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Monday 17 November 2014

Lundi 17 novembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 November 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 novembre 2014

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Wendy Eaton, the mother of Nicole Eaton, who is the page captain today at Queen's Park.

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to introduce Mansoor Lakhani and his wife, Salima Lakhani. They are the parents of Moiz Lakhani, who is the first page from Ottawa South since I've gotten to this Legislature. Welcome to them.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to welcome our friends from the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance and the Chicken Farmers of Ontario to the House today.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to welcome student leaders from the U of T Students' Union and the U of T Association of Part-Time Undergraduate Students. They are here somewhere.

Hon. Jeff Leal: We've already welcomed the chicken farmers here today, but I'd also like to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park today: Don Taylor, from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers; Gerard Schouwenaar, from Flowers Canada (Ontario); and Jan VanderHout, president of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance. They have a reception at lunchtime today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With us today in the west gallery we have a very learned group, representatives of the Canadian Federation of University Women. We're glad you're joining us today, and be kind to us. Welcome.

We've got time for another introduction, if there is one.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It took a while, Speaker, but I found somebody I know. I see Paul Kossta all the way up there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: For a second time, thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Henry Zantingh, from the Chicken Farmers of Ontario; and Michael Burrows, from the Association of Ontario Chicken Processors; as well as some of the board of directors, who are on both sides, east and west, of the members' gallery.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and to the House today Wendy Marshall, who operates a daycare called Pumpkin Patch. She's co-

president of the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to take a moment to thank all members for their province-wide attendance at our remembrance week activities. I think it's fair to announce that all of us shared the same concerns that we all have in the province of Ontario. I want to bring credit to all the members in the House for their constant vigilance in our communities across the province to always remember our veterans: yesterday's veterans and today's veterans. So congratulations to all members, and thank you for your participation.

The member for Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Social Policy's consideration of Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will deal with the first motion, which is to put a motion without notice. Do we have permission to put a motion without notice on the floor?

I heard a no.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After that no, you can see why I moved myself down the row.

My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier. Today, your government will release its fall economic statement. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said that "Ontarians should be very concerned" about the direction in which the province is heading.

1040

Your inability to take urgent action is costing hard-working Ontarians over \$11 billion in interest annually to pay for Liberal waste and mismanagement. That's taxpayers' money that could be invested in front-line health care, first-rate education, reliable roads and transit.

The interim report by Ed Clark is proof your government will not make the tough decisions to reduce spending to balance the books, because you directed him to

tinker around the edges. Premier, will you admit that today's fall economic statement will do nothing to tackle the urgency raised by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let me say that it is always a pleasure and a privilege to work with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I know that the summit that was held just a number of days ago was very, very productive. They, in their report, which I believe is called Emerging Stronger—which actually reflects what is going on in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, having come out of the economic downturn and still recovering, but strength is exactly the direction that we're going in. The fact that over 550,000 jobs have been created in Ontario since the 2009 recessionary low, the fact that the unemployment rate is at 6.5%, the lowest unemployment rate since October 2008—those are indicators of just how this province is emerging stronger than ever, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, Premier, we remember the Drummond report, and we're seeing it again in Ed Clark's interim report. You cannot balance the budget on the backs of beer drinkers.

Today's fall economic statement will confirm what Drummond and Clark have already told us: that the Liberal government will not make those tough decisions. They will not rein in spending. They will continue to dig Ontario deeper in an economic hole despite how many reports you end up commissioning. Commuters, students and seniors will suffer because of this government's reckless mismanagement.

Premier, will you finally come clean to Ontarians in your fall economic statement and admit that you have no hope to balance the budget by 2017-18?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me just answer the statement in his question about the reports that we have asked for.

The Drummond report: Over 80% of the recommendations that Don Drummond put forward, we have acted upon. There is chapter and verse on that, and the member opposite knows that. He knows full well that that information was available in our budget, and he can access it any time.

In terms of the recommendations that have been put forward in the interim report by Ed Clark and his panel, we ran on the reality and the expectation that we would be maximizing our assets, maximizing the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. The commission has given us advice, and we are going to follow through on that. He will see that in our fall economic statement, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Back again to the Premier: Ontario's projected \$12.5-billion deficit this year is larger than every other province and the federal government combined. There is really nothing complicated about deficits and the debt. They're simply deferred taxes that will have to be paid for by future generations and inevit-

able cuts to public services. Paying off Ontario's debt alone, without reducing the annual debt by one penny, costs provincial taxpayers almost \$11 billion annually, more than the province pays for any other public service aside from front-line health care and education.

Premier, will your fall economic statement truthfully tell Ontarians that because of your out-of-control spending we will continue to waste billions of dollars on debt interest payments, and will you finally admit you have no plan to balance the books?

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The President of the Treasury Board beside me is asking for one idea from the opposite side in terms of how we could continue to emerge—an idea apart from cutting 100,000 jobs, because that actually is an idea that would hold us back.

So let's look at the facts. Ontario's unemployment rate is 6.5%, the lowest unemployment rate since October 2008. October's net job numbers: up 37,000 jobs in Ontario in October. Over 90% of those are full-time, Mr. Speaker. Ontario continues to be first in North America for foreign direct investment.

The reality is that we are emerging stronger. The member opposite says that's a simple thing. It's actually not. There are many fronts on which we have to operate. One is working with the private sector to make sure that jobs are created; another is investing in infrastructure, and that is the work we are doing right now.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, for the past month, we've asked you and your government to provide a business case for MaRS phase 2. For the past month, you've never once acknowledged that a business case exists. On Thursday, your government released 700 pages of documents that we requested a month ago, yet, once again, no business case. But now it's crystal clear: You told the media you believe you did release a business case.

Minister, that's not a business case and it's not due diligence. A building appraisal is not a market study, nor is it a feasibility study. Why was a business case never done by either MaRS or the ministry to determine what the rental market was for a research space in Toronto?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I was pleased, last week, that we were able to release over 700 pages of documentation that showed an incredible amount of due diligence done by Infrastructure Ontario with regard to the loan the member's referring to.

I think what Ontario taxpayers want to know is, what did the PCs feel about the idea—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: —to ensure that MaRS phase 2 did not rot in the ground. That's why we put that loan forward.

What the member also needs to recognize—because I haven't heard him say this—is that this loan is fully

secured and will be fully repaid. So when the member suggests, wrongly, that somehow taxpayer dollars have been spent on this with regard to this loan, he's absolutely wrong.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, we shouldn't be surprised that you can't tell the difference between an appraisal and a business case. You couldn't tell the difference between a gas plant and a ballot box. You couldn't tell the difference between a franking sticker and a postage stamp.

What amazes me, Minister, is how you still have a job in this Liberal cabinet. You have quite the knack for having other people resign for your mistakes. I hope you're planning on sending a Christmas card to your former colleague from London West, as well as your former staffer.

Minister, will you provide the estimates committee with any market study that either MaRS or IO undertook prior to you signing off on the \$235-million loan, or will you finally admit one was never done?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I understand that the member's the critic. I understand that the opposition's role is to critique government policies. They are entitled to their opinions. They're not entitled to their facts, and the facts are the facts. The fact is, the loan to MaRS is 100% fully secured. The other fact is that if his party were in office, they would have let that building rot in the ground. Some 51,000 jobs exist in the bioscience cluster. We're going to—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: Speaker, every document requested has been released to the public through the media and to the committee. That's being open and transparent. What those documents do is, they confirm what we've been saying all along: The investment is fully secured and it's a loan that will be repaid. The taxpayers' investment is protected. We'll continue to invest in building a strong bioscience cluster in Ontario.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, I think we should all be concerned with your competency as a minister of the crown. Not only do you not know what an actual business case looks like, you also weren't clear on how far you would go to bail out MaRS. You boasted to the media that you were only prepared to pay \$7.1 million in interest. You were only partially accurate. You neglected to mention that you were legally obliged to pay \$7.1 million for the next 15 years, for a total of \$106.5 million. We know you can't tell the difference between \$40 million and \$1 billion, but I thought you might have taken a math class in your time at MTCU.

Minister, can you tell the difference between \$7.1 million and \$106.5 million, or the difference between one year and 15 years?

1050

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, seriously? That member wants us to take math lessons from the PC Party?

Do you remember last June? It wasn't that long ago. Too bad you weren't in charge of your party's platform. Maybe the math would have been correct, because you sound like such a brilliant mathematician.

But Mr. Speaker, if the member is such a brilliant mathematician, he would know and he would listen to the fact that we've been open and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is last time I provide anyone with an opportunity not to be mentioned by riding.

Finish, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I said earlier on that the member is entitled to his opinion, and he's entitled to his rhetoric as well, but right now, that's the only thing coming out of his mouth: blind rhetoric. The fact of the matter is, he can fabricate the facts all he wants. The facts are the facts. The loan is fully secured and will be 100% repaid—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: To the Premier: Since 2002, privatizing energy generation has driven up hydro bills by more than 300%. The PCs started this job. You seem intent on finishing the job.

Now the Premier is planning to privatize energy distribution. How much will Ontarians see their bills go up when the Premier privatizes hydro distribution?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just begin by saying that we made it very, very clear in our budget, then when ran in June, on our platform, and then again when we reintroduced our budget that we were going to do a review of the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario and that we were going to make sure that we were maximizing their benefit to the people of Ontario because in 2014 and going forward, we need to make investments in infrastructure, like transit—like transit to Kitchener–Waterloo—and like investments in roads and bridges around the province. We need to make those investments. In order to do that, we need to make sure that all of the assets owned by the people of Ontario are performing at their very highest capacity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Premier, Ed Clark says that there are tax barriers to privatizing Hydro One's distribution network and our local hydro utilities—that's his language. So the Liberals are going to get rid of those tax barriers. How much will these tax changes cost the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just go back to the issue around the assets, because I think it's very, very important that we understand that what Mr. Clark and his colleagues are talking about is working with the distribution part of the province, which is not as efficient as it could be, which does not function in a way that actually maximizes the benefit to the people of the province. In fact, there is the potential that there would be a reduction or at least a slowing down of the increase of rates, not an

increase. If the member opposite reads the report that was put out last week, she will see that.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I did read the report. On page 9 of Ed Clark's privatization report, he writes, "OPG's portfolio includes assets—specifically its hydroelectric generating stations other than the large hydroelectric stations at Niagara Falls and on the St. Lawrence River—that could be sold to finance additional investments in provincial infrastructure. There is an active market for such assets."

Will the Premier rule out selling OPG's hydro dams, and will you do it today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, I would like to ask the member opposite her opinion on the nine private power-generating plant agreements that the NDP put in place when they were in office, because at that time, the NDP obviously believed that it was possible to work with the private sector and that it was in the best interests of the people of the province to work together and to not hold on to an ideology that says that government and private sector should not work together. I don't adhere to that ideology. Apparently, the NDP in the past had the ability to work co-operatively with the private sector. Apparently, that's been lost, certainly in this member's mind.

What we believe is that making sure that the assets that are owned by the people of this province work to their best capacity and to the best advantage of the people of the province so that we can make the investments that are needed now—that's what we believe needs to happen.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know, it's not ideology when you follow the numbers, because the numbers don't lie. The numbers are accurate.

Again to the Premier: Today, Ontarians will see the fall economic statement. Will it tell Ontarians how much their hydro bills are going to go up after the Premier privatizes Hydro One distribution lines, privatizing local hydro utilities and perhaps—she didn't rule it out—privatizing OPG hydro dams? Will you tell them how much it's going to cost?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I would say to the member that the government and the Premier have made it very, very clear to the asset committee that if there is any increase in price that comes from any of what is being contemplated now, we will not be going forward with it.

Additionally, I want to say that you effectively voted against a budget that had two significant mitigation prices for the people of the province of Ontario: (1) the elimination of the debt retirement charge and (2) the Ontario Energy Board is in the process now, under our budget, of creating a program for low- and middle-income people to mitigate the rates that they have. You and your

party voted against that. You campaigned against it. Shame on you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: We voted against an austerity budget with 6% cuts in many ministries across this province. That's what we voted against. And we wouldn't need mitigation terms if—the cost of hydro keeps going up and up and up, and people can't afford it.

Really, what is happening here is that the Premier doesn't know how much her plan is going to cost rate-payers. She doesn't know that, nor does the Minister of Energy. She doesn't know how much her tax changes will cost the province's bank account. Why is the Premier moving ahead with privatizing assets when she doesn't know what her plans will mean for the people of this province?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I appreciate the member's concern about electricity prices. We have done a significant number of things to mitigate future increases, including the NUGs, non-utility generators, which are 20-year-old power purchase contracts which other governments put in place. They're coming up for renewal, and the OPA is negotiating a lower price in order to suppress the pressure on prices. One of the members from the New Democratic Party is encouraging us to pay more for private purchase of that power on a renewal contract, so they are talking out of both sides of their mouths.

I don't have the time to go into many of the other price mitigation measures that we have put in place, but they are significant. It's a priority for us, and it's working.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Perhaps the problem is that the Liberal government doesn't really understand what privatization is, they've used so many words to describe it: "P3s," "alternative finance"—

Interjection: "Modernizing."

Ms. Catherine Fife: "Modernizing." Maybe that is the problem. For over a decade, the Liberal government has shown a sense of entitlement and arrogance when it comes to a government that belongs to the people of this province. They thought they knew best with eHealth and Ornge and gas plants, and now they're saying that they know best about the public assets that are owned by Ontarians.

The Premier said that she would be different, so why do we see the exact same Liberal arrogance here in this House today?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In our procurement for our power, we have programs in place which are very, very egalitarian, if I can put it that way, and which also help to suppress prices.

Among those are our programs for First Nations. We have had more First Nations participate in our power purchasing process than ever in the history of this province. We have in our renewable process incentives for aboriginal communities to get involved. We have loan programs for aboriginal communities.

We have many things in all of our processing of our electricity contracts that help people in this province, and

many of them are used to suppress pressures on prices. We're very proud of that record.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, your Bill 10 hearings begin today and will be quickly finished by tomorrow evening. Groups such as the Association of Day Care Operators of Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Independent Schools, Ontario First Nations daycare associations and francophone daycare associations have been left completely out of the hearings. These groups represent tens of thousands of daycare spaces across our province.

1100

Minister, we have repeatedly asked for travel and extensive consultation on this very, very important bill. We absolutely have to get this bill right, and yet you have time-allocated and moved this bill through very, very quickly.

Can you explain to the House what the rush is to push this bill through this House without the input from many key stakeholder groups?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would be delighted to talk about the timing on this bill. The bill was first tabled over a year ago, and we've been talking to people both before and after that. So we've been talking to people for a couple of years about this bill—over 400 written submissions before we even drafted the bill, and tons of correspondence and discussions.

In fact, after we tabled the bill a year ago, we met with ADCO, the Association of Day Care Operators, and some of the feedback that we received when we tabled the bill the first time is actually incorporated into Bill 10 in its current version.

In fact, I even went to Ottawa—

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

Supplementary, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question goes back to the Minister of Education.

It was a bit rich, on the weekend, for the Premier to chastise federal leaders about daycare when it is her government shutting down debate on child care in the province of Ontario.

Today, the Association of Day Care Operators said that they were excluded from child care hearings. They represent over 200,000 mothers and fathers.

We know, for example, that, in the hearings that we're going to see over the next two days, Montessoris, independent religious schools, Jewish day schools and native and francophone child care operators are also being excluded.

I want to talk about Sarah-Jane, a child care operator from Lanark county, who found it so expensive to travel here to Queen's Park that her friends had to do crowd-source funding for her to come to her provincial capital to speak to Ontario legislators. Her friend Sandra Niblock asks, "Five dollars a person adds up. Think of the money you could be earning as she speaks for us."

Does the minister think open government means closed government when it comes to public—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I'd like to remind the member: When I stand, you sit, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, you must. Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Let's talk about travelling. As I said, on Friday I had the opportunity to travel to Ottawa and to speak with the leadership of both the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers and the providers resource network. Actually, included in that group was one of the leaders from Lanark county. So I went to hear them. I think we had a very productive conversation. We don't agree on all the issues, but I think we did find some areas of agreement where we can work together and make the bill work.

I think it's really important to understand that after we pass the bill—and I obviously hope the bill will pass—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Same reminder: I stand; you sit.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

The government wrote MaRS a bailout cheque worth at least \$300 million. They wrote a US real estate speculator a \$65-million cheque for a building that was never more than a third full. But they won't release the business case for the loan they made to MaRS.

To be clear: The documents released last week were not the business case.

At this rate, we'll find life on the planet Mars before we get the business case for the building from MaRS.

Why won't the government release the business case? Is there something that you're hiding?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: To directly respond to the member's final question, absolutely not. We've released over 700 pages of documents. Exactly what was asked for was exactly what was released. Within those documents is all kinds of information regarding the due diligence that's gone into this loan that IO conducts, frankly, in all of their consideration of loans—over 700 pages of documents that include all of that information.

I know it's a lot of documents and I know that the members opposite may not have the time to go through them, but within those documents is confirmation of everything we've been saying all along. The loan is fully secured on a—

Interjections.

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

I'm going to ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to come to order and the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington to come to order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got it out. I got it out.

I also won't allow for you—the reminder: I do not like it when you name somebody other than with their riding or their title. I'm going to stick to that. It elevates the debate, and if you use it the other way, it lowers the debate, and I don't want it.

Please finish.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What those documents provide is confirmation of what we've been saying all along. The property is worth more than what we've invested into it.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: The taxpayers' investment is safe and secure—

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Premier released a property assessment for MaRS that's based on 80% occupancy. The building is 30% full.

The Premier's government insists the deal was smart, but nobody seems to be able to find the business case. This Liberal government insists it's being honest, but the people of Ontario still have questions.

Six months after Ontarians learned about the scandal, why is the Liberal government still hiding the business case—not 700 documents, the business case—from Ontarians?

Hon. Brad Duguid: If the member had time to go through the 700 pages of documents we put out, he would not be referring to this issue in the way that he's referring to it.

It's pretty simple overall. It's a complex issue, but it's pretty simple. There was a building rotting in the ground at MaRS. Do the NDP now want to join the PCs in suggesting the government should have just let that building rot and put at risk the 51,000 jobs in our bioscience cluster? Mr. Speaker, that would not be our position.

We supported the idea to construct this building. Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson, two experts, will soon be providing us advice about the path forward. I'm very confident that there's a positive path forward on this project that's going to be very successful in terms of protecting taxpayers' dollars.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

From knocking on doors in my riding of Cambridge during the spring election to receiving calls at my constituency office, the economy is top of mind for many of my constituents, including my 17- and 20-year-old sons

and their friends, who are now planning for their future and their entry into the job market.

I have reviewed Stats Canada's recent job numbers report and found a positive trend for my region of Waterloo that includes Cambridge. My region's unemployment rate dropped by 0.4% in the last month alone and 1.5% over the last year. Cambridge now has an unemployment rate of 6.3%, proof that our government's economic plan is working for my constituents in Cambridge.

Would the minister please inform the House about last month's job numbers and how our province has continued to grow since the global recession?

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's certainly great news for the Cambridge community. It's really good to hear that.

Last month alone, Ontario created 37,000 net new jobs. Over 90% of those jobs were full-time jobs, which is great news. Our province's unemployment rate dropped 0.6% last month. It's now 6.5%. This is the lowest unemployment rate Ontario has seen since October 2008. Mr. Speaker, even the opposition has to consider that good news.

Since the recession, Ontario is up 550,000 net new jobs—in fact, more specifically, 551,300 net new jobs. In fact, our job recovery rate since the recession is 207.4%, well outpacing the US at 115%. That tells me we're doing something right in the province of Ontario.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: This is great news, not only for my Cambridge community but for the entire province.

Ontario's manufacturing sector is important to the overall strength of our economy. I know that the opposition enjoys talking this sector down, but I think it's important to talk about the facts.

Last month alone, Ontario's manufacturing sector gained 32,900 net new jobs. Recently, I spoke at a manufacturing summit in Cambridge hosted by Professional Engineers Ontario. They're excited by the growth of the advanced manufacturing sector in Cambridge.

Today, in my community, auto manufacturing is incredibly important. Toyota's Cambridge facility, our largest employer, is home to the only Lexus plant outside of Japan.

Would the minister please update the House on the strategic investment partnerships this government has recently secured to keep Ontario's auto sector on track?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Last week, following the Premier's successful mission to China, our Premier was pleased to announce that our government is investing with Honda to make the Alliston facility the global lead for the Honda Civic.

I've been advised that this is a first, globally. This will make Ontario the only jurisdiction outside of Japan to ever land a Honda global lead facility, something for us and the workers in Alliston to be very proud of. These investments will not only safeguard 4,000 high-skilled, direct positions, they will also support thousands more supply chain jobs throughout Ontario. The project will cover major investments in the assembly lines, engine plants and paint shops.

As Ontario continues to lead North America in foreign direct investment, our strategic efforts to partner with our auto sector will continue to provide value and attract investment and jobs to our province.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, how many violations of provincial truck testing standards did Serco report at the DriveTest centre in Woodbridge this year?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member for that question. This is a very timely question because the member will know that not that many days ago I had the opportunity to announce via the media that our government would be moving forward for the first time—for the first time amongst all the provinces across this country—with mandatory, entry-level training for truck drivers who are seeking to obtain their AZ licence.

This is a measure where, once fully rolled out, of course, I'll have the chance to work closely with my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on this particular matter. As I said a second ago, it will place Ontario at the forefront of dealing with making sure that truck drivers out there are properly trained.

Last week I had the opportunity to attend the convention of the Ontario Trucking Association, and they were thrilled to know that our government plans to move forward with this measure. I look forward to discussing this more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll remind folks that I did ask about violations at the provincial truck testing standards facility in Woodbridge, because we know, through the Toronto Star report, that would-be truckers were not even being taken on 400-series highways—a clear violation of your ministry's standards.

Serco's contract allows them to self-audit and self-report compliance with ministry standards, giving them Ornge-like powers that are jeopardizing our safety. Minister, you have a clear responsibility for oversight and yet you allow a contract for self-policing of our testing centres that diverts accountability.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, will you, today, table the reports and audits of detailed DriveTest centre violations since this self-policing regime went into effect?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's interesting, I also had the opportunity to read some of the media stories that the member opposite is talking about. The self-auditing aspect of what this particular contractor is able to provide deals with a variety of issues, including items like customer satisfaction. When it was first brought to the ministry's attention, via the media, that there was a problem or a concern being expressed around this particular test centre, Ministry of Transportation officials were able to go out to the test centre itself to make sure that all the rules and regulations were being followed.

In fact, as it relates to the extent to which these test centres are performing their responsibilities in the man-

ner that they are supposed to, the Minister of Transportation does, of course, send out folks to audit, on average, on a monthly basis.

It's important, as I said in responding to the first question, that we move forward with the mandatory training for AZ drivers who want to become truck drivers here in this province. Hopefully, the member opposite will support those measures.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Joe Cimino: Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Transportation, I'll keep the same line of questioning.

Last month, we learned that the provincial government allows unregulated licence mills to train drivers of 40-tonne tractor-trailers. Then we learned that Serco, the private multinational corporation that runs DriveTest centres, does not always test these drivers on highways. At that time, the Minister of Transportation assured us “there are specific standards and requirements for commercial driver testing that our service provider must meet.”

Well, today we learned that the government has no idea whether Serco is meeting these standards. That's because last year, the government gave Serco the power to police itself, leaving it up to Serco to verify its own performance and let the minister know whether they are not doing their job properly.

Will the minister explain why the government agreed to this gaping loophole when the contract was renewed last year?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In my answer to the previous question from the member of the opposition, the member from Kitchener, I spent a bit of time talking about what this particular contractor is in fact permitted to self-audit, which is at the crux of this question as well. Here is a list of some of the things that this particular contractor is entitled to self-audit: accuracy of transaction processing and timeliness of corrections, maintaining an 85% customer satisfaction rating at all locations, and response and resolution time to customer inquiries and complaints. The list goes on, Speaker.

What I'm trying to get at here, and what I tried to say in my response to the original question I received on this, is that the self-auditing mechanism doesn't occur with respect to the testing itself. The Ministry of Transportation works very hard with all of our testing centres to ensure that they are following the regulations and rules. When the story first appeared, we did take action.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll respond more in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Joe Cimino: Speaker, through you: In 2003, the Harris Tories privatized driver licensing centres, signing a 10-year contract with Serco, which also runs private prisons and private hospitals. Contracting out has been a

disaster, leading to a long strike in 2009. But instead of cutting ties with Serco, as the NDP had demanded, last year the Liberal government signed up for another 10 years, and this time, the contract is even worse, with less accountability and protection for Ontario drivers—and the government refuses to say how many inspectors, if any, are overseeing Serco's operations.

Instead of outsourcing accountability to yet another public-private partnership, will the government publicly release the uncensored Serco contract, all audit reports and ministry reviews of DriveTest, and tell us the number of inspectors in charge of overseeing Serco's operations?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In one of my answers to a question already today, Speaker, I talked about the fact that on average, on a monthly basis, there are MTO inspectors who are out there at this particular test centre and across the province.

I think it is important here in this Legislature for us to deal with facts and information. It's really important to note that over the last few years, there were a number of measures that have been brought forward by our government to make sure that our roads here in Ontario remain amongst the safest in North America. For example, not that many years ago, this government took some steps to make changes to the commercial vehicle testing regime, including a training standard for class AZ drivers and for their licence training programs which was introduced back in 2010 by one of my predecessors in this portfolio. Here's the interesting part: Notwithstanding what the members of the opposition are trying to do here today, since that time, since those measures were introduced, we have seen in Ontario that the number of fatal collisions involving large trucks has reached a five-year low.

So instead of standing here in this House—

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —and trying to create hysteria around this subject, let's deal with the facts and see—

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

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Minister, despite a constantly changing economy, Ontario was able to rank high as one of the largest economies in the US and Canada last year, and we're first in North America when it comes to foreign-direct investment. We all know how crucial to our success it is that we promote our economic competitiveness on the international stage.

