's no more credit.

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

The member from York–Simcoe.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to offer a few comments today on the bill.

I think, though, that while it purports to provide real help for seniors, it's a real sound bite. When you think about the fact that most seniors live on a fixed income, this means they have very little to be able to allocate for something like the renovation, and the way that the home renovation tax credit works is simply that they're going to receive a tax credit. They're going to have to have the money that they want to spend on this particular renovation ahead of time.

Actually, this morning a study came out on seniors and retirement and their fiscal strength and health in Ontario, and one of the things that was mentioned about people retiring is that very often a significant percentage of people are forced into retirement, not a planned retirement, whether it's health or other circumstances that create this. So I think we need to first look at the issue of the fixed income that seniors normally have. This, then, creates continuing pressures for them.

You look at the high cost of staying in your own home. Certainly I'm aware of the comments that I receive on a regular basis from seniors in my riding who are very sensitive to the increased cost of living. They look at gas prices, they look at even food prices that have gone up, and they're always looking at the fact that there are those essentials that seem to be under continual pressure of increased costs. Here I'm talking about things like hydro rates increasing. So to have the government talking about the potential of a renovation tax credit that

would keep you at home is something that really isn't even available to most seniors.

They're also looking at interest rates that are the lowest in a decade, and that's their bread and butter, frankly: their RRSPs, their investments, their nest eggs that they see with very, very low interest rates.

The bill appears to be one that has been hastily put together. It doesn't require a means test, so anyone who is 65 or over can look at his or her own dwelling and say, "Well, this would help keep me in my house longer." We talk about the grab bars. By the way, it would not take very much to increase beyond the allowed amount for the tax credit. If you have to widen a door frame, a doorway, if you have to put up a ramp, you'll very quickly exceed the maximum cost available.

So there's no means test. The person can own, rent or live in the dwelling that they wish—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Okay. Second reminder to the official opposition: Your member is speaking, and there isn't one person who is listening. They're all in discussion. I can't hear her. So could we cut it back. If you want to have your sessions, there's the door. The lobby is out there, and there is lots of room out there to talk. We had five people talking here. Please cut it back. Thank you.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The point I was making was the fact that it appears to be hastily put together, with no means test. It doesn't matter whether you own, rent or live in a facility in which you are looking at making some kind of renovations.

**1600**

I also want to talk about the limits of the tax credit itself. I've already mentioned the fact that you have to have the money in order to do the renovation, but you also have to be able to be the beneficiary of the tax credit. It has to be enough to make a difference. When you look at the fact that it's 15% but you are also paying HST at 13%, it really means that you're looking at a 2% difference, an opportunity there.

I want to also, in the moments that remain, look at the bigger picture. One of the things about staying in your home: While definitely the first choice, I think, of most people, there certainly comes a time for many where it doesn't matter whether you have a grab bar, a ramp or something like that, but the level of home care is not adequate for you.

Last year, before the election, the Auditor General provided all Ontarians with a review of the 2011 pre-election report on Ontario finances. There's some interesting reading there. The fact that it was a year ago doesn't matter; the issues are the same. What he demonstrated in that report was the continual growth of long-term-care-home costs. They have increased, on average, 8.6% per year over the past eight years. In 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014, the government plans to hold growth in expenditures to an average of 4.2% per year, or about half of the past growth rate. An equal kind of draconian

number exists for CCAC expenditures, where they have averaged 7.2% year over year. Again, the government's forecast for 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 assumes that their growth will average 2.3% per year.

The obvious question to ask is: If the government is going to increase home care services, what numbers are they starting with? As we look at an aging population, the need for funding is driven by the increased demand for home care. Yet this government has committed to a rate cut from the increase of an average of 7% down to 2%. You have to wonder: Does the government want us to believe that the demand has fallen? And if the government does not increase funding enough to meet the demand, then it will mean that more and more seniors and others are on waiting lists for home care. We know that what also happens to that whole continuum of care is that people are in hospitals; they are waiting for the opportunity to be in the long-term-care facility.

What we're looking at here is really very, very token—as I mentioned, not real help, but a real sound bite, and that's what the home renovation tax credit is all about. It does not provide a significant opportunity to keep people in their homes. It does not take into account the fiscal pressures that the government has committed to reducing. So, almost a year after the election, we're talking about what we talked about last year: the crisis in home care for our seniors in this province.

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

**M. Michael Mantha:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Nous voici encore, une autre fois, en train de discuter de la pièce de législation ici, le projet de loi 2. Or, il me semble que ça fait au moins un bon deux heures que je me lève pour parler de ce document-ci et de ce projet de loi qui va essentiellement aider, oui, mais l'aide que ça va offrir va être minime. C'est le grosso modo du bill. Tu regardes les gens qui vont être éligibles à profiter de ce projet—sérieusement, il faudrait qu'on regarde aux gens que ça va aider : seuls ceux qui ont un budget ou qui ont de l'argent ou qui ont des enfants, ceux qui ont un montant d'argent jusqu'à un minimum de 10 000 \$. Et puis ce n'est pas le maximum qu'il faut que tu dépenses. Oui, absolument, tu peux dépenser moins d'argent que les 10 000 \$ qui sont demandés dans le budget pour avoir le plein crédit du 1 500 \$, mais essentiellement, il n'y a pas grand gens qui vont avoir un avantage avec ce projet de loi.

Dans ma circonscription d'Algoma-Manitoulin, les gens qui m'approchent à la porte, ce n'est pas des crédits qu'ils veulent. Les gens qui m'approchent et avec qui je discute des projets à leur porte ont besoin d'argent aujourd'hui. Ils ont besoin d'argent par la fin du mois. Ils ont besoin d'argent pour rencontrer des dépenses par la fin du mois. Ce n'est pas des crédits dont ils ont besoin ou qu'ils demandent; ils demandent un service aujourd'hui. Ils demandent qu'on soit capable de les écouter pour leur rendre les bénéfices dont ils ont besoin pour rendre leur vie un peu plus équitable.

C'est beau de voir ce projet ici. Vous savez, nous autres, à partir du parti NPD, oui, c'est un pas en avant qu'on voit. Les chances sont qu'on va le supporter. Mais ce n'est pas essentiellement un projet de loi qui va aider les gens en gros. Puis, il faut vraiment qu'on cherche comment on va aider ces gens-là avec de bonnes idées, de bons sujets et de bons projets de loi. Merci.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm glad to have this opportunity to address the remarks made by our colleague from York-Simcoe and perhaps more generally the comments that we've heard this afternoon. It seems like the official opposition is trying to say that this is unnecessary, excessively costly, that we haven't costed out the entire program appropriately, and from the NDP, we're hearing that of course we're not going far enough. So it seems to me that Bill 2 in fact is a very reasonable, prudent, balanced approach, which really is what our government is all about.

As we age, we talk about the continuum of care. It's inevitable with the march of time that each of us is going to suffer from increasing disability to a certain extent. What Bill 2 does, it gives seniors a chance to exercise their own choice—in fact, choosing what they need to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

I know in my own riding—it was about a year ago when we were exploring this particular idea in our platform—this was an exceptionally popular move. There are many people in my riding looking after their parents, their seniors in their home, and this tax credit applies to them as well, so that where children are looking after their parents, they may need just a few additions in their home to allow their parents to stay with them in that family unit.

Of course we've looked at the cost of this potential program, modelling it somewhat on the federal Conservative 2009 home renovation tax credit. We know what the uptake of that particular tax credit was, and so of course we costed it out in relation to that potential uptake.

This is a prudent and sensible measure, and we should be voting on it as soon as possible.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I appreciate the opportunity to be here to discuss Bill 75.

I've had an opportunity to debate this myself as a member, and I want to congratulate, of course, the member from York-Simcoe who, each and every time she takes the floor of this assembly, commands an enormous amount of respect because she understands her file and she has a comprehensive view of the legislation before the House. I think that she and I share a concern with this legislation in that it is only available for certain seniors who have a certain amount of money. We, on the other hand, are concerned that we are protecting all seniors and making sure that they all have an ability to succeed into their retirement years in a healthy and safe way.

Now, what my big concern is—and I've stated this in the House before. My mom is a widow, and my mom was widowed in her 50s. We're not talking about a millionaire here, and we're certainly not talking about anybody who got a big retirement nest egg. I look at anyone who would be in my mom's situation where that safety net isn't there because, simply put, she was a housewife. She raised my sister and I, and that's what she did for a living. Anybody in that situation doesn't really have a lot of access to \$5,000 or \$10,000 to do renovations to their home, certainly not even to improve it, because if the furnace goes or the washer or the dryer go or something else goes, that's what the priority is.

**1610**

What the government is basically doing here is saying, "We're going to give you a credit and we're going to help you out, but only if you spend a bunch of money." It's like going to the appliance centre and saying, "I'm going to buy this refrigerator and then I'm going to do the mail-in rebate." Well, you know what? That doesn't help anybody at the point of purchase, and this isn't going to help any senior in Ontario at the point of their purchase.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My, my, my. This government has been in power for nine years and this is as good as it get for seniors. It's shameful. This is a government that have said that they want to decrease poverty by 25% in five years. In fact, they're overseeing a province where poverty is going up. If you heard the Daily Bread results this morning, it's going to go up by about 25% in five years under their watch.

Let me say frankly that seniors—many, many seniors—live in poverty. They're the ones who are using the food banks. To say to somebody who can't pay their heating bills, who can't pay their rent or their mortgage, who can't pay their hydro bills—that's a major one for my seniors—who can't pay their bills, that if they spend money up front, down the pipe maybe a year later they might get 10% back, that's worse than sad. It's insulting, Mr. Speaker. It's insulting for seniors.

No senior I know or have ever met is being kicked out of their house because they don't have grab bars around the bathtub. No senior I've ever met is having to leave their home because they don't have a ramp. They're leaving their homes because of poverty; they're leaving their homes because they don't have home care.

You heard the member from York-Simcoe talking about the plight of home care. We have home care workers who would rather work at Tim Hortons because they make more money at Tim Hortons than they do providing care—the care that our seniors need. That is the state of care for our seniors trying to live at home in Ontario. Trust me, it's not about the uptake, it's not about the costs, because I don't think very many people will take this up. I would love to see the figures tabled from this government about how much money they actually spent on this program, because I would suggest that very

few seniors or their families will take this program up. That's what they're counting on, Mr. Speaker. They're counting on few seniors taking it up. A sound bite for sure.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from York–Simcoe has two minutes.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I appreciate the comments made by the members from Algoma–Manitoulin, Oak Ridges–Markham, Nepean–Carleton and Parkdale–High Park.

