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des débats
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Monday 11 May 2015

Lundi 11 mai 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 11 May 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 11 mai 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to introduce to the House my sister Marlene Yakabuski, and my brother Mark.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to introduce to the House my right hand here in Toronto, my EA, Victoria Stevenson.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, my wife, Elizabeth, and a good friend of ours, Marilyn Whiting from Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Speaker, you know we had a significant event on the weekend. The new leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party is with us today: Patrick Brown.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Two introductions, Speaker:

I want to welcome a former Premier of Ontario, the Honourable Bob Rae, to the House. Welcome, Mr. Rae.

I'd also like to welcome a former member of provincial Parliament from Perth-Wellington, John Wilkinson.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I won't consider that stepping on one of my jobs.

Further introductions?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd like to welcome to the House my intern, Justin Khorana.

0910

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's my pleasure to introduce Sylvie Landry from Durham region. She's a membre du Conseil scolaire Viamonde and an excellent advocate in Durham region. Welcome.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to introduce Richard Ciano, the president of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's with great pleasure that I introduce the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Don McCabe, in the members' east gallery today.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to introduce Earl Provost, the former executive assistant to Toronto's deputy mayor Norm Kelly.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'aimerais présenter M. Denis Vaillancourt, le président de l'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario, qui est ici avec nous ce matin.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, it's my great honour to welcome the former Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable John Turner.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I would like to introduce to the House now-retired Senator Di Nino, founder of Parliamentary Friends of Tibet.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I wish to introduce former MPP Steve Gilchrist.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd like to welcome my sister Marisue Gardonio, who is here in her capacity as the chair of the Ontario Road Builders' Association, and my nephew Aaron Natyshak, who is going to be interning with me. He's a student at Bowling Green State University.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to introduce Robert Beaudin, the principal of l'Académie Alexandre-Dumas.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to introduce Mr. Walied Solimon, Mr. Mike Richmond, Shane Hefron, Brock Pearson and, of course, Tamara McGregor to the Legislature.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to welcome everyone else, if anyone got left out.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd like to introduce my good friend Stewart Kiff et sa délégation francophone, and Max Beck, the spouse of Barbara Hall. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Bob Stanley, who is here joining us as campaign manager to Patrick Brown, and of course, everybody else who hasn't been introduced. Welcome.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It gives me great pleasure to introduce a guest in the Speaker's gallery, a long-time friend of mine—we served as legislative pages together back in 1991—Katie Telford. Welcome.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to introduce Gurdev Gill and Manjit Gill from Brampton.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'd like to introduce Maxim Jean-Louis, the CEO and executive director of Contact North, a great educational institution in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Leave it right to the end—the Auditor General.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter—
Interjections.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The auditor? Everything is clean. No problem. The government has—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My forgiveness; the Attorney General.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter le président du Collège Boréal, Pierre Riopel.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As ordered on May 6, this House is now adjourned during pleasure for an address by the Premier of Quebec.

HON. PHILIPPE COUILLARD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier, as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the Legislature today on behalf of all of the members of provincial Parliament. It was impressed upon me that diplomacy at events such as this works best when mention of certain hockey rivalries is kept out of the equation. Out of respect for the playoffs, I won't say anything more about this particular topic.

In this Legislature, we are reminded of the date of Confederation, 1867, that is carved in the wood above me. As two of the founding provinces of Canada, we have experienced the challenges of this union, where our country has grown and matured, yet through it all we have learned the value of our diverse cultures and that our paths together are much stronger than we are apart.

Premier, in the history of the Legislative Assembly, only a handful of dignitaries have addressed our House at pleasure, and you are about to do that. Out of this small number, it is worth noting that today is the third time that the leader of the province of Quebec has spoken here, as did Premier Antonio Barrette in 1960 and Premier Jean Lesage in 1967. I think these historical occasions speak volumes about the type of relationship our two provinces do have.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, bienvenue. La parole est à vous. Mr. Premier, welcome. The floor is yours.