My riding of Halton is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, and our residents are concerned about our province's economic health. My constituents want Ontario to maintain its competitive business advantage and continue to create opportunities for economic growth.

Minister, as the global economy remains unstable, what is Ontario doing to ensure that we foster a climate that is conducive to business?

1120

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Halton for asking.

Speaker, three weeks ago, I was in China on a trade mission with the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Two delegations of over 60 Ontario businesses and organizations—one in clean tech, the other one in science and technology—accompanied us. We visited Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing in China. We were joined by Premiers from other provinces as well who share our belief that relationships must be in place in order for the doors to open for the business connections.

We secured three deals that will lead to almost \$1 billion in investments and 1,800 jobs for Ontarians.

Speaker, we're also pleased that our trade mission brought about tangible results so quickly. Driving our economy and creating jobs are our ultimate goals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, it is reassuring to hear that the trade mission to China brought about so many trade and investment partnerships. According to the Conference Board of Canada, every \$100-million increase in exports creates close to 1,000 new jobs for Ontarians. Given the success in China and the number of new partnerships you have brought to Ontario, I'm sure we can expect many new opportunities for the people of our province.

However, it is important to note how diverse Ontario is, not just in culture, but in our job force as well. In my riding, we have a lot of young families coming from a lot of different backgrounds with a lot of different skills. Many are looking to break into and establish themselves in the job market. Not all Ontarians work in the same sector. Not all Ontarians will find work in a steel mill.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister be able to tell us what is being done to ensure that Ontarians in different fields, like the residents in my riding, will benefit from the success of the China trip?

Hon. Michael Chan: We know how important it is to our economy that we must diversify. But diversification is not just about knocking on the doors of different countries. It's about exploring opportunities in many different fields and bringing various types of investment to Ontario.

This is what we did in China, Speaker. We secured partnerships, investments and jobs that will benefit different sectors and different communities. Here are some of the examples: We partnered with a company building a pair of residential towers, a company that will bring manufacturing jobs for green projects, a steel nail mill, a financial centre and more.

We will also formalize a new work plan for the Ontario-Jiangsu Business Council which will promote ties beyond the mission.

Speaker, we are committed to ensuring this trade mission does not create only temporary results. We have worked to bring about long-term, prosperous growth for Ontarians.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, we all join the people of London to mourn the life of Dave MacPherson. Mr. MacPherson was tragically killed in a fire that engulfed an unlicensed group home where he and some 30 other people, all suffering from mental illness and addictions, were forced to reside because your government has failed to provide an adequate number of properly licensed facilities.

But days before this fatal fire took place, a manager from your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee toured the building. How is it that ministry staff who toured this group home did not raise any concerns, even though the building was under strict city and fire department improvement orders?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me offer my most sincere condolences to the family and friends of the victim. This is a real tragic incident.

I want to remind members that the job of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee is to do for the client what he or she would do for themselves in financial matters; for example, receive income, apply for any available benefits, pay bills and file taxes. As the guardian of property, the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee does not make personal decisions for the client, such as deciding where a client lives and what activities they engage in. It also does not recommend or refer clients to any type of housing. Community agencies usually perform this function.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, the place was appalling. There were no walls in the bedrooms. There were bugs in the bed and piles of garbage in the hallways. Who would want to live in that, and why would the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, which signs the cheque, turn a blind eye and walk away?

For more than a year, inspectors from several city departments had been monitoring this London apartment building. London police alone have visited the facility over 100 times in 2014. There are constant red flags, including health, safety, fire and zoning violations, but some of our most vulnerable Londoners were still living in these conditions.

Minister, your ministry's Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee is responsible for protecting the rights and interests of Ontarians suffering from mental illness. This tragedy should have been prevented. What immediate and urgent action will you take to guarantee that this same tragedy does not take place in other Ontario communities?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The role of the Public Guardian and Trustee is to look after the financial matters of those individuals. However, there are other agencies, like the municipality, for instance, that are responsible for looking into these facilities and seeing if the fire code is respected and if health and safety is respected.

But I'm sure that the Ministry of Community and Social Services, along with other agencies that look after

these types of individuals, will look into it, because it's very unfortunate, and I hope it does not happen again.

HOME CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. This Liberal government has a bad habit of saying one thing and doing another. For all their talk about making home care a priority, the Liberals are allowing home care services to be cut from Windsor to Sarnia.

The Erie St. Clair CCAC has reduced daily nursing visits by a shocking 33% this month. That's a huge hit that means seniors won't get the care they need. Many have been told they're now just a number on a wait-list, and family caregivers have been stripped of essential respite time.

Will the Premier explain how she can possibly stand by and allow vital home care services to be slashed in southwestern Ontario?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It simply isn't true that we're slashing our funding to home care or to our CCACs. In fact, we have dramatically increased the funding that we provide to home care and to community care services through our CCACs and through our LHINs since coming into office in 2003. In fact, it is a 99% increase in funding over, roughly, the past decade.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, we do rely on our LHINs and our CCACs to make those important decisions in terms of the distribution of resources.

I'm happy to speak more about that in the supplementary coming up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The minister can talk about home care until he's blue in the face, but the only thing that matters is whether he's willing to stop these cutbacks that are happening on his watch.

A 33% reduction in home care nursing visits is not acceptable. My office has been flooded by worried families who have no idea where they're going to turn to get the care their loved ones need. They're scrambling to deal with these cuts and the government's broken promise to deliver better home care.

Premier, you stated that you would not forget about Windsor, but this is not the type of attention we were hoping for. Will the Premier commit today to doing whatever it takes to reverse each and every cut to the seniors of southwestern Ontario who depend on vital home care services?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, again, we are investing more than \$4 billion in home care, including investing significant portions of that amount in the Windsor-Essex area. We are not making cuts to home care or to our community care services. In fact, we've increased it: this year alone, \$270 million extra into that important care.

It is true that we're using those funds to provide support for the more complex-needs patients. We're

making sure that those patients are no longer cared for in hospitals but are actually cared for in the place that is more relevant to them to give the highest quality of care, to provide them with the supports that they need. Those complex-needs patients who perhaps used to be cared for in hospitals are now being cared for in home and closer to home. It's working, and we're increasing funding to accommodate those needs.

1130

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. John Fraser: Two Fridays ago, we heard some great news for Ontario's economy. Our unemployment rate dropped to 6.5%, the lowest since October 2008, the peak of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I need to know who.

Mr. John Fraser: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Thanks to the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr. Speaker, 37,000 jobs were created in Ontario last month, most of them full-time, including 6,300 jobs for youth. It is vital to Ontario's economic future that youth have opportunities for employment, and it's apparent that our plan to grow the economy and create good jobs is working in every region of the province. However, we know that there's always more that can and needs to be done.

Could the Minister of Children and Youth Services give us an update on how the Ontario government is helping to create opportunities for youth employment in the province?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thanks to the member for Ottawa South for that question. It's a really important one because I think we can all agree that the future of Ontario is indeed tied to our youth, and it's important that we help young people reach their full potential in this province. We need to work collaboratively, not just in government but with the private sector, the broader public sector and so on.

When I'm meeting with groups outside of government, there's a real recognition that government can't address this issue alone. We must work collaboratively with the private sector, the broader public sector and beyond. Our work with CivicAction is an example of a project we've entered into to help at-risk youth overcome barriers to employment. CivicAction is leading a nine-month engagement review in the GTHA and the report, Escalator, will provide opportunities for employment, mentorship and so on. I'll speak more to it in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Fraser: I appreciate the minister's answer. It's very interesting work that's being done with CivicAction to help at-risk youth with employment opportunities.

Bringing the private sector, labour, government and community groups together is a major undertaking, and the collaborative, consensus-building approach to this issue will lead the way to lasting and positive outcomes for youth who need these opportunities.

Though the Escalator report was only released in September, I'm hoping that the minister could give us some insight on what the response has been like.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I am very pleased to report that in November CivicAction and NPower Canada welcomed their first cohort into the Technology Service Corps Canada program. This is an employer-driven program for aspiring IT professionals. It gives free training, internships, job placements and mentorship for underserved youth in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It's a fantastic program. This is another example of important partnerships that our government is making with grassroots organizations in Ontario.

I should just mention, too, that CivicAction led a round table last Friday on youth employment with LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner. That's another example of important partnerships with the private sector.

We're committed to working with all our partners to help address the issues with youth employment.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. On October 30, my colleague asked the minister about his government's incredible indifference towards two small municipalities hit by last year's ice storm. He claimed that municipalities that "suffered the most damage and have the least ability to respond fiscally" would "get helped as quickly as possible." If that's true, then why is he plastering those municipalities in red tape, forcing them to fill out even more paperwork a year after the disaster struck?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's an interesting question. It goes right to the heart of accountability. When you're distributing \$190 million in ice storm relief, you want to make sure you get it right. Municipalities have applied for assistance. They've been screened based on that application, and there's a process of documenting their receipts for ice storm repairs that's very, very necessary for any government that wants to be transparent and accountable. It's as simple as that. That's what we're doing. Municipalities have, in fact, asked—and AMO has asked—for an extension of the deadline with respect to filling out the forms so that more of those municipalities that you're talking about can come together, document their need, present their receipts, and get, hopefully, a response from the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Minister, the town of Minto and the municipality of North Perth, where officials are still filling out paperwork, will not be satisfied with that answer, and neither am I. They were hit very hard but have yet to see a nickel. I have consistently spoken up for the municipalities I represent, starting in April 2013. That's when the first storm hit and North Perth applied

for assistance. The government's response? Not so much as a gift card.

When the former minister promised \$190 million after the December ice storm, officials in Toronto confidently stated that "virtually all" of their costs would be covered. Why hasn't the government given Minto, North Perth and other small and rural municipalities the same assurances, or does the minister actually think that Toronto is less able "to respond fiscally"?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I think it's wonderful that the member opposite continues to be an advocate for his community; that's what he's here for—good for you.

Notwithstanding that, we want to make sure that any assistance that's provided is done based on need and is done in the responsible and accountable way that requires receipts to be presented for the work that's done. Municipalities know what the guidelines are, and in a number of instances have asked for extensions in order to assist.

By the way, there is some financial assistance available to municipalities who are having trouble with the paperwork.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Questions remain about the government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. We know that "comparable" plans will be exempt, but the government is still to define exactly what that means. Instead, they continue to prioritize their bank-friendly PRPP legislation.

Speaker, I have already asked this question and I didn't receive an answer, so I'm happy to ask it again: Will PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her question. As we know, retirement savings is an issue for us in this province. When we look out we know that people are not saving enough for their retirement futures. Our government has committed to strengthening our retirement income system, and that includes voluntary measures such as PRPPs, which are a complement to our made-in-Ontario solution of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Speaker, we have to take action now. Doing nothing is not a solution. We have to ensure that we strengthen Ontario's retirement savings system so that when people retire, they can retire in some comfort and dignity. That is our intention and that is our focus.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The government claims that it is committed to a public pension plan in Ontario but their actions say otherwise. They tell us that PRPPs will merely supplement the ORPP, but more and more it looks like they will become a substitute. Speaker, if the government is committed to a public pension plan, then we want to hear them make commitments, not just make noise.

So I'll ask again: Will PRPPs be considered comparable and qualify for an exemption from the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan? Third time.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Let me be very clear. The focus of our government is the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, and that is what we're focused on doing. Other measures such as PRPPs and RRSPs are voluntary savings mechanisms, which are essential to people achieving their retirement goals overall. It's important for us to have strong retirement savings systems in this province so that we can continue to move forward and to contribute to Ontario's economy in the long term.

I thank the member opposite for her question. It's an important one, as we focus on building up retirement savings in this province.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Minister, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, there are many constituents who live very demanding lives, whether they're students, professionals or parents of young families. They want to know that they can shop safely for basic needs and enter into fair and accountable agreements without worrying about being taken advantage of by misleading sales tactics or confusing contracts. I think many of us have had experiences like that.

Ontarians believe that our province should maintain certain standards protecting their rights as consumers. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please update this House on what his ministry is doing to protect Ontario consumers?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the question from the member from Kitchener Centre. It's an important question. Since 2003, we've taken a significant number of measures to help protect consumers, including things like removing the expiry date on gift cards, capping payday lending costs, and capping fees on cellphone costs as well as allowing for triple recovery.

We're also very pleased with the recent passage of Bill 55, Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, which will help prevent aggressive, high-pressure door-to-door sales tactics as well as protect consumers with respect to water heater rentals, debt settlement and real estate practices.

We are moving as well to introduce changes to the Condominium Act. There has been a fairly lengthy consultation on that. We're going to have more to say about that in the future, as well as areas around home renovations, moving companies, home inspections and the development of a consumer protection bill of rights.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm delighted to introduce, from Crohn's and Colitis Canada, Aida Fernandes, Lisa Salapatek, C.K. DesGrosseilliers, Helen Silbiger, Natasha Mistry, and Andrew Holt and his mother, Martha Holt. Welcome.

Mr. Arthur Potts: In absentia, I would like to introduce Amanda Ironside, who is a teacher at East York Collegiate Institute. She was here with three members of her grade 10 civics class, and we were very civil for her being here.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome my predecessor, the Honourable Gerry Phillips, who is here with us today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: My colleague introduced Mr. Phillips; thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So both of you are stepping on my job.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'll just add, Speaker: from Scarborough, a wonderful former member and colleague and a great adviser to us. Thank you for being here today.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to welcome to the House today a number of guests—and I'd ask all members to welcome them—from the Ukrainian Canadian community. We have with us Valentina Kuryliw, who is chair of the National Holodomor Education Committee, and a number of members of the committee: Nadia Makriy, Lydia Falcomer, Eugene Yakovitch, Lesa and Jaroslav Semcesen, Bob Onyschuk and Myroslava Oleksiuk. Welcome.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes. Sorry, Mr. Speaker; I was remiss in not also recognizing Sarah Ker-Hornell, who is with Film Ontario. She's a constituent in Toronto-Danforth.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge my colleague MPP Yvan Baker's mother, who is joining us here today as well. Welcome, Mrs. Baker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Somebody is going to get in trouble for that one.

The member from Thornhill, an introduction.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I was expecting some students from Thornhill Public School today. I don't know if that's them up in the gallery, but hopefully they made it down today safely in this weather.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's get to the one that I always do. My friends and colleagues, with us today in the west members' gallery, from Scarborough—Agincourt in the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th and 39th Parliaments, from parts unknown, Gerry Phillips.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION WEEK

Mrs. Gila Martow: On behalf of myself and the entire PC caucus, I am honoured to extend my warmest greetings to all those who participated in last week's 34th annual Holocaust Education Week in Toronto and all over the world. This was presented by the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre of UJA

Federation of Greater Toronto. I'm proud to be able to say that this year, Canada has assumed the position as the chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

Holocaust Education Week offers extensive programming designed to engage Ontarians from all different types of heritages, with the opportunity to delve into one of the darkest moments in human history and emerge with universal lessons of hope, tolerance and human rights. I myself attended a couple of fantastic events, one at the Royal Ontario Museum to mark the launch of Holocaust Education Week and another a lecture at Shaar Shalom Synagogue.

Holocaust Education Week offers a powerful schedule of activities, including films, discussions and exhibits that encourage remembrance and denounce intolerance.

I want to take this opportunity to commend the dedication of the survivors, volunteers, staff and supporters from UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre for their efforts to make this and every year's Holocaust Education Week such a success. Thank you for all the work that you do.

IRENE ATKINSON

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my absolute honour to stand today and to recognize a woman who truly is a force of nature in Parkdale-High Park and throughout the educational system. That's Irene Atkinson, our trustee, who is retiring after 40 years as a trustee, the longest-serving trustee in the Toronto District School Board ever, and, not only that, the only trustee who served on the Toronto Board of Education and on the TDSB as well.

She is known as the "mother of Sorauren." She actually saved Sorauren Park in our community as a place for families rather than a place for garbage trucks to park. She worked tirelessly and got extra funds for Parkdale public, Queen Victoria public, Swansea public, Keele public—I could go on and on—over the 40 years.

A true woman of conscience, she used to be a red Tory and left the Conservative Party after she saw what Mike Harris did to education in this province. She crossed the floor to us—we were the happy beneficiaries of that—and continued to serve the same folk.

Here's to Irene Atkinson. After 40 years, we hope she has a wonderful retirement. Of course, a woman like that never really retires. She's actually going on to work on the review board and other boards in the community. But we're going to miss her. I can tell you that a generation or two of education ministers are not going to miss her, because she kept on their heels.

Here's to Irene and all the women like her.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Last week, Ontarians all across our province paused for a minute of silence on November 11 to commemorate the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, when the guns of World War I fell silent

with the signing of the armistice between the Allied Nations and the Central Powers.

“The beginning of the end of war,” wrote American veteran and author Herman Wouk, “lies in remembrance.”

Our Royal Canadian Legion branch 139 Streetsville marched with veterans, elected officials, fire, police and emergency response, as well as our very active army, navy and air cadet corps. Queen Street in 2014 was lined with more people than anyone can ever recall attending a Remembrance Day ceremony.

This year’s ceremony was the first Remembrance Day at the redeveloped Streetsville square, with its rebuilt cenotaph, and the last Remembrance Day for Hazel McCallion to preside as Mississauga’s mayor. An estimated 3,500 people lined the streets and jammed the square to pay tribute to Canada’s fallen soldiers and to remember not merely those who served in Canada’s wars and peacekeeping, but also those who returned to build the great nation, province and communities that we have and enjoy today.

1310

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, recently we celebrated the first annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, part of the Hawkins Gignac Act, which passed last year. I want to commend Ontario fire departments for their support and their efforts to raise awareness.

For example, the Perth East and West Perth fire departments made *The Wake Up Call*, a CO safety video that educates people on the dangers of carbon monoxide. In Peterborough, the fire department worked with First Alert and the Peterborough Petes to create an information display. In Barrie, the fire and emergency services knocked on doors and distributed printed materials describing the new CO laws in Ontario, and held a talk with John Gignac, the founder of the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation for CO Education.

I also want to recognize the Insurance Bureau of Canada, which has donated over 2,000 carbon monoxide detectors. In recognition of CO Awareness Week, they made donations in London, Ottawa, Cornwall, and several Oxford fire departments. They also donated to Habitat for Humanity in Leeds and the Thousand Islands. These carbon monoxide detectors will play an important role in protecting Ontarians. You can’t see, smell or taste carbon monoxide, so the only way to know your family is safe is to have a detector in your home.

I want to thank everyone who helped promote Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, including the members of all three parties. These efforts are making Ontario families safer and are a tribute to the Hawkins family. I want to thank each and every one of you.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Cindy Forster: Last Thursday, November 6, I had the opportunity to attend an event in my community

at the Welland community centre to protect our local hospital services in our communities. We hear about this issue day in and day out from small and rural communities across this province. It was attended by many, many people in my riding, and they all had the same concerns: cutting hospital beds; cutting CCAC services in our communities; wait-lists for mental health services; wait-lists for long-term-care beds; and giving our long-term-care beds to the private sector instead of to the non-profit sector—those dollars should be going to the care of individuals in our community.

Now, this coming Friday—and I would encourage all MPPs to attend this event—there’s going to be a rally here at Queen’s Park. It is sponsored by the Ontario Health Coalition and the Niagara Health Coalition and it’s here at 12 p.m. on Friday. There are buses coming in from across the province, because everyone is concerned about the erosion of health care services in their communities.

In my own community, many hospitals have closed; another one is slated for closure. So, please, attend this rally and show your support to keep our hospitals open.

REGAL ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I am rising today to recognize a tremendous milestone in Davenport. On Saturday, November 8, Regal Road public school celebrated its centennial anniversary. This means that since 1914 Regal Road has been at the forefront of guiding and educating Davenport’s young people.

Regal Road public school was constructed for the Dovernort community just as the area was annexed to the city of Toronto. It is a magnificent building, designed in the beaux arts style by architect Franklin E. Belfrey, who also designed many other schools in Toronto, including Oakwood Collegiate, also in my riding. In 2007, the city of Toronto declared the school a heritage building.

Regal Road is a wonderful school, located at the northeast corner of Davenport Road and Dufferin Street. My colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West actually attended Regal Road when he first moved to Toronto in the 1960s. The school enrolls approximately 520 students from JK to grade 6 and offers a dual-track system, with both English and French immersion curriculums. Reflective of my riding of Davenport, students at Regal Road are from a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

I had the pleasure to meet a tour group from Regal Road at the Legislature in September, and I look forward to meeting more students from this exciting school going forward.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Todd Smith: Today, the government releases its fall economic statement. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said Ontarians should be very concerned about the direction in which this province is heading. The

recent interim report by Ed Clark is proof the Liberals will not make tough decisions to reduce spending to balance the books.

We can expect today's economic statement to continue the Liberals' unrealistic and unaffordable path that puts front-line services in jeopardy while hurting families in every part of this province, including those having the hardest time.

Mr. Speaker, this government is spending beyond its means. The Bank of Canada and the Conference Board of Canada have also provided evidence that the government's path is unsustainable. Under the Liberals, our debt has doubled and our annual debt interest payment now approaches \$11 billion. That's taxpayers' money that should be invested in front-line health care, first-rate education, reliable roads and transit. All Ontarians are paying the price for debt interest costs that take money out of priority services like health care and education.

This Liberal government is always trying to blame someone else for not getting their own house in order. They've doubled the debt in just 11 years. They continually blame lower-than-expected revenues and the federal government. This Liberal government must take responsibility for their bad policy decisions. I hope they will do that today.

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, last week I had the privilege of travelling to Ukraine to support a medical humanitarian mission where Canadian doctors performed surgery on patients who were victims of the war in eastern Ukraine, people who were fighting for their freedom and their democracy. I also had the opportunity to visit the national Holodomor memorial, and I stand here today to commemorate the Holodomor.

Holodomor commemoration week, which is this week, pays tribute to the 81st anniversary of the Holodomor, when Joseph Stalin closed Ukraine's borders and confiscated grain to destroy the Ukrainian population that resisted his rule, who had sought the freedom and democracy that the people of Ukraine are fighting for today. During that time, 17 people per minute, 1,000 per hour and 25,000 per day were dying from famine. The world was silent. Millions died as a result.

My grandmother was one of those people who survived the famine, and she lost three of her brothers to the Soviet regime. She once told me that she hopes the victims of the Holodomor will not only be remembered but honoured. Honouring means not just remembering them and commemorating them, but also learning from their mistakes, learning from the mistakes that we made, and making sure we take the steps to make sure it never happens again.

One of the things that needs to be done is to make sure our young people here in Ontario learn about the Holodomor. That is why I'm so pleased to be here today to stand with the leaders of the Ukrainian community who have worked towards that for so many years, with

you, Mr. Speaker, and other members of the Legislature who co-sponsored a bill to commemorate the Holodomor, and with our Premier and our education minister, who have spoken in the past about the importance of teaching the Holodomor and have ensured that the Holodomor will be part of our curriculum so that every Ontarian learns about the Holodomor.

Today, I'd like to take this opportunity to not only reflect and to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor, but to ask us to re-commit ourselves to make sure we learn from the mistakes of the past and make sure tragedies like this and those that are happening in Ukraine never happen again. Let us do what my grandmother would have asked: Let us not only remember the victims; let us not only commemorate the victims; let us honour them.

MALADIE DE CROHN ET COLITE ULCÉREUSE

CROHN'S DISEASE AND COLITIS

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Je suis fière et honorée de me lever aujourd'hui afin de manifester mon soutien à l'égard du mois de la sensibilisation à la maladie de Crohn et à la colite. La maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse sont les deux formes les plus courantes de maladies inflammatoires de l'intestin. Il s'agit de maladies chroniques qui causent l'inflammation de l'intestin. Actuellement, il n'existe aucun traitement curatif connu contre elles et on en ignore la cause.

Les Ontariens ont plus de raisons que quiconque dans le monde d'être préoccupés par la maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse. Près de 95 000 Ontariens vivent avec l'une ou l'autre de ces maladies. En effet, monsieur le Président, ma famille est une parmi bien d'autres en Ontario qui sont touchées par la maladie de Crohn. Deux de mes cousines souffrent de cette maladie, alors je connais bien les défis qui se présentent quand les gens vivent avec la maladie.

Depuis 40 ans, Crohn et Colite Canada travaille à la découverte d'un traitement curatif contre la maladie de Crohn et la colite ulcéreuse, ainsi qu'à l'amélioration de la vie des enfants et des adultes touchés par cette maladie chronique.

As mentioned earlier, I would just like to recognize once again Andrew Holt and his mother, Martha, who are here today, volunteers, and the staff de Crohn et Colite Canada pour leurs efforts et leur dévouement. Ils travaillent fort pour faciliter le quotidien des personnes vivant avec cette maladie, et pour ceci, je les remercie infiniment. Thank you.

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NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Windsor West has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her

question given by the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care concerning service cuts at CCACs. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence of the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Clark assumes ballot item number 22 and Ms. MacLeod assumes ballot item number 39.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I wish to thank my newly minted deputy minister, Scott Thompson—the other guy's name escapes me at this moment. I appreciate the entire staff at the Ministry of Finance for their hard work in making today's statement and update possible. Ontario is truly blessed with a wonderful set of individuals in our public service.

I rise today to present the 2014 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review. This fall economic statement shows how the government is building Ontario up, supported by four pillars: (1) by investing in people's talents and skills; (2) by building modern infrastructure like roads and public transit; (3) by creating a dynamic and supportive environment where business thrives; and (4) by ensuring a strong pension system so everyone can retire with greater peace of mind.

Underlying the foundation of these pillars is a prudent and thoughtful path to a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're working towards that balance while ensuring that we provide the programs and services that Ontarians expect and rely on.