I think I'll just start with the response from the member from Parkdale–High Park. I would agree with her. One of the things that I thought would be very interesting is that this bill have some kind of ability to test its validity. When you are able to actually look at the kind of pickup and support, how many people has it actually affected? Certainly it's not something that the seniors in my riding discuss.

I think the question that the member from Nepean–Carleton mentioned about the point of purchase is the whole dilemma with providing a tax credit. You have to have the money up front. You have to wait for a long time. You have to save all the paperwork, do it, and then get something back.

The seniors in my riding are very conscious of the fact that the squeeze they are getting is that of the financial ability through lower interest rates that their savings collect, the increase in energy costs—those are the things that are driving them from their homes. I think many members have expressed similar concerns, that this isn't really what's driving people from their homes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Just for note, Speaker, you're the only one who gets my name correct every single time I stand up. Thank you very, very much.

I'm pleased to speak for the third time on Bill 2 today, and I just have four or five arguments I want to talk about and then I can wrap it up. I'll try to add something to the conversation that I haven't heard yet through the days of listening to this debate, but I'll start out with just going over the usual, that our point is that it's only a 15% credit maximum on \$10,000.

I keep hearing in the media that seniors are going to get \$1,500 back—\$1,500 given to seniors. They've got to pay \$10,000 to get that \$1,500. I don't know too many seniors in my riding who have that type of money to get that credit or where to get that credit. Those who have that money are golfing at the local golf club. They're planning on doing some renovations because they're fortunate enough in their retirement to have enough money. So this credit is nice for them to get. They're going to apply for it and get it because everybody thinks the government takes too much money from them at the end of the day and they all want back their share. But the majority of the seniors in my riding aren't really having those funds to actually pay \$10,000 to get \$1,500 back.

It doesn't include certain items, like a furnace. Do you not think that maybe improving somebody's furnace in their home will give them adequate enough heat and

cooling, but at the same time it's probably going to lower energy rates, which is really what seniors are getting nailed on in this economy? It's the fact that the energy rates are through the roof. They have the HST on their energy bills, and they have that debt retirement charge on top of it. So that is just continually adding up.

Maybe if they tweaked this measure, maybe they could put it towards furnace upgrades in their house to help lower their energy bills, and then perhaps this might be something to go after.

Oh, you're not leaving.

I thought he was leaving me. He stood up on me.

You see, I'm watching you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Did I throw you off? Sorry.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It's all right.

So what I'm thinking is, maybe a better use of this money would be to actually follow through on one of the original bills in this House back in November that passed with the support of the House, which is getting rid of the HST off our heating bills for everybody, not just seniors, and maybe even going a step further and figuring out how much of that debt retirement charge is really there and finishing that bill off, because people are really sick of paying those bills.

The other problem I find with this bill is that the people who have the money to put the \$10,000 out are just starting out in retirement. They have a long time to go before they need to renovate their house. How are they to know what part of the house to renovate when they have the cash at, say, age 65, age 70, when they're far from needing any renovations? How do they know their hip is going to go on them or their knee is going to go on them or they're going to need a ramp? They don't know, at that age, so are they supposed to use telekinesis and decide what to renovate in their house at that time? If they wait till they're 80 or 85, they're probably quite an amount into their retirement savings, if they're fortunate to have some, to actually benefit from using this tax credit.

The other thing I've noticed, just thinking—I've heard the number bounced around that it's going to cost around \$300 million a year, and they're going to take this from elsewhere to offset the cost. In retrospect, I've figured out where they're getting that money from. They're going to end the slots-at-racetracks program, the horse racing, which is approximately about \$300 million a year that they generate in cost-sharing revenue with the horse industry. Basically they're going to take the \$300 million from the horse racing industry that they get in the revenue-sharing agreement and allow it to a minute portion of the senior population in Ontario to make some renovations, but they're going to get rid of 60,000 jobs and they're going to end in the slaughter of 15,000 horses, all in the matter of this election ploy from a year ago to garner some support coming into the October election. So I just thought that was pretty interesting.

The other argument I have is, the bill is window dressing. As I said before, they're actually trying to hide

the fact that the cost of living in this province is tremendously high and increasing day to day, and to throw this credit out is to throw a red herring at them to go, “Oh, I’m going to get this beautiful credit from this government,” whereas, as already mentioned, the energy costs are through the roof. And it’s not just for seniors or low-income people; it’s for everybody. It’s for those struggling to make their mortgage payments month to month and the fact that they’ve pay the HST on their energy bills. They’ve got an energy policy in this province that is shooting our energy costs through the roof. We’ve got taxes that are unbelievable in this province that people are paying day to day.

Thinking of that, I kind of focused in on this high cost-of-living thing. The government is willing to help out just a certain portion of the population of Ontario. Again, they’re back to their motives, Speaker, picking winners and losers, and I think that as a whole has to stop. They focus on, “Maybe we’ll just help some seniors here.” Even though they think they’re helping every senior, they’re not. It’s a small, minute portion that is actually going to get the \$1,500 at the end of the day.

**1620**

In fact, I did some online shopping before I came here—what it would cost someone to stay in their home. I don’t think you need \$10,000 if you barely have the money to get by. A grab bar is \$20, and I’ve seen some bathrooms where you can maybe put two or three grab bars in—there’s \$60—and I do know of some pharmacies out there that, if you buy a grab bar from them, they install it for free, so we’ll say that installation is free.

A raised toilet seat with arms: If you need a raised toilet seat installed, it takes a couple of minutes to put it in, and it’s \$64. A bath bench with a back is \$63.99. A bath mat—this is a really great bath mat you won’t slip on—\$22.99. Those are just small things. There are other things on here. You can get a reacher to help you pick things up, but that doesn’t count under this bill. That’s only \$15.

But the fact is, you can probably do good enough renovations, because people do what they need to do to get by, considering they don’t have lots of money. You can probably get by with renovating your house to stay in it for a couple of hundred dollars, and I think the fact that you’re throwing out \$10,000 when you can’t do any substantial renovations that are meaningful is a ruse that the Liberals are throwing out there.

I’ve already talked about the HST and the debt retirement. Going back to argument 4 here—I know I’m skipping argument 3 because I kind of ran over it earlier—the fact that the Liberals promoted in this last election that they wanted immediate action, in fact, on September 29, 2011, the Canadian Press ran an article entitled “McGuinty Fast-Tracks Home Reno Tax Credit; Election Rivals Say He’s Desperate.” Well, he’s been desperate for the last year, and it hasn’t stopped yet, with the previous shenanigans over the teachers over the last month.

But the fact that he said this was going to be immediate—“We’re going to bring it right out”—that was just

about 12 months ago, and I don’t see how that was immediate or fast. The government can throw it at us about wasting time, but it has been a year, and the fact that their House leader has been unable to actually get any bills passed—maybe two or three—let alone we have no committees to get these bills to third reading, I think that’s kind of ridiculous. I don’t know if you think so, but the fact that we have no committees operating 11 months into this Legislature’s 40th session I think is kind of odd and weird.

**Interjection:** It’s terrible.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** It is terrible, very terrible.

I think what the government needs to do, when they make a promise and they actually mean it, is to follow through with their actions. The fact that they just wanted to get votes with this tax credit, much like they did to get the few seats they saved with the power plants last year, Mississauga and Oakville—of course, we’ve been talking about possible contempt this Monday when the Minister of Energy won’t release those documents. We’re hoping that he does and follows through with the will of this House, which the government seems to not want to do lately.

My last argument—it’s a minute and 42 there—is the fact that they’re blaming us for this delay, much like they’re trying to say that we were blocking Bill 11 a few months ago. The fact is that this government is plagued with scandal. I feel sorry for the back bench there, because it’s the cabinet here that’s running the show, and they’re full of scandal. We look at Ornge. They say we’re wasting time in getting bills passed, but the fact that this whole House motioned for a select committee on Ornge to find out what’s going on with Ornge and where the money is going and who’s really in charge there—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Sorry, Speaker; I know.

Back to the bill: This was more of an election ploy, and they’re saying that we were blocking its passage when in fact they’ve been blocking committee structure; they’ve been blocking their own bills passing through. I just wish they’d sit down and look at Ontario as a whole and look at how you can reduce costs for Ontarians across this province, and that’s taking the HST off your energy bills, getting rid of that debt retirement charge and getting rid of your apprenticeship ratios, putting them to one to one, so that we can get people back to work in this province. I look forward to the responses.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Hey, Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to get up again here and speak to G20—or G2. It feels like G20. Sorry.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** I just remind the member from Essex that we kind of keep it a little more formal than “Hey there,” okay?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** All right, Mr. Speaker. Sorry. I will be more formal. It is G2, I believe. Thank you for the clarification.

To add to some of the comments from my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London, who I think expresses some of the same concerns, the bill is a token measure. It's window dressing, sort of a band-aid solution, a small amount of support for those in our province who really need the support the most: seniors who are on fixed incomes, who are having a hard time, who are facing disability, facing mobility issues, potentially ambulatory, who need extensive renovations to their homes yet really will not be able to find the resources to do that. This is a small measure to assist them in that scenario.

He mentioned that something should be more tangible, such as a furnace upgrade. That was in a previous program, the eco-energy rebate program, which gave up to \$5,000 on furnaces and windows. I think that was also matched by a federal program. That was widely successful, and I think it was too successful. We certainly don't have the threat of this program, with its small amount of support, being too widely successful, because we know that seniors need more and they're asking us for more. It would be nice for the government to show that they are listening and to provide some more assistance in that regard.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm pleased to respond to the speech by the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London and, I think, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

There was some question from both of these speakers as to why we are still calling this bill. First off, it's important to understand that it's Bill 2 because it was the first thing, essentially, that we tabled back in November. We think this is an important piece of legislation.

The second thing to understand is that the standing orders which you enforce, Speaker, only allow the government to call a bill once in any sessional day. So when the House was recalled a few weeks ago to debate Bill 115, we could only do that once a day. We chose to debate Bill 115 whenever there were the most hours available. We were required by the standing orders to call a different bill, and we chose this bill because we believe it is important that we get it.

Contrary to the comments opposite about how seniors don't care, I actually just had a letter this week from one of my constituents who is a senior, saying, "I've been saving my receipts. When am I going to get to use them?" Of course, our response was, "If the Conservatives would stop throwing up speakers, we could all have a vote and we could get this passed, and then you can use your receipts that you've been saving for the past year to get your tax credit." In fact, if this bill gets the same sort of take-up that the tax credit from the federal government did, which was similarly structured a few years ago—if we get the same take-up, we think 380,000 seniors will use it.

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

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I just would like to add my two minutes' worth to the member from Elgin–Middle-

sex–London, and what a speech he had. I'll tell you, I was very impressed with how he did it, his delivery and his mannerism. It's just—

**Interjection:** Remarkable.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Remarkable.

Speaker, this bill was introduced about a year ago. I listened to the members opposite saying what a great idea this was. Well, cancelling a gas plant was a great idea last fall too, and look what happened there.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** How much is that going to cost us?