0920

L'hon. Philippe Couillard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée législative; madame la Première Ministre; mesdames et messieurs les Ministres; monsieur le Chef de l'opposition officielle et également monsieur le Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur, monsieur Brown; madame la Chef du deuxième groupe d'opposition; le très honorable John Turner, ancien premier ministre du Canada; l'honorable Bob Rae, ancien premier ministre de l'Ontario; mesdames et messieurs les députés; mesdames, messieurs.

Je veux tout d'abord vous remercier, madame la Première Ministre, ainsi que les membres de cette Assemblée, pour cette opportunité qui m'est donnée de m'adresser à vous aujourd'hui.

I do so fully aware of the exceptional nature of this event. Indeed, the only times a Quebec Premier has addressed this assembly goes back to the 1960s, when Antonio Barrette first spoke here in April 1960, followed by Jean Lesage in February 1964.

I'm here to attest to the long tradition that unites our two provinces, a relationship based on respect for our differences, but also on our shared desire to advance the interests of the people we represent, at every level.

La relation entre le Québec et l'Ontario remonte aux origines mêmes de la présence européenne en Amérique du Nord. Après les Premières Nations, nous sommes toutes et tous venus d'ailleurs. Mon ancêtre, Guillaume Couillard, est arrivé de Bretagne en 1613, a exploité la première ferme de Nouvelle-France et a fondé à Québec une longue lignée de 12 générations.

There are millions of stories like mine. Think of your own. The only differences between you and I are the dates of our respective families' arrivals in this land, our mother tongues and our regions of origin.

Dans ce contexte, il n'est pas étonnant que nous partagions quatre siècles d'histoire commune, depuis la fondation de la ville de Québec en 1608 et les voyages de Champlain en Ontario en 1615. Cette année marque d'ailleurs le 400^e anniversaire de la présence francophone en Ontario.

Champlain ne s'est pas arrêté à Tadoussac ou à Québec. Il a continué sa route et le français a fait du chemin au fil de notre fleuve, de nos lacs et de nos rivières. Puis, au cours du temps, cette Nouvelle-France est devenue une terre d'accueil pour de nouveaux arrivants de toutes origines. Les frontières du nord de l'Amérique se sont progressivement tracées. Les interrelations entre les membres de diverses communautés se sont multipliées. Des identités se sont affirmées.

Si Champlain revenait en cette terre d'Amérique qu'il a parcourue, dessinée et souvent nommée, il y retrouverait son empreinte : le respect de la diversité et une volonté d'y voir rayonner la langue française.

Depuis 1980, partout au Canada on assiste à la multiplication des classes et des écoles d'immersion française, ce qui témoigne d'une présence accrue de francophiles et de leur désir de transmettre à leurs enfants une part de notre héritage francophone. En 1976, il y avait 260 écoles offrant à 23 000 élèves des programmes d'immersion en français à l'extérieur du Québec; en 2011, 342 000 élèves étaient inscrits aux programmes d'immersion en français à l'extérieur du Québec. C'est une croissance, bien sûr, très importante.

Cela dit, les progrès ne sont pas semblables dans toutes les régions, et les gouvernements peuvent encore faire plus et mieux. C'est d'évidence; les recours judiciaires en matière d'éducation le démontrent.

Nous devons insister sur les avantages du français pour chacune des régions du Canada. Le rayonnement de la langue française partout au Canada est un élément essentiel à la prospérité économique, sociale, culturelle et politique du pays. C'est un élément qui nous distingue toutes et tous, et qui constitue, bien sûr, le cœur du caractère spécifique du Québec.

D'ailleurs, toutes les provinces et tous les territoires le reconnaissent puisqu'ils se sont tous dotés d'une politique d'offre active de services en français. De plus en plus, la légitimité du français s'affirme et c'est un avantage pour le Canada.

Le 400^e anniversaire de la présence française en Ontario en 2015 et le 150^e de la fédération en 2017 sont des occasions de réaffirmer que la francophonie est une caractéristique fondamentale de l'identité canadienne.

Regardons à nouveau les armoiries du Canada. On y retrouve clairement l'image du pacte de 1867 qui a lié les deux peuples fondateurs du Canada. Et aujourd'hui, s'il fallait les redessiner, nous y ajouterions la marque des Premières Nations avec lesquelles nos ancêtres ont tissé leurs premières alliances.