The global economic environment remains challenging and has contributed to a slower pace of revenue growth. However, there are positive signs that the economy is gaining momentum this year, supported by a resurgence in the United States.

Major indicators for Ontario, including real GDP, exports and household consumption, have posted solid gains. And most significantly for many Ontarians, our unemployment rate declined to 6.5% in October, down a whole percentage point from the beginning of the year. That's the lowest rate of unemployment since 2008.

Our government is working to meet our fiscal targets, despite the challenges of modest economic growth and lower-than-expected revenues. Today, the province's total revenue for 2014-15 is projected to be \$118.4 bil-

lion. That's \$509 million lower than the 2014 budget forecast. This largely reflects lower levels of taxes collected in 2013.

Notwithstanding lower-than-expected revenues, we have overachieved on our fiscal targets for five years in a row, thanks to sound management of program spending. In fact, over the past four years, we've been disciplined, and growth and program spending was held to an average of only 1.2% a year. We delivered public services more efficiently while making critical investments in programs and services that people depend upon, like health care and education.

Ontario has an efficient government. Indeed, Ontario consistently has the lowest per capita program spending among all Canadian provinces.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, our government is taking a balanced path to achieving a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're taking a deliberate approach in the face of tough choices, to ensure that every dollar goes further in achieving higher value for taxpayers. We're doing this by: reviewing and transforming programs; by managing compensation costs; ensuring everyone pays their fair share of taxes; and unlocking the value of provincial assets. As well, we're encouraging collaboration with all levels of government to support these important fiscal measures in achieving our targets.

We are committed to eliminating the deficit while transforming and modernizing public services, but should revenues fall further, the government must consider other tools to balance the budget.

My colleague the Honourable Deb Matthews, President of the Treasury Board, is leading a careful review of every government program. For each program, our Treasury Board colleagues will ask: Is it relevant? Is it effective? Is it efficient? And is it sustainable?

Focusing on evidence and results is critical to the review. The objective: ensuring that sustained funding goes to initiatives that work and deliver better results for people. For the government, that means savings. Those savings targets are set at \$250 million for 2014 and \$500 million for each of the next two years.

As well, we're working hard to manage compensation costs. For example, in August, the government reached a four-year collective agreement with AMAPCEO. This agreement includes a wage freeze in the first two years and a 1.4% wage increase in each of the third and fourth years. It includes no new funding for compensation increases. The cost of wage increases is being offset through changes to benefits and entitlements, making it a net zero deal.

We're also working to manage compensation costs in the broader public sector. If passed, new legislation would authorize the government to control salaries and set hard caps. These clear changes will lead to clear benefits for all.

Mr. Speaker, over the past several years, our government has reduced taxes for businesses, encouraging growth in jobs and capital investment. Ontario now has a lower combined corporate income tax than the combined tax rate in any of the U.S. states.

Of course, all businesses need to pay their fair share of taxes. When businesses don't pay their fair share, they not only compromise the public's revenues; they disadvantage other businesses that do follow the rules, and that's not fair. We cannot allow the underground economy to grow, which adversely impacts everyone. As such, the underground economy will be forced above ground and brought into the light.

The government is taking action. We're strengthening compliance in high-risk sectors. We're making sure that anyone who wants to do business with the Ontario government has paid their taxes before they're awarded a government contract. We're improving the way government ministries and agencies share information to enforce this compliance. We're taking further measures to address the supply of contraband tobacco. Fair is fair. These steps will ensure that everyone plays by the rules.

Continuous improvement is also a guiding principle in managing provincial assets. Unlocking the value of those assets will help our economy grow while creating jobs and improving government services. It will also create new revenues that will go to pay for public transit.

Let's be clear: The government will not be selling crown corporations for the purposes of meeting its operating costs. The Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets was asked to find ways to increase efficiencies and unlock the full value of Hydro One, OPG and the LCBO. The council has issued its preliminary findings.

At the LCBO and throughout our alcoholic beverage distribution system, we want consumers to have more choice and more convenience while providing greater returns for the people of Ontario.

The council has reviewed the key elements of our electricity system and determined that OPG's generation business should be retained, with a focus on the Darlington nuclear refurbishment. Hydro One's core transmission businesses should also be retained.

But the council says that local distribution is fragmented and inefficient. That's why the council is recommending that the system of about 70 local electricity distributors be improved through consolidation and innovation. Facilitating such consolidations is good energy policy. This will lead to a more efficient, adaptive and lower-cost system.

Our government supports the council's initial findings, and we look forward to receiving its final recommendations. This will help inform the 2015 budget.

Ontario's economy is continuing to create jobs. As noted earlier, our unemployment rate is down to 6.5%. Since the recessionary lows, Ontario has gained over half a million net new jobs, nearly all in full-time, well-paying positions.

Applause.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes. More needs to be done, and more is being done. That is why we're taking steps to ensure that people, particularly young people, have the skills and training required for those rewarding jobs.

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To that end, we're launching programs so that high school students can reach their full potential. Next year,

Experience Ontario will allow high school graduates to gain work experience before they choose their career path. This, and other initiatives, builds on our \$295-million Ontario Youth Jobs Strategy. The Youth Employment Fund has already helped more than 23,000 young adults find jobs. We're also conducting a review of the College of Trades, because skilled trades are fundamental to ensuring that Ontario's economy grows.

For Ontario to grow its economy and create more jobs, the province needs better infrastructure. Ontario is planning to invest more than \$130 billion over the next 10 years in infrastructure to make us more competitive. We'll be investing \$15 billion in transit projects in the GTHA and nearly \$14 billion in other critical infrastructure projects throughout Ontario. By investing today, we're creating jobs and growing our economy to meet the needs of tomorrow.

We're also modernizing and strengthening Ontario's business sector. Our plan includes maintaining a competitive tax environment, reducing regulations and helping businesses manage their electricity costs so that they can prosper.

We're also fostering strategic partnerships through our \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund to support growth in our key sectors, such as advanced manufacturing.

As well, we're fostering regional growth using the economic development funds like RED, the Rural Economic Development Program. Recently, RED provided support to the Hensall District Co-operative, located in Huron county. This co-operative markets high-value field crops for over 2,000 farmers, thereby creating jobs and generating \$4.3 million in private investment.

As part of our province's Going Global trade strategy to promote international trade, Premier Kathleen Wynne recently led a mission to China that attracted almost \$1 billion in new investments. These investments by Chinese companies will create thousands of jobs across Ontario. These efforts also spur economic growth for the arts and tourism sector.

It is also why we are very proud to be hosting the Pan Am and Parapan American Games, which inject billions of dollars in infrastructure, in our stadiums, community centres and sporting facilities for the long-term benefit of future generations to come. The profile of these international games has already created tremendous economic interest by investors throughout North and South America to Ontario. They also see and appreciate the wonderful diaspora of cultures that make up our great province.

We also value our heritage, as well as the First Nations and Métis Nation people. In fact, in September we announced funding of \$5.9 million for commemorative events, including the 400th anniversary of the franco-phone presence in Ontario.

Je suis très fier que les gouvernements du Québec et de l'Ontario collaborent plus étroitement. Par exemple, nous aurons une réunion conjointe de membres des Conseils des ministres de ces deux provinces plus tard cette semaine. Une coopération accrue renforcera les économies du Québec et de notre province de l'Ontario.

Remarks in Portuguese.

For the benefit of Hansard, we value our collaboration with the province of Quebec in both official languages, as well as others as may occur, the main point being that Ontario welcomes greater relations with other provinces. Our Premier, who has been a leader in the Council of the Federation, will host a joint Quebec-Ontario cabinet meeting later this week. Premier Wynne is working hard to increase co-operation among all provinces and territories, which can only mean good things for the nation's economy. What is good for Quebec is good for Ontario; what is good for Ontario is good for Quebec, and what is good for Quebec and Ontario is good for Canada.

As well, we're leading and working with provincial and federal partners to establish a co-operative capital markets regulatory system. That means our capital markets will be more competitive on the global stage and safer for individual investors.

To improve our financial services industry, we're reviewing the mandates of FSCO, of DICO, the legislative framework for credit unions and caisses populaires, as well as the regulation of financial planners. Having appropriate oversight in these important sectors is crucial.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also pleased to be working closely with a recently announced trading hub of Chinese currency in Canada. This is unique. It will be the first such hub in North America, putting Toronto at a competitive advantage over financial centres such as New York and Chicago. It will support greater trade with one of the biggest economies in the world. We're proud to do so, in collaboration with the federal and BC governments.

A strong and secure retirement income system is to everyone's benefit. People deserve to enjoy their retirement years, and that's why we're creating a mandatory, made-in-Ontario pension plan called the ORPP. I'm proud of my colleague, the Honourable Mitzie Hunter, Associate Minister of Finance responsible for the ORPP, who has begun her work toward a pension launch in 2017.

Mr. Speaker, when the global recession struck, the federal and Ontario governments worked together to limit its worst effects on people. Working in conjunction to simulate investment helped us weather the economic storm. However, that collaboration between our two governments is still much needed. We need to work together today to secure long-term prosperity for Ontario and Canada tomorrow. The federal government must avoid further unilateral actions that hurt the people of Ontario; actions that put the province's fiscal plan at risk.

As the federal government moves into surpluses, it should reinvest in the provinces. It's not that we're asking the federal government to invest its money; we're saying that more of the money collected in Ontario, from Ontarians, be reinvested back in Ontario. In many respects, the federal government collects a bucket of water from Ontario and returns a thimble. We need some of that water to flow back.

Ontarians contribute to the federal coffers \$11 billion more every year than they receive back. That gap

amounts to about \$850 per person, or \$3,400 per family of four. Ontario has consistently been a net contributor to the federation, and that's how it should be. But the time has come for greater federal support to benefit the Ontario economy and, in turn, the economy of all of Canada. To that end, we call on the federal government to match Ontario's investments in the Ring of Fire. We also ask the federal government to increase investments in public transit.

Mr. Speaker, we talk a lot about economic stimulus, but when it comes to the feds it's acting in reverse, it seems. Lack of federal investment is holding us back and slowing us down. It's like we're driving ahead but the federal government is letting the air out of our tires. We can't go as far, we can't go as fast and we can't go to where we need to be. The time for that investment is now.

We're determined to build a fairer and healthier Ontario. The province is taking action in reducing poverty. It's aimed at supporting people to find meaningful employment at a fair wage. Allowing people to realize their full potential will reduce poverty, and that improves the economy. That's why we're helping low-wage workers by raising the minimum wage to the highest of any province in Canada, at \$11 per hour, and that's indexed into the future.

Mr. Speaker, driving a car to and from work is also a necessity for many Ontarians, and that's why we're taking action in reforms fighting fraud and eliminating abuses, so that auto insurance can be more affordable. We know that more needs to be done. Rates have gone down by 6% since August 2013, but we've now introduced legislation—under debate today, I believe—that, if passed, would bring rates down even further in the coming year.

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Mr. Speaker, from now until our next budget, this government is pursuing its mandate for action. Our clear path to balance is supported by four essential pillars: investing in people's skills and talents; building modern infrastructure and transportation networks; creating a supportive and dynamic business climate; and ensuring retirement security for everyone in Ontario. These targeted investments and our determined effort to make every dollar count will help eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

In short, we are creating opportunity and security for all. We are building Ontario up.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your time, and thank you to all my colleagues.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm loath to interrupt statements like that—during ministerial statements. I have to express a little bit of my disappointment that the banter going back and forth was not conducive to our normal ministers' statements.

It's now time for responses.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Today's fall economic update continues the Liberal government's unrealistic and unaffordable path that puts front-line services in jeopardy and will

hurt families in every part of this province, including those having the hardest time.

The government is clearly spending beyond its means, but instead of a responsible plan, the Liberals spun us a fairy tale of balancing the budget with more spending, higher deficits and bigger debt.

The Liberals brag about the economic outlook improving, but Ontario's fiscal outlook is actually worse. Revenue is \$509 million lower than the 2014 budget forecast, and that was only four months ago. Most troubling is the fact that our GDP growth is down to 1.9% even though it was forecasted as 2.1%, again only four months ago. These are major changes in only a few months.

The Bank of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce have all provided evidence that the government's path is unsustainable. In fact, a recent report from the chamber entitled *How Bad Is It?* concluded that "Ontario will not grow its way out of debt."

That's not all the chamber had to say, and in fact much of it flies in the face of what the minister just said. These are quotes from the Ontario chamber: "Ontario's fiscal situation is becoming increasingly dire...." "We are likely to reach a state of crisis unless the province cuts spending and changes the way it does business." It makes a "clear case for urgency." "Government must fundamentally change the way it does business in many program areas." "Increased interest payments on the debt will further crowd out government's capacity to spend on programs and services valued by Ontarians, such as education, health care, and transportation."

Here, Speaker, is exactly what that means to families and seniors across Ontario. Here's what a \$12.5-billion deficit means: The ONA has announced that 1,600 nursing jobs are cut; diabetes testing strips in Ontario—cut; physiotherapy for seniors in Ontario—cut; cataract surgeries in Ontario—cut. That's the Premier's dirty little secret she doesn't want Ontarians to know: Today, under her watch, health care jobs and services are being cut every single day.

Perhaps the most disgraceful thing about the situation we find ourselves in is that the Liberals are always trying to blame someone else for not getting their own house in order. They've doubled their debt in only 11 years and continue to blame others, including the federal government.

Speaker, we found the truth in the government's own public accounts documents, which show that the Liberal government has actually received \$600 million more from Ottawa this year than last year. In fact, in the fall economic statement of today, it says that we've got another increase of \$8.3 million. It's not a \$600-million deficit; it's \$600 million more from the federal government that this government has not told us about. The federal government is balancing its budget while at the same time providing tax relief to Ontario.

The Ontario Liberals' appetite for wasteful and self-interested spending has left us with a deficit larger than all other provinces combined, and they need to take

responsibility for their bad decisions. How can we trust a government that says it's going to invest in transit when they leave themselves a loophole to use that asset sale money on anything but transit? How can we trust a government that bulldozes ahead with a new pension plan when their own internal documents show us it's going to cost the province of Ontario tens of thousands of jobs? Twice in today's economic statement, the government explicitly told us they're going to be raising taxes—they called it "other tools"—to balance the budget.

In closing, this government would do well to heed the advice of the chamber of commerce: You need to fundamentally change the way you do business. It's the only way we can get this province going in the right direction again and make Ontario first.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to respond to the fall economic statement on behalf of New Democrats.

Clearly Ontario is growing slower, and there is less in the cupboard. The fall economic statement shows that we're going to miss, again, four years' worth of growth targets that were set out just a few short months ago. The Liberals are also missing revenue targets, and there is less in the bank: a \$509-million shortfall of provincial revenue targets. This raises even more concerns about what they will sell to cover their losses. The desperation, actually, is a little bit alarming.

Over the last two weeks, we saw that the OLG is looking to expand online gambling, for instance. They have reached out to their 56,000 priority customers. Last week, I got a call at my office from the executive director of the social planning council. Her 23-year-old autistic son, who is on ODSP, got such a call. You do not balance a budget on the most vulnerable in this province. It is despicable.

The shiny promises that the Liberals made in the campaign have disappeared. There is nothing about the Trillium Trust and how it will function, except there's a loophole so that they can siphon that money away.

Of interest to my community: The high-speed rail promise made by Minister Murray has disappeared. The people of Windsor and London are looking for sustainable rail transit as well, as are the mayors of Niagara region, and they can make a good case for that.

With this document, the Liberals are raising even more doubts about the promises that they've made to Ontarians.

For the first time, you are saying that auto insurance rates didn't come down by 8%, as they first claimed they would; in fact, it's 6%. Now they're saying that a 15% reduction may not happen at all.

There is lots of information that's just plain missing. There is a lot of talk about the Stephen Harper-approved PRPPs, but nothing that gives comfort to the US Steel retirees wondering what will happen to them. It is very telling that you have prioritized the PRPPs, I think.

There is nothing about the services that will be cut by the Liberals' 6% slash to just about every ministry every year—on page 244 of the austerity budget—all of this within the context of 53% of children in the city of

Toronto living in poverty and 170,000 people and families who are waiting for affordable housing. How will you ever stabilize the economy if people do not have stable housing?

This is, by and large, a marketing document for the Liberals. Quite honestly, the people of this province deserve better.

Of note, for the first time that I've seen—and I have consulted many of the more experienced members—you're mentioning MPPs by name, as if this is a book of fiction. Ontarians deserve answers and transparency, and this is all spin.

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If you want some suggestions about how to find revenue, we have come to the table with some constructive suggestions: You should close the HST corporate tax loopholes; you should bring the public service's IT services back in-house and stop paying two to three times as much, as you are; you should stop the privatization agenda; and you should stop wasting money.

In your document here, you say, when you're reviewing—the Treasury Board president is going to be reviewing government programs—you'll ask, "Is it relevant, effective and efficient?" Public services are, but not when you privatize them and you outsource them and you pay two to three times as much for them.

The finance minister says that they have overachieved on their fiscal targets. Mr. Speaker, if this is overachievement, I would hate to see what an underachieving Liberal looks like in the province of Ontario. When you scratch the surface, you get more surface. It's disappointing, and the people of this province, quite honestly, deserve better.

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

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I fully support it. I will affix my name and send it with page Nicole.

Interjections.

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

I would deeply appreciate the opportunity to finish routine proceedings in the normal manner. If you have conversations that are too loud, the petitions are not being heard. Thank you very much.

We'll continue petitions. The member from London West.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

I fully support this petition, affix my name to it and will give it to page Claudia to take to the table.

MIDWIFERY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas midwifery care in Ontario is perfectly aligned with transforming the health care system toward quality care that uses resources effectively;

"Whereas midwives, who are primary care providers, ensure the provision of the right care, in the right place, and at the right time;

"Whereas the Minister of Health expressed commitment to work closely with midwives to ensure they have the support they need to carry out their work as well as grow the profession;

"Whereas midwifery in Ontario is currently being destabilized by negotiations that have broken down, a contract that expired on March 31, 2014, and a compensation structure that has not addressed pay equity;

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

“That the government resume negotiations with the Association of Ontario Midwives and enable midwives to continue to provide the highest standard of primary health care to women and their families.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition. I’ll send it to the table with page Steven.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

“Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

“Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

“Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

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

“We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to give it to page Nick to bring to the Clerk.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic peoples to our province’s social, economic and multicultural fabric;

“We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport.”

I agree with this petition, I affix my name to it and I will give it to page Moiz to bring forward.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is from the Ottawa-area first responders.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas emergency response workers ... confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

“Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

“Whereas Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’ sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’.”

Our first responders deserve no less. I’m going to affix my signature and give it to page Maja to deliver.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas the purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act ... is to ‘provide for the protection and

conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990....; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

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

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

Mr. Speaker, I keep getting these petitions from a great number of my constituents in Oxford county. I affix my signature. Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: "Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I sign my signature to this petition and give it to page Jared to deliver.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Bill Walker: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, beginning on January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from WSIB and had private insurance; and

"Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario;

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

"To repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119."

I support this and will sign my name and send it with page Nicole.

CYCLING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas 25% of Ontario adults regularly cycle and over 50% of children cycle either daily or weekly;

"Whereas a cycling fatality occurs every month in Ontario and thousands of cyclists are injured each month;

"Whereas Ontario is lagging behind provinces like British Columbia and Quebec that have invested \$31 million and \$200 million respectively in cycling infrastructure;

"Whereas investing in cycling infrastructure in Ontario will create jobs and benefit the economy, reduce traffic congestion and pollution, protect those sharing the road, and encourage active transportation;

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

"That the province of Ontario release a comprehensive cycling strategy for Ontario that includes dedicated funding to match municipal investments in cycling infrastructure, education initiatives to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of all road users, and a review and update of provincial legislation including the Highway Traffic Act and the Planning Act to ensure roadways are safe for all users...."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign this and give it to Steven to be delivered to the table.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here with a great number of signatures from the tri-county area of Oxford, Norfolk and Elgin. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition and present it to page Claudia to bring down to the Clerks’ table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world’s highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer’s hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario’s residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Nick.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Monday, November 24, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Wednesday, November 26, 2014, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 8:

—notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire;

—witnesses are scheduled on a first-come first-served basis;

—each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the second day of public hearings;

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 3 p.m. on Thursday, November 27, 2014; and

That the committee be authorized to meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on Monday, December 1, 2014 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Wednesday, December 3, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 12 midnight for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration; and

On Monday, December 1, 2014, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the Committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

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That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, December 4, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved notice of motion number 8. I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this motion as it relates to Bill 8.

I'm very pleased to participate in this debate, and of course I look forward to hearing comments from other honourable members of all parties.

As I have said before, last June the people of this province sent our government to Queen's Park with a very strong mandate. They've asked to us work along with other parties and Ontarians on issues that are im-

portant to Ontarians. And one of the issues that I think was clearly spoken to by all parties was matters around accountability and transparency within the government and the political process. They were clear that they wanted this Legislature to move past the games and grandstanding of the previous Parliament and get down to work.

It's an issue I heard quite often while I was in my community of Ottawa Centre, knocking on doors on a regular basis and meeting with constituents. They often showed their surprise and disappointment at a lot of the stalling of work that took place under the previous minority Legislature. And one of the clear indications and instructions I received from my constituents was that we need to move ahead; we need to move with important policies that ensure we're building a stronger, more open and transparent province.

In regard to Bill 8: This is an extremely thoughtful and well-needed piece of legislation. What is more, the Premier has made openness and transparency a top priority since day one. Bill 8 would make serious improvements and changes across the broader public sector. It would strengthen political accountability and make the business of government more transparent. It would give officers of the Legislature more responsibility in their roles, and would introduce more oversight and accountability to public organizations that provide services to the broader public.

I would like to provide some specifics on what Bill 8 will do.

If passed, Bill 8 will implement executive compensation reforms immediately. The government would become authorized to directly control the compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector and take action to ensure compliance.

Bill 8 would set up the office of the patient Ombudsman and grant investigative powers to the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

It will also enable greater oversight and accountability of air ambulance service providers. The parts of Bill 8 that would make improvements at Ornge have been before the Legislature for almost three years. Those parts have been debated an astounding 23 times in this Legislature since 2012.

The bill will also require expense information for MPPs to be posted online for out-of-riding travel, hotels, meals and hospitality. It will require expense information for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their respective staff to be posted online as well: all very concrete steps to ensure that the government is more transparent; that all the functions of government and this Legislature, like all MPPs, are more open and accountable to our constituents.

Speaker, this bill has been considered extensively by the Legislature and needs to pass. This bill was first introduced eight months ago and has been debated several times in the Legislature. We tried to pass this bill before the election but couldn't because the opposition needlessly tied up the business of the Legislature. This

piece of legislation was part of the plan that we took to the people of Ontario in June. They supported that plan, and we intend to follow through on our commitment by passing Bill 8 and enacting Bill 8 through this Legislature. The alternative is letting the opposition drag out debate on the bill for months and even years, as they have done in the past. We need to move forward with this bill.

We know that there is support from members of all parties on this bill. In fact, members from both opposition parties have made positive comments in support of this bill. For instance, the member from Nepean–Carleton said, “Most of this bill, we agree with, on the opposition side, so I think that with some amendments, this bill would receive support from the official opposition.” The member from Timmins–James Bay said, “A lot of this stuff is things we are generally in favour of.”

Speaker, we invite members to propose amendments in committee so that we can work together to make the public sector more accountable. This bill, if passed, will allow for more transparent, more open and accountable government. This bill, if passed, will ensure that our constituents know how their members work and operate in terms of our expense claims, our voting records—things that are important information that should be available to our constituents as easily as possible.

Time allocation is one part of the legislative tool kit available and has been used by all three parties here in our province. From 1999 to 2003, for instance, the last Conservative government time-allocated about 60% of its bills. Although it is our government’s preference to allow bills to progress through the normal course, these types of motions are sometimes necessary, especially when there are bills from the last Parliament that Ontarians are counting on us to pass and that have gone through substantive debate over the course of the last Parliament and the new Parliament.

The voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June. They did not want any more stalling of the Legislature by the opposition parties.

I urge all members in this House to support this motion and help pass Bill 8 as soon as possible.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words about the government House leader’s notice of motion regarding Bill 8.

I feel it’s important that I quote the standing orders. This motion quotes standing order 47(a), which says, “The government House leader may move a motion with notice providing for the allocation of time to any proceeding on a government bill or substantive government motion.”

The reason I read that standing order, Speaker, is because I want to try, in a few minutes, to give the other side of the story. I firmly believe the government House leader’s speech only told half of the story. I think it’s very important for members who are here and for the public to get the other side of the story.

The government House leader, when he makes his speech, really doesn’t lay out the facts of why we’re here today. If he really wanted co-operation and consultation, he could have acted a little bit differently in some of the dealings since the June 12 election. He makes a statement about stalling tactics and delay tactics. He uses the words “games” and “grandstanding,” and I’m not particularly sure what he means when he says that. Certainly, it’s not in the context of this session of Parliament.

1420

I made myself very clear when I first met the government House leader in my capacity as the opposition House leader. Just as an aside, a number of people have asked me today about my change of seats. I made a change in seating because I felt like I was bargaining with someone who wasn’t being forthcoming in terms of fair, honest negotiations. I didn’t want to sit and look at the government House leader another day. In fact, I am quite happy sitting by the third party House leader because, just in the short time I’ve been here, we’ve been able to talk about co-operation much more so than anything the government House leader has said in a meeting.

I want to go back to the very first meeting I had with the government House leader, when we talked about bills. We talked about what bills the government wanted to pass. They were very open about the bills they wanted to have passed. Granted, the list would expand. It would start at four bills, then go to five, then go to six. Now it’s at seven bills that the government has told us in the House leaders’ meeting.