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I don't know that.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Millions. Hundreds of millions.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Millions of dollars wasted. We could have given a bunch of that money, instead of doing that, to seniors to help them with their home renovations. Now we have to go looking for the money.

**1630**

I also heard that if we would sit down and quit speaking to the bill, we could get it passed. It is our right to speak, Speaker. That's what we are here to do. So for the member from Guelph to say something like that is ridiculous, in my opinion.

I think that if this government wanted this bill through, they would have formed committees to do it. They didn't do that. They resisted that all along. I also think, concerning our economy, that if they hadn't gone along and cancelled the slots-at-racetracks program, they wouldn't be putting people out of work in this province.

It's just incredible how this government thinks—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Or not.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Or not.

I was impressed, at the plowing match yesterday, to look at how our agricultural community does things. This government should look at our agricultural community and see how it's done.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Once again, speaking to G2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, I'd like to comment on some of the comments made by the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London. I agree with most of the things he said, but one thing occurred to me. He talked about taking the HST off home heating. I remember when we passed this, one of the arguments from the other side of the House was, "Well, yes, but what happens to the rich people? They don't need the HST off. So the tax isn't fair."

My question to the other side of the House is, what happens to Gilda, who comes from Iroquois Falls to my office and needs a new roof to stay in her house, because her house leaks, or she needs new windows? Or do you know what? She can just survive, and she could use a new bathtub, but she has to borrow the money and then get the payment, wait a year for the money back.

I'm not saying this is a bad program for the people who can afford it. But what about the people who can't? They deserve to be able to stay in their house. Actually, if you keep them in their house it'll be cheaper—we all know that. What about those people? You're making a

choice. Just like the people on Thanksgiving Day when the train is closed and there aren't enough buses, you're making a choice about who can go home to northern Ontario for Thanksgiving, and that's a crime.

We have to look at programs. This program will help keep some seniors in their home—some—and it makes for lots of sound bites, a year of sound bites already, just like the sound bite yesterday on the local foods act. How many times will we hear that till we actually see something happen?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has two minutes.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to thank the members from Essex, Guelph, Perth–Wellington and Timiskaming–Cochrane for their insights into my debate.

I would like to just respond about the delay in getting this bill done. The member from Algoma–Manitoulin had an excellent bill that actually did remove the HST off heating around the same time this bill came out, and we have yet to see this bill resurface from committee. Calling on the government, maybe this is the time to actually step up and do it.

They took a good page out of our Changebook from the election, giving hard-working Ontario families a break, not the Working Families Coalition that we have mixed with the opposition that imploded last week, but that's another story.

I think what we really have to do to fix this problem is not give more credits; we need to get our economy on track again. We need the government to be focused. We've got to reduce regulation on businesses. We've got to get apprenticeships at 1-to-1 so we can create some jobs. We've got to get a good energy policy that's not putting people out of business—get rid of that global adjustment charge—and we have to lower some tax rates so we can attract some businesses. I know that you, over to the left, are not going to agree with me, but what's going to work is lowering some taxes.

Speaker, the Ontario PC Party has a plan for this province. It's not fake tax credits that are only for the minority, when you can probably renovate your house, as I said earlier, for a couple of hundred dollars—installation free of charge. I'm pretty that sure if you buy it all at one place, there are cheap ways out there, working with small, independent businesses out there, small corporate businesses out there—whoever it is—supporting the local economy and doing these renovations for a low price. You don't need the tax credits this government is proposing that people get. Number one, they don't have the money, and number two, it's not needed.

Thank you for your time, and thank you for listening to me.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Further debate? The member from Simcoe.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Simcoe–Grey, to be exact. I'd like to get re-elected in Grey county, too, if possible.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity, a few minutes, to speak on Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax

Credit Act. I find it a bit rich that we're debating this bill to provide what amounts to meagre savings to barely a handful of people, seniors who are fortunate enough to have \$10,000 in the bank. I know that point has been made by many people, including me on second reading debate, but it needs to be stressed.

This government has done nothing but pickpocket these people, to the point where they've been hiking taxes and fees for seniors for the past nine years. Despite Premier McGuinty's famous ad campaign in 2003 where he said, "I'm telling Ontario families that their taxes will not go up tomorrow, or any day, under a Liberal government"—of course we all know that was complete nonsense. Seven months later, he brought in what was the single largest tax increase in Ontario history when he implemented the health tax. This tax alone has robbed more than \$18 billion from families and seniors since being implemented.

But that's not all. There are lots more reasons why seniors can't afford Bill 2. The harmonized sales tax added 8% in new taxes to thousands of products and services, including haircuts, home-heating fuel, electricity and gasoline, just to name a few. All told, this new tax is depleting our collective pocketbook by \$3 billion per year, making it an even bigger tax and greedier tax grab than the health tax that the McGuinty Liberals brought in.

Then there's the \$53-million hidden hydro tax, which they snuck in last year, and smart meters and time-of-use metering were also assaults on household finances, particularly for seniors, who are retired and spend more time in their homes during the day than most of the rest of us and like to do laundry during the day when it's convenient, when they're able to do so.

Since 2003, hydro rates have gone up a staggering 75%. Over the next five years, rates will rise at least another 46% according to the government itself, and that doesn't include the government's decision to extend the debt retirement charge by seven years, which amounts to \$1 billion per year, plus we pay HST on top of that, again draining seniors' and families' pocketbooks. So they can't afford the \$10,000 that you need in order to do home renovations under Bill 2.

Then there's also auto insurance rate hikes that happened while coverage requirements were reduced. In fact, your coverage was reduced by 50% and your rate hikes averaged about 8% or maybe more—I'd have to defer to some of my colleagues who probably know the facts a little better on that. But I know my personal rates went up, and that's what I hear from my constituents.

The government went on to apply the land transfer tax on fractional ownership, implemented the Ontario tire stewardship fee and increased fees for various government services, including commercial vehicle operators' registration and driver testing. There were also increased taxes on beer, wine and spirits, and they even raised the floor price on beer, claiming social responsibility. But now they want to litter our communities with slot machines, so I'm not sure how sincere they are about so-called social responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, let's not forget the sneaky eco-taxes that they slapped on electronics, such as computers, TVs and iPods. Families now have to use their credit cards instead of their OHIP cards for eye exams, physiotherapy and chiropractic appointments. Out-of-pocket health care expenses paid by middle-class households have jumped by 43% in the last 10 years.

What effect do these endless tax hikes have on households? Well, we're working longer and harder than ever with less and less to show for our efforts. We spend more time on wait-lists and lineups for services, while the system wastes valuable resources, like the scandal at eHealth and the completely useless local health integration networks that the government set up. Personal bankruptcy figures for Ontario—figures that I have available—reveal that in the first nine months of this year 37,462 residents declared bankruptcy, and the number of consumer bankruptcy proposals filed increased by 26%.

Clearly, life in Ontario has changed, and this tiny little tax package contained in Bill 2 does very little to mitigate nine years of the regrettable McGuinty government decisions.

**1640**

I think it's important to reiterate some of the points made by our critic, the honourable member for Thornhill, Mr. Shurman, and several of my colleagues, who have done a good job of putting this bill into perspective throughout the time that we've been considering it.

The first point is this: Seniors of modest means and those who need help the most won't see any benefit from Bill 2 and the tax plan contained therein. As our finance critic pointed out, seniors who are 65 or older make up about 13% of Ontario's population—1.8 million people. The median income of those seniors in Ontario is \$25,000 per individual and \$45,000 per couple. That's equal to about \$2,000 to \$3,700 gross income per month. In order to qualify for the maximum tax credit of \$1,500 in this bill, a senior citizen has to spend \$10,000. This plan actually costs seniors \$8,500 if they've got that kind of money to spend in the first place, and that's the catch: Many simply don't have that kind of money in the first place. In fact, most of the 1.8 million seniors in Ontario won't see anything from this legislation.

Those who do participate will be faced with other taxes payable. I believe it was the member for Durham who pointed out that if you spend \$10,000 on renovations, thanks to the government's HST you'd have to pay \$1,400 in sales tax, so at the end of the day, after fully enjoying the benefits of Bill 2, you would have saved \$100.

The next catch is this: Only some renovations qualify, because the improvement cannot be made to increase property value. I don't know how many people would want to do renovations to their house and their house value doesn't go up. You've really got to wrap your head around that one. That would be difficult. That means no new windows or insulation to help tackle energy costs, and no heating or air conditioning upgrades. Those are things that could truly help seniors who are trying to stay

in their homes, especially given this government's enormous increases in energy prices.

Clearly, this bill doesn't actually help seniors in any kind of broad-based way. I really don't see how the members of the government side could convince themselves otherwise. Not only does this bill not help seniors; it has no meaningful impact whatsoever on the economy, and it does nothing to correct nine years of tax hikes. Our finance critic pointed out—again, the honourable member for Thornhill—that it doesn't really encourage any kind of broad-based renovation projects and it doesn't really create jobs on any kind of broad basis. We have to look at things on a bigger scale. We're facing the highest level of unemployment in recent history, with 600,000 people, men and women, who woke up this morning with no job to go to. Stats Canada tells us that last month we lost another 25,000 jobs.

This bill is just not that good, and it's not what seniors are worried about. I know that if you polled the 19,000 seniors in my riding and their families, most of them would say that their number one concern is long-term care and a nursing home bed and home care. Without question, it's one of the biggest issues that I deal with in my constituency offices. There is such a huge waiting list to get into local homes that most seniors are forced to travel out of their home communities to find space. In fact, it's so bad that I had one of the attending physicians in one of our local nursing homes tell me that he can't even get his own wife into that nursing home, and he has been the attending physician there for 18 years. Seniors who can no longer live in their homes deserve to be cared for as close to home as possible. Family members who are able to lend a hand with the care of their loved ones often find it impossible to travel long distances on a regular basis to provide care and support. They worry about the emotional well-being of their loved ones when they're so far away from the home and the support network they need.

The fact is, Ontario's long-term-care facilities are 99.9% full 100% of the time, and that statistic certainly rings true in my riding. If the government really wanted to help seniors, instead of Bill 2, they should build some beds in my area and across the province to provide some relief for those families who are constantly waiting and worrying about getting a spot. If they really cared about the well-being of seniors, they wouldn't have hiked their taxes, auto insurance, hydro rates, driver's-licensing fees and so on for nine years.