D'ailleurs, dans la décoration de l'hôtel du Parlement, siège de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec, son concepteur, Eugène-Étienne Taché, a pensé aux premiers occupants en sol québécois, auxquels il a réservé une place d'honneur sur la façade. Le sculpteur Louis-Philippe Hébert les a immortalisés dans deux oeuvres de bronze : Le pêcheur à la nigogue, qui représente un Amérindien dont les pieds trempent dans une eau ruisselante, et La halte dans la forêt, qui représente une famille amérindienne.

L'Ontario et le Québec se sont engagés à travailler de concert avec les autres gouvernements du Canada à la promotion, à la protection, à la pérennité et à la vitalité du fait français au Canada. Notre entente, conclue en novembre dernier, en témoigne. Nous le faisons parce que nous connaissons le rôle clé joué par les francophones dans la fondation et la construction du Canada d'aujourd'hui et leur importance pour le Canada de demain.

Comme premier ministre du Québec, j'assume le rôle primordial de chef d'État de la seule société à majorité francophone d'Amérique. Cette caractéristique unique est une fierté mais également une grande responsabilité.

Depuis Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau, qui fut premier ministre du Québec en 1867, c'est le devoir de chaque personne qui lui a succédé de défendre et de promouvoir notre spécificité et notre caractère distinct, et de promouvoir et protéger notre langue au Québec, ailleurs au Canada et ailleurs en Amérique du Nord. Nous sommes le coeur, toujours fier et fort, des racines françaises de l'Amérique. Nous reconnaissons pleinement le rôle important et les droits des Québécoises et Québécois d'expression anglaise qui, avec nous, ont bâti le Québec.

Pour les francophones de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard à la Colombie-Britannique, en passant par l'Ontario et, naturellement, le Québec, le français est plus qu'une langue; c'est aussi l'expression d'une culture qui nous définit ici et partout dans le monde. C'est un atout extraordinaire sur lequel nous devons tous capitaliser, notamment dans la perspective du libre-échange avec l'Europe.

In 1964, standing before this very assembly, Premier Jean Lesage stated the following. I will translate: "Until now, one could say that in Canada, relations between its governments have been vertical, that is to say, federal to provincial. But I truly believe they will gradually become horizontal, province to province."

This vision has been realized. Nearly 40 years later, Premier Jean Charest raised the concept of creating a unique forum for Canada's 13 provincial and territorial governments: the Council of the Federation, a forum to promote co-operation between our governments; a forum to build alliances on matters of common interest; a forum through which the provinces and territories that make up this country can affirm their leadership, take their rightful place and work together on issues affecting the populations they represent.

Ontario and Quebec share more than a few of those issues. We are natural allies. Together, we currently

account for over 60% of the Canadian population and close to 60% of Canada's GDP.

Central Canada is an economic force. It is a political force, and it is a force to be reckoned with for ensuring national prosperity.

Notre alliance remonte au tout début de notre histoire. Souvenons-nous de Baldwin et LaFontaine : en 1841, la coopération de deux réformistes modérés, Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine et Robert Baldwin, a contribué en bonne partie à la naissance du Canada après qu'ils aient lutté ensemble pour y introduire le gouvernement responsable et représentatif.

Cartier et Macdonald : leur alliance a permis de jeter les bases de notre fédération, mais également de mettre en place des mesures assurant la promotion et la protection du fait français et du caractère du Québec.

Dès 1886, les premiers ministres Honoré Mercier et Oliver Mowat ont mis en place la première conférence interprovinciale à Québec.

Notre relation est devenue particulièrement féconde à partir des années 1960, qui constituent, certes, une période charnière de l'histoire de nos deux États. Le 5 juillet 1960, Jean Lesage devenait premier ministre du Québec, marquant ainsi le début de la Révolution tranquille.

One year later, John Robarts became Premier of Ontario. At the time, Ontario was undergoing radical social change, just like Quebec. In the shadow of these common challenges, our relations grew closer still. At this historic crossroads, our Premiers rebuilt the alliance that is at the very root of the Canadian federation.