Again, when we bring up questions like this in question period and the Premier stands up and says, “We’re going to refer that to the House leaders,” that gives you the illusion that there’s actually a three-way conversation and co-operation. I want you to know something, Speaker: That has not been the case under the government House leader’s watch. What is said behind closed doors is not what’s being said here in the House. I want to make that statement today.

I have not in any way, shape or form indicated to this government that we were going to be unduly delaying legislation, that we were going to be playing games, that we were going to be grandstanding. In fact, I was open and transparent, to use the government’s own words. I was very open and transparent—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: You know what? If the minister wants to stand up and take—I think the government House leader had 33 minutes left. If the Treasury Board minister wants to stand up and take some of the 33 minutes that the government has left on the clock, by all means do so. I have my opportunity to put my side of the story, because I think you got half the story right there.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: I was very honest, open and transparent when they asked me what bills I wanted hearings on. There’s a session going on right now, Minister of Education, regarding Bill 10. We were open, honest and transparent right from the start. We said we wanted

province-wide hearings on Bill 10. I negotiated into the night, a couple of weeks ago, with the government House leader to try to get a couple of days of hearings outside the city of Toronto. I thought I had a deal. I felt very upset when the Premier's office squashed that deal at the 11th hour. Again, we had some issues with the towing provisions of the insurance bill. We wanted to have a few hearings.

There were some bills like Bill 35: I understand that the bill that is tabled now was the bill that went through Parliament and was amended by committee. I'm not averse to having a discussion about that bill and programming that bill. The same with this bill: The government House leader was quick to quote the member for Nepean–Carleton about some of the provisions in that bill. Again, we didn't have much problem in working on a co-operative framework at the House leaders' meeting to have a few hours of debate, some committee time and then some third reading debate.

But don't ask me for my opinion on what bills I wanted to travel, don't ask me what bills I wanted slowed down so that we could get public opinion, and then totally deal with standing order 47 and time allocation. I'd have more respect for this government if they just did time allocation on all seven bills and tabled it so that the two other parties can know your plans. Don't sit across the table from me and ask for my opinion when you're not going to listen to one thing I say. Don't insult me and don't insult the House leader for the third party. If you're going to sit there and use words about co-operating with the opposition and making Parliament work, then, you know what? You can't talk out of both sides of your mouth. You can't say one thing in a House leaders' meeting and then do something else on the floor of the chamber.

The fact of the matter is, Speaker, that this time allocation motion is just like the others. This is a substantive bill. There are 82 pages. It amends 16 acts. Essentially, what you're going to have on Monday, November 24, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., is 17 people who are going to be able to make a presentation. They're going to get five minutes to make their statement. There's going to be nine minutes, apportioned between the three parties, to ask questions. The following time the committee meets is two days later, on Wednesday, November 26. In the two hours that they're going to meet in the early afternoon, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., you'll have eight people making their presentations. You'll probably be on your ninth deputation. Then you'll flip over to 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., where you'll finish up that person and get another eight people.

The fact of the matter is, the government has decided that 34 people are going to appear before the committee and talk about this bill. That's similar to what they've done with Bill 10 today, even though we've had so many people across this province indicate that they wanted that bill slowed down.

I gave my assurance, by the way, on Bill 10 that once we had province-wide hearings and dealt with clause-by-

clause, I would do everything under my power to bring that bill back and have passage in time for the government to deal with the regulations. All I wanted was the opportunity for people to have their voices heard. I didn't ask for province-wide hearings on all seven bills; I didn't ask for that. I asked for a few select bills to be given that opportunity and for us to work in that co-operative vein at House leaders', to try to get that done.

I've been very open and honest in what I wanted, and I have to tell you, Speaker, I've been extremely frustrated. At every House leaders' meeting, I asked about committee hearing travel. I also asked about having Laura Miller and Peter Faist appear before the justice committee. Talk about trying to be open and transparent: You want to have a committee meet and actually hear from all the witnesses before you start report writing—but, oh, no, not in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario. I joked with the third party House leader today. You know, she talks about the activist centre. I think we're going to draw a line right between the two House leaders here, and that will be the activist centre. I'll be on the right of centre and he'll be on the left of centre. But I think we could get more activation of government legislation if they listened to us.

This isn't a tough situation. We have a number of things that are before us. We've got a number of issues that other Legislatures seem to be able to take and deal with. One of the ones that is near and dear to my heart: I'm on the Speaker's security committee. We haven't had a meeting yet, and I'm concerned about that. We had a very significant incident happen on Parliament Hill. There was a story a couple of weeks ago that the BC Legislature has been able to handle some improvements to their security. I think we need to get moving on some issues.

I can no longer sit idly by and not comment when the House leaders' process is continually spinning its wheels. I'm going to lay my cards on the table, Speaker. I pledged, when I became House leader—I was asked by Mike Crawley, I think it was, from the CBC about whether I was going to ring bells and delay legislation. You know what? I didn't think I needed to. I thought, if I was going to be asked my opinion on two or three or four pieces of legislation, that I'd actually get listened to.

I'm a fair and a reasonable person. In this Legislature, a couple of times, under private members' business, I was able to get all-party support for a couple of my bills. So I know what it's like to work across party lines to get things done. But don't insult me and insult my party by asking for our opinion and then not addressing it—ignoring it. I want no part of that.

Again, I want to say that there are some bills that our caucus doesn't want to stall, yet there are other bills that we feel people need to be heard on. We're going to continue to present our views.

This bill in particular, as I said earlier, deals with about 16 amendments. There are a number of things that we've spoken about in this House. I'm sure this is one of those bills, even though it's a very large bill—as I said earlier, it's 82 pages. There is something, that I think

we've all talked about in our communities, that needs to be done in terms of openness and transparency.

1430

I wish the government would have gone the other way on openness and transparency and allowed us to have Peter Faist and Laura Miller testify. I think it would have been great to have a select committee on the Ornge scandal. I think we still should have a select committee, as Laurie Scott is calling for, to deal with the whole issue of abuse. From our caucus's perspective, we're going to continue to talk about those things. But again, don't sit on the government side and start giving yourself the illusion that we're stalling the proceedings. The bells that rang, quite frankly, were trying to raise awareness on the Ornge scandal. We still believe, on this side of the House, that an all-party select committee to deal with those issues with Ornge would have been the right thing to do. It would have been the right thing for the Legislature to come through in a minority Parliament and make that decision.

When people talk about ringing the bells, we rang the bells for a purpose. We rang them for a purpose. We started this new Parliament with some—we took the government at their word, that they were willing to sit down and discuss openness and transparency. Yes, Speaker, this is an openness and transparency bill. Yes, it will go through committee. Yes, it will come back here under this motion and be passed quickly after public hearings with their 34 people who can attend and the debate for third reading. But it still speaks to the issue that this government is failing Ontarians.

They can't say one thing in the House and do something completely different in a House leaders' meeting. I'm sorry, Speaker, but I had to get those comments on the record. I'm sure the government House leader should just deal with his bills. If he wants them time-allocated, have the guts to look us in the face and table that motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Right from the activist centre to the left of the centre line is the NDP.

I've got to say, I agree with pretty well everything that my colleague the House leader for the Conservative Party has raised. I think the government tried to build an expectation, when they came in with their majority government, that they really wanted to work with the opposition and find a way for us to be able to move forward an agenda, that allowed them to get their agenda, allowed them to pass their bills, and gave the opposition an opportunity to give some scrutiny to legislation.

I think that is not a bad idea. When I first got here in 1990, there was no such thing as standing order 47. The only way you could stop debate was by calling the question, and there wasn't even a limit to how much you could speak in this House. I remember various members—the member from St. Catharines, my God, how he would take the floor and go on for a day or two about absolutely anything he wanted to talk about. But that was

his right as a member and, yes, it was kind of hard to take at times—and I was known once or twice in that first Parliament for having done so myself because of decisions that were made by our whip at the time. But the point was, even in a majority Parliament—

Interruption.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's making that noise is what's driving me crazy here. It's as if it's picking up something every time I hit the desk.

When I first got here in 1990, even in a majority Parliament, the government couldn't just do what it wanted. It had to work with the opposition parties to be able to move its agenda forward. This is how it worked, and it was, I think, a fairly good system. The government would decide what it wanted as a bill. Let's say it was the fall. It would introduce the bill at first reading in the fall. They would conclude second reading sometime in the fall, when it came to the actual bill. Sometimes the bill had very little debate because there would be agreement amongst the House leaders to give it some time in committee. But here's the kicker: Normally, we didn't do the hearings in the session that the bill was introduced; we did them in the intersession. It allowed the committees to go out on the road and actually talk to the public about the bill. And you know what? That worked for the government and it also worked for the opposition.

I'll give you an example of one bill, and that was the creation of the sustainable forestry development act that was done under our government by Howard Hampton when he was Minister of Natural Resources. I think it was introduced in the fall, because I kind of remember having the hearings in the winter, but I might be wrong. Maybe I've got the timing wrong. But it was introduced, we had a fairly short debate at second reading, and the bill went out for hearings and it travelled northern Ontario. Why? It was about sustainable forestry development, so we went to places around the province that were affected by forestry.

I always remember that there was a newly elected member who came in in a by-election when Mr. Dennis Drainville left, and that was Chris Hodgson, who would become the member to go on that committee.

Chris—I'm going to use his name because he's no longer a member in this place, so I can call him Chris. He's actually a good friend. He's now president of the Ontario Mining Association. He went out as an eager-beaver member. I always remember that because I was an eager-beaver member too. As you, Mr. Arnott, of the class of 1990—the few of us who are left—went out and heard what people had to say about the bill. Yes, he was being oppositional to our bill; there was no question about that, as was his right. But he was also trying to find ways to make the bill more functional.

While we were in places like Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay and Kapuskasing and the various places that we went to, he would reach out to people to come and talk to the committee about the bill. They would make suggestions, from the forest industry, the First Nations communities and others, about what they thought

were the problems with the bill, and guess what happened? After two or three weeks of hearings—I don't remember how long we were gone, but it seems to me that one may have had up to four weeks of hearings, if I remember that one—God, we got to be friends on that committee. Imagine that. Members of this assembly actually got along—Conservatives, New Democrats, Liberals. We called each other by our first names. We established friendships and relationships that last till today. I still consider Chris a friend from the experience I had in 1990—whenever it was. Why? Because those committees not only served the function of giving the public a chance to have a hearing on the bill in question; they allowed members to work together, because the House leaders had to work out ahead of time how much time the bill was going to have in committee, and the government House leader had to satisfy the opposition that the time was sufficient enough to be able to satisfy his critics and his caucus about how long they'd be out on the road. And guess what else happened? We actually amended legislation.

Can you imagine that, Steve? Oh, I can't use "Steve." The member for Leeds—Grenville, the House leader of the Conservative Party, can you imagine? We actually went into clause-by-clause after all these hearings and there would be amendments that were brought forward by the opposition, and, God almighty, they passed. We'd actually take those amendments and we'd incorporate them into the bill. I'm not saying for a second that we took them all—absolutely not. But there were a number of amendments that were accepted because members of the committee dropped their partisanship somewhat when they were on the road because they now felt somewhat empowered to be able to make a change to the bill and they felt that they were doing their jobs and were being useful.

The public felt engaged because, "Hey, I've talked to the Conservative member," or the NDP member or the Liberal member, "and they tell me they're going to bat for us." Everybody felt as if the process was somewhat theirs, and we actually passed legislation that was changed quite a bit from second reading to the time we brought it back to third, and that was because of the committee process.

This government comes in and says, "Oh, we're going to have to time-allocate everything because it's so important. Oh my God, the world is going to end; it's going to come to an end if we don't pass this legislation."

Well, it never took less than a year to pass legislation in this place when I first got here. The Legislature had operated for, at that point, 100 years; I think the anniversary of the Legislature was about the time that I was elected, so it was about 100 years. For 100 years, this place operated with no time allocation. It operated with sometimes very acrimonious debates at second reading and sometimes quite partisan campaigns in the time that we weren't in committee, but the thing that they had to do: They did have to work together because the government did not have a time allocation role. The only

way that we could allow a bill to go quickly through the House or without too much interference from the opposition—as we would see it, as a government, interference; it would be the same for the Tories or the Liberals—was to go and make a deal with the opposition. It was virtually a minority Parliament when you really stop and think about it.

This is maybe unfair because this is my view, and if somebody feels differently I would suggest they get in the debate and explain to me why. But one of the problems that we had in the last minority Parliament was that people had forgotten how to work together. That was the big failure at the beginning, the very beginning of the minority Parliament, of the last session.

Because governments have done time allocation since 1993 or 1994 under the NDP, accelerated under the Tories and concluded by the Liberals—we all have our hands in this, so I can't stand here and say, "Oh, my God, we were so virtuous that we wouldn't do anything the same." I'll tell you one thing: I learned a very good lesson through this, but that's a whole other thing.

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But the point was that the opposition parties and the government forgot how to work together, because for years they didn't have to. For years—at the end of the NDP administration, during the Conservative administration and then under the Liberal administration—they would go in and dictate at House leaders' meetings what was going to happen: "Here, guys. Here, girls. Here's what's happening next week. Have a great day." Boom. That was a House leaders' meeting. Well, it was never that way before.

So, when we fell into a minority Parliament, everybody forgot how to work together, and we were somewhat with our backs up—all of us—and somewhat guarded, because everybody had lost the ability to do that, and those relationships that are so important to making this place work had disappeared. Where those relationships were done was in committees. Members spent time together. They listened to deputations together in different communities across Ontario, they would supper together afterwards, they would be on a bus or a plane to wherever they were going. So you got to know each other and you got to know each other's families, and it really changed the dynamic of how this place works.

I don't blame the government members for thinking, "Oh my God! Imagine that! The opposition brought 400 amendments to the legislation. How terrible!" I'm sorry; that's what committees are about. I've been at committees where Liberals in opposition to us, Tories in opposition to us, and we in opposition to the Liberals and the Tories, brought far more than 400 amendments. My God, I remember a time in this House when we went through clause-by-clause with the Tories, and I don't remember how many amendments there were, but we hadn't gone through half of them and it was eight-and-a-half days later.

But guess what? That's what this place is about. It's not about filibustering, but about giving the opportunity

for legislation to be seen, to be heard, to be vetted and to get the public to have their say, which I'll talk about in a minute. Yes, it gives power a little bit to the opposition to be able to hold the government's feet to the fire, but here's the bottom line: It's a very brilliant system, the parliamentary system, because in the end the government will always get its way, and rightfully so.

Do I like the results of the last election? God, no. I'm sure you do, as Liberals. My good friends in the Conservative Party—I'm sure Steve doesn't like the results of the last election.

Mr. Steve Clark: Not so much.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's that?

Miss Monique Taylor: They're 77% sadder today.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay, they're sadder today.

Interjection: By 77%.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. All right.

But my point is that the result of the election was decided by the people of Ontario, and once the public has spoken, that's it; we have to live with the result. We lived by that in opposition in the minority Parliament. We said, "We need to respect the public for what they have done. They decided on a minority Parliament."

Guess what? They've given the government a majority this time. I can't argue with that. I don't like it, but that's what it is. So, I say to the government across the way, and I say to the Deputy Premier and the government House leader: Shame on you for bringing in time allocation. I said through the entire minority Parliament that I will not be a party to any time allocation, and I never was. Sometimes we could have done that.

You know, as our whip, Madame Cheri DiNovo from Parkdale—High Park—we would go into discussions with the Conservatives and the Liberals on some bills, and sometimes they were bills that we wanted. The government would come to me—my good friend Mr. John Milloy; I can call him by his first name now, because he's not here. John would come to me and say, "Gilles, this is an important bill for both of us. Let's time-allocate." I'd say, "Absolutely not. The Conservatives have a right to do what they're doing. If they want to speak this bill out or force it into committee by doing whatever, God bless. That is their right."

Even in a position of power, our party recognized and respected the process that, in the end, the public is never wrong, and that when they send us to this place, we need to respect them. What time allocation does, I think, is that it doesn't respect the public.

Here's what's happening now. The government does exactly what my good friend the member from—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Leeds—Grenville. I'm so glad you sit here now.

Mr. Steve Clark: You're going to get that.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to learn that soon.

Mr. Steve Clark: You are. You are.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's going to be imprinted, my good buddy.

As the member from Leeds—Grenville said, we went into House leaders' meetings at the beginning of this session with the understanding, because the government sent a pretty direct message to both House leaders and our teams that they were in fact prepared to give us some time in committee and prepared to give us some adequate time in debate, if we were guaranteeing that they could get bills by a certain date.

They gave us a list of bills, and I'm not going to go through that. But both the Conservatives and the New Democrats said, "Okay, we'll take that back to our folks. We understand that you're going to get your bills in the end, and if we can find a way to give the public their say and for us to have our say in the House, that would be a good thing." So we went out and did the work we had to do.

The government never intended to honour anything it had said. So I don't blame my good friend from Leeds—Grenville, the Tory House leader, for being upset. We went through this whole process where the government understood section 47 of the standing orders, and they had no intention of allowing us to have any kind of public hearings outside of Toronto. They had no intention of allowing proper vetting of the legislation by the public. Their game, right from the beginning, was to time-allocate everything. I'm not surprised by that, because I heard what the government had said at the beginning, but having been around this place for a while, I thought, "No, these guys are going to time-allocate," because it is easier to time-allocate than to actually manage a situation and do it well.

That's the other lesson I've learned over the years: The one thing human beings hate to do is manage and make decisions. If you're a boss, it's easier to yell at somebody if they've done something wrong than to say, "Okay, let's sit down and talk about this. Let's try to find a way to not have that mistake happen again," or, "Maybe it's an issue with me as the boss."

That's why I like collective agreements. That's why I like unions, because they have a collective agreement and a grievance procedure. At least those workers are organized and have an ability to be heard.

The point is, nobody wants to manage. What time allocation does is remove the government's responsibility to manage from the Legislature.

I think we've all read our history. The British parliamentary system was developed over 1,000 years from a couple of really basic principles: that we, as a Legislature, never allow the executive—back in them days, the king, but in our days, the cabinet and the Premier—the ability to spend money without the authorization of the Legislature. That's our primary function. Even though that kind of happens, because of time allocation the opposition—and, I argue, the public—has less scrutiny on government expenses.

The other thing that we're responsible for, obviously, is the legislative part of it. The government has the right to legislate bills in order to deal with different issues, as they are with this particular bill about transparency, which I'll get to in a second. They have a right to do that.

But here's the other kicker that drives me crazy: The Legislature, over the years—because we hate to manage, and we don't want any pesky MPPs getting in the way of actually dealing with legislation, we delegate the authority in the bill to regulation.

When I got here, for example, in the sustainable forestry development act, most everything was defined in the legislation. It wasn't permitted, by regulation, for cabinet to make this thing work, other than the planning manuals, which is a whole other issue. But for most bills that we pass through this House, we very, very seldom, in very few examples, will delegate our authority as the Legislature to cabinet. I'm going to give you a good example where this has really served us badly.

Agree or not agree, the Conservative government under Mr. Harris passed legislation that said that if you want to do a casino in your community, you have to have a referendum. Right? Because the NDP government of the day created two or three casinos—three casinos—and the Tories of the day and the opposition were opposed to it. When they got to government, they said, "Well, we'll fix that. You need to have a referendum."

It was really clear what Mike Harris wanted: He wanted a referendum. That legislation was passed, but they delegated the authority of the act—the whole guts of the act was delegated to cabinet.

Mr. McGuinty comes along—I can call him Mr. McGuinty now, because he's no longer the Premier or a member. Mr. McGuinty comes along, and what does he do? He basically says, by regulation, that there won't be any referendum.

Is that what the House pronounced itself on? When the House voted on that bill some years ago, did the House not say, "No, there will be referendums, absolutely"? Fifty per cent plus one of the House said there has to be a referendum. But that decision was voided by the delegation of authority in the act to the cabinet, and the cabinet of the day, under Mr. McGuinty, decided there will be no referendum.

When members in this House, and especially new members on the government side—and I don't mean this in a demeaning way. Listen, I was there. Je me souviens. Coming into this place as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young government member, boy, I was going to change the world. I guess we have changed the world, to a degree, but that's a whole other story. But we tend to believe what our whips, our House leaders and our Premier tell us, and how great we are and why this is so important. Rah, rah, rah, with the caucus. You're doing yourself a disservice, I can tell you.

One of the things we did as a government, that I think was probably the worst mistake we did, was that we introduced the concept of time allocation into our standing orders. I was stupid enough—and I'm going to say it right here—to listen to my House leader and come into this House and give speeches on supporting that.

I remember an opposition member by the name of Ernie Eves coming to see me after that, and he says, "Oh, you will rue the day that you gave that speech." It wasn't

too far after, in 1995, that I recognized what Mr. Eves had told me, and he was right.

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That's why in opposition, in the minority Parliament, I and our caucus never supported time allocation, because it is a bad way of drafting legislation. The government now, by way of this motion, is saying they're going to time-allocate a transparency bill. Think about this for a second. It's a bill about transparency, and we're going to close the doors to the public and say, "We're not going to travel the bill outside of Toronto and we're going to limit how much time there's going to be transparency in the committee process here at Queen's Park." It's a contradiction on every level.

The government members are going to say, "Oh yeah, but you brought 400 amendments, Steve. Oh, that was so"—give me a break. There are rules. If you want to bring 2,000 amendments, bring them on. It may be a tactic by the opposition to slow you down; I'll admit that. It might have been. I don't know if it was, but it might be. But you know what? In the British parliamentary system, that's the process. Those are the tools that the opposition is given to do its job. If you get held to account and somebody's holding your feet to the fire, you're far more likely to do better legislation.

Let me ask you this question: Why is it that people don't speed on highways when they see a police officer going by? The fear of being caught. The only reason that people don't speed on highways is when they think they're going to be caught. That's the same principle when it comes to legislation and time allocation and the right of the opposition to hold the government to account. If the government knows that it's going to be held to account by a strong opposition, if they know there is going to be clear transparency in the legislative process, guess what the legislation is going to look like? It'll be a heck of a lot better than what we're doing today.

I see bills come through this House, and you guys did it, under the Conservatives, and the Liberals have done it in spades in a whole bunch of other bills, where they bring really good ideas forward. They draft a flawed bill, they agree it's flawed when you get to clause-by-clause, but the minister and the bureaucracy say, "No, don't change it, because we'll look politically weak if we change the bill."

I'll give you another one. Do you remember Linda Jeffrey? I can say her name because she's no longer a member either.

Mr. Steve Clark: Her Worship.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Her Worship Linda Jeffrey was Minister of Natural Resources, and there was a section in the far north planning act—I don't remember the details; I'm going to sort of make it a little bit up because I don't remember the details—that said, "The sky shall be blue."

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Just like you normally do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: See there? Like I normally do. Okay, all right; that's fine. You don't get the gist of this whatsoever, then; just keep on doing what you're doing.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, just stay in your world and don't come out again for at least another 10 or 15 minutes.

So, my point is this. There was a—
Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, if you listened to what he heckled—I don't mind being heckled. You guys can heckle me all you want, but that was just—he missed the whole gist of what the speech is about.

Linda Jeffrey, who was a very well-meaning minister of the crown, brings forward a bill with the good intention of creating a planning mechanism in the far north. You may be opposed to that, you may be in favour of it—it's irrelevant. The bill came forward. There was a section of the bill that said, "The sky shall be blue." I remember reading the act and sitting in committee, and I go, "Jeez, that doesn't mean blue; that means black. It means the sky is going to be black." So I raised the point through committee. I asked a couple of people who came to depute to the committee, "Tell me what your interpretation of that section is." They would say, each and every time, "It's completely opposite to what the government intends."

When we got to clause-by-clause, we proposed amendments to fix it. I didn't like her bill. In fact, I voted against it, but I was at least trying to make it better, so I proposed an amendment. The government was refusing the amendment, so I said, "Okay, I want to ask legal counsel on committee to give me an explanation of what that part of the bill says." They said, "In fact, it's not blue; it's black." The government members were saying, "No, no, no. That person doesn't know what they're talking about." I'm sorry; these are legislative lawyers hired by the committee who are non-partisan and there to assist the committee. So I said, "Okay, fine. Let me call the ministry lawyer up."

I think it was Dianne Corbett who was the ADM who was on committee at the time, who came before—I may have this wrong. Maybe it wasn't Dianne, but it seems to me it was Dianne Corbett. There was a lawyer for the ministry who came forward, and I asked the question, "Tell me what the meaning of that section is, and am I wrong? Is this not what I say it is?" They said, "No, you're right. In fact, you're 100% right." Because they couldn't lie to committee. They understand, as civil servants, if you come before a committee and you knowingly lie, you can be held in contempt. It's like going to court and lying to the judge; we have powers akin to a judge in a court. So I talked to Linda Jeffrey, and she goes, "You know, Gilles, thanks for that. Let me talk to the corner office over there"—remember, Mr. McGuinty—"and I'll get back to you tomorrow." She came back to me, and I'm not going to reveal what she said to me in that conversation because it was said privately, but I can tell you that the bill was not amended. So even when the government knew its own bill was flawed, they didn't amend it because they didn't have to. It was easier for them to leave it flawed than to make the change.

What I'm trying to implore here to the government members is, when you go to your caucus meeting tomorrow, I think you need to have a discussion about where you use time allocation and that you should actually do what the Premier and the House leader were trying to tell us at the beginning of this Parliament: to find ways to work together. Guess what? You're going to find that the opposition is not going to hold everything up. It's quite the opposite. Because of time allocation, the only thing we can now do is talk everything out for six and a half hours and have two hours of debate on time allocation. So of course we're going to debate and we're going to use all the time we can at third reading.

Do you remember third reading back in the days before time allocation, Clerk? There was no such thing. The bill would get called for third reading and nobody would get up to debate because it would be in agreement. Now, we talk everything out at third reading.