This bill should not be passed. It should be sent back to the government so that they go back to the drawing board and listen to all of the seniors and their families in Ontario who have been struggling under this government, and truly do what seniors need: address home care, address community care, address the health system and put some money back in seniors' pockets. Don't make them cough up \$10,000—probably their life savings—to renovate a home which they can't increase the value of. It's just ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

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



**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** It was interesting to listen to my colleague and some of what he had to share about his own riding. That already there are 19,000 seniors in his riding speaks volumes. This is a lot of people, and you can really see he has been in touch with a number of them, because as it is in his riding, my riding is the same. Throughout our ridings, how many people, how many seniors, have come to you and said, “I need a tax credit to renovate my home”? Frankly, Mr. Speaker, zero. How many seniors come to our offices, often with their children and often in tears, telling us that they’re having a serious problem with home care, they’re having a serious problem keeping one of their loved ones at home in their own home, and they’re having even more of a struggle trying to find a secure long-term-care bed for them to move into?

The member uses the word “broad-based.” The member from Simcoe–Grey I think described it well. This is not a bill that will have a broad-based impact. It is very narrow in its focus. It is not a priority for the majority of the seniors in his riding. I would say what he’s heard from the seniors in his riding is very much in line with what I’ve heard from the seniors in my riding: that this is not a priority. I’ve never had a senior come to me and ask for a tax credit for home renovations so they can stay in their home. I have some coming to me for home care every week.

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

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** It’s a pleasure to speak on Bill 2, the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act.

We all keep on listening from demographers that Canada is an aging society. Most of us have relatives and friends and parents in that slice of the population. If we are lucky and take care of ourselves, we may reach that age ourselves. I would like to speak about the benefits of Bill 2.

Mr. Speaker, this helps seniors stay in their homes longer. This legislation, if passed, benefits taxpayers by relieving pressures on long-term-care-home costs, and this legislation, if passed, will create more than 10,000 jobs. This would also help 380,000 seniors to get the benefit of the tax credit.

Last month I was at the fun fair organized by the seniors to promote physical activity in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. They kept asking me when they could get starting the benefit of this tax credit. We have heard the NDP saying we are not doing enough, and the PCs saying we are going too far and it’s a costly one. But I think it’s a very balanced approach. It’s a win-win situation, and I’m looking forward to passing this bill soon so that seniors in my riding can benefit from that.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It’s a pleasure to respond to my colleague from Simcoe–Grey. I want to thank him for reminding people not only in this Legislature but out there in the province and TV land, those watching today, just how much, how often and how painfully this Liberal

government has inflicted itself on residents of this province, and particularly struggling seniors. My colleague went blow by blow, point by point, each time. It’s great that he’s got this long-term memory and he’s got all these facts on hand about all of the hurt that has been brought on by this government, but I’m sure he’s not working alone, because, like every other member here, we hear from our constituents on a daily basis about how they cannot tolerate this government any longer, and when you ask why, they go through the very same things that my colleague Mr. Wilson did about, “Well, this year it was the hidden hydro tax, \$53 million on our bills.” Then it was the exorbitant increases because of the Green Energy Act. He talked about all of these things—and I’m pleased, Speaker, that you allowed him to talk to that, because then you have to ask yourself, is this just an attempt to try to curry a little bit of favour with those same seniors that you’ve been hurting for nine years, beating them over the head with a stick of taxation and fee increases and God knows what? And now you’re coming back and saying, “Oh, by the way, if you’re going to put in a grab bar, we’re going to help you with that.” I think it’s too little, too late.

1650

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

**M. Taras Natyshak:** Merci, monsieur le Président. Je vous remercie infiniment. Je veux prendre la chance, ici, en ce moment, de parler en français. Je vais délivrer mes commentaires en français parce que je pense que j’ai dit tout ce que je peux en anglais, donc ça va me donner une chance de pratiquer, et mes amis, dans leur boîte de traduction, peuvent me suivre, j’espère.

On parle d’un projet de loi qui essaye d’aider les aînés dans la province de l’Ontario avec des renouvellements de leur maison, de leur habitation—ceux et celles qui ont des problèmes médicaux, des problèmes de mobilité, et aussi—

**Interjection:** Accessibilité.

**M. Taras Natyshak:** Accessibilité, c’est un mot français.

Ce que le gouvernement propose est un programme qui va leur donner au maximum 1 500 \$ après leurs impôts pour faire ces renouvellements—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Rénovations.

**M. Taras Natyshak:** Rénovations.

Ici, sur le côté néo-démocrate, on pense que ce n’est pas assez d’argent, et qu’on a besoin de faire plus pour les aînés dans cette province qui ont travaillé toute leur vie, qui ont contribué à notre province et qui ont besoin d’un gouvernement qui comprend qu’il y a des « challenges »—

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Des défis.

**M. Taras Natyshak:** —des défis très grands dans cette province, et que le support ne va pas les assister comme le gouvernement le pense. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Merci beaucoup. The member from Simcoe–Grey has two minutes.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Speaker. I’d like to thank the honourable members from Nickel Belt, Missis-

sauga–Brampton South, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Essex for their comments.

The member from Nickel Belt made a very, very good point that very few, if any, seniors come to us asking for a tax credit for home renovations. Most of the ones I can think of over my 22 years are people who had means. They had money, so they could afford their renovations, and if the government had some program, whether it was federal or provincial, they took the grant, but they probably didn't need it. Certainly low-income seniors here and the average senior in Ontario can't afford this legislation.

It's astounding that my colleague the member for Durham brought up the fact—the fact itself is astounding, and I thank the member for Durham—that to qualify for the \$1,500, a senior citizen has to spend the full \$10,000. The maximum grant you can get is \$1,500. So the plan actually costs a senior \$8,500 to participate in Bill 2, and the catch that many of the 1.8 million seniors in Ontario probably don't realize is that if you spend the \$10,000, you'll pay \$1,400 in HST. So, at the end of the day, after the several hours of debate in this House, if you have 10,000 bucks, you'll save \$100.

But the other catch that I've pointed out, and it's been pointed out by many colleagues before me, is that your house can't increase in value. So I don't even know—are we buying ghosts here to put in your house? How are you to do renovations but your house cannot increase in value? I don't understand it, and I don't hear the government talking about that very much. It doesn't make any sense. So go back to the drawing board. Start talking about home care and stuff that's important to seniors in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you to the member from Simcoe–Grey.

The member from Huron–Bruce–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Speaker. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I know you paid particular attention to Mr. Yurek—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, exactly. I may take that over.

Speaker, it's an absolute pleasure to stand up and speak to this bill. In general, it is perceived that seniors have higher levels of disposable income, owing to greater savings and fewer expenses than current the working-age population. However, this perception is wrong for a large percentage of the population.

Here's a sobering fact. Some of the recent downturn and market turmoil is in fact melting away seniors' lifetime savings. The situation, because of the Liberal mismanagement of our economy, is getting very desperate. Seniors are coming into my office—they're in their 60s and 70s—and they're worried that they're going to run out of money, that they're not going to have the ability to stay in their homes. Those who have the option and the

ability are actually going out and getting jobs. They thought they were retired for life, but they're going out and getting jobs, because they're worried about their future. They're worried about their ability to pay their hydro bill, in fact.

The problem with this particular bill is that it's based on dubious facts and assumptions, kind of like their debt and deficit reduction projections. But that's a topic for another day; I've only got 10 minutes, and I can't come anywhere close to speaking about that boondoggle. They've created nine years of this mess; I can't fix it in 10 minutes.

The truth is that statistics show that the percentage of seniors who could benefit from this tax credit is incredibly small. Those people who have the \$10,000 don't need a tax credit to get \$1,500, and as my colleague from Simcoe–Grey says, when you factor in the HST, which equates to \$1,400, they net out at a whopping \$100. Speaker, it's just unbelievable that they actually put their precedence on this; it's crazy, in fact.

In my riding, as of 2006, there were more than 45,000 people over the age of 55 in Bruce and Grey. That accounts for one third of the county's total population. Today that number is higher by 20% in Grey county and by 11% in Bruce county. I know seniors' needs, because we have higher than the provincial average in my riding who are coming to me daily, telling me about their plight and their concerns because of this fiscal mismanagement.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It's a great riding.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It is a great riding. Thank you, sir.

My riding has significantly more seniors than the rest of Ontario, and many of my senior constituents have a median income just shy of \$22,000. That's less than the provincial average of \$33,000. I don't think a \$10,000 tax credit renovation project is in their midst, particularly if we factor in the \$100 net.

So rural and northern communities like Durham, Tara, Tobermory, Lions Head, Chatsworth and many, many other communities in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound paint a very different picture of the financial ability of my seniors. They're in nowhere near a position to spend \$10,000 to get back that ominous \$1,500, nor would I suggest that this is nearly as big a priority as perhaps paying their hydro bill, which is slated for a 46% increase over the next five years under this Liberal government.

Speaker, a look at affordable housing trends in Bruce and Grey proves the disconcerting fact—in fact, this holds true for the rest of the province—that the number of Ontario seniors on social housing waiting lists continues to grow. Forty thousand are seniors, according to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association 2011 report. So this tax credit certainly won't be of much benefit to a large, large number of seniors, especially now, when they are coping with the rising cost, referenced by many of my colleagues, of their home heating bill, the thing that's a priority, a reality that they have. With temperatures starting to turn, those seniors are starting to turn their attention to, “Can I really do that?”

I don't think they're looking for the \$10,000 renovation, particularly when you can't improve your home, as my colleague from Simcoe–Grey pointed out. It kind of sounds like the way the province has ended up. They put a whole bunch of money into it and there isn't a whole lot of improvement. In fact, we're going in the wrong direction at a rapid pace.

Between low-income seniors and seniors living on austerity measures since the beginning of the economic crisis, I wonder just who is going to benefit from this tax credit. Again, very small—I mean, this is window dressing. I think my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London stated it very well: This is window dressing at its very best. It sounds good, but how much will it truly affect people's lives? How much will it really improve a large number of people across our province?

**1700**

We need to be talking about substantive bills. This bill is embarrassing. One of the members, I believe from Guelph, stood up and said that this was the second bill, number 2, but the first one they tabled. That was almost a year ago, and they haven't even been able to get this through the House. If it's so great, why is it not through? Why have they not used their abilities to get this through? Why are we not talking about reducing the \$15.3-billion deficit as our first priority? Why are we not talking about cutting spending so we don't double the debt in eight years, which they're on track to do?