0930

In 1969, our relations gained a further measure of formalization. That year, recognizing that Canada's historical and linguistic heritage was reflected in two communities, one French and the other English, and convinced that greater co-operation between the provinces was essential to the country's vitality, the governments of Quebec and Ontario signed the agreement for co-operation and exchange in educational and cultural matters. Under this agreement, various co-operative mechanisms touching on language, education, culture and public administration were implemented.

This close co-operation continued, particularly under a succession of Premiers: Ontario's Bill Davis, David Peterson and Bob Rae with Quebec's Robert Bourassa; Dalton McGuinty with Jean Charest.

We have already travelled a long way together, but we can, and we must, go further still.

When I took office in April 2014, I made the decision to pursue and even deepen our historic relationship with Ontario. I soon discovered a shared desire to go further on our shared journey. I want to thank the Premier for her openness and willingness to expand our dialogue in so many ways.

Applause.

Hon. Philippe Couillard: On November 21, 2014, here in Toronto, our respective cabinets had a joint meeting and launched the basis for this renewed alliance. As a

result, four new co-operation protocols were signed: revitalization of the trade and co-operation agreement between Ontario and Quebec, seasonal electricity supply, concerted action on climate change, and a declaration of the Francophonie.

J'aimerais attirer plus particulièrement votre attention sur la lutte contre les changements climatiques. Lors de Climate Week à New York en septembre 2014, le secrétaire général des Nations Unies, Ban Ki-moon, déclarait : « Il n'y a pas de plan B, parce qu'il n'y a pas de planète B. »

Pour moi et bien d'autres, le progrès économique et l'emploi se conjuguent nécessairement avec le développement durable et leurs deux compagnons essentiels, la protection de l'environnement et le développement social.

Nous vivons aujourd'hui à une époque qui nous oblige à résister à un faux choix : le développement économique ou la protection de l'environnement. Cette lutte contre les changements climatiques est un défi, mais également et surtout une opportunité de développer une économie du 20^e siècle, une économie créatrice d'emplois qui fait de l'ingéniosité et de la créativité les pierres angulaires d'un nouveau paradigme économique qui dépasse nos frontières.

La lutte contre les changements climatiques est un des plus grands défis auxquels l'humanité est confrontée. Le succès dans cette lutte exige des actions coordonnées, rapides et déterminantes de la part de tous, sans exception. Les États fédérés comme l'Ontario et le Québec ont un rôle incontournable à jouer dans cette lutte et l'efficacité de notre contribution sera décuplée si nous agissons ensemble.

À l'aube de la prochaine Conférence des Parties, qui se déroulera à Paris en décembre prochain, jamais le rôle des États fédérés n'aura été aussi important pour notre avenir et celui de nos enfants. À nous de saisir cette chance, parce que le prix de l'inaction sera encore plus grand. Les changements climatiques causent déjà des phénomènes météorologiques extrêmes comme des inondations ou des sécheresses. Ces situations, nous les vivons tous et toutes dans chaque province ou territoire du Canada et dans chaque État américain.

D'ailleurs, nous avons signé récemment, avec les États du Vermont et de New York, une entente qui prévoit désormais une collaboration transfrontalière accrue sur le plan de la prévention, de la prévision et de l'atténuation des impacts des inondations en provenance du Lac Champlain et du bassin de la rivière Richelieu.

Je sais que chaque parlementaire ici présent comprend la nécessité d'agir, et partage cette préoccupation; nous l'avons constaté lors de notre récent sommet à Québec. Les façons de faire diffèrent à travers le pays, chaque région devant tenir compte de sa réalité économique, géographique et politique.

What I want to emphasize here is that putting a price on carbon is a logical choice. Increasingly adopted here and abroad, it is also a choice that will yield concrete results.

In Quebec, emission units sold through carbon market auctions will generate more than \$3 billion by 2020, 100% of which will be invested through a dedicated green fund in measures to reduce emissions, accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and better prepare Quebec for the impact of climate change.

Premier Wynne's intent to join the cap-and-trade system under the Western Climate Initiative is indeed excellent news. Together with California, our association will create the largest carbon market in North America. We will continue to build relationships with other partners, and we have good reasons to hope that others will follow suit.