Time allocation doesn't help to get your agenda forward. It just creates flawed legislation and frustrates the process. I will argue that you will find that if the House leader had been serious about what he was proposing, and he had to understand if he put forward—was it six bills, Steve? I think it was six.

Mr. Steve Clark: It started as four, then five, then six, and now it's seven.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, it kept on going. Now it's seven. But if the government would have come to us and said, "Here are seven, and this is what we want"—we may not have agreed to the seven; we may not have given you fast passage on all seven. We might have given you fast passage on four or five. The Conservatives might have said, "This bill is something that we're interested in, and we want to have some hearings," and New Democrats probably would have said the same thing. And, yes, guess what? You may have had to travel a couple of bills. And the member from Ottawa—

Mr. Steve Clark: South.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—Ottawa South and I might have been on committee somewhere in Ontario in the inter-session in February or January. We might have gotten to know each other a little bit better. We may have been able to engage stakeholders on the bill at hand. We might have even agreed on some amendments to make the bill better. I may still vote against your bill, but it's in my interest to make it better. I've never known a member of the opposition, no matter what side of the House I'm on, who goes in and decides that they're going to try to make the bill worse. Our expression is voting "yea" or "nay." Our job as legislators is to try to make the bill work.

So I encourage you: Go to your caucus meeting—if not tomorrow, next week—and have a discussion with your House leader and your Premier about really trying to find a way not to use time allocation, because you are not serving your own interests by doing so. I'll tell you, every time you use time allocation, we will speak six and a half hours to every bill, we will speak two hours to every time allocation motion, and we will speak as long as we can at third reading. And yes, we might even ring

bells. Who knows? I am not big on that. Steve and I are not bell ringers, I always thought, but I'm just saying—they're the only tools we've got. But if you actually did what this Legislature used to do years ago, and you didn't use time allocation, you might find, if you tried that, a much different result in this place. You'd probably find that members are more willing to work together than you think.

I spoke on delegated authorities. I don't have to say anything else on that, but I urge you to have that discussion. Who knows? Maybe one day, discussion will be had in this Legislature about how we can actually do what we're sent here to do, and that is to give bills proper scrutiny, to allow the government to get it in the end, but in the meantime to give it the proper scrutiny so that bills get what it is that they need to make them actually work in the end.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to speak for a bit of time on Bill 8. I know there is very little time to talk about issues of oversight and transparency and accountability, especially in the context of the past 11 years, where we have seen quite a shopping list of very, very significant, very high-profile scandals: most recently the MaRS building; Ornge air ambulance, as has been mentioned today; and the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. I make reference to Caledonia. I consider that the mother of all scandals over the past eight and a half years. That's a particular issue that has now had four books written about it. Obviously, there's something going on down in Caledonia; four books have been published on that particular issue. We've yet to see an inquiry on Caledonia.

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Of course, we can go back even further to the OLG and the eHealth scandal.

Many people ask me what happened in the last election. Normally, with a scandal-ridden tenure of this nature, a government would be voted out. That's one option. Another option would be for this government to clean things up a bit. But with the recent MaRS debacle, we really don't see any change in ways, in spite of legislation like Bill 8. It's titled the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. It's a bit of an attempt. It's a bit of a sham, as well, and it really doesn't touch on what is truly required.

The Ornge air ambulance scandal—an issue of that magnitude, several times over and very recently. We in opposition have called for the minister responsible to resign. That did not happen. I'm surprised this doesn't happen under this present government, under our system of responsible government that goes back something like 160 or 170 years, where those in charge do step down. This hasn't been happening in the last 11 years.

I sat on the Ornge air ambulance committee, the Auditor General's committee. Issues of oversight, lack of transparency, lack of oversight and lack of accountability came up again and again. The red flags were not being

paid attention to. The warnings were being ignored. There is a lot of meat in the report that we brought forward. We brought it forward before the election. It didn't see the light of day until just a few weeks ago, for obvious reasons.

The MaRS building, just a few hundred yards in front of this building—the government had been warned that the market was changing.

The Pan Am Games: a \$1.4-billion budget, but they don't include the \$700 million for the athletes' village.

The Mississauga and Oakville gas plant issue came in, according to the Auditor General, with a \$1.1-billion price tag.

Again, we've just had a financial statement. We're discussing now issues, again, as we should be, of the deficit and the debt and spending by this government. If you add up the cost of Caledonia, eHealth, Ornge air ambulance and the gas plant scandal, it really is an affront to any discussion here of fiscal responsibility within this government.

One other thing I do want to touch on—again, there's such limited time, and I know the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has some important things that he wants to say. But here we are talking about oversight, talking about transparency and talking about lack of management, essentially. The last 11 years have put us on this track of discussion, and it has taken away from subjects we should be talking about, like streamlining government and finding some of the savings that this government needs to find if they are going to balance the books in fiscal year 2017-18, in spite of what Don Drummond says. Why are we not talking about restructuring and downsizing and privatization of some of the services? Because of what has gone on, we are now discussing lack of oversight, lack of transparency and lack of accountability, partly to be addressed by this legislation, Bill 8.

I made mention of the Auditor General. The Auditor General is limited in many ways. For example, with Ornge air ambulance, the people in charge of that boondoggle created a list of arm's-length organizations. I'm not even sure if they're mentioned in our report, because the Auditor General is not allowed to take a look at some of these spinoff companies from the Ornge air ambulance organization.

There's another organization the Auditor General cannot take a look at. There's no oversight. There's obviously no transparency or accountability as far as the Auditor General's book of business. That's Tarion Corp. I know that Norm Miller, the member for the Muskoka area, brought forward a private member's bill just before the election dealing with these companies that we can't take a look at and also dealing with Tarion Corp.

We know that, by and large, there are very good builders in Ontario. The home builders in my area—I know many of them. I built my own home; they're maybe not too happy about that. They do a good job. But there is the occasional marginal builder, the poor builder.

They're supervised by Tarion, which has been around for something like 38 years, but the Auditor General

can't take a look at Tarion unless this Legislature were to agree to give our Auditor General permission to do that.

Many of our MPPs have been contacted by a group called Canadians for Properly Built Homes. They've been on this Tarion file for quite a while now. There are a number of concerns. They feel it's well overdue for some updates. They can't get the information they need, as the Auditor General cannot. They would like to see more information made public about home builders' performance records. Canadians for Properly Built Homes have concerns about the governance of Tarion, concerns about the licensing of some of the marginal builders that I mentioned, and they are, obviously, concerned about the quality of housing—technical standards, for example—in the province of Ontario.

A number of MPPs have worked on this Tarion issue. Former MPP Ted Chudleigh voiced his concerns with respect to HVAC—heating, ventilation and air conditioning—issues as far as design and construction. I know that former MPP Frank Klees did a lot of work on an extensive file from Dr. Earl Shuman; it's known as the Shuman Test fraud. That has been a 16- or maybe 17-year-old battle now. I know that former MPP Rob Milligan worked on that as well. Randy Hillier put forward motion 50 to permit a value-for-money audit of Tarion by the Auditor General, again in the interests of consumer protection. But again, this government, through the Auditor General, cannot take a look at Tarion. The way it was originally structured 38 years ago, there's no room for transparency or accountability.

MPP Todd Smith, among many, had been circulating petitions calling for a value-for-money audit.

Just before the election, I had tenure as critic for consumer services. I put forward a formal order paper question—that would be about a year ago, last December—asking the Ministry of Consumer Services when it will conduct a value-for-money audit of the Tarion Warranty Corp., again, in the interests of transparency, oversight, accountability and the governance of this particular corporation.

Things aren't happening, Speaker. We have legislation here with words like “transparency” and “accountability” in the title. I feel it doesn't go nearly far enough. There's an awful lot of work to be done.

I think I'll end here now because there's so little time to continue this discussion. I would certainly like to hear from my colleagues this afternoon.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand up in this House. I wouldn't say it's a pleasure to stand up for a time allocation motion.

I would like to talk about a couple of things today. The first is, it's a contradiction to want to time-allocate a bill on transparency. Basically, you're saying, “We want to let you talk about it, but not for very long.” Really, if you're working on a bill about transparency, and if you're really, truly a government committed to openness and transparency, you would want to get as much on the

table—as opposed to as little on the table—as possible. So it's a contradiction.

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I'd like to follow up on something that my House leader said. I don't have the institutional memory of this place that some of the other people do, because I've only been here three years. Some of the things he said about committee work—committee work is very important, but getting committees out in the province, I think, is even more important. This bill, again, restricts the committees to here: instead of the province, an insular vacuum of one specific spot in the province.

In my three years here, I've only had the opportunity to be on one; I got subbed in on one committee. It was the LHIN review, and I've mentioned it here before. One of the places we went was Kingston, and we went to Vankleek Hill. The people in Vankleek Hill are probably still talking about that.

In that short time that I was subbed in, not only did I build relationships that I wouldn't have had before; I also understood parts about the province that I never would have gotten the opportunity to unless we had been on that trip. By this continuous time allocation and saying, “Well, we have committee presentations. They have to be here, or we can do them by Skype, or we can do them on the telephone”—because we don't have Skype, really. Where I'm from, a lot of us don't have high-speed Internet.

I think, really, for this government—for any government—to truly understand the province, a few committees should travel to places where they don't have high-speed Internet. It would make a difference. For me, it makes a lot of difference when I go to places I've never been. I have a much better appreciation of the issues that are happening in Toronto since I've lived part-time in Toronto for the last three years. It has made a huge difference in my outlook on this province.

But by this government declaring they're open and transparent but, “We only want to talk to people who have the ability to get to Toronto”—that's wrong. It's wrong-headed, and it's not a sign that you truly believe in openness and transparency, despite what the bill's title is.

I'm not going to dwell on some of these, but in the three years I've been here, we've spent more time chasing after facts on the Ornge scandal, on the gas plants scandal. The House leader said that in the last Parliament, the people of Ontario said they were sick of the games that the other parties were playing. Well, I hate to tell you this, but it takes two sides to play a game. Although we never supported bell-ringing, the reason that the opposition was having to use every tool in their arsenal was to chase after the lack of openness. I don't think it has changed, despite what this bill says.

I will give you an example. With the MaRS—and I don't know if it's a scandal. I'm still waiting for the information. From what I understand, the government gave a company a loan and changed the regulations so this company could get the loan. We're asking for the business case. Why did you do that? Why did you change

the regulations to give a company a loan that normally a private company wouldn't get? And we're still waiting. We're still waiting. We've got all kinds of documents, but we're still waiting for an open and transparent business case.

I'll give you an example in my riding. I'm still waiting for this answer. The Minister of Infrastructure is working with me. I'll give him credit; he's working with me. I'll give you my business case.

The town of Kirkland Lake needs to build a new swimming pool. It has young families. They've come to work in the mines. They've got young kids. There are not a lot of other services in the immediate area. They need a new swimming pool. They applied to Infrastructure Ontario for a loan—the same Infrastructure Ontario that gave MaRS a 200-and-some-million-dollar loan. They applied for a loan of \$7.5 million. They were refused. Why? They were refused because in the last year they ran a deficit. They ran a deficit of about half a million dollars. That's why they were refused.

My approach to the minister, and my business case, is that they ran that deficit because the MPAC assessment on their two major employers was challenged, and they were forced to pay back half a million dollars from a faulty MPAC assessment to those employers.

Further to my business case, the Minister of Finance has acknowledged in this House that there are problems with MPAC. They've done a study. They've asked for a full review of MPAC, because there have been problems specifically in one-resource towns like Kirkland Lake. There's my business case.

I've asked the Minister of Infrastructure to look into that, to see if we can change that decision, because the town had no control over a faulty MPAC ruling that forced them to pay back half a million dollars that caused a deficit. There's my business case—open and transparent. I'm still waiting for the answer. That's a business case.

We're still waiting for the answer on MaRS. That's why we question whether the government is truly interested in accountability and transparency. If they were, they would travel and talk about what transparency means.

I've said in this House before, and I'm likely going to say again, as long as the people in Timiskaming–Cochrane feel fit to have me speak on their behalf: This government—and maybe governments before, because I've only had experience with this one—is really good at picking the right title and then crunching a bunch of other things in there, but focusing on the title. Who wouldn't want more MPP accountability and transparency and more public sector accountability? Of course, everybody wants that.

Even the Liberal House leader, in his opening remarks, mentioned that my colleague the member for Timmins–James Bay had said, “We support some of the things in here—maybe most of the things.” But that's the problem with an omnibus bill. You put a few good things in, and then you slip in a few that aren't so good.

Interjection: A poison pill.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. But it's great: You can run around and say, “Look, we've put this bill forward. We're all about accountability and transparency. How could these people want to delay this? It's all sunshine and rose petals.” But it's not.

Like the member from Timmins–James Bay said, if we actually had the time and the will from the governing side, maybe we could put in a few amendments that would make this bill a little bit less egregious in the areas where it is egregious.

There are areas in this bill that are not going to do what the people think. When I look at the title, and if I didn't follow politics that closely, I would think they're turning over a new leaf. This is the promise. I believe I heard in the financial statement today that if this bill was passed, it's one of these things in turning over a new leaf to make the government much more—this is a whole new open and transparent government.

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If it was, they wouldn't have to time-allocate this bill. Also, the opposition wouldn't have to do things that are oppositional if the government actually answered questions.

Again, I'll use my Kirkland Lake case. I'm waiting for the answer, and if the answer is no, well, I've done my job on behalf of my constituents. I've had good relations with the minister. I fully expect he will give me an answer.

But when we don't get an answer, when we get, “Oh, but we've released 700 documents and we've released this and we've released that,” that's not really an answer. Flooding people with a bunch of information but actually not pointing out where the information came from would be like when I went to school—the teacher asks me a question and I throw the textbook on the table. I say, “Teacher, it's in there somewhere. I know what I'm doing.” That's what they're doing. They are throwing a textbook on the table, they are throwing the manual on the table, saying, “There's your answer.” We didn't ask for 1,000 documents. We asked for an answer, and this bill is not helping with that process. That's what I find most disappointing.

Are there good things in this bill? Yes. But it's not getting at the root problem that we're having with this government and that we continue to have with the new Wynne government. They're failing at this point to answer basic questions. It wouldn't be a scandal if you answered the question. You develop scandals when you try to hide things, and that's the problem.

It's been a pleasure to be able to express my views and advocate on behalf of the people of Kirkland Lake, who really need a swimming pool.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to speak today on this bill. I've heard a number of speakers in here today, and I think we're all relatively consistent that it's a bit ironic—“contradictory,” I think, is the word that one of

the other members used—to state that this government is bringing in a transparency and accountability act, and yet they're time-allocating it. It really does speak to the height of the hypocrisy of what this government is doing. When I'm out in my riding, what people are talking to me about—

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdrawn, Speaker.

They're concerned and feeling betrayed with the conduct of this Liberal government, and certainly the new Premier as much as the last Premier. We heard things in the past, and my former colleague Frank Klees from Newmarket–Aurora brought out a lot of concerns in regard to the Ornge boondoggle that we've heard a lot about in here. Nothing really happened under that watch. Yes, they changed some people in the deck chairs and they tried to make the public feel good that we've moved some people out and we've moved some new people in. But what they didn't do was step up, in the spirit of accountability and transparency, and truly allow us to get to the truth on that matter.

It was the hope, with the new Premier coming in, that you would have a new flavour and a new way of doing business. Sadly, Premier Wynne has again really just fallen lockstep into the old way of doing things.

Again, this bill really is transparent in the fact that it says one thing and does the other. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville spoke earlier, and I think his words were that they talk out of both sides of their mouths. In particular, he was very specific to the House leader for the Liberals, that they're behind closed doors having a discussion, and then the next thing you know, it's the exact opposite of what they have agreed to. It's a sad situation that we find ourselves in, and we can't continue to allow them to say one thing and do another. They've run this province into the ground.

As we've heard in here earlier—I think my colleague Vic Fedeli from North Bay–Nipissing suggested it during his response to the economic update today—they are continually saying one thing and doing another. They haven't stepped up and agreed that they've tripled the debt and that we are in dire financial circumstances; we need to turn this province around, and we need to do that sooner than later.

Last week in this House—or two weeks ago, I guess it was, since we were in a constit week last week—I, again similar to my colleague Mr. Klees from Newmarket–Aurora, asked for the Deputy Premier's resignation, and I don't do that lightly. She's one of 107 of us who is duly elected, a long-standing member of this Legislature, but at the end of the day people died under her watch and the expectation would be that if you truly want to be accountable and transparent, then you have to step up and show action—not just words and rhetoric, you actually have to show action.

I'm saddened that I had to do that, but I think that is the role of opposition. It's the role of myself on behalf of Ontarians to expect our government, especially our

senior leaders: our Premier, our Deputy Premier and cabinet ministers, to step beyond the bar—not lower the bar, not make it acceptable for these things and just try to sweep them under the carpet. We need to ensure that people are going to step up and show accountability and transparency. That's what leadership is about. Our next generation—those pages sitting in front of you—need to see a role model.

I'm concerned that sometimes this Liberal Party opposite seems to want to bring in a bill and pretend that legislation can change the world just with the stroke of a pen and putting a few words on paper. That's not what it is, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe ethics can be legislated. There need to be very stringent accountability measures and they need to then take action when those measures are not met. What I have seen from this Liberal government in my three years is that that has not happened. We have things like eHealth, Ornge, the gas plant scandal—and I'm going to talk about those a little bit more in a few minutes. When you have that those types of boondoggles, the worst boondoggles and scandals in our provincial history, yet you still have all of your cabinet ministers in place—no one has actually resigned or been forced to resign or, more importantly, should have stepped down of their own volition when these types of things happen under their watch to show the spirit of accountability and transparency—it then becomes just a piece of paper that I believe isn't really worth the paper it's written on.

It's interesting that one of the schedules in the amendments to the Ambulance Act says that this bill would provide whistle-blower protection for persons who disclose information to an inspector, investigator, special investigator or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In the Ornge file again, we had people who came forward, wrote letters and said, "We have some very significant concerns," and those were just brushed aside. They were swept under the carpet. It saddens me that we're in a situation like that.

It's interesting again that I think this bill arrives at a time when this 11-year-old Liberal government in Ontario presides over the least open and the least transparent government in the history of the province. I'm going to speak about three or four specific items, Mr. Speaker.

One that was just brought up today by our member from Lanark—I don't know the other three, but he's got quite a handle there—Randy Hillier. He talked about MaRS. This is yet again another boondoggle that's unfolding which, ironically, didn't come out until after the provincial election where people would have known that they are again wasting millions and millions of dollars that now aren't going to be going to the front line of our health care, our schools and our most impoverished people in our province—\$450,000 in monthly loan interest payments for an empty, downtown Toronto space.

I have people coming into my office every single day looking for services that they need for their loved ones, for those less fortunate, and every day it's a challenge because we know we're spending this kind of money. This government has presided over, in their 11 years, the

highest debt and deficit in our provincial history. People out there need to be aware that the only two ministries within government that actually have more money spent are education and health care—we're spending more on the provincial debt per month than we do in the social services ministry that I'm given the privilege of being the critic for. Sadly, Mr. Speaker, and it gives me no pride in saying this, there's a lot to criticize in that whole ministry. We're not getting to the front lines. We're not helping the people most in need.

Ornge, as I've spoken about in this House a couple of times, is absolutely a sham. We've seen it over and over. There's \$9.3 million in compensation to Chris Mazza, the CEO. We've got shell companies out there that we can't even have the Auditor General check out because they've hidden these things behind the legislation and the regulations to prevent us from looking in and truly getting to the truth—the accountability and the transparency. If they were truly sincere in those two words, they would have brought that information out.

What I want to ask today in this House—and I will ask it whenever I get the opportunity again—particularly to the President of the Treasury Board and Deputy Premier is, the Ornge report was tabled in this House. I want to know what actions they're actually going to implement to prevent this from ever happening with any of our inner agencies again, so that money truly is being used on the front lines, providing the care and services that the great people of Ontario deserve.

I want to understand how they're going to ensure that oversight and accountability will be built into any new agreements going down the road so that this can never happen again because we've wasted millions and millions of dollars that are not going to the front lines as they so deserve.

1530

EHealth, again, a billion dollars wasted on tendered contracts to high-priced consultants—upwards of \$3,000 a day to a consultant who then turned around and billed us outrageous expenses. These things cannot just be, “Well, sorry, but we'll get better.” I hear in this House all the time, “We need to do better. We will do better,” but every time I turn around there's another one of these appearing in front of this Legislature under the watch of this Liberal government. It's just not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. We need to show true transparency and accountability, but that takes people to step up and do the right thing.

I'm going to go to one that's very near and dear to me. I think it's the height of hypocrisy, really, when you think about the intent of this and the wording. I think Mr. Vanthof mentioned that words are pretty hollow when you just put a title on it but you really don't stand behind it. Some \$1.1 billion was wasted to shut down those two gas plants and save four Liberal seats.

This government has allowed deleted emails to go unscathed. There's no recrimination for that. There is nobody who has paid the price for that. There are currently two OPP investigations—unprecedented in provincial

history. This is just unacceptable, and the height of hypocrisy. The only two people who we believe really know—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry. Once again, I have to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary word that he just used.

Mr. Bill Walker: My apology, Mr. Speaker. If I used the word “contradictory,” would that be acceptable?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): You have to stand up and withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

I'll use “contradictory,” Mr. Speaker. I do apologize; I wasn't really understanding what you were asking me.

But you can't speak out of both sides of your mouth. You can't say one thing and do the exact opposite and expect the people of Ontario to truly believe what you're saying. We have knowledge that Peter Faist and Laura Miller were the two people most implicitly involved in the scandal that is the gas plants. We wanted them to come in front of the committee to be able to share their true knowledge, so that we can get to the bottom of that, so that we can actually put provisions in place so that something like the gas-plant billion-dollar boondoggle, which once again has produced nothing for the great people of Ontario, and has in fact taken a billion dollars off the table from those most critical services that we provide to the most needy in our province—I think it's just unfathomable that this government would hide behind that.

We asked for them to be able to be called, and they denied that ability for them to appear in front of us. How transparent and accountable is that? Again, you can't put a bill on the table saying, “We're going to legislate ethics,” and then—your actions speak way louder, voluminously louder, when you shut that down.

Similarly, they're shutting down debate on this bill itself, the accountability and transparency act bill. They're actually time-allocating it. They're shutting down proper, rigorous debate on that, so again, it's a little tough for me to stand here and really feel that I have a comfort level that they're truly going to turn the page. I was hopeful, with the new administration coming in under Premier Wynne, that we were going to see a different government, and sadly I'm not seeing that. I'm seeing more of the same. If I go back to my roots, to Groundhog Day: It's the same old thing, day after day, except the spin that will be different: “We need to do better. We will do better,” and then we go right back through the whole thing again.

Bringing a bill like this in again really challenges my thought process as to how sincere they really are to the people of Ontario. It almost feels like they're mocking the Ontario public at times. “We've got power,” they keep saying; “We've got the majority.” Yes, we respect that; the people of Ontario did speak, but they didn't give you a majority to do the same old things over and over again, and to bring bills like accountability and transparency and not truly stand behind those words. This government is truly the epitome of waste and scandal, so

it's a little bit rich to ask for accountability and transparency when I can cite those four off the top of my head, and those are just the first four that come to mind.

I came to this Parliament to make a difference, so that we certainly could do the best that we can for all Ontarians. I've had the privilege of having the deputy health critic portfolio, children and youth, and now social services, community services, long-term care and wellness. Those people out there on the front lines truly need those services.

I keep coming back to the scandals, the wasted billions and billions of dollars that are not there. People come through my doors in tears—families who are stressing over how they care for their loved ones—and I struggle with how to tell them anything other than that there's a limited amount of money out there because this government is spending so much money on debt and debt-servicing payments. I can't fathom that in their last budget they didn't even acknowledge the need to cut back on their spending.

The economic update today, which I believe I have a copy of on my desk here—this may be considered a prop, but it is their piece of information. One of my colleagues noted that the maple leaf is in red, which is kind of a sad statement, because so is the government in red. We need more accountability to ensure—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: You can't say—

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: Mr. Speaker, this exactly speaks to what I've been saying. They won't even acknowledge that this is the worst period this province has ever experienced in debt and deficit payments. Yet we know it. The people out there in Ontario know it. Certainly, the financial community knows it. That's why we're in dire straits. If we go much further down the road, we will probably go bankrupt, which is a sad state of affairs, particularly for those young pages. Sadly, this government wants to stand behind it. They want to espouse a whole bunch of things, but you know what? Accountability and transparency is stepping up and doing the right things to get this province back on track.

It's a sad state when we see the same things—another bill, if we really want to use an example for transparency and accountability, is Bill 10, the Child Care and Early Years Act. My colleague from Simcoe North, in this House, asked for the government to extend the public consultation period so we could go across the province and truly hear the needs of Ontarians, so then you can actually develop legislation and policy that's truly going to be of benefit for those next generations, for our leaders of the future and for those who we should treat as our most precious resource. What did they do? They time-allocated it and said, "Thanks, but no thanks. We're not going to do that."

Hon. Jeff Leal: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): A point of order: the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: While I have profound respect for my good friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I think we're debating Bill 8 right now, the time allocation debate, as opposed to Bill 10, the Child Care Modernization Act. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you'll provide some direction on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Yes, we are debating a time allocation motion with respect to Bill 8. I will return to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to conclude his remarks.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, it just goes to show: I was using that as an exact example of what they're trying to do with Bill 8. They say "transparency and accountability," but at the end of the day, they have no interest in being transparent and accountable or they would have taken action.

They would have actually put some changes in place that are going to prevent things like Ornge, MaRS and the gas plants from ever, ever happening again. There would have been people, at the end of the day, in those senior leadership positions who would have actually—voluntarily, hopefully, in the first case—stepped down, and if not, the Premier would have stepped up and said, "You know what? This is not acceptable. This is not the highest standard that we can achieve as a government for the people of Ontario, and I expect more out of you." They would have given them at least some time in the penalty box to allow them to reflect and think, "Is that really what I should have done? Is that how we should have handled the situations in my senior leadership?"