It's really ironic that we would be talking about something here that really is just window dressing. It hits all the buzz words; it's a 30-second sound clip: "We're helping seniors." Mr. Speaker, I disagree, and many of the seniors in my riding disagree. If they were really serious, and it wasn't an election ploy like those gas plants—one of them I heard in this House today was that it's going to cost us a minimum of \$190 million. How much could that have helped our seniors? And the Oakville one I don't think has even really hit the fan yet. It's rumoured to be half a billion dollars. That money, if it wasn't wasted to save a couple of seats, could certainly be helping the multitude of seniors, like my mom, who is on a fixed income and who can't afford to spend \$10,000.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** What about the income tax reform?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** The income tax reform—exactly. That's another boondoggle I'm going to talk about very shortly.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. I would suggest to the member for Essex and the member for Scarborough East—

**Ms. Tracy MacCharles:** Pickering–Scarborough East.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you for that correction, and now my correction comes: If you want to yell across the floor at each other, go outside and do it. I don't want to hear it.

Continue.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. I'll continue to talk about the priorities of Ontarians.

We should be talking about things like debt retirement. We should be talking about how to get people back to work. There are 600,000 people unemployed, and we're talking about a seniors' tax credit that the bulk and the multitude of seniors across our province can't and won't even be thinking about. Let's be serious. They talk about this being immediate. It has been a year and they still haven't been able to. What kind of incompetence is that if you can't get a bill through in less than a year? They need to be talking about the right things; they would get to the floor of this House.

One of my colleagues astutely mentioned again that if we had these committees—if they'd been struck appropriately and in a timely manner, it might have gotten there. Now they're playing games with these committees again so they can bury a lot of the information that they don't want to truly come to light.

It's becoming a bit of a track record. Last week, we read some information about the record of LHINs. In my riding, two of 14 targets were met. If that's the level of success that they're pinning their hopes on for our great province, I am dismayed and disappointed. We need to do better. I keep hearing certain members on the opposite side of the floor saying, "We will do better." It's getting tired.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Nine years.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** They've had nine years.

They need to move forward with some of these bills.

Let's talk about some of the Liberal records on seniors: OHIP service cuts, the mismanagement of our province's health services and taking away a number of these programs that seniors rely on out there. The nixed lump-sum tax returns. Premier Dad decided that he would tell these seniors—who, by the way, built our great province and funded our great province—how they should manage their money: "We'll dole it out as we wish." Was that because he really believed he really was Premier Dad or because he has such a financial mess, he can't afford to pay it in any more than monthly payments? It's ridiculous. I'll give him credit: He backtracked and he came to his senses—he and the finance minister. Next year, the seniors will get back to getting the money that they actually put into the system when they deserve it.

There's more here, Speaker. Increases to seniors under the Liberal government—let's just talk a little bit. Smart meters: Hydro rates have gone up 75% under their watch, and they're actually predicting another 46% increase over the next five years. That's inexcusable and completely unrealistic. Auto insurance, the Ornge fiasco, the gas plants, which I've mentioned already: How much will these truly cost at the end of the year? The Green Energy Act: That boondoggle is going to decimate our kids for generations by the time they pay the debt off of that nightmare. eHealth, eco taxes, physio fees being cut, driver's licence fees increasing: If they really wanted to help seniors, they wouldn't have implemented any of

these things; they would have actually gone backwards and said, “We need to cut the debt so seniors can afford to stay in their homes and they’re not afraid of losing their homes over their pay.”

Speaker, there are 600,000 people out of work. I would suggest to you that this act is not going to do anything to truly get people back to work. It’s not going to do anything to truly help those seniors stay in their homes. If you’ve got \$10,000, you don’t need this piddly little \$100 net to actually allow you to go forward with that. I would trust that most of those people with \$10,000 in the bank are already doing it. They’re not looking for this window dressing type of bill from the government; they’re saying, “Do you know what? You need to address the real issues. You need to address the jobs crisis we have.”

Six hundred thousand people woke up this morning without a job, and 25,000 added. Plus, they’re talking about another 30,000 to 60,000 when they decimate the horse industry, although I do hold out hope. I believe that at the plowing match yesterday I heard the Premier say, “We want to make sure this industry survives; we need to do what we’re going to do to ensure that industry.” Then back the horse back into the barn; admit you made a colossal mistake yet again, and then we’ll move on. Those seniors and those communities who will actually make some money from horse racing may be able to put it back into the economy and the things they wish to do.

Premier Dad is trying to control every part of our life. He has decimated this province over the last nine years. This bill is not going to do it. If we really need, Speaker, let’s talk about some long-term-care beds that I need in my riding, not these home renovation tax credits.

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

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Would the member from Peterborough keep it down a couple of decibels? Thank you.

The member from Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I listened intently to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound; he makes some good points. One of the themes that came out was the lack of this government’s ability to actually listen to what people need and want before implementing legislation. Had they listened to the people in Oakville and Mississauga, they would never have built these plants in the first place, which we opposed from the beginning. Now they taunt us by saying that we wanted them cancelled. Well, we never wanted them built, just like the people who lived in Oakville and Mississauga.

Ditto this bill. Had they consulted with seniors, they would have heard that seniors didn’t ask for this. What they did ask for was long-term-care beds, more hours of help in those beds, home care; that’s what they asked for. And they asked for help with their heating bills, something that we proposed from this side of the House and which this government refused to acknowledge.

Our seniors need affordable housing. That’s something we’ve asked for; that’s something they’re not getting. He pointed out that 40,000 seniors are waiting on affordable housing lists—that, by the way, is up to around 160,000 families now, with an average wait of 10 to 12 years. That’s the poverty level, and many, many of our seniors live in poverty. They don’t have money for renovations of any kind. They want to pay their rent, pay their mortgage, pay their taxes, pay their hydro; they need help with all of the above, and they’re not seeing it from this government.

What’s the root cause, the root problem, here? This government makes decisions based on their own political agenda, the Liberal Party’s agenda, and not based on the needs of the citizens of the province of Ontario. So this is a sound bite for seniors. We’ve had other sound bites for other groups. We had, of course, Bill 115, which was designed to win a by-election in Kitchener–Waterloo—and failed, I might say. They didn’t listen to people, and they continue to not listen to people, and unfortunately—or fortunately—it may be their downfall.

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I’m pleased to rise again to speak on this particular bill, Bill 2. Let me remind my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—the criticism of our government of not passing Bill 2 here. The last I recall, this is a minority government; we are supposed to work together. So your bell ringing and your delay tactics—let’s get that very clear.

Let me remind the members of the House, the purpose of Bill 2 is to support seniors living at home independently and, at the same time, job creation. I recall that your party did not support the eastern Ontario development fund, so we know your position on Bill 2. You don’t support job creation. You may talk from both sides of your mouth that you support employment and you support jobs; you really don’t, because we know your record on supporting job creation.

My constituents from Scarborough–Agincourt, a significant portion of them seniors, live independently at home. They are keen to have this bill passed by this Legislature because they want to stay at home, living longer and living independent at their home. Many of my Chinese seniors in the riding actually live with their extended family members. This particular legislation will actually help those extended family members to renovate their homes so their grandparents and great-aunts can live in the same household.

**1710**

To say that we’re not supporting seniors, not respecting them—that’s absolutely not true. The fact is, the demographics show us that many of the population are aging. We know that by 2020 over 25% of the population will be seniors. You will never have enough long-term-care beds, and the data shows that seniors want to stay in their own homes, not in a long-term-care facility. So we need to address that issue.

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound did a marvellous job wrapping up the many failings and faults of Bill 2.

I want to call on the member for Scarborough–Agin-court, who was talking about how in a minority Parliament we ought to be working together as she was waving and pointing her finger at people. I think working together is not the way to do it by pointing your finger. Anyway, the member for Scarborough–Agin-court has swallowed the encyclopedia of revisionist history, I guess.

Let's get back to the facts here. The fact of the matter is, this Liberal government failed to respect the electorate, failed to respect this Parliament and refused to constitute the committees in a way that represented the electorate's choice in October 2011. Their failure to respect that electorate was the cause of why the committees were not struck. It's also the cause today that the committees are still not reconstituted. When the committees are not constituted, then, of course, bills cannot go forward. Now, it's—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. Order. Point of order?

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** Yes, I have a point of order. The member who's speaking right now is not addressing the comments made by the original speaker. I think his comments should be addressed to the Speaker, according to the standing orders, and not towards a member who's commenting on the original speaker's points. I find that to be amusing but off topic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you for your point of order. It's duly noted. When I feel, as the Speaker, that he has gone too far, I'll be the first to let him know. Thank you for your point of order.

Continue, and try to walk the line.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Absolutely, Speaker.

Once again, when a member puts forward statements that are not entirely in keeping with the record, it's incumbent upon other members to shed some light, and that's what we're doing. This member from Scarborough–Agin-court provided not the complete story to the people of Ontario. We're providing the complete story.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's always very enlightening and very heart-warming to stand up in the House when I hear from other MPPs in their areas—how they're engaging their communities, their constituents, the people who walk their streets.

I just wanted to touch on the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—it's nice to hear that some of the issues that are going on in your area are very similar to what's going on in Algoma–Manitoulin.

The member from Simcoe–Grey also talked about issues that are going on in his area. Those issues are also going on in Algoma–Manitoulin.

The member from Nickel Belt, whom I'm very familiar with—we've talked about this issue. She brought up issues that are very similar that are going on in her area as are going on in Algoma–Manitoulin.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke: The issues that he brought up during the earlier discussions about this bill are also going on in Algoma–Manitoulin.

It's very heartening for me to hear that this message is going on throughout Ontario. The point that I'm trying to make is that the more we talk about it, the more that we bring these issues up as far as being common throughout the entire province, hopefully that message will carry across.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I don't think so.

**Interjection:** I doubt it.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'm an optimistic person. I believe we're all here to try and do the greater good for the entire province—not just some of them, but all of them.

A lot of the issues that I hear as well through this whole process is that we're not hearing that individuals want the credits. What I'm hearing is, people are giving me the difficult stories that they built this entire province. They've worked at this entire province and they want to benefit by staying at home, but they're having problems doing that when their energy bills are increasing and when their MPAC assessments are doubling.

We need to move forward with this. It's a good initiative, but let's tackle the real issues of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has two minutes.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you to the members from Parkdale–High Park, Scarborough–Agin-court, Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, and Algoma–Manitoulin.

I think the speaker from Parkdale–High Park hit it right on the head: The lack of ability of the Liberal government to listen is what got us into this. The gas plants are a prime example. Just think of the money that's going to be wasted: \$190 million to start; it will probably hit \$1 billion. And how much of that is helping our seniors across this wonderful province? We need money. That money could be going to long-term and home care rather than to something like this and the waste that they're doing.

Let's talk about the real needs of seniors. Let's talk about reducing hydro rates that are exorbitant, and they're worried about not being able to turn on the heat. Let's talk about the debt retirement fees that they continue to charge but are not there. Let's talk about the HST.

She talked about minority government working together. I would suggest that our colleagues in the NDP caucus and in ours talked about the HST, and in fact I think outvoted the government, but they just didn't listen to that one. And I think in the horse racing there's a pretty similar example.