Trade and the economy are also areas where co-operation between our two provinces generates promising leads. Our combined GDP is over \$1 trillion, and the Quebec-Ontario economic zone is the fourth largest in North America after California, Texas and New York.

Trade with Ontario amounts to more than 60% of Quebec's interprovincial trade, while trade with Quebec represents close to 40% of Ontario's. Trade in goods and services between us amounted to over \$83 billion in 2011.

Aujourd'hui, nos défis sont semblables : la nécessité de retrouver l'équilibre budgétaire et de diminuer le fardeau de la dette publique, tout en créant un environnement d'affaires favorable à l'investissement, à la croissance de l'économie et à la création d'emplois. Par ailleurs, nous annoncerons sous peu, comme nous nous y étions engagés, la conclusion d'un accord ambitieux sur les marchés publics à la mesure de ce que nous faisons avec d'autres pays du monde. Faisant suite à notre Accord sur le commerce intérieur de 2009, il s'agit d'un progrès majeur accompli au bénéfice des travailleurs et des entreprises, une nouvelle énergie donnée à notre marche commune vers une plus grande prospérité.

Notre politique économique vise à renforcer le Québec. Quand l'économie du Québec est plus forte, c'est tout le Canada qui en profite.

When Ontario's economy is strong, all of Canada benefits. And when Quebec and Ontario work together to forge a strong economy, when they display imagination and dare to go even further, then everything becomes possible.

Il en va de même de la place du Québec dans le Canada. Au fil des années, des ententes politiques et des décisions de la Cour suprême, les contours du caractère spécifique du Québec se sont précisés : la seule société et le seul État majoritairement francophone d'Amérique, sa culture unique partout reconnue, un régime juridique marqué par sa tradition civiliste et, dans les mots mêmes de la Cour suprême dans un jugement récent, « ses valeurs sociales distinctes ». Cette réalité évidente, confirmée par la Cour, appelle un acte de reconnaissance à la fois fort et enthousiaste, un acte de reconnaissance envers un partenaire qui souhaite une alliance encore plus solide.

Nous avons une histoire commune et nous partageons les mêmes aspirations pour nos enfants. Nos différences

ne nous éloignent pas : elles nous avantagent et elles nous distinguent.

Everything becomes possible when individual specificities are respected. Durant les années 1960, le premier ministre Jean Lesage affirmait que l'un « des objectifs du régime confédératif ... est de rendre possible aux groupes ... le maintien et surtout le développement de leurs caractéristiques propres. »

Soon afterward, John Robarts added, “Canada is a federal state, not a unitary state. This is a fact that cannot be overstated and should be reiterated constantly, given its profound implications. The provinces were created, and exist, in recognition of regional differences.”

I recognize the Canada of today in the words of these two Premiers, a Canada that progresses when its constituent states affirm their leadership.

Il est clair dans notre esprit que le Québec, comme tous les États membres de notre fédération, est libre de faire ses choix selon ses priorités. Mais ce que nous rappellent les premiers ministres Lesage et Robarts, c'est que le gouvernement fédéral a non seulement la responsabilité mais également l'obligation de tenir compte de nos caractéristiques communes et spécifiques dans l'élaboration de ses politiques.

Comme vous le savez, une campagne électorale fédérale aura lieu au cours des prochains mois. Les États qui forment ce pays ont tous des particularités dont les partis fédéraux doivent tenir compte, et le Québec ne fait pas exception, tout comme l'Ontario. Comme premier ministre du Québec et au nom de la population québécoise, je considère essentiel que les partis fédéraux nous disent clairement quels sont leurs plans pour le Québec. Nous sommes plus de 8 200 000 Québécois, la deuxième province la plus peuplée au pays, une société distincte qui a quitté les estrades pour reprendre sa place—toute sa place—celle de leader au sein de la fédération canadienne qu'elle a contribué à bâtir. Avant de leur accorder leur confiance, les Québécoises et les Québécois sont en droit de savoir quelle sera la position de chaque parti fédéral sur plusieurs enjeux, dont plusieurs ont fait l'objet de discussions et de consensus au sein du Conseil de la fédération.

0940

Le Transfert canadien en matière de santé : nous voulons que la pondération prenne en considération la démographie au-delà d'un simple financement per capita.