It's one of the most important things in this Bill 8 that ministers who fail miserably in their public service duties, and whose inattentiveness leads to future Ornges, have to resign. We need to see something in there so that people are truly going to step up and be held to account.

It's a privilege to be a cabinet minister, as all of the people who have had that great title over the years and the responsibility—but it does come with accountability and responsibility. There needs to be transparency and accountability in every single person, but especially in our Premier and the cabinet ministers.

It doesn't talk about what's going to happen if somebody fails in those, if they don't discharge their duties to the best of their ability, and when we have billions of dollars wasted—that the precious people of Ontario are not getting—as a result of their inability to manage properly.

We want to see this. Certainly, there are lots of amendments. The general intent and the wording were okay, but there are some significant changes that need to be made to hold those governments to account and to be transparent. We'll continue to do that as the opposition.

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

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 8. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say “nay.”
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.
 Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.
Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice, signed by the chief government whip, that this vote should be deferred until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

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SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE
 INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE
 DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 6, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / *Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.*

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It will be my pleasure to talk about Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act—and amending a whole bunch of other things.

Basically, this bill, Bill 21, has three parts to it. It is a collective of two bills that were in the previous Parliament—Bill 178, to ensure that our blood system continued to be a voluntary one; and a second bill that had to do with the diluted chemo drugs and what we should do so that this never happens again—and then a third part, to try to make the Regulated Health Professions Act a little bit more transparent and accountable to the people, like us, it's supposed to protect. I will use my time to deal with all three parts of this bill.

Let's start with the first part, which has to do with voluntary blood donation. I don't want to do a history course, but you have to remember a few things. The first thing is, since November 2012, for the last two years, the province has known that there is a private for-profit agency that wants to open a plasma collection—they're called Canadian Plasma Resources. They want to open in Ontario, and they want to pay donors for their plasma donations. Everybody has known this for two years—two years in a week.

In November 2012, Canadian Plasma Resources applied to Health Canada for a licence to open two plasma collection sites in downtown Toronto. Canadian

Plasma Resources indicated that donors would be paid \$20 per donation of plasma, or if they didn't want to take the \$20, they could make a charitable donation and get a receipt for this amount. This request was done two years ago. Health Canada held consultations on this in April 2012.

A summary of those consultations was available online, for anybody who follows health care matters, since it was posted on July 26, 2013, more than a year and four months ago.

It wasn't until March 20, 2014, that the government of Ontario woke up and realized that this was 100% their responsibility—if we are serious that we want to protect our voluntary blood services, that the government had to act.

But a year and a half had already gone by, and this for-profit company had not sat idle. This for-profit company had rented a beautiful location on Adelaide Street, not far from Queen's Park—actually, not far from the Ministry of Correctional Services, and not far from the Salvation Army hostel either. They opened up another one on Spadina, not far from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. They have spent, I'm told, between \$6 million and \$7 million to retrofit those two sites, to hire all of the staff, to bring all of the equipment in. Well, I may not be the most shrewd business person, but I'm guessing that if somebody is willing to invest over \$6 million in Ontario to open a for-profit paid plasma collection site, it's because they have a pretty good business case and they think this is going to go through.

For an entire year and a half—more than a year and a half—our Ontario government stayed silent. This business set up shop in Ontario, did the investment, and then in March, the minister comes out and puts the bill forward. We all know what happened to that. An election was called and it never saw the light of day. Then we had to wait until July 22 this year, when the same bill was reintroduced—and I will speak to this, because when it was first presented, I stood up in this House and pointed out that there were areas of concern with this bill, areas of concern that should have been addressed. But no, they reintroduced the same thing: cut, paste, voilà. It's now called Bill 21. It has the same mistakes that the first bill had, and it got reintroduced. That was in July. Everybody knows that we are now at November 17, and we're just going through with second reading.

There is urgency to this bill, Speaker. There is a \$6-million urgency to this bill, because right now, there's a business that has set up shop in Toronto, with plans for Hamilton, to start paying donors for plasma collection.

We hopefully all remember a bit about the Krever commission. We all remember a bit about the thousands of people who died and what we've learned from this. It was a very expensive process when the Krever commission came to town and delivered its recommendations.

What were the key recommendations from the Krever commission? Blood is a public resource, donors should

not be paid, sufficient blood should be collected so that importation from other countries is not necessary, access to blood and blood products should be free and universal, and the safety of the blood system is paramount.

After years of this inquiry, after tens of thousands of people and families affected by this tragedy, we said, “Never again.” We said that we had learned our lesson and that we owe it to everybody who lives in this province and in this country that we will never put their blood system at risk again. But now, for the last two years, this company is there. This company has set up shop a couple of blocks down. Feel free to go and have a look. Feel free to go on their website and register to be a donor, because it’s all happening here, right now, in Ontario.

We’ve had so many groups come forward that say, “We need to make sure our blood collection stays voluntary.” This is consistent with the World Health Organization’s position that the safest blood is where donors are voluntary, non-remunerated and from low-risk populations. It would ensure that we have learned our lesson from the Krever commission on the hazards caused by treating blood as a commodity for the many Ontarians who died or are currently still suffering from the tainted blood scandal.

Actually, to drive the point home, we had a theatre group that came all the way to Queen’s Park. They did a play called Tainted. They were here at Queen’s Park on Monday, October 27, and they presented a play that was extremely powerful that took us, through the eyes of a family, through discovering HIV and AIDS, through the infection of thousands of people who did not know they were getting infected, through our blood system that failed them on so, so many levels, through the Krever commission and through their recommendations.

1550

This theatre group came here to Queen’s Park. I went and saw the play. It was right here at Queen’s Park; it was pretty easy to do. I’m really sad to say that there was not one representative of the Liberal government who came to see the play. There was not one representative who cared to remember the lessons of the Krever commission and those people who came to help us remember what we had learned.

We also have to realize that we have presently Canadian Blood Services. They have been in place since the Krever commission’s recommendations, where the Red Cross stopped collecting blood and blood products and the responsibility was given to a brand new agency. The brand new agency was going to be there to learn the lessons of the past and to make sure that we protect everyone; that’s Canadian Blood Services.

Ontario is the biggest contributor to Canadian Blood Services. So if there is anything that we are not happy about, we carry a pretty big stick. We pay for Canadian Blood Services. Ontario is the biggest contributor to the budget of Canadian Blood Services. If we are not happy with the number of units of blood and plasma and blood products that they collect, that they process, that they put forward, why don’t we speak up?

I’ve had many conversations with Canadian Blood Services. They haven’t heard a peep from the Ontario government. They figure, like everybody else, if you don’t hear a peep, it’s because you’re doing a pretty good job. If they are doing a pretty good job, then why do we need new people to come and collect and, by paying their donors, put at risk our not-for-profit volunteer-driven collection system that we have here in Ontario and here in Canada?

Quebec understood the lessons quite quickly. They passed a bill. Héma-Québec is now the only one that can collect blood in Quebec, and they are not allowed to pay donors.

Sometimes people come—yes, there is a program in Winnipeg; it has been there since before the blood scandals. It pays donors of very, very rare blood types. It is a tiny, weeny little program that needs to be there. This is not the bread-and-butter stuff that we’re talking about when we’re talking about Canadian Plasma Resources. Canadian Plasma Resources has the intention of dealing in hundreds and thousands of units. The tiny, weeny little program in Winnipeg that pays donors pays donors because those donors have been identified throughout Canada with very rare blood types. They collect dozens, at the most, of units of blood and plasma, not hundreds and thousands. So this is sort of a red herring that we hear about.

We also hear things like, “Oh well, 70% of the plasma comes from the States.” We heard this in this House, that 70% of the plasma comes from the States. This is not true, Speaker. It’s fraction products from plasma that are imported from the States, mainly IVIG. This is something that we do not manufacture in Ontario or in Canada. There are only very few places on earth that do that kind of work—three labs that I know of.

Sure, we get some of those plasma products from those three labs, but we are self-sufficient in plasma. We do not import fresh or frozen plasma from anywhere. We get the plasma we need to treat the people who are sick in Ontario from volunteers who donate their plasma freely to help their fellow human beings. This is how we make sure that our system is safe. This is how we make sure that the people who receive the treatment where plasma is needed receive safe blood products. It’s as simple as that.

So to say, “Oh, 70% of plasma is coming from the States.” This is not true. These are fraction products of plasma that come from those specialized labs that do not exist in Ontario or Canada that are being imported—no fresh plasma, no frozen plasma. So this question, I hope, will be clear.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Safe plasma.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Safe plasma.

There are changes happening with the Canadian Blood Services, a not-for-profit agency funded—the biggest funder being the province of Ontario. Things are changing. I can tell you that there used to be a plasma collection program in Sudbury. I know this because I was a donor for years. For years, every Wednesday on my

lunchtime I went down and donated plasma. When you're a plasma donor, you can donate every week. So every Wednesday at lunch I met the same people sitting there, donating plasma. I no longer can do this, because it was decided that the plasma collection was going to be moved to Thunder Bay, for reasons unknown to me. And Thunder Bay was set up to collect about 10,000 units. But for reasons unknown, the Thunder Bay site has also been closed.

There are changes happening within the Canadian Blood Services system, changes that are not really in line with continuing to be self-sufficient. We have a government, and certainly a Minister of Health, that will be more than happy to tell everybody who listens, or not, that he wants to make sure that blood services continue to be on a voluntary basis. He wants to make sure that he does the right thing to protect the health of Ontarians. He says all of the right things, but he doesn't act. He is the Minister of Health; he is the one who transferred millions of dollars to Canadian Blood Services, but yet he doesn't put any oversight or accountability to make sure that we continue to have this.

We had, this fall, quite recently—just before Thanksgiving, actually—a call from Canadian Blood Services that said we were at the lowest level of units since 2008, and a call was put out there. I can tell you that people came to me and said, “France, we really tried to answer the call, but the phone lines were always busy. We couldn't even get through to get an appointment.” I said, “Oh, well, that's sort of weird. We'll bring your concerns forward.” Then I noticed that they were not the only ones.

The government has a responsibility through the millions of dollars that they invest to make sure that the system works. If we have a system that doesn't meet our needs, of course people are going to want something different, of course people are going to start looking at anything and everything. We have a good system in Canada. It needs oversight—

Interruption.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Oh, that's never good.

Interjection: Arrest her.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, yes, yes. I'm about to be arrested. Sorry about this. We're not allowed to have our phones on when we're in here. I'm usually very diligent in doing this, but today I slipped, and I'm truly sorry.

So coming back: We have a voluntary blood donation system. We have a strong, not-for-profit agency that exists. There are some changes going on. Let's make sure that the will of the people is heard, that the lessons of the Krever commission are respected and that we continue forward with a system where everybody who donates does so voluntarily from the goodness of their heart to help their fellow citizen. This is how we will succeed.

1600

I think this is what the government wants to do, and I think the bill that is in front of us has the possibility to do this. Let's move on with it. It has been two years. This is way too long. That was part 1 of Bill 21.

Part 2 of Bill 21 is a series of amendments to statutes regarding pharmacies. Here again, I want to put it into a little bit of perspective. The perspective is that 1,202 people received diluted chemotherapy drugs, most of them in Ontario, a few of them in New Brunswick. All of those diluted chemotherapy drugs came from a for-profit agency in Hamilton, in southern Ontario.

When that happened, when people found out on March 20, 2013, that 1,202 people had received diluted chemo drugs, they were devastated—themselves, their families, I would say the larger cancer family, as well as our health care system as a whole. How could this happen? How could it be that Ontario, that has such a good health care system, such a good cancer treatment system, could let 1,202 people down? How could we have failed them?

The government agreed to put a select committee together to look into this and give people answers. We were to review the incident and the many questions that the incident had raised, learn from it and make changes so it never happened again. I became a member of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, and we started collecting sworn testimony from April 16, 2013, until the House was dissolved in May 2014. Fifty people were called to testify, some of them more than once. Whether treatments were compromised by the diluted chemo treatments, unfortunately, we still cannot answer. I can tell you that Cancer Care Ontario is certainly trying to answer that question, but it hasn't been answered.

But many other questions were answered by the report that we tabled in April 2014, many questions such as: How could this be? How could this have happened in Ontario? Who made the mistake? How does this all work? Why wasn't it caught sooner? Why did we let 1,202 people go through before we caught on? All of those questions were answered in the report that was tabled with this Legislature.

To refresh your memory, gemcitabine and cyclophosphamide are two chemo drugs that are used to treat different cancers in both children and adults. Those two drugs had always been prepared in the hospital or cancer treatment centre or by the manufacturer of those drugs. In the fall of 2011, the hospital decided to contract this out. Not only did they decide to contract this out; they asked a group purchasing organization called Medbuy to do the contracting for them. Medbuy was not part of the hospital. It was a contractor that would handle the purchasing of this drug from a for-profit company called Marchese, which had won the request for proposals. It was this company, Medbuy, which handled the contract, that made the mistake.

For all of the people in the families who were wondering what happened, here's what happened. Medbuy, the contractor, took a list from the manufacturer of the drugs. They took a list from Baxter. Baxter is the name of the people who manufacture those two chemo drugs. They took the list from Baxter and they put it out for tender. The tender came back. Marchese was the chosen bidder, and they went on and made those drugs. When Baxter

was asked to submit their list, they just submitted the name of the drug. They did not go into detail as to how the drug was to be used. They are the manufacturer. They know exactly how their drugs are to be used. They are the ones who created it, who brought it to market, who manufacture it, and now they were getting it ready for the hospital to use. When this list went out, it did not say that it needed to be done in a specific concentration, which is something that happens with many, many drugs in the hospital. All of the pharmacists who sit at Medbuy, who look into this; the people from Marchese, which is the company that prepared it—all of those people had pharmacists. None of them caught on. None of them were close enough to the patients to have their due diligence triggered to make sure that they were protecting the patient.

What have we learned from this, Speaker? We learned that the further away from the patient you are, the higher the risk to the patient. When somebody prepares a drug for a specific patient, they know that they have to get this right, because if you don't get the right chemotherapy treatment to that patient, some of those drugs are very potent and some of those drugs will kill the patient on the spot. When you're next to that patient, you are very vigilant. But when the hospital contracts out the procurement, who contracts out for the purchasing of those drugs, who then sends those drugs to a list of hospitals that have never dealt with the procurement, that have never dealt with the manufacturer or any of the above, then due diligence is not done.

Due diligence was not done until we had this very keen pharmacy technician at Peterborough Regional Health Centre who noticed that this drug needed to be concentration-specific and that the drugs he had received were not. He is the one who rang the alarm bell. He is the one who exposed what had been going on for over a year and a half, which explained why so many people had already been affected—290 people at Windsor Regional Hospital, 691 people at London Health Sciences Centre, 37 people at Lakeridge Health, and one in Peterborough, the one where it was discovered.

We learned that the contracting out had all sorts of anomalies in it, such as: The contracting-out agency, the purchasing agency, never got paid for their services. They used a kickback on the price of the drugs to pay themselves. Everybody on the committee agrees that this payment method has to go. It is fraught with problems. I'm not allowed to name people, but there are MPPs in this House right now, on the government side, who sat there and spoke in favour of changing this kickback system because it put people at risk, yet this bill has come back and it is not in. It is not in Bill 21, although everybody on the committee agreed that we can't continue like this.

Another thing that didn't sit well with the members of the committee was that when the request for proposal was out, people could offer to basically give money to the company for their educational fund, money that basically could be used as they saw fit, and the more you

gave, the more points were assigned to your company to win the contract. This does not lead to quality; this does not lead to ensuring safety in our health care system. This practice should be outlawed and discontinued.

1610

We all agreed to this—the PCs, the New Democrats, the Liberals. We all heard the stories. We all saw the worries in the faces of the people who had been affected, and their families, and we wanted things to change. But it is not in the bill.

Then came those really uncomfortable moments, those moments when you asked the CEO of Medbuy, the purchasing company, things like, "How many of your employees make over \$100,000?" His answer was straightforward: "Oh, perhaps five." All right. Through lots of trouble, we managed to follow the money and found that—"Oh, look at this"—of the ones we were able to get the salaries for, 17 of them made over \$100,000.

All of that money came from hospitals, which are under the disclosure act, the sunshine list that people know. We know that for everybody who's paid by the government or a transfer payment agency of the government, if you make over \$100,000, your salary becomes public and you're posted online and in newspapers. Everybody knows. But all you have to do is contract out your purchasing department to an outside agency, and then 17 of them made over \$100,000.

I worked in hospitals for a very long time, Speaker. There is nobody who works in purchasing departments who makes \$100,000. You can look on the sunshine list all you want for all 152 hospitals, who all still have a purchasing department, and how many purchasers do you see on the sunshine list? Zero. The people who work in the purchasing departments of hospitals—sure, the head and the VPs and stuff, they make over \$100,000, but not the purchasing agent. Why is it that at Medbuy, 17 of them made over \$100,000?

I knew they didn't want us to know that, because when they came to committee, they lied to us. They told us that it was perhaps five, but the truth of the matter was, after doing a lot of searching, there were 17 of them. They did not want us to know that. They did not want us to know a whole lot of things they were doing.

Of course, when the committee saw that, one of the recommendations we made, and, I think, a recommendation that everybody would agree with, was that those companies, given that they receive 100% of their funding from hospitals, should be covered by the sunshine list. We all agreed; the Liberal members all agreed. I can still remember some of them arguing quite firmly that this has to change; this needs to happen. Those purchasing organizations, given that they do the work of a hospital, that they're 100% paid by hospitals, have to be on the sunshine list. But do you see this in the bill? Nope. It is not in the bill.

We had a very difficult time finding out where the money went. My, oh, my, I spent a lot of nights trying to read through documents and trying to follow the money, because the money comes from the government to the

LHINs to the hospitals to the group purchasing organizations, who do not pay for the purchase of the drugs. The hospital pays for the purchase of the drugs. Part of the money goes back to the purchasing agency as a kickback, which helps itself and then gives some back to the hospital.

Well, it didn't matter. I'm no better and no worse at reading financial statements than anybody else. It didn't matter who came to help us. It is impossible to follow the money.

What do you do when taxpayers' money cannot be followed? You change the rules. You make sure that people have to submit financial statements so that we know where the money goes, so that we can follow the money. It is all fine and good that we don't pay for group purchasing organizations and that they get a kickback, but the people at Medbuy are completely unaccountable. The people at Medbuy told us, "Oh, only five of our employees make over \$100,000," when we could identify 17. I'm almost positive there would have been more than this if we had been allowed to get the documents we wanted.

The same thing with the money that goes back into the hospitals. Now, this money is not labelled as coming from the government. It's their own money that went in a circle. It went to purchase the drugs, kicked back to the purchasing agents, comes back to the hospital as a rebate, and then the hospital does whatever they want with that money, because when the money comes from the government to the hospital, they have to be accountable for that money. They have to submit financial statements, and those financial statements are audited. We are allowed to see. The Auditor General certainly is allowed to go in, and she's pretty good at crunching numbers, let me tell you. We have committees here in this Legislature that are allowed to call them in front of the Legislature so that you can look at their books and hold them accountable. But not that money. All you have to do is send this into the circle where everybody helps themselves to taxpayers' money and then they're free to do as they wish.

The committee was really upset about this. Some of the Liberal members of the committee were really, really upset. I remember one being really red in the face when he saw that. Basically, when you don't know, you assume the worst, so we all assumed that they did with that money things that probably are not the most conducive to good-quality patient care. But we have no proof of that because it was impossible to follow this circle of hell.

So what did we do? In the recommendations we said that if we are serious that we want to change the system, if we are serious that we don't want 1,202 people and families to go through the hell they went through when they found out that they had been given diluted chemo, we put recommendations so that those agencies could be called to this Legislative Assembly, so that our Auditor General could go and audit the books, so that we would make sure. Maybe nothing wrong happened with that money, but when you don't know, you assume the worst.

If they are doing great work that leads to increased patient care within their mandate, we all win, don't we? But we don't know that and we want to know. So we put recommendations in our report so that the Auditor General could go in and investigate, if need be, and so that those agencies could be called in front of the committee of the Legislature if we saw fit.

Are those recommendations in the bill, Speaker?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: No.

M^{me} France Gélinas: No, they're not. My colleague is quite astute. She has caught on that none of those recommendations are in the bill. Why not, Speaker? Why not?

When we tabled our report, a lot of people had followed the work of this committee step by step because some of them had lost loved ones during that period of time and were wondering, "Was it because they received the wrong chemo?" Some of them are still alive, wondering, "Did I make myself sick as a dog for three months for nothing because I received the wrong chemo?" and everything else in between. I must say that a lot of those people came and thanked us for our report. They came and thanked us for having been frank, having identified where the mistakes had been made, having been transparent as to the process that was going on that had allowed this mistake to happen, for having called people in front of the committee and asked them to testify under oath. They were very grateful. A lot of thank-yous came forward, a lot of heartfelt thanks came to me and, I'm sure, to every other member of the committee, because they felt good that they knew what had happened. They knew who had made the mistake. They knew how the mistake had happened. They sure would like to know if their own care was compromised. We could not give them that answer, and I'm truly sorry about that. We could certainly give them answers as to what went wrong, and we also gave them reassurance that our recommendations would make sure that it would never happen again. And they thanked us.

1620

But what do we see in this bill? We see that hospital pharmacies will now be accredited by the College of Pharmacists. In and of itself, it's something good. I'm not opposed to it. Nobody is opposed to the step that is in that bill. But that's not what the people of Ontario want. That's not what those 1,202 families want us to do. What they want us to do is, they want us to set in place changes that will make sure that it never happens again, that we to prove to them that we have learned from our mistakes and that when we make a mistake, we own up to it, we show them what happened, we put recommendations in place, and then we act upon them.

This is what they want us to do, but none of that is in the bill—nothing that I've talked about. We didn't make promises to the people who were affected and their families, but we told them—I told them that I would work as hard as I can to make sure that those changes are implemented and that what your family has gone through, it did not go through in vain; that we would

learn, that our health care system would be better for the people after you, that we would learn from our mistakes, and that we would make changes. But none of this is happening. I feel especially bad for those 1,202 families who expect better than that from us. It's not a high expectation to say, "Don't let that happen again. Don't let something that shakes the confidence of our health care system to the core happen again." But we're not doing it.

The minister has reintroduced a part that was in Dr. Thiessen's report. I have nothing but respect for Dr. Thiessen and his recommendations. To make sure that hospital pharmacies are accredited is a good one, but it will not prevent another diluted chemo drug scandal from happening. It will not prevent families from going through a really, really hard time because the health care system had made a mistake that affected them, had let them down.

We have an opportunity to change this. We have an opportunity to do better. I sure hope that we take it. I think we owe it to them.

That was the first two parts of Bill 21. Let me find it; I'm getting a little bit overwhelmed with papers.

The last part of Bill 21 is another part that is an opportunity to do great work. We are going to change the Regulated Health Professions Act. We are going to make it more transparent and more accountable.

Any of you who has read the newspaper in the last couple of weeks will now know that we have a Regulated Health Professions Act, because it has been on the front page of the paper for the last month. Why? Well, for all the wrong reasons. Why was it on the front page of the paper? Because Ontarians got serious infections from private for-profit clinics. Some suffered very serious illnesses, and some have died. All of this happened in an accredited private clinic, and none of this was made available to anybody. None of this was made available till the newspaper put it on the front page of their paper. I will thank Theresa Boyle, the health reporter who, on Sunday, October 5, had done her work and got an interview with the Minister of Health. He said: "It is clear that our system must become more transparent, and that if clinics have had problems with infection control and whether patients have suffered illnesses or died, Ontarians need to know."

I'm quoting again: "I see my top priority as minister as protecting the safety and well-being of Ontarians. An important part of that is them having access to information which is going to allow them to make the right decisions for their health and well-being," he said."

I think he's saying the right things. I kind of like what he's saying, and I'm sure everybody who has been affected likes what he's saying. He goes on to say that he will ask the different colleges to fully disclose information about investigations that they conduct. So he says the right things, and I surely would love for those right things to go from words to actions, but it is not happening.

We have an opportunity here with Bill 21 to make changes, and there are a few small steps that are being

taken that will help. But we had a minister who says that his "top priority as minister" is "protecting the safety and well-being of Ontarians." He has a bill that has an opportunity to do this, that was introduced once before, that I have spoken on once before where I have showed him where you could do better, where you are changing things in the law where your objectives are good but you're creating loopholes where it's not going to work. I've already gone through all this once before. The bill gets reintroduced. It is a cut and paste of the bill we had before. The same loopholes are there. The same shortcomings are there. Does nobody ever learn anything in here?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Groundhog Day.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Groundhog Day, yes, Groundhog Day, except that it's not for good news. In the movie Groundhog Day, he would learn everything; he learned to play the piano and he learned to catch the person who falls out of the tree and all of this. But in this Groundhog Day, we have the exact same cut-and-paste bill with the exact same problems.

I'm not the only one who thinks that there are problems with this bill. The Federation of Health Regulatory Colleges of Ontario has also asked for changes. The bill at the time was called Bill 117. It has now been cut and pasted into Bill 21 with the same loopholes, the same problems. The federation is the umbrella group of all 26 regulatory colleges; that includes the three transitional colleges that exist in Ontario. Basically, although they support—and so do I—the goal that Bill 21 is trying to do when it comes to the Regulated Health Professions Act, the bill itself is flawed. We knew that it was flawed. We told the minister he was flawed—not him, but the bill was flawed, and he never made any changes.

You have to realize that when it comes to the Regulated Health Professions Act—they supervise all of the colleges of the 26 professions that offer health services in Ontario. All of them exist for one single reason: They exist to protect the people of Ontario. They are there to protect people like you and me. When, in our times of need, we turn to a health care professional who is regulated, we know that they belong to a college that will assure quality and that will protect us. This is the only reason they exist. They don't exist to protect their profession. They don't exist for any other reason than to protect us.