Speaker, they talked about—and I was pointed at, which in my view is a lack of respect for me, and I won't

do that. I'll rise above that. But I will point out that I won't stand here and be lectured about things like job creation when they have 600,000 people that are unemployed and 60,000 to be added to that from the horse racing, and a \$15.3-billion deficit and a \$411-billion debt that they've doubled in eight years.

They talk about respect. What about, before this House—we were talking about contempt of the Legislature. How about respect there? How about a Premier and a health minister who will not come before that committee, even though they said that if it was the will of this House—they will not do that. Please don't lecture me in the future about your glaring track record on some of these issues. We need to be talking about seniors. We need to care about those seniors who truly can't pay their bills because of the fiscal mismanagement and the mess you've made of our province.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** It's my pleasure today to speak to Bill 2, Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act. I will tell you that I did have a great opportunity, not only last October, to speak to many seniors in their homes while campaigning in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, but more recently as well in the recent by-elections. It did happen in the summer. They said they weren't going to happen until the fall, but nonetheless, we did catch a few seniors at home and had a great opportunity to listen to some of the concerns that those folks have at the door, the real concerns that they have at the door, talking about some of the costs that are hitting them. I think we've talked and heard about it many times: the fact that hydro continues to increase here in Ontario. Many seniors are in fact afraid of opening up their hydro bills at the end of the month. One man was literally shaking as if he was—it was like a young lad getting his cellphone bill for the first time. You just never know what happens with a cellphone bill.

And we brought those concerns back. I think you've heard my colleague speak to many of those and the fact that we've actually explained to the government time and time again that this bill doesn't actually benefit Ontarians but in fact rather misleads them, I'll say.

If I must applaud the government for one thing—and I will do just one thing today—that would be for their crafty public relations strategies. They're great at branding these bills: fancy, really fresh names to attract votes, of course, but they're really, really good at hiding that fine print—great names, but the fine print is what you need to read. In fact, back to Bill 2, like I said, it actually says one thing but means quite the other. The name suggests that anyone can qualify for a tax credit to renovate their home. That couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, the bill, as written, applies only to seniors or children living with their parent over the age of 65 who can afford to spend up to \$10,000 on very specific types of renovations.

The government is trying to make people believe this bill will make it affordable for seniors who are struggling

to stay in their own homes, but that is simply not true. This bill gives seniors a tax credit of 15% on home renovations to a maximum of \$1,500 a year. That means the senior is still responsible for 85% of the costs. On renovations of \$10,000, a senior will have to pay \$8,500. Now, if the renovation costs \$20,000, that would be over the maximum and the senior would then have to pay \$18,500. For many seniors this is simply not an option; it's unaffordable. Who has \$18,500 these days to be renovating their homes, especially seniors, who, again, are complaining about just rising utility costs each and every month?

**1720**

For those wealthy seniors, they can already afford to make these renovations and won't necessarily need a tax credit anyways. For seniors who live on a pension and within a budget, they will most likely not be able to come up with the 85%. Those who struggle with paying their hydro bills, as I have mentioned, will be focused on spending their money elsewhere—just the basic necessities to allow them to stay in their own home.

You know, my constituents want their hard-earned dollars to go to the right place. Bill 2 will continue to focus attention away from the seniors who need it most rather than implementing effective, bold plans that reduce the cost and size of government and deliver public services on the front line where they are needed the most.

In fact, just today—I'll comment quickly on my colleague's hard work—a constituent of mine was in my office, a family; he is undergoing prostate cancer treatments with a drug, Zytiga, I believe: expensive treatments per month, scraping together every last penny they have to be able to afford this life-saving treatment for folks with prostate cancer. I'll commend my colleague sitting beside me from Huron-Bruce, who took bold action and wrote the Ombudsman to lobby for those men suffering from prostate cancer. We'd like to give special credit to her but also those gentlemen out there who now will be able to continue to afford this treatment and this, I take it, drug that will increase their lives, and those who just simply want to stay at home. Thank you for that.

I just talked about seniors living on a pension. You know what? They have to live within a budget, of course.

They've got to take care of home services—I'm talking home care services—and bring those dollars back to the front lines instead of the bloating bureaucracy that we've seen recently, whether it be with Ornge or eHealth. You know what? We're up to now \$2.4 billion on eHealth and yet five million Ontarians still don't have an electronic health record today. And the 1.2 million folks who suffer from diabetes were hoping that this new diabetes online registry would be, I believe, in effect as of last year. It wasn't; it was delayed. Just recently, in fact today, eHealth and the Liberal government announced that they would be discontinuing that agreement with CGI. So unfortunately, those 1.2 million Ontarians who suffer from diabetes will be further set back.

So, as I had mentioned, my colleagues here on this side in the PC Party, as well as the NDP, have been

calling for more transparency and accountability in government. In fact, I'll thank those folks. Last week, I tabled my bill, Transparency in Government Bills Act, Bill 109, that had the support of the third party, and I'd like to thank them for that, because this government's track record is very much the opposite in terms of being transparent. They continue to hide the required documentation from the people of Ontario and avoid following the rules in this Legislature. Last week, we heard a lengthy ruling from the Speaker on the Minister of Energy, and the path continues.

In fact, just today the Environmental Commissioner said that this government lacks transparency, and almost used the word "contempt," in allowing Ontarians to provide feedback on the Environmental Bill of Rights. So, you know, this is an emerging trend with this government and it's very, very troubling. But since, obviously, the government decided not to support my bill, the government transparency act, through a proper cost-benefit analysis, I'd like to walk Bill 2 through a cost-benefit analysis. Then maybe we can put it to rest, once we realize the cost and benefits of Bill 2. So column one, the cost; column two, the benefits.

I'll begin with the costs.

First, a senior must front the money to renovate their home. In fact, we've found that the people who really need the help to make their home healthier and safer don't have the money to qualify for this tax credit. This means that a senior making \$25,000 must spend up to 40% of their income on home renovations to get less than 1% of their total income back. In a senior's pocketbook, this is a huge cost.

Cost 2: Recall back to the Drummond report—that's the Liberals' hand-picked economist who brought a report out, a long-awaited report. In fact, the Drummond commission made it painfully clear that Ontario is in the mess we're in today because the government has failed to keep spending in line with revenues. The fact that we continue to debate the first bill of this Parliament—the government continues to spend money rather than coming up with bold ideas that actually work, like taking the HST off people's hydro bills, that we talked about in the last campaign. This would actually provide the relief to Ontarians who need it the most.

Cost 3: Thanks to the Liberals' HST, half the tax credit actually goes to cover the increased taxes on home renovations. Even if a senior applies for the tax credit, they will only get enough to pay for the increased cost of the HST, which you could classify as a benefit in the short run, I guess. But when you look deeper into the scenario, the cost outweighs the benefit. The HST increased the cost of tons of products and services. Some of these items have become so expensive for seniors that the money they would otherwise have spent on replacements and renovations around the home now goes to taxes, the taxman—we all know who that is—so that your government can debate on bills like this for far too long. It's so long that almost a year after the Premier promised seniors, on the campaign trail, that they should

go ahead and spend their savings on renovations—they didn't warn those seniors that almost a year after they spent the money, the bill still wouldn't be passed.

Very few low-income seniors can afford to do renovations not knowing whether they would qualify and then have to wait a year for the money. Having it retroactive to last year is really only benefiting those who can actually afford to do the renovations.

You've forced the cost of hydro up by 8%, and taxes, with extensive, expensive green energy experiments. You've revealed that the cost of energy is set to go up 150%. You're making the cost of living simply unaffordable for my constituents in Kitchener–Conestoga and for the rest of Ontarians. Therefore, these costs far outweigh any benefits. In fact, when I have the opportunity—and I continually have the opportunity when I get back into my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga—to speak to them, they don't believe that when government gets bigger, it actually becomes more helpful.

I have a few more comments. I know I'm running out of time here, so I'll have a seat. I've got lots more here on the next round of questioning. I'll turn it over to my colleague—

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's once again an honour to speak to the remarks of the member from Kitchener–Conestoga and to spend more time talking about seniors. He spent time since the election last October, as have I, talking to seniors. I knocked on some doors in the by-election too, talking to seniors close to his region.

Speaker, the cost of heating is a big concern for seniors across the province. The cost of hydro is a big concern for seniors across the province, probably a bigger concern than Bill 2. It's an honour for me, but it's also a responsibility for me to speak on behalf of the seniors in my riding. Last October, one of their biggest issues was home heating, because we heat with oil. Most seniors in our riding don't have access to natural gas, which is much cheaper. But even that—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. Well, folks, it's you again. I can't hear the speaker. When your speaker was speaking, they were quiet. Everybody is talking over the person that's speaking. Once again, could we please keep it down? Last warning—I'm going to start naming people.

Continue.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, Speaker.

One thing has changed considerably in my riding since last October. On September 28, seniors and disabled people will no longer have access to public train transportation in my riding. People like Roslyn Shirley, Lise Lachapelle and Aline Benedetti, who have to come to Toronto for medical treatments, will now have to spend hours on a bus. No more public train transportation—that's their biggest issue—and the seniors in my riding have yet to hear an answer from this government on how that is going to be replaced. Put your mother or your

grandmother on a bus for 10 hours for cancer treatment or for a hip replacement, or for anything like that, and call that Ontario.

1730

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Point of order, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** A point of order from the member from Nepean.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you, Speaker. I have to correct my record. Earlier in debate, I believe I referred to this bill as Bill 75, but it is Bill 2. So I'd like to correct my record to reflect that this is Bill 2, not Bill 75. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Thank you; duly noted.

Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** It was truly a delight to listen to the remarks from my good friend from Kitchener–Conestoga. It's interesting: I was at the IPM yesterday in Roseville, and of course, there were a number of displays. In fact, Home Hardware had a number of displays at the IPM yesterday. I had the opportunity to chat with seniors there—a wonderful lunch at lunchtime, another opportunity to chat with seniors. Some of them were particularly interested in Bill 2. They were wondering when the filibuster was going to—

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, a point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. Point of order.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Earlier, there was a reference to being on the subject of what the speakers were talking about and, of course, what the bill before the House is. I don't believe there's a bill about the IPM on the floor of the House at present.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Actually, he was talking about the International Plowing Match—people he met there. That's not a point of order.

Continue.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your ruling on that point of order, but let me be more specific.