Le financement des infrastructures publiques : 90 milliards de dollars en 10 ans pour le Québec seulement, et 130 milliards de dollars pour l'Ontario. Le palier fédéral doit en faire plus de façon à ce que l'ensemble des ordres de gouvernement atteigne progressivement le seuil de 5 % du PIB recommandé par l'OCDE, la péréquation dont le plafond doit être éliminé ou redéfini.

La lutte contre les changements climatiques à la suite de notre Sommet de Québec : quels sont les plans des partis fédéraux pour soutenir les efforts des provinces et territoires? Comment les cibles qui seront présentées à Paris intégreront-elles ces efforts? Quelle sera la répartition de ceux-ci à travers la fédération?

Et nous rappellerons aussi que le caractère spécifique du Québec doit nécessairement être formellement reconnu, parce que cette reconnaissance, redisons-le, c'est le reflet d'une réalité évidente qui participe à la définition même du pays.

Voilà certaines des priorités que nous soulèverons en vue des élections fédérales à venir. On demandera aux chefs des partis de s'exprimer clairement sur chacun de ces enjeux. Par la suite, bien sûr, ce sera à la population de faire son choix.

Ensemble, nous devons préparer l'avenir en poursuivant sur notre lancée. C'est ce que nous visons et c'est ce qui nous unit. Le monde autour de nous change, apportant son lot de défis. On doit donc tous travailler ensemble à l'établissement d'un fédéralisme dans lequel la coopération est une valeur partagée et réelle.

We must reaffirm, as did Robarts and Lesage in the 1960s, that rather than a unitary state, our country is a federation where differences are respected. This is at the very core of our collective success to date. This will be the backbone of our future and one of the building blocks of the prosperity we all want to leave for our children.

This is not to deny the difficulties and disagreements that we sometimes have and will have. But we must rise above short-term visions because of our shared responsibility to our fellow citizens of today and tomorrow: that of giving them a more equitable world where respect and recognition of the other are the drivers of action. A free, prosperous and just society: This is what we all stand for. This is what our predecessors fought for. This must be our legacy to our children.

Since 1867, Quebec and Ontario have contributed positively to the functioning of the federation and the growth of a shared economy.

Il importe que nous nous assurions du respect de nos champs de compétence et que nous remettions de l'avant l'influence combinée du Québec et de l'Ontario au sein de la fédération.

We will continue to hold constructive dialogues on the many challenges we share and the many ways forward yet to be discovered. The government I lead firmly believes that Quebec progresses when it seeks to unite rather than divide, when it participates rather than excluding itself, and above all, when it builds bridges with its partners in the federation rather than putting up walls.

La fédération canadienne est porteuse de principes de vie commune qui nous amènent vers de plus vastes horizons, un espace unique, envié partout sur la planète, de partage démocratique, économique, culturel et social.

Le Québec doit et veut rester un leader de cette fédération, un repère et un ami pour les francophones d'Amérique. Ensemble, nous voulons promouvoir les intérêts du Québec et de l'Ontario, mais nous voulons faire plus que ça. Nous souhaitons faire progresser le Canada d'une manière qui profite à tous les partenaires de la fédération, tout en réaffirmant le pacte et les alliances qui l'ont fait naître—particulièrement notre alliance, celle que nous vous convions à enrichir encore davantage au profit des concitoyens que nous

représentons. C'est une invitation à laquelle tous et toutes sont conviés. Je vous remercie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Monsieur le Premier Ministre, merci beaucoup.

On behalf of the Ontario Legislative Assembly, I thank you for your address to us today. Better understanding is forged through opportunities such as these when our doors are open and our ideas are shared. That is the spirit in which we have now embraced your visit here today. Again, merci beaucoup.

At this time, by motion, I am told that the address from the three leaders will take place. We will now invite the Premier to respond.

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

Premier Couillard, thank you so very much. Mr. Prime Minister, my colleagues in the House, leader of the official opposition and leader of the third party and all of our guests, thank you very much.

Bonjour. Boozhoo. Aanii. It's wonderful to be here with all of you. On behalf of the government of Ontario, I am happy to welcome Premier Couillard to Queen's Park and to thank him for this special address.