1630

But they need changes to the law. The law is quite old. It has served us well, but it needs to be updated. It is being updated a tiny wee bit in Bill 21, a few steps, but even those few steps leave big loopholes behind.

I see that the time is really going fast now, isn't it? I will point to a few of them.

One is that there are some people who complain to a college for things that have nothing to do with protecting the public. The nurse who lives next door to me has a dog that barks, and that bothers me. So I call the College of Nurses and tell them, "This nurse really gets on my nerves with her dog. I want to put in a complaint." The

way we have it now, the College of Nurses—or physicians or physiotherapists; every college—must investigate every complaint. That's a huge waste of time and resources. The nurse who doesn't deal with her dog barking has nothing to do with protecting the public in receiving nursing care, but right now they have no choice but to investigate this.

This has to change. It's a waste of resources. They do open the door to changes, but they open the door to changes very, very narrowly and won't act. Most of the colleges would still be stuck with a whole bunch of complaints that have nothing to do with protecting the public.

The other one comes back to what happens with private clinics. You know that more and more services—the hospitals are being told to concentrate on hospital services at the bedside: “If it is not a hospital service at the bedside, it can be downloaded to the community. Let a for-profit clinic in the community go ahead and offer that service. It is not your primary mandate; you can send that to the community.”

More and more physician groups are putting private clinics together. So now we have a change in the bill that says that if a physician—I shouldn't pick on physicians, but will take this one for now, because it's the example I have right in front of me—is under investigation by a hospital to lose their privileges, this information should be shared with their college. Right now, all of this could basically happen and the college would never know. The college wants to know, but they have put the bar so high that all a physician has to do right now is let go of their privileges or limit their practice on their own terms rather than be reported to the college, and the college would never know.

The bill is also written as if physicians only work in hospitals. Now, any of you who have read the papers know that more and more of them work outside of hospitals in community-based clinics. The bill specifically says “hospital”—end of conversation.

So now, sure, a hospital will be able and will have to report some physicians who do wrong and are being investigated by the hospital. Once they meet this very high level of certainty that they have done wrong, they will have to be reported to their college. But if the same practice happens in one of those community-based clinics—if the director of the clinic realizes that one of his nurses or one of his physicians is really incompetent and has made gross mistakes—the same provisions don't apply to them. It only applies to hospitals.

How could it be, in 2014, when we have a Liberal government that says every day of the week that they want to move more services out of hospital and into the community, that they bring forward a bill that assumes that physicians only work in hospitals? How could that be? This is November 2014. How could it be that we still have pieces of legislation in front of us that don't take that into account? I don't understand. We had pointed to that before when the bill was first introduced, but it was never acted upon.

So right now, a hospital must have reasonable grounds to believe that the resignation or the restriction, as the

case may be, is related to the competence, negligence or conduct of the physician. To put those words in the bill narrows it too much. Remember, those people have deep pockets. They can hire a very good team of very expensive lawyers who will argue with the hospital that they did not meet the threshold of competence, negligence or conduct of the physician, because none of those words are defined in the bill, of course, just to make sure that the lawyers stay happy for the rest of their lives. So after a hospital has to defend itself that it did the right thing by calling the college and sharing that information, and it is now brought to court by the physician, with his team of expensive lawyers, and the hospital has to defend itself—spend a ton of money defending themselves, saying they acted as per the purpose of the law—do you figure they will be very enthusiastic to do that again, after they've spent tens of thousands of dollars justifying their decisions? Why don't we make this easier? If we are serious that we want employers to report to the college when something like this is happening, well, let's be serious about it and give them the tools, not give them a bill half-cooked, poorly defined and full of loopholes. That is not going to help anybody.

There are other parts of the bill about appointing a college supervisor. There are parts of the bill that change the confidentiality duty.

I'm looking at the time and I feel really stressed because I won't have enough time to go through it all.

Right now, when a college does its work, it will gather all sorts of information. Sometimes that information needs to be shared. They have learned of a miss in the standard of practice of one of their practitioners, whether it be a nurse, a physio, a dietitian or a physician, and they want to share this with their employer? Well, they're only allowed to do this if that information comes to them during a disciplinary hearing. If that information comes to them at any other time than during disciplinary hearings, they won't be allowed to share that information.

Really, Speaker? This is the bill we have in front of us. The aims of it are good. The bill itself needs some serious work.

Étant donné qu'il me reste juste deux minutes, je veux passer très rapidement sur le projet de loi 21.

Le projet de loi 21 a trois parties. La première partie, c'est de s'assurer que le système de collection de sang et de plasma en Ontario demeure un système bénévole, c'est-à-dire de s'assurer qu'on ne pourra pas payer les gens pour faire un don. C'était la recommandation numéro un de la commission Krever, qui voulait s'assurer que le système qui avait tué et rendu malade des dizaines de milliers de Canadiens avait appris de ses erreurs. La première chose que l'on a appris, c'est pour s'assurer qu'il n'y aura plus jamais personne qui va recevoir du sang ou du plasma contaminé, que l'on s'assure que notre système soit basé sur un système bénévole. Ça, c'est la première partie du projet de loi. Le but du projet de loi, on le soutient à 100 %. Le projet de loi, en lui-même, a des petites failles.

La deuxième partie du projet de loi, c'est tout ce qui s'est passé avec la chimiothérapie diluée. On a eu 1 202

personnes, Ontariens et Ontariennes, qui ont reçu la chimiothérapie diluée.

1640

Un comité de l'Assemblée législative a été mis en place. Des recommandations sérieuses, pour s'assurer que ce genre de problème ne se répète plus jamais, ont été faites, et aucune de ces recommandations-là ne fait partie du projet de loi. Il faut faire mieux que ça. Il faut s'assurer que les erreurs du passé ne seront pas répétées, et ça, ça veut dire amender le projet de loi.

Dans un troisième temps, on parle de la transparence des collèges qui sont là pour protéger les gens qui reçoivent des soins de santé. On sait que les gens veulent beaucoup plus de transparence. Ils veulent beaucoup plus d'imputabilité de la part des collèges pour s'assurer qu'ils sont bien protégés. Le projet de loi, encore là, a des trous.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Nickel Belt. I congratulate her on using her time very well and very succinctly, and wish her a speedy recovery. I see she's down to one crutch, so we're all happy to see that.

We both agree that the voluntary blood system in Canada and Ontario has to remain. I appreciate her comments. As a matter of fact, Canadian Blood Services is headquartered right in Ottawa South, at the corner of Smythe and Alta Vista.

The bill prohibits directly or indirectly providing payment to any individual in return for giving blood or blood constituents such as plasma; offering to provide payment to any individual in return for giving blood; and expecting payment in return for the giving of blood. So I think that we agree on that, and that's very clearly stated in the bill. I appreciate her support in that regard.

In terms of the measures in the bill that are in response to the diluting of chemotherapy drugs, I did have the opportunity to actually sit in on a couple of—I always end up in committee at report-writing time, and I haven't been around for all the hard work. I concur with some of things that she said. There are some concerns in there when you take a look at that piece of financial oversight. But I think there may be some measures in Bill 8 that will address those concerns in terms of that financial oversight.

I think the bill does go directly to the practice of compounding and mixing and sets a new regimen so that we can better protect and ensure quality in our system.

Again, I thank her very much for her remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to the remarks of the member from Nickel Belt.

It's interesting. We've been talking all week—in fact, since the Legislature has come back and since these bills were being rammed through, and whatever else, by this present government. They keep using terms like

“accountability” and “transparency,” all these terms that sound nice on paper, but certainly when we see the bills in front of committee and whatever else, we certainly can see that this government has a different definition of transparency and accountability than, certainly, members on this side of the House.

From what I understand of this bill, with what's going on right now, 70% of the plasma that is used in Ontario comes from the United States. Some 70% of the plasma comes from the United States, and that's where paid donors are used. So here we are, saying that in Ontario, we're not going to use paid donors, and that's fine. But if we have to import this, it's just a double standard here.

I would suspect that this bill is going to be rammed through like the rest of the bills that the government has put forward. We have to be so careful, especially with something like this, and what has happened in the past, that we don't get into a mess like we did before. I would hope the government would see this and understand that we need accountability with these bills, and especially this one, which deals with people's health.

We need to have the proper measures in place to have the right oversight, so that we don't get into these problems that we had before. This is my concern, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad to have some questions and comments with regard to what our critic to the health minister spoke about. She did a great job of explaining how arduous this process was, but it was so important because people's lives are at stake. This, unfortunately—and it's very sad—is not the only example, since many of the new MPPs have been here, where lives have been at stake. Ornge is another example where people's lives are at stake.

Here, we're talking about recommendations that were put forward by a reputable specialist, Dr. Thiessen; measures that could actually shine the light on the problems that happened with this underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. That's what I'm referring to, Speaker.

Over half of those over 1,200 people were in the city of London. It really shook the core of London that people were going in for treatment and had no idea that they weren't getting the proper drug dosage in order to get better.

That's what I'm still questioning: why this government wants to not show transparency when it comes to their bills. It's ironic that we have a bill that we just time-allocated today: Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act. Where's the bill for government transparency to the public? That's what I'd like to know, Speaker. Maybe we should actually bring a bill like that so that we can hold this government accountable under legislation and be transparent to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm delighted to be able to speak to this particular bill. I have great regard and great

respect for the voluntary blood donation system. As an individual donor, I have been down over 70 times in the course of my life, finding that this was the way I could put my blood to use for accident victims across the province. I've been a regular donor since my 20s. I used to have offices around the corner from the Manulife Centre at Bay and Bloor, and on my lunch hour it was so easy to go in there and do a volunteer donation. Having the blood type O-negative, which all of you know is very rare, I can give my blood to anyone, but if I should need blood, I must get it from an O-negative person.

We're here with a bill which is essentially a preemptive strike in order to clarify that the rules in Ontario will be that we will not accept payment for donors to provide blood specimens. This is so important to the integrity of our system.

I had a very good friend who lived next door, whose daughter contracted hepatitis C as a result of a tainted blood transfusion. The rest of her life—now she's under care and having to take special precautions because of the hepatitis C. It happened in a different province, but still, with the blood controls that were in place there, it resulted in some tainted blood.

We're concerned, obviously, that people who are financially disadvantaged might be overly encouraged to donate their blood products in order to receive payment. We're very concerned that that may result in a tainted opportunity, that people won't take due consideration. People who would otherwise be seriously at risk might still, notwithstanding their knowledge that they may be at risk, provide it because there's a financial incentive to do so.

What we're very clear on in this act, pre-emptively, is that in Ontario we will protect the integrity of the system.

I appreciate so much the comments from the member for Nickel Belt. There may be some areas for improvement, and I hope we'll have a chance to direct some of those at committee. Thank you very much for your very reasoned response to the bill, and I look forward to working with you on that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's the end of our questions and comments for this round.

I return to the member for Nickel Belt for her reply.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank the member for Ottawa South, the member for Perth–Wellington, my colleague from London–Fanshawe and the member for Beaches–East York.

The first thing I have to put on the record: We cannot say in this house that 70% of the plasma comes from the States. This is not true. It is fraction products that come from the States. Ontario is self-sufficient in fresh and frozen plasma. Have you ever heard Canadian Blood Services saying, "We need more plasma. We need more donors"? You haven't heard them say this? Because we are self-sufficient. What we import is fragmented. Basically, it's called IVIG that we import. That's the first thing.

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The second thing is, I'm happy to hear that people on the other sides are open to making changes to the bill.

We have a bill in front of us. I hope it will go to committee as fast as we can send it there. It has been two years since Canadian Plasma Resources has let it be known that they were going to open shop. They have spent \$6 million. They are full-fledged ahead wanting to set up this paid-for-donation—it's not donation any more, but paid-for-plasma clinic here on Adelaide and on Spadina. It has to be stopped, and the sooner, the better.

The member from London–Fanshawe is right. We owe the people affected—most of them in and around London—to act upon the recommendations of the committee of this Legislature. We have made good recommendations that brought them relief and that they agree with. Now it's time for us to step up to the plate and act upon them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Ballard assumes ballot item number 21 and M^{me} Lalonde assumes ballot item number 37.

Further debate?

Mr. John Fraser: I'm pleased to speak further to our government's Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, that would prohibit payments to Ontarians for their blood and plasma and enhance the regulation of hospital pharmacies.

The proposed Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, is a combination of two time-sensitive bills, as the member from Nickel Belt mentioned—we've been waiting for about two years for one piece of this bill—that were previously introduced by then Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews, but which died on the order paper in May 2014.

Our government believes that allowing private clinics to pay individuals for plasma donations would risk the integrity of our voluntary blood donation system, which has been successfully administered for years by a single integrated national blood service.

Canadian Blood Services currently manages the blood and blood product supply in Ontario. Its activities include blood and plasma collection from Ontario donors and the procurement and distribution of plasma and plasma-derived products to Ontario hospitals. Once collected, plasma, a component of blood, can be used in two different ways. It can be used as a direct transfusion to treat patients who are bleeding severely or need plasma to help their blood clot. As the member from Nickel Belt said, Canada is completely self-sufficient in transfusion plasma. Patient demand is met entirely within the country.

Plasma can be manufactured into life-saving drugs, referred to as plasma protein products. These plasma protein products include albumin, used to treat fluid loss in burn and trauma victims, immunoglobulins for infections and immune disorders, and clotting factors for patients with hemophilia and other bleeding disorders. They are critical to the health and well-being of countless people in Ontario.

Canadian Blood Services procures plasma protein products in several different ways. The organization collects plasma donations from Canadians. It also purchases additional recovered plasma in the United States from volunteer donors in not-for-profit blood centres licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration and sends this collected plasma for manufacturing into plasma protein products. These products are then redistributed to Canadian hospitals through Canadian Blood Services.

Canadian Blood Services also directly purchases plasma protein products on the international market for distribution to Canadian hospitals.

The introduction of private, for-profit plasma donation clinics in Ontario would alter the blood system currently in place in the province. In early 2014, the former minister wrote to her provincial and territorial counterparts, encouraging them to take a pan-Canadian approach to opposing paid plasma collection anywhere in the country.

Speaker, the current situation in other Canadian jurisdictions is as follows: There is one private plasma clinic in Winnipeg which provides compensation for plasma donations. The practice is not prohibited under Manitoba law. Again, as the member opposite mentioned, it is for very specialized products. Quebec's civil code prohibits paying donors for blood and plasma, although it is permissible to pay an indemnity as compensation for the inconvenience suffered when blood is given for research purposes.

Buying and selling organs, tissues and body parts is prohibited in all provinces and territories. This policy has broad support across Ontario.

Whether other jurisdictions follow our lead or not, Ontario's position remains crystal clear: We stand firmly against payment for blood and plasma donations.

The new statute proposed in Bill 178 was reintroduced on July 22, 2014, with minor changes, as schedule 1 to the proposed Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. Schedule 1 to Bill 21, the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014, differs from its previous iteration in Bill 178 in that it contains certain changes that were incorporated in response to stakeholder input and legal recommendations relating to enforcement.

Schedule 1 of Bill 21 would, if passed, create prohibitions against directly or indirectly providing payment to any individual in return for giving blood or blood constituents such as plasma, offering to provide a payment to any individual in return for giving blood, and accepting payment in return for the giving of blood. Schedule 1 would also exempt Canadian Blood Services and its donors from these prohibitions, so that Canadian Blood Services would not be prevented from paying donors if Canadian Blood Services, in its sole discretion, ever deemed such a measure to be necessary.

Similarly, schedule 1 would exempt blood that is given solely for the purpose of research, such as clinical trials or population health studies.

We are also proposing to amend the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act to authorize regulations to include or exclude places required to be

licensed under this act, expand the public-interest grounds to deny a licence for new blood collection facilities, and strengthen our lab enforcement regime so that we can take quick and decisive action in the case of violations.

Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our volunteer donors, and we strongly support Ontarians as they continue giving blood and plasma voluntarily. I'd like to share with you some of the comments from the organizations and individuals who wrote to the ministry to express their opposition to private, for-profit plasma collection.

The British Columbia chapter of the Canadian Hemophilia Society had this to say: "It is crucial that we protect our volunteer system in Canada." The letter goes on to say, "We applaud you for taking action to stop payment for plasma and other blood products."

An Ontario citizen wrote to the ministry in these terms: "I strongly believe that we must ensure that the volunteer blood and plasma donation system is protected."

Finally, Fred Horne, Alberta's former Minister of Health, responded to the March 2014 letter from the Honourable Deb Matthews saying, "Like Ontario, Alberta has full confidence in the Canadian blood system and believes that Canadian Blood Services has the capacity to successfully manage the blood and blood products supply for our province's residents."

Judging from these and other communications from ordinary Ontarians, health care providers and advocacy organizations, as well as health system leaders, it is clear that people do not want for-profit plasma collection in this province.

I want to assure members that this decision to prohibit payment for blood or plasma in the province would have no negative impact on, or reduce the supply or availability of these products for Ontarians. We are taking strong action against paid blood donation to maintain the integrity of the voluntary blood donor system.

I'd now like to say a few things about the second part of our proposed legislation. Our government appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to review the chemotherapy drug underdosing incident and submit recommendations to prevent further similar incidents. Dr. Thiessen was uniquely qualified to lead this review. He is a former professor, was associate dean and is a current professor emeritus at the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Toronto. Following 33 years at the University of Toronto, six years were spent at the University of Waterloo, where, under his appointment and strategic responsibility, a new health sciences campus and Canada's 10th school of pharmacy were created.

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His qualifications span wide-ranging experiences in professional education, research methodologies, pharmaceuticals, the pharmaceutical industry, medication supply chain and patient care through an academic career of about 40 years. Dr. Thiessen earned his BSc pharmacy degree from the University of Manitoba and went on to complete an MSc at Manitoba and a PhD at the Univer-

sity of California, San Francisco. Dr. Thiessen's research interests include new approaches in cancer treatments.

On August 7, 2013, the former Minister of Health and Long-Term Care released Dr. Thiessen's report, which contained a detailed factual review of the case of underdosing of chemotherapy drugs at four Ontario hospitals and one in New Brunswick. Dr. Thiessen found that while the impact on patients remains unknown, there had been a relatively low degree of underdosing, and the probability in combination drug therapy that a single drug factor, at the stated dosing shortfall, has had an overall serious effect is small.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our dedicated health care professionals for their continued commitment to caring for their patients and to their patients' safety. I know that most people in this system are there to ensure that their patients get the highest and best quality of care.

Dr. Thiessen's report contains a number of recommendations to prevent future incidents, directed towards five entities: the group purchasing organizations, Marchese Hospital Solutions, the Ontario College of Pharmacists, the Ontario Hospital Association and Health Canada.

Here are the recommendations. Recommendation number 1: Notwithstanding the underdosing incident, the continued use of group purchasing organizations to negotiate vendor product preparation pharmaceutical services shall not be discouraged. However, improvements are needed in the group purchasing organization-based processes.

Recommendation number 2: Every group purchasing organization shall review its procurement process to ensure that risk for patients is considered an essential evaluation and adjudication criterion when considering proposals.

Recommendation number 3: Every group purchasing organization shall develop and adopt a standardized product and/or service specification description that outlines the requirements for contracted sterile or non-sterile pharmaceutical preparation services.

Recommendation number 4: Annually in January, each group purchasing organization shall publicize information regarding the contracted pharmaceutical services provided by all its vendors.

Recommendation number 5: Marchese Hospital Solutions shall review and revise its product preparation processes to ensure that all its products meet the specifications required by professionals in treating patients effectively and safely.

Recommendation number 6: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall work quickly with Health Canada to define best practices and contemporary objective standards for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.

A lot of acronyms here—recommendation number 7: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall stipulate specialized electronic material rec-

ords and label requirements for non-sterile and sterile product preparation within a licensed pharmacy.

Recommendation number 8: The Ontario College of Pharmacists, and by extension the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities, shall consider a special designation and licence for any licensed pharmacy engaged in large volume non-sterile and sterile product preparation. Such pharmacies shall be inspected annually.

Recommendation number 9: The Ontario College of Pharmacists shall specify credentials beyond education and licensing for personnel engaged in non-sterile and sterile product preparation practices within a licensed pharmacy.

Recommendation number 10: Health Canada shall license all enterprises that function beyond the product preparation permitted within a licensed pharmacy; that is, all product preparation enterprises not within a licensed pharmacy shall be licensed.

Recommendation number 11: The Ontario Hospital Association shall conduct a formal review/audit to determine the efficiency and traceability of computer-based clinic and hospital records for patients and their treatments, and report the findings to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Recommendation number 12: The Ontario College of Pharmacists shall license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's clinics or hospitals.

We have accepted all the recommendations of Dr. Thiessen. To oversee the implementation of Dr. Thiessen's recommendations, the ministry established an implementation task force composed of government and stakeholder representatives. I'm pleased to report that the implementation of the recommendations is either complete or has advanced significantly, and the task force has since been disbanded as a result.

Recommendation 12, allowing the Ontario College of Pharmacists to license all pharmacies operating within Ontario's hospitals, is not currently provided for in legislation; hence the proposed amendments. We have been working very closely with the college and the Ontario Hospital Association on these amendments and will continue to do so.

The chemotherapy underdosing incident and other situations have highlighted the importance of ensuring that our health system entities, such as health regulatory colleges, are able to share information and coordinate responses in order to more effectively address circumstances that might pose a risk of harm to patients. The public expects that regulators and other health care entities should work seamlessly to improve response where patient care may be at risk. Under the proposed amendments, colleges would be able to more easily share information with their fellow health system partners, such as public hospitals and local public health units, on matters that may affect public health or patient care. Additionally, mandatory reporting requirements would be strengthened so that hospitals would be required to share more information with colleges that may indicate

concerns regarding a regulated health professional's practice.

The proposed amendments would also allow the government to more quickly appoint a college supervisor in order to address any serious concerns regarding the quality of a college's administration and management of its operations.

These provisions would align closely with our government's commitment to make the health care system more transparent and accountable. Our government fully supports the continuation of the self-government model with respect to the regulated health professions in the province, and continues to be highly supportive of the important and hard work done by our health regulatory colleges in regulating the activities of their members and upholding and protecting the public interest.

I'd like to thank the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the Ontario Hospital Association for working with us so diligently in the spring and early summer of 2013 as, together, we investigated what happened in the chemotherapy underdosing incident, and, even more importantly, for helping us to ensure that it does not happen again.

These proposed amendments will go a long way toward reducing the possibility of such an incident in the future. With the help of our health regulatory colleges, the amendments will enable a more rapid and integrated response to potential future incidents and enhance communication among entities that are responsible for patient care and safety.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to stand and provide some comments. About a week and a half ago, I gave an hour of discussion on this topic. It's always good to revisit it.

I'd just like to remind the government that I think this is a very complex issue. It's one that, generally, my PC caucus colleagues, including our health critic, Christine Elliott from Whitby-Oshawa, are supportive of, but we do want to make sure that it gets to committee and gets the full review that it needs. As I said, it's very complex. It would be very simple to say that our voluntary system works.

I do want to give a shout-out to Canadian Blood Services and, more importantly, those volunteer donors who have always been able to sustain our voluntary system, at this point. But there may be challenges down the road with our ever-increasing population and senior population. We're also using more and more of the blood plasma protein for things like Alzheimer's and dementia research.

The comment I made during my hour was that I think we need to slow things down and ensure that we fully explore with all the proper stakeholders at the table, and ensure that we're doing the utmost to make sure that we have a system in place that's going to make sure that demand is there and can be met, whether it be voluntary—and in some cases, particularly for the plasma protein, if we need to.

Right now, 70% of the plasma protein products are imported from the United States, and it's actually both paid and unpaid. What I tried to suggest the last time is that if people have a loved one who needs a blood transfusion—we're certainly self-supporting at this point. We may not be in the future, so we need to be prepared. You can't just turn that switch on overnight, so we need to have regulations and policy and legislation that are going to allow that and not detract from that. I think we have to be open-minded of what the future need is, putting into context that we do have that baby boom coming through. There's going to be more demand for certain types of blood and blood protein, plasma.

I just think that if we're going to do the best job for the people of Ontario, we need to make sure we have thorough consultation. We don't want to time-allocate things and just rush them through and make inadvertent mistakes that we have to pay for the hard way.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Speaker, and through you: This is a very important bill, and I appreciate the comments from people from around the House on it. I think we can agree that blood donors in Ontario and Canada should remain voluntary. I think that just because perhaps some other jurisdictions around the world pay doesn't mean that it's the right thing to do.

I did read in the bill, and I look forward to reading more about it, that there are some exemptions; for example, for research.

I will focus my comments on the fact that we need oversight. We see in my critic portfolio, transportation, some issues with privatization and divesting of duties by this government to the private sector without proper oversight. So when we talk about inspection, for example, of clinics, and when we talk about enforcement, we've got to make sure that we actually follow through, and follow through with the public sector doing it, people in the ministries making sure that the standards and requirements set out—and we'll hopefully have a more robust set of standards through this bill as it goes through the process—get implemented and followed and that inspections occur and enforcement takes place.

It's similar with this group procurement process. I was listening very attentively, and I heard people talking about the fact that this might be okay. Our critic from Nickel Belt, whom I respect a lot, would say no, there are problems.

What I'm not hearing, again, is the piece on inspection. I think I heard that somebody's going to go in there once a year and make sure there's oversight. Is that enough? No. Who's doing it? I don't know. Is it self-policing again? That's a great concept, self-policing.

I suggest that we need strong oversight. As this bill goes through the process, that's what I will be looking for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to thank my colleague from Ottawa South for informing us about this very important bill, Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014.