Just a week ago, I had the opportunity to go by Anden Kitchen and Bath on Lansdowne Street West, operated by a good friend, Vance Robbins, who used to coach my son in baseball. He's got a big sign up there that says, "The fall is a good time to do renovations." I thought, "My goodness. Vance and his team of tradespeople there"—it's a wonderful company, right beside Peterborough Dodge Chrysler, another great organization in Peterborough. I know they're anticipating the demand. As soon as we get Bill 2 passed, the number of seniors who will be going in to see Vance and his team, asking him for renovation plans to make their bathtubs and their homes more accessible for seniors—those seniors who lack mobility and have some challenges getting into their bathtubs, have some challenges with their kitchens etc.—they're looking forward. It has been estimated that some 380,000 people may take advantage of this particular initiative that we have proposed.

Hopefully, the filibuster will stop, we'll get this bill passed and everybody will get to Anden Kitchen and Bath.

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

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** I've heard, throughout the debate this afternoon, some very good points made on this side of the chamber. My esteemed colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound alluded to the simple fact that this does nothing for the seniors who need it most.

Again, when I was talking to the bill earlier, when I'm out door-knocking in my community, the great riding of Northumberland–Quinte West, I listen to what the seniors have to say. I can honestly say I have not heard one senior on the street or call my office or call me at home and say that this is something that is imperative: "I need this in order to stay in my home"—not one, Mr. Speaker; not one. Yet my esteemed colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound pointed to the fact that these seniors need help to stay in their homes. This is not the way to go about it. They're forced to pay an exuberant amount of money for their property taxes and their skyrocketing hydro and home heating.

This is where this government has been sort of misleading the people, saying that they are trying to help seniors when, in fact, that's not the case, not just in Northumberland–Quinte West but across this great province of Ontario. I stand here today saying that this is a piece of legislation that does nothing.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sorry for being slow in reacting there.

It's always nice to hear a lot of the comments that are being made.

I can stand here proudly and say that I don't need a lecture in regard to how we can work together in this House. I think that I, along with my colleagues here, have demonstrated to the entire province and to all Ontarians what it actually takes to build those bridges in order to get certain things accomplished, to have those tough discussions in regard to moving the sticks forward, opening up the doors to make sure that what Ontarians are expecting us to do here and the goals they've sent us here for get accomplished for them.

I can stand here proudly with my colleagues and say that not all the members in here, but some of the members that are in here, and all of the members within our caucus, are actually doing that. I'm very proud to look across the way at some of my colleagues in our neighbouring caucus. I'm sure they have their hearts and their minds in the right direction as far as what it takes to get certain things accomplished. So I can certainly stand here and say I don't need to be lectured in regard to what it takes to be working together in order to get things accomplished.

I can proudly stand here and say, on behalf of the people of Algoma–Manitoulin, that I know what they need, as far as what they need as seniors. It's not going to



be a handle in the shower that's going to help them through the tough times we're going through. Those are not the answers they're looking for. The answers that they're looking for are getting the HST removed off their hydro bill and getting the home care that they need. Those are the tough issues that we really need to handle, and working together, we'll get that done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Kitchener-Conestoga has two minutes.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to obviously recognize the folks who lent their voices to the discussion on Bill 2. Of course, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, the member opposite from Peterborough and the member for Northumberland-Quinte West, I do appreciate your comments.

I just want to build upon, obviously, the member from Algoma-Manitoulin's comment on working together. Not only do we want to work together, but I think it's every member's intent in this Legislature to be able—to want—to help seniors, especially seniors who want to stay and live in their own homes for as long as possible. Truly, the problem with this particular bill, Bill 2, is that the people who actually need the help the most won't benefit from this bill.

Members on this side of the House obviously believe that rather than implementing a tax credit that barely covers the increased cost of the sales tax, Ontarians would be better off if the government took a better look at policy to improve the lives of our seniors, especially those who want to remain in their own homes. In fact, it saddens me that seniors fear opening up that hydro bill each and every month to find yet another heightened hydro bill. I opened mine last month, and it was well over \$300. We weren't operating any differently, but it was rather expensive. I can only imagine some of those seniors living on a fixed income—seeing their faces after they've opened up their hydro bills.

At the end of the day, seniors want a government that actually works for them and is governing this province on good policy, not obviously strategizing on public relations antics.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me this opportunity to speak to this bill and to speak to the many seniors in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga. I hope I have lent my voice to that.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I welcome and appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 2. I actually had to take a second look, a double take. Bill 2 goes back to sometime last fall, just after the election, and just suggests to me the low priority that the Liberals opposite have attributed to this proposed legislation.

1740

It's titled the healthy homes renovation tax credit. We're going almost a year now; today is September 19. I guess, if anything, it allows us a bit of an opportunity to generate some discussion of how we can be better enabled to provide legislation and provide services for

seniors, for all seniors, and in particular seniors who, with age, are developing mobility problems, have trouble functioning in a home, and in particular those seniors who are disabled—may well have been disabled for a number of years—but we have to do this in a cost-effective manner. There has to be a plan that has to be managed. You're not going to accomplish much with these kinds of one-off grants and loans and piecemeal projects that come out. A lot of people don't even hear about them, and then they're over with by the time the word gets out.

You know, to do this properly, we have to focus—we all have to focus. There's no doubt that this province is facing some very serious economic realities. This government alone is facing some very serious fiscal realities, and for that reason, focus—focus and refocus and concentrate. Concentrate on provincial services in the areas we are talking about here: seniors and people with disability issues. Focus on the old, focus on the sick, focus on the disabled, focus on people who have a real need.

We know the state of the economy. We've seen the crushing impact of Ontario's economic decline. The province is obviously overtaxed. It has a spending problem; it does not have a revenue problem. It does not have a revenue problem yet, anyway, and we are staring down the barrel of unsustainable debt. As well—and we all know this as parliamentarians—people, particularly taxpayers, are demanding a much better return on their tax deposits to this particular government. On the same hand—and this certainly is evident when we're back in our constituency offices—there's yet a continued and never-ending, growing list of wants and needs from people. This tax credit falls in that category.

So how best to make decisions with respect to the allocation of what are very clearly scarce budget resources—this is our quest in debating this particular legislation—while at the same time acknowledging our shared responsibility to help those who are truly in need? And again, I think of seniors with a disability. They are struggling, through no fault of their own, and it's clearly incumbent on all of us—it's incumbent on government—to reach out and provide the support in a fair and accountable manner, while fostering as best we can—and it is difficult when money gets shovelled out the door—individual responsibility through as many people as possible.

This legislation, the healthy homes renovation tax credit, proposes to provide support through a new permanent, refundable personal income tax credit, assisting with the cost of permanent home modifications that improve accessibility or help a senior to be more functional and more mobile in their home. If that were the end of the story, Speaker, if this bill could be taken at face value, then I would have no problem supporting this proposed legislation. However, on further examination, it really does become clear that if the aim of this bill is to help seniors—to help all seniors—it fails miserably. If the aim of this bill is to help those in Ontario with

disabilities, it is not up to the mark. As has been explained this afternoon, it's only available—in fact, this was explained last year—to help a certain number of individuals, a certain number of seniors, if they have a certain amount of money, anywhere up to \$10,000 to spend on renovations. Specifically, this is because of the fact that the bill benefits only a tiny segment of the population, if they even hear about the opportunity, if this thing does come to fruition.

The fact is, Speaker, that while this government may have in mind something like 1.8 million seniors, and these people, if the word does get out on this legislation—I don't think anybody has really heard about it yet. It has been over a year and actually was raised by the government as a potential vote-getter in the election. If you've got 1.8 million seniors believing they're going to get \$1,500 from the government to make their homes more accessible—most of them, unfortunately, won't qualify financially for the \$1,500 maximum credit in the first place. For \$1,500—that's the credit you get—you've got to run up a reno bill of something like \$10,000.

I think of seniors who contact my office looking for advice, looking for support. Most would not be expecting or in any way would be prepared to shell out 10 grand to get 15% back or get the \$1,500 back. Poor seniors, low-income seniors, the ones who are in the most urgent need of government support to increase accessibility, would be no more readily able to pay \$8,500 of the \$10,000 to even get through the door of this healthy homes program.

If you look at the numbers, it doesn't seem to add up. The median income for those 1.8 million seniors in Ontario is something like \$25,000 a year, or \$45,000 for a couple. Who among us—who in that category would be able to shell out half of our income for needed renovations? How do you expect seniors to pay \$10,000 on a \$25,000 median income? Meanwhile, while increasing accessibility and mobility is clearly a priority as one gets older, to be sure, but what of those seniors who have other deficiencies in their homes that they would like to spend some money on?

Homes get older, Speaker, just like people do. Periodically, you need a new roof; you need a new chimney. You've got to put fresh gravel down on your driveway. You deal with increasingly inefficient windows, furnaces, the jacking up of energy bills to levels beyond the means of someone particularly on a fixed income, and I bet a dollar to a doughnut that anybody here who knocked on doors in the last election heard about the problems paying the bills and heard about the problems paying the electricity bills. These are the kinds of issues I was hearing about.

My question: How does the healthy homes legislation help in these situations? It doesn't apply. It's not going to help out with an electricity bill.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** You've got to have an open mind, my friend.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I don't know what that comment was about. We could maybe put that in Hansard and figure it out later.

Instead of providing a real hand up for seniors and their housing concerns, what I see is a somewhat weak-kneed, vacuous approach, a healthy homes approach. I guess the government felt they could play up their support for seniors while ignoring the fact that there is little of that actual support forthcoming. I put it down in the category of window dressing.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I couldn't resist the opportunity to comment on the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. I think he summed up everything that people are thinking here today. He realizes that this is actually a bit of a shell game.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's a sham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I didn't say that, but it's possibly the right word.

**1750**

Here's the issue; here's how cynical things are. Some people will recall that the Liberals have what they call a trillium tax credit. I'd like you to pay attention. They have the trillium tax credit. Mr. Speaker, you know that used to be paid out in a lump sum. All of us in the House, if you're listening to your constituents at all, you know that they were very upset that you stopped paying it—I see Mr. Leal nodding—in a lump sum. That lump sum used to go towards—member from Haldimand-Norfolk—those jobs that come up every once in a while: getting the driveway paved, fixing the chimney, getting a new furnace. What happened?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Listen up. The member from Peterborough, you need to listen more. Here's the issue: They realized they've made a mistake because they didn't consult with people. This is a contradiction, because this was the very thing that would have helped in this case of doing home renovations, the lump sum payment. But what they've done now is they've come up with this new game, which is a game. They've only allotted, I think, \$60 million to it, which is over a couple of years. And he said it very clearly: The average income is something under \$25,000 for a lot of these families. They're still taxing them on this income. Now, if you spend \$1,000, you're going to pay \$130 in tax—13%—and they're going to give you back 10%. So you've spent \$130 on tax on the \$1,000. It's disgusting; it's a sham.

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

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** I'm delighted to make a few comments on the presentation by the member from Haldimand-Norfolk. Let me say that it seems, by listening to the members on the other side, that there is ample support for the bill. If that is the case indeed, then I think we should move this bill forward as quickly as possible. There is no reason to delay it any more because we've already had, if I'm right, some 28 hours of debate. If they are saying they agree, even though it does not help all the seniors, then I think we should move on the bill and

make it law so those 380,000 seniors could benefit from the content of this bill.

I call on the members of the House, Speaker. We already had 28 hours of debate, so let's move the bill forward. Let's give a chance to the seniors who want to stay in their house longer and enjoy the privacy and comfort of their own homes, give them that possibility.

We all know in the House that not every bill that we approve in this House benefits 100% of our Ontario people. These benefits are particularly addressed to those seniors and those family members that want to continue to live more comfortably in their homes.

The fact is that this is a benefit that is renewable year after year, so as there is a need and there's the possibility of correcting and making their lives more accessible to live in their own homes, this bill provides that facility. And I think we shouldn't be losing sight of the fact that if there are 387,000 seniors, then we should be doing this.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Once again it's a pleasure to speak to, as I referred to earlier, Bill 2. Our caucus is enjoying having the fulsome debate that is required for this piece of legislation. As you are aware, Speaker, the reason we are in this assembly is because we debate issues of the day.

Now, as I stated when it was my opportunity to address this piece of legislation back a week ago, this bill was named Bill 2, the second piece of legislation put forward—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** Stop the clock. The two members on that side, if you'd like to speak, you usually stand up, but it appears you're standing up talking. All right? Either sit down or go outside and talk.

Continue.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you, Speaker. I know this isn't exactly on topic, but I want to warn the new member from Vaughan that he is with the member from Durham, and I know you're from opposite sides, but if you learn from the member from Durham you're going to be in a lot of trouble from the Speaker if that continues. I've known this member for a great number of years and I admire and respect him. However, he could get a newer member in trouble, so I warn you on that.

As I've stated numerous times in this House, Bill 2 was the second piece of legislation put forward by the McGuinty government after it assumed office once again in 2011—second piece of legislation. The first is not really a piece of legislation we debate; it is the ancient right of Parliament that we put forward, and it lies here in perpetuity until the House falls and we go into an election.

Bill 2: Eleven months later, we're still debating this legislation. This is apparently a priority of the government to help seniors. Well, that's not what the will of the House is. The will of the House was to support seniors by

removing the HST off of home heating. That was the first piece of legislation that passed this House. Of course, it came from our friends over at the NDP. My good friend from Algoma-Manitoulin put forward the legislation, and we supported it in the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. We still maintain that that would have been the opportunity that we could have used here in this assembly, and that's why we cannot, at this point in time, continue to support this government.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** At this late hour and after having spoken so many times, it's not quite a pleasure anymore to speak to the healthy homes renovation tax credit.

But there's one thing that struck me from the member from York West: that we should get on with it, and it could help so many seniors. But if this bill goes ahead, what it should say when the PR comes forward, the ads, is, "Help for select seniors."

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** No, really. Then, you know what? I'm going to be stuck, and we're all going to be stuck with, "I'm sorry, ma'am, but you don't qualify." You know what? That's the problem with a lot of this—I'm new here. A lot of us are new here. But that's a problem with a lot of this legislation: The big headline sounds a lot better than what's actually happening. If you show us the numbers, that 380,000 seniors can actually pay for this and still pay for their heat and still pay for vegetables, then you know what? Then you've done your job. But just to shove numbers out—380,000 seniors and—a lot of seniors who are still in their own homes have trouble paying for groceries, have trouble paying for heat, and something like the HST coming off would make a bigger difference to them than having to borrow \$10,000 to basically get their HST back.

Please, when this bill, if it passes—please make it "Help for select seniors," seniors who could afford it in the first place. Then we've all done our jobs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** The member from Haldimand-Norfolk has two minutes.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Well, the member for Durham made reference to this debate and that what's going on here is a bit of a shell game. I maybe wouldn't use those words. I would use the word "sham" or "show and tell." In fact, I really consider this more than a sham. I think it goes beyond a sham or a game. I think the member from Durham referred to the word "game." It goes beyond that: a sham and illusion in my mind.

Why would I refer to this as a show and a sham? The reason we're debating yet again more spending on a program whose efficacy is somewhat suspect I think can be summed up in a couple of numbers. One number that comes to mind: \$411.4 billion. Everyone in this House knows that is the debt projected by Don Drummond for the year 2017-18. The other number that comes up: \$30.2 billion, the deficit projected, again for that same time period. This is a spend bill.

I appreciated the comments. The member from York West said, “Well, there’s no reason to delay it anymore.” We do question why the government delayed it for so long. This is a government bill. We wonder what happened here. It’s something that was introduced last fall.

Further to that, the member for Nepean–Carleton, first of all, had to talk about the member for Durham. But she made reference to Bill 1, the ancient parliamentary right. Bill 2 is essentially Bill 1; 2 is 1.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane alluded to the lengthy debate. We recognize that. He also alluded—

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

*Third reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller):** It being 6 o’clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o’clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
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<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	







Continued from back cover

**Eastern Ontario development**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	3673
Hon. Brad Duguid .....	3673

**Electronic health information**

Mr. Michael Harris .....	3673
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	3673

**Correctional services**

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	3674
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	3674

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /  
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	3674
-------------------------	------

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /  
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

**Rosh Hashanah**

Mr. Peter Shurman .....	3674
-------------------------	------

**Casinos**

Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	3675
------------------------	------

**Telemedicine**

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	3675
------------------------	------

**Peter Lougheed**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	3675
----------------------	------

**Wedding anniversary celebration**

Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	3675
--------------------------	------

**War of 1812 re-enactment**

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	3676
-----------------------	------

**Avon Maitland District School Board**

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....	3676
----------------------------	------

**Ottawa Little Theatre**

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	3676
-----------------------	------

**IPF Awareness Month**

Mr. Bill Walker .....	3676
-----------------------	------

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**First Responders Day Act, 2012, Bill 123, Mr. Klees /  
Loi de 2012 sur le Jour des premiers intervenants,  
projet de loi 123, M. Klees**

First reading agreed to .....	3677
Mr. Frank Klees .....	3677

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

**Air quality**

Mr. John O'Toole .....	3677
------------------------	------

**Ontario Northland Transportation Commission**

Mr. John Vanthof .....	3677
------------------------	------

**Electoral reform**

Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	3677
-------------------------	------

**Health care funding**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman .....	3678
--------------------------	------

**Replacement workers**

Mme France Gélinas .....	3678
--------------------------	------

**Radiation safety**

Mr. Reza Moridi .....	3678
-----------------------	------

**Aggregate extraction**

Mr. Jim Wilson .....	3678
----------------------	------

**Air-rail link**

Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	3679
------------------------	------

**Transportation infrastructure**

Mr. Phil McNeely .....	3679
------------------------	------

**Hospital parking fees**

Mr. John O'Toole .....	3679
------------------------	------

**Ontario Northland Transportation Commission**

Mme France Gélinas .....	3680
--------------------------	------

**Electoral reform**

Ms. Soo Wong .....	3680
--------------------	------

**Dog ownership**

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	3680
-------------------------	------

**ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**

**Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, 2012,  
Bill 2, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2012 sur le crédit  
d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur  
le bien-être, projet de loi 2, M. Duncan**

Mr. Randy Hillier .....	3680
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	3681
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield .....	3682
Mr. John O'Toole .....	3682
Mr. John Vanthof .....	3682
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	3683
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	3683
M. Michael Mantha .....	3684
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	3685
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	3685
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	3685
Mrs. Julia Munro .....	3686
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	3686
Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	3687

Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	3688
Mr. Randy Pettapiece .....	3688
Mr. John Vanthof.....	3688
Mr. Jeff Yurek .....	3689
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	3689
Mme France G�linas.....	3691
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	3691
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	3691
M. Taras Natyshak.....	3691
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	3691
Mr. Bill Walker.....	3692
Ms. Cheri DiNovo .....	3694
Ms. Soo Wong.....	3694
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	3695
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	3695
Mr. Bill Walker.....	3695
Mr. Michael Harris .....	3696
Mr. John Vanthof.....	3697
Mr. Jeff Leal .....	3698
Mr. Rob E. Milligan .....	3698
Mr. Michael Mantha.....	3698
Mr. Michael Harris .....	3699
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3699
Mr. John O'Toole .....	3700
Mr. Mario Sergio .....	3700
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	3701
Mr. John Vanthof.....	3701
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3701
Third reading debate deemed adjourned.....	3702

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 19 September 2012 / Mercredi 19 septembre 2012

### ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

#### **Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012, Bill 75, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2012 sur la Société d'exploitation du réseau d'électricité de l'Ontario, projet de loi 75, M. Bentley**

Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	3653
Mr. Michael Mantha .....	3654
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	3655
Mr. John O'Toole.....	3655
Mr. Monte McNaughton .....	3655
Miss Monique Taylor.....	3655
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	3657
Mr. Randy Pettapiece .....	3657
M. Michael Mantha.....	3657
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	3658
Miss Monique Taylor.....	3658
Mr. Norm Miller .....	3658
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	3660
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	3660
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	3660
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	3660
Mr. Norm Miller .....	3661
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	3661
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	3662

#### **Introduction of members for Vaughan and Kitchener-Waterloo**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	3663
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3663
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	3663

#### **Annual report, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario**

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	3663
------------------------------------	------

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Steven Del Duca.....	3663
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	3663
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	3663
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	3663
Mr. Randy Hillier .....	3663
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	3664
Mr. Michael Harris.....	3664
Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	3664
Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	3664
Hon. Michael Chan .....	3664

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	3664
Mr. Joe Dickson .....	3664
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) .....	3664

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### **Ontario public service**

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	3664
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3664

#### **Ontario public service**

Mr. Tim Hudak.....	3665
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3665

#### **Power plants**

Ms. Andrea Horwath .....	3666
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3666
Hon. John Milloy .....	3666

#### **Power plants**

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	3667
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3667
Hon. John Milloy .....	3667

#### **Power plants**

Mr. Rob Leone .....	3667
Hon. John Milloy .....	3668

#### **Job creation**

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	3668
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	3668

#### **Health care**

Mr. Steven Del Duca.....	3669
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	3669

#### **Power plant**

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	3669
Hon. John Milloy .....	3669

#### **Employment standards**

Mr. Taras Natyshak .....	3670
Hon. Linda Jeffrey.....	3670

#### **Arbitration**

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	3670
Hon. Linda Jeffrey.....	3671

#### **Power plants**

Mr. Ted Arnott .....	3671
Hon. John Milloy .....	3671

#### **Hunting and fishing**

Ms. Sarah Campbell .....	3672
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	3672

*Continued on inside back cover*