Au nom du gouvernement de l'Ontario, je suis heureuse de souhaiter la bienvenue à Queen's Park au premier ministre Couillard. Je le remercie d'avoir accepté de prononcer cette allocution spéciale. Merci beaucoup.

It is a true honour to have you here today, and I want to thank all members of the Legislature, in particular the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party, for supporting this historic opportunity.

The agreement of the whole House demonstrates that this is a moment that transcends party lines, a moment that joins us to the history of this chamber, in which to date only nine such special addresses have been made before the Ontario Legislature.

Aujourd'hui, le premier ministre Couillard vient de prononcer la 10^e allocution spéciale dans l'histoire de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario.

Only twice, as has been said, have these addresses been made by Canadian Premiers, and on both occasions they were Premiers of our neighbour, our friend and our partner, the province of Quebec.

Aujourd'hui, le premier ministre Couillard donne suite à cette tradition de même qu'à cette autre longue tradition de collaboration entre nos deux provinces.

The relationship between Ontario and Quebec stretches back well over a century to the union of Upper and Lower Canada and the joint role we played as founding partners of Confederation.

Tout au long de notre riche histoire, une longue lignée de représentants du gouvernement, du monde des affaires et de la société civile ont mis sur pied des alliances extraordinaires et, avec chacune, créé des liens qui nous rapprochent et qui nous rendent plus forts: from Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and Robert Baldwin, who reached out across cultural and regional divisions to establish responsible government in Canada; to John A. Macdonald and George-Étienne Cartier, qui ont dépassé

leurs différences pour travailler à mettre en place une vision commune d'un pays unifié; to Jean Lesage and John Robarts, whose collaboration with their contemporaries helped build our modern country by creating a social union within Canada; to Dalton McGuinty and Jean Charest, whose first joint meeting of our cabinets in 2008 built on the progress of those who went before to create the foundation for the relationship that we enjoy today.

Nous sommes honorés de poursuivre cette tradition de partenariat avec le premier ministre Couillard, un leader qui, à chaque occasion, a démontré comment notre patrimoine commun est une source de privilège et de prospérité, un premier ministre qui travaille à créer de nouveaux avantages, de nouvelles possibilités et de nouveaux partenariats qui nous permettent de continuer le travail historique de nos prédécesseurs en améliorant la vie des Canadiens et des Canadiennes d'aujourd'hui et de demain.

Together, Ontario and Quebec are working to build a stronger central Canada and thereby a stronger Canada. Through collaboration, we are fully confronting the challenges ahead and unabashedly seizing those opportunities that will strengthen our economies now and in the future.

Notre partenariat a déjà généré d'importants résultats pour la population que nous desservons.

In November, we signed an unprecedented agreement to expand our electricity trade, keeping power more affordable, reliable and sustainable.

Nous avons mis sur pied un groupe de travail qui examine d'autres moyens de faire équipe sur des questions énergétiques communes.

0950

We're reinvigorating our trade agreement to help businesses remain competitive and to grow.

Nous revigorons notre entente sur le commerce afin d'aider les entreprises à demeurer concurrentielles et à continuer de croître.

Pour reconnaître que la francophonie est un élément intégral dans le succès du Canada, nous avons signé une déclaration visant à protéger et à promouvoir la culture et le patrimoine francophone en Ontario. L'Ontario est le lieu de résidence de près de 612 000 francophones et représente la plus importante population de francophones à l'extérieur du Québec.

Last month, when we announced that we would implement a cap-and-trade system here in Ontario, we also announced, as Premier Couillard has said, our intent to link that system with Quebec and California under the Western Climate Initiative.

Our provinces have been leaders on this critical issue for some time now. And as the challenge grows more urgent and the opportunities arising from action more abundant, it's imperative that we continue to join forces. By combining our efforts to fight climate change, we are building a stronger and greener economy, and adding strength to Canada's founding partnership, so that its benefits can endure for years to come.

C'est en unissant nos efforts pour lutter contre le changement climatique que nous bâtissons une économie plus forte et plus verte, et que nous renforcerons le partenariat fondateur du Canada de telle sorte que les fruits de notre travail commun pourront être ressentis pour encore bien des années.

When the colonial