I too want to add my voice to stressing that Ontario is taking very decisive action to maintain the integrity of the province's health care system. We're seeing two previous bills that are being brought together that were introduced by the previous health minister. They died on the order paper back in May 2014.

If passed, we are going to see prohibiting paying or accepting payment for blood and plasma donations in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is aimed at protecting the integrity of our voluntary blood and plasma donation system. I think we can be very proud in this province that we do this on a voluntary basis.

The bill is also going to be focusing on the regulation of hospital pharmacies in response to Dr. Jake Thiessen's review of Ontario's cancer drug supply system and making other changes to strengthen aspects of our health care professional regulatory system. In the Kitchener-Waterloo area, I'm very familiar with Dr. Jake Thiessen, and I think we are very fortunate to have his commentary on this particular legislation, so we thank him and respect him for that.

In the act, the government is going to be keeping its commitment to licensing hospital pharmacies by the Ontario College of Pharmacists and enhancing the health professional regulatory system's ability to prevent and respond more quickly to events that may adversely affect patient care in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I have full confidence in the blood system that we have developed here in Canada. I know that Canadian Blood Services has the ability to very successfully manage the blood product supply for Ontarians.

I hope that we can rely on the opposition to give their approval to this very important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Seeing none, I return to the member for Ottawa South for his reply.

Mr. John Fraser: I would like to thank the members from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, Sudbury and Kitchener Centre for their comments.

In response to the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, we all seem to agree here that we need to keep the voluntary blood system in Ontario. It works well. I have full confidence in Canadian Blood Services. I think that's something that we can all agree on. We have been talking about these bills being time-sensitive, and I look forward to them getting to committee.

I would encourage people to remember that, in these things, we have to remember not to lose the possible in pursuit of the perfect. That's not to say that things don't need to be amended, but we have to move forward on these bills in order that we can better protect the people we serve.

I'm encouraged by some of the comments that were made in regard to oversight. The pharmacy part of this

bill does speak directly to oversight. We do, I think, express confidence very clearly in our regulated health colleges and our partners who work within the system. It is in everybody's interests that the public has confidence in the system. These measures in the bill address a situation that should not have occurred.

In terms of group purchasing organizations, I think very clearly Dr. Thiessen said that we should continue that practice. It's a good-value practice. I do believe, as one of the members opposite said, that we have to take a look at the oversight from a financial perspective as it integrates into our health system. And I think some of the measures in Bill 8 will help to enable us to do that. Thank you very much for your comments.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure this afternoon to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 21, which is An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.

I think I'll start off by talking about the blood donations part of it. I agree with many of the speakers that the voluntary blood donation system that we have is absolutely the best way to go. I can think of personal cases. We've all had stories of the problems in the past system that have been corrected. We had the Krever commission, which looked at the problems with the blood system. Safety is certainly the number one concern. I had a friend who had a major heart operation back in—I think it was about 1980; I might be off by a year or two—and from the blood transfusion developed hepatitis, I believe it was. That eventually led to his early death. I certainly miss my good friend John Lee, who came to our resort for many, many years. I'm sure we've all had friends and people we know who have been affected by some of the problems in the past. But I think safety is the number one concern, and certainly we rely on a volunteer system at this point.

I want to talk a bit about the products that come from plasma, the fractionated products and just plasma in general. I'll see if I can make some sense of this. Plasma is the yellow-coloured liquid that makes up 55% of total blood volume. Plasma can be obtained from either a regular, whole blood donation or through a process called plasmapheresis, where blood is collected from the donor, the plasma portion of the blood is then separated out and the blood cells are returned to the donor. It is so valuable for many purposes that it is sometimes referred to as liquid gold.

Plasma can be used as a direct transfusion to treat patients who are bleeding severely or who need plasma to help their blood clot. Plasma can also be used to manufacture plasma protein products. One of these products, known as IVIG, shows an early promise of success with Alzheimer's disease, so demand for it is expected to soar in the next few years. Once blood is collected, fractionation occurs, which is the processing of source plasma into

a range of specialized proteins for therapeutic use. Fractionated products include albumin, which is used for volume replacement during surgery or following massive bleeding, and—I'm sure I'm going to mess up some of these terms—immunoglobulins, for the prevention and treatment of infectious disease and immune disorders.

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It's important to note that this Bill 21 does not deal with transfusions when speaking about compensating donors for plasma. The current issue is whether the company can collect plasma from paid donors and sell it to companies that use this plasma for pharmaceutical products. My understanding is that currently Ontario is self-sufficient in fresh plasma products that come from volunteer donors, but that we import—and I think that the amount that's been talked about is 70% of the protein, the products that are made through fractionation, and they come from the States and many of those products are actually from paid donors. It does seem a little bit hypocritical that we're currently, for those protein products, buying them from the States and they do come from paid donors.

I note that the Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association had a reception here in the last few weeks, and they handed out information. They brought, I think more importantly, some people who rely on the protein therapies to tell their story of just how important it is for them and what a difference it makes in their quality of life because they get these products. A bit of the information they handed out: Who Needs Plasma? Plasma protein therapies “replace missing or deficient proteins that allow individuals to lead healthy and more productive lives. The patients that rely on these therapies generally require regular infusions or injections throughout their lives. The diseases and conditions treated by plasma protein therapies are considered rare diseases because they affect a relatively small per cent of the population. Most are genetic, chronic conditions.”

They go through a number of different therapies: albumin treats shocks, burns, adult respiratory distress syndrome, cardiopulmonary bypass surgery; and there's IVIG—I won't go through all the list of things because I will not pronounce them properly—and alpha-1 antitrypsin and also, for people with hemophilia, coagulation factors. One of the points that I thought was particularly interesting is just how much is needed for one patient. For one patient, for one year, for primary immunodeficiency disease, you need 130 donations. For alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, you need 943 donations for one patient for one year. For hemophilia A, you need 1,237 donations. That's an awful lot of donations for one patient for one year.

But I think the point I was trying to make is, for those patients and these products, the products that we're using in Ontario are most of them, 70%, coming from the States, and there they do pay for a good portion of the donations. I understand that it's not a safety factor because of the processes they go through, but having just walked across and talked with the former health minister,

they were concerned about the effect it might have on the voluntary donation of plasma. I would say that's certainly a very valid concern.

Now, in the handout that came out from PPTA, that's one of the questions they answer in their myths and facts sheet, where they say “Myth: Allowing paid plasma donor centres will negatively impact on volunteer plasma and blood donation.” They give us evidence. “Evidence from other jurisdictions in Europe and the United States demonstrates that paid donor plasma centres actually increase the volunteer donations in both blood and plasma. Further evidence in Canada demonstrates that in the past, some volunteer plasma centres have not been successful.”

I would say, what I'm learning from this, Mr. Speaker, is that for these protein products, 70% of them are coming from the States and many of the donors are paid, but also what I think is that it's really important with this bill in particular that we do hear from the experts at committee so that there aren't any consequences that come out that might be negative.

Just to provide a little bit more information: In their myth and fact sheet that they're handing out, they say that patient groups are against compensated plasma donations. “Fact: Patient groups support plasma donations and the compensation for the donor's time and commitment. It takes hundreds of donations to make a single life-saving therapy. Without committed donors, thousands of patients with rare diseases would not have the treatment they need.” I was struck, and I'm sure any members who went to that presentation on plasma at lunch a couple of weeks ago were struck, by the stories of the people who really rely on these products and just how important it is to them and what a huge difference it makes for their quality of life.

Bill 21 is also talking about amendments respecting the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions. This is coming certainly from the diluted chemotherapy situation that happened in Ontario recently. I will say that this fall I had a number of meetings with pharmacists in general. They have had a day here at Queen's Park, and last week during constituency week, I had a couple of visits to pharmacies. I went and got my flu shot and did a promotion for it, because it has just been in the last couple of years that pharmacists have been able to deliver flu shots. I did it as much for publicity so people would be aware that you can now get a flu shot at the pharmacy. I was a little concerned with the photographer who was there taking the picture for the local paper, who was telling the pharmacist to look into the camera, and I was saying, “No. Look at my arm. I would prefer the needle to actually hit the spot it's supposed to hit.”

I also met with pharmacists in Huntsville last week. They were talking about how they are lobbying for expanded scope of practice. That does seem to make sense to me, especially for things like vaccinations. They can do the flu shot now; why not be able to do travel vaccinations? Certainly from the perspective of the consumer, that would be more convenient.

Last year I paid to get a vaccination. It was a vaccination that had to stay cold, so I had to actually go and pick it up at the pharmacy and then take it to my doctor's office, and it had to be injected within half an hour, or it might not work so well. That's a situation, certainly, where being able to just have it come out of the fridge at the pharmacy and get it done would make a lot more sense.

Mr. Speaker, also, as you may recall, the last time I had an opportunity to speak in the Legislature on other health care concerns, I was talking about the northern part of the riding, the Port Loring-Argyle area. I see the Speaker perk up when I say that. In that area, they have been without an ambulance since the summer. It was one of the unique parts of the province that had volunteer paramedics to maintain and work in the ambulance. I stated at that time that I'm very concerned about the remoteness of the area, that they need to have an ambulance stationed there. They have come up with a temporary situation where there would be an SUV and a fully qualified paramedic there. That was the sort of interim solution. But I don't think that's good enough. It's at least an hour from the closest hospital, so it could be a two-hour round trip to hospital.

I'm pleased to see, according to the local newspaper, that there is now a community paramedicine grant that was approved. So there is an actual ambulance stationed there with two paramedics who will be there 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and will also be doing some other services in the area. That is going to go through until June 2015. I'm happy about that. I hope that when we hit June, by then, another solution comes up so that one way or another there is an ambulance stationed there.

They are going through a review of the whole district of Parry Sound-Muskoka looking at emergency services and ambulance services. I suggested, if they are trying to save money, perhaps volunteer drivers. It's too hard to get qualified paramedics as volunteers, but perhaps volunteer drivers might be a way of doing it and keeping the service in the Port Loring-Argyle area.

Last week I also met with a few health providers. I met with the LHIN, the local health integration network. I met with nurse practitioners representing RNAO. From that, there are certainly some issues that have come out.

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I'm pleased that in Parry Sound-Muskoka, a month or so ago, the proposal put forward by the district of Muskoka for health hubs to have nurse practitioners in Port Carling and Dorset, and in a mobile unit, has been approved. That's really great news, to bring primary care closer to the people of Muskoka, and also the Wahta First Nation. There had been a nurse practitioner stationed there who was being funded by the band but hadn't really been formally recognized by the province. The Minister of Health also agreed to fund that nurse practitioner position.

Actually, when I had the nursing meeting last week, I met with Dana Strength, who's the nurse practitioner at Wahta, and Donna Kearney, who was formerly the nurse

practitioner in Rosseau; she put together the proposal for the district of Muskoka. That's good news, and I think it's moving in the right direction, where you're trying to get primary health care closer to the people and, really, the most efficient model possible.

I can tell you from my experience in Parry Sound, where we have six stand-alone nurse practitioners in places like Port Loring, Argyle, Pointe au Baril, Britt or Rosseau, that the communities very much support the nurse practitioners, and they seem to do a great job.

At my meeting with Donna Kearney and Dana Strength, they did raise concerns about whether the model that they've chosen—in the Parry Sound side of the riding, basically a doctor works with a nurse practitioner who is paid a set amount of money, no matter how many clients there are. They were a little concerned that, with this new model being set up, they'd be under the family health team; without being an expert on it, I would just hope that the government has done its research so that the financial implications still make sense.

Other issues that the nurse practitioners brought up to me were the compensation for nurse practitioners in rural areas. Donna pointed out to me that her salary had been the same for 10 years and hadn't increased at all, but nurse practitioners in hospital settings or other settings are making substantially more. That's certainly an issue for trying to make sure that you have good, experienced nurse practitioners in these more remote, rural areas, where I would argue that they really are responsible for the full scope of the kinds of things that they do. That's something I certainly think needs to be addressed: Their compensation has to be competitive with what other nurse practitioners make, especially considering the sort of work that they do.

I also met with the LHIN, and that raised some concerns for me, because the province is going through some funding changing right now. They're moving the hospitals to—I believe it was called a quality-based funding model. I may have that terminology a bit incorrect, but essentially they figured out a certain cost for a certain operation, and that's what you get paid; if your costs are higher than that, then you don't get paid as much.

My first inclination is that this is going to have a very negative effect on Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, to the tune of millions of dollars less operational funding. I think it's the right way to be moving health care, out into the community. If you can get the care you need at a nursing station, you shouldn't be going to the emergency department, and it's much more reasonable in terms of the cost of it to be able to get it done in a health clinic, nursing station or family health team versus the emergency department.

But I'm a little concerned about the transition. I know that Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare is going to face some real challenges. We've heard about cutbacks in other parts of the province. I know the Ontario Nursing Association president claims that there have been 1,600 layoffs of nurses across the province, and I'm worried. I

haven't seen the exact numbers yet, but if Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare faces a big change in their operational funding in one year, they're going to be faced with making decisions about how many nurses they have. They're going to be faced with trying to rationalize what they do offer, and that is a big concern, something that I am certainly concerned about.

In the meeting I had with the LHIN, I did raise some of the health concerns I've heard about. We have a Mr. Gary Froude, who was citizen of the year a couple of years ago in the Port Carling area—very much involved with all kinds of community events. He suffers from a rare disease that has him in a hospital and on a ventilator. Gayle Dempsey, his spouse, is trying to get him home. He wants to come home. He's been in the hospital for a year now, and apparently there's not a ventilator program available in Muskoka. I asked the LHIN about this. I hope they can look into it to see what might be done.

Every way you look at it, it's got to be cheaper to have him at home. He wants to be at home. Who would want to be in hospital as their home? Obviously, the cost of being in a hospital on a daily basis would be crazy. I'm very hopeful that the LHIN will somehow be able to provide ventilation at-home services, which are available in some other parts of the province, so that Gary Froude can come home.

I can see that I have used my time up, and I thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: We're talking, of course, about government Bill 21. It was not only looked at in some detail by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, but an hour was devoted to it by our eminent health critic, the member from Nickel Belt.

There is no question that this government is privatizing our health care system. I've into my ninth year here now. They cut eye exams. Remember that? They cut physio. Remember that?

Did you know that we're only one of two provinces that will not extend OHIP coverage to our new immigrants? In the age of Ebola, this is madness. This is privatization, and this is madness.

Physio, of course, is gone. Dental care: Remember the promises about dental care from this government? Well, the cheque is in the mail on that one and not received. I hear about that all the time in my community.

This is privatization. We have the rise of private clinics, and now we have the spectre of medical tourism. As if the wait time for surgical procedures and other hospital necessities is not long enough, we now have queue-jumpers because they can pay cash. If that's not privatization, I don't know what is. That's privatization.

If you couch this with the fact that they followed the Mike Harris government, and they privatized even more than they did, that is pretty shocking. This is shocking.

Tommy Douglas—let us remember him—said that medicare always has to be fought for every generation

and it has to be expanded every generation. We need pharma care at the federal level. We need dental care at the provincial level. We need more medicare, not less medicare, and less medicare is what we're getting. This is just the latest in a series of scandals. Stay tuned for more. That's what you get with privatization.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm really pleased to add my voice to say a couple of words on Bill 21. I listened very carefully to my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He spoke passionately about health care in his riding and some of his concerns. It was nice to hear that he agrees with some of the transition in health care that has been happening over the past many years, especially with the pharmacists having a new practice with vaccinations etc. and nurse practitioners being part of a family health team and the local clinics.

He also mentioned some of his constituents requiring home care services. He believes that the transition we're going through is in the right direction, but he has some concerns. I don't disagree with him having some concerns, because when you try something new in a system, there are growing pains, and there are going to have to be adjustments.

I was pleased to hear that he has continuous discussions with his LHIN and his CCAC people because those are the folks on the ground in his neighbourhood who are responsible for making the changes that he so dearly wants for his constituents. I congratulate him for that.

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He also touched upon the bill in terms of what is happening with the need to protect our voluntary system of blood donations in our province and our country. He sort of agrees that we need to do something after he has done a good review of what has been happening with the system and where we get all our protein that is needed for some patients in our province. So I want to say that the member has presented a good case for what he was saying, and the government is listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments, and I have a couple of questions for the government.

I know the previous speaker on the government side talked about the fact that they're listening, and, on Bill 21, I don't think they are listening. We had some groups here in the precinct a couple of weeks ago. They were very clear to me. They sent me a letter that I shared with the government House leader that there are groups that feel we should have province-wide hearings on Bill 21. I know that the government has already put us on notice that they're going to rush this bill through and not give those people that opportunity. I'm sorry that they're going to be shut out, given the fact this they were very clear when they were here that we should have a chat about it.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka talked about the fact that 80% of all plasma-derived medicinal products for Canadian patients are manufactured from paid plasma donations from the United States. I appreciate some of the points he made about a voluntary system versus a paid system. I think he put some great comments on the record.

I guess the question I would have for the government is, don't they feel that a domestic plasma collection system that is able to have regulatory oversight from Canadians—isn't that something that you want? Right now, I'm told that Health Canada has no direct oversight on the plasma that we're getting from the US, so you have to ask that question of the government. Do they consider United States plasma donations that are paid for safer than they feel Canadian plasma is?

I really believe that the member has put some great comments on the record. He certainly brought some local examples. But it all goes back—is the government willing to hear from the stakeholders, the patient groups? Are they willing to have those hearings that I think this bill requires? We'll soon see.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka always brings a local example to every piece of legislation in this House, and I think that's very valuable because there are obviously great disparities in the levels of service that people in this province receive, depending on where they live.

Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, while it is a good title—of course, it does combine two pieces of legislation, formerly known as Bill 178 and Bill 117—is, once again, though, an example of a piece of legislation coming to the House where informed voices have sat down with the government and the opposition critics and produced some very tangible suggestions to strengthen it, and yet it still gets presented to us in a very weak form. It seems to be a trend, and perhaps it's a theme. That's disappointing, because when it gets to committee it takes that much more work to try to make it right.

I just say to the government, with greatest respect, of course: Why not do it right the first time so that when it gets here to the House, we can pull back the layers when it gets to committee?

It is interesting because the social policy committee, in the last session, had made some recommendations to make the piece of legislation stronger. They had made amendments and asked the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to review best practices, including oversight, which the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka has raised, for procurement and the distribution of oncology drugs.

Bill 117, of course, was tabled in October 2013, before the committee issued its report. You have to wonder. I do recognize that the government was trying to catch up because they left a loophole for for-profit blood collection open, but the work before us is even more profound going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We return now to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his reply.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to the members from Parkdale–High Park, Scarborough–Rouge River, Leeds–Grenville and Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments.

I did speak about scope of practice, specifically related to pharmacists, in my speech. This past week, I happened to hurt my hip, back, something—I'm not quite sure yet because I haven't actually made it to the doctor yet. When I couldn't get in to see my regular doctor, for the first time in my life I visited a chiropractor and went for a couple of visits just trying to get a little bit of relief. The chiropractor says, "Well, this may help, but I really need an X-ray to know what to do next." It seems a little strange when you're looking at scope of practice that the chiropractor or physiotherapist—and I'm not sure about whether a nurse practitioner can order one—wouldn't be able to order an X-ray. Apparently, he has to write a letter to my doctor, and then I have to visit the doctor to be able to go get an X-ray. I'm sure this costs a lot more for the system, and it's certainly not convenient for the users. I think that's something that is worth looking at to both make the system work better and save some money, because there's limited dollars.

The member from Scarborough–Rouge River talked about nurse practitioners working in a family health team. In Parry Sound–Muskoka, we're unique on the Parry Sound side, where the nurse practitioners are working on their own. They work with a doctor. The doctor is just paid a stipend, but otherwise, they're on their own, and they do a great job. It's a model that could be used all across, especially rural and northern Ontario.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and share my thoughts on Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. This bill, as I understand it, enacts the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, which bans payment, reimbursement and compensation for blood and plasma in Ontario.

In the last session we were here, this bill was presented to the House. I was hopeful that we were going to be able to get that bill passed. It was two separate bills at the time; now they're combined into one. That was the first bill that was brought to our attention.

What really kind of tweaked my interest was that this government knew since November 2012 that there was a private for-profit agency on the brink of setting up to actually collect blood in exchange for reimbursement, for payment. So why it took this government that long—it's really discouraging to think that they would not act quicker on such a vital issue.

Speaker, I think we're all in agreement that we should not be reimbursing people for blood donations. I think people should be doing it out of the kindness of their heart, helping their fellow man, being a humanitarian, because if we need help, we're hoping that people come

forward when we're in need of perhaps any blood services for health reasons that we may incur.

The other portion of this bill, schedule 2, that's now being presented in Bill 21, is the underdosing of chemotherapy drugs. The member from Ottawa South actually read each of the 12 recommendations that Dr. Thiessen presented to the committee. When I was sitting here, I had to read the bill again to understand. He was reading each one. The impression was that these 12 recommendations were adopted and implemented into Bill 21—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The member from Sudbury is saying it was a good point. As I sat here, I thought, "Wow, this is wonderful. We're getting all 12 recommendations in this bill. What a progressive Liberal government we have. At last, there is a bill that I can actually 100% get behind" and not just the fancy title or the title that gives the idea that they are—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Impression.

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Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I think I used that word, "impression," so I think I'm going to try to say they're giving the idea to everyone that this is being done fully from the 12 recommendations from Dr. Thiessen. As the member from Ottawa South read that, and very heartfelt, I thought to myself, "I better check my facts," because usually I'm pretty meticulous. People maybe know me—I'm kind of detail-oriented. When I think I'm wrong, I question and I go look. So anyway, I went and looked at the situation again. Sure enough, there are not 12 recommendations that were made by Dr. Thiessen in this bill. So, New Democrats, we were right. There is only one. There is absolutely only one recommendation that is in this bill, Bill 21.

You know what that recommendation is, Speaker? It's identifying pharmacies within hospitals as part of the Ontario College of Pharmacists, so that they have oversight over the pharmacies in hospitals. That isn't the end-all and be-all of those recommendations to actually prevent underdosing of chemotherapy drugs in the context of the example we're talking about.

The other kind of concerning part, and the member from Kitchener–Waterloo pointed it out as I was going to talk about this, because it's really important, was that the social policy committee—our health critic was involved in those deliberations. She spoke very informatively of how the social policy committee took all this information from deputants, from Dr. Thiessen, from Medbuy—they listened to Medbuy. Some of the things they uncovered in Medbuy were very interesting. One of the pieces was—and I'm kind of giving a little bit of background where I'm going—they asked Medbuy, "How many employees under your purview make over \$100,000?" The answer was approximately five. After they did some digging, there were 17 employees that made over \$100,000.

I don't understand why that recommendation from the social policy committee wasn't something that was adopted into this bill. If transparency is truly the mantra

of the Liberal government—because we know they want to be transparent; we know they want to be accountable. The Premier said it herself: Ask her anything. I don't know if she said that, but I'll say it: Ask her anything. I hope you get a transparent answer.

So what they did is they tabled the bill, and I don't know if this was a strategic kind of motive or a strategic kind of—what do you call it, Catherine? Move. Yes, a strategic move. That's right, like when you're playing chess, right? And they were one step ahead of the social policy committee, maybe. The Sergeant-at-Arms is kind of chuckling.

So I'm questioning that. Why would a transparent government put a bill on the table before the social justice committee did the work it was mandated to do? I think that's a very important question. It really shines the light on this government and who they want to hold accountable. If you wanted to hold accountable the parties that were involved in this underdosing of chemotherapy drugs, there was an actual measure that could help hold accountability in this whole fiasco.

The other recommendations that the social justice policy made that were very astute, very smart, and got to the point of transparency in this situation—they had said here, "In order to maintain transparency and accountability"—those are two buzzwords we're all using about this government—"the government of Ontario, through legislative or other means, [should] take those steps necessary to ensure that group purchasing organizations"—GPOs—"and shared services organizations are subject to all aspects of the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act." So we were talking earlier today about Bill 8, the bill that was brought forward, and that was the bill that actually says "public sector and MPP accountability and transparency."

So, Speaker, in that regard, there are funds that are given to hospitals. The government funds the hospital from the public purse. Then these group purchasing organizations get some of that money, but yet they're not held accountable under the public sector accountability act. So that was a really strong recommendation I felt made a huge world of difference to accountability in this bill.

The other one—I talked about this, but again this was through the committee—the salaries of employees and executives of the group purchasing organizations, because the health critic talked about 17 employees and the purchasing agents who made over \$100,000, but I wonder—an interesting question—how much the executives made from, again, the public purse.

The third one was that "group purchasing organizations and shared services organizations are subject to audits by ... the Auditor General." What's wrong with that piece of transparency? I don't understand why that wouldn't be a criteria that this government felt was important for accountability and transparency. That was part of the problem that was identified through the committee. They couldn't follow the money. Our finance critic is always saying, "The way you're going to get the

answers is to follow that money,” but somehow—I don’t know if I should use the word; I might have to withdraw. So I’m going—I think I’m on the—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: What’s the word?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Well, the word is “buried.” Can I say that?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Of course you can.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, okay.

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, maybe not.

It feels like, because these recommendations weren’t up front and put into this bill, it’s like it was buried. These things are being buried. I wasn’t sure if I could—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Hidden.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes—hidden, cloaked.

The last one, Speaker, was that “public and broader public sector members of the group purchasing organization and shared services organizations pay for the

value of procurement services as opposed to a percentage of purchases.” Oh, and there is one more—excuse me: “Rebates and value adds” should be “discontinued.”

The health critic made a very important point and stressed very clearly that part of the problem was the contractors, the middleman—Medbuy. There is a financial piece in there, and there was a transparency piece when they actually put that contract out to bid.

Speaker, we’re completely ignoring these recommendations, and I think that’s wrong. So I hope when this goes back to committee that the government will listen and do the right thing and put these back in this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being very close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cindy Forster
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahan, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadi
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Joe Cimino
Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadi
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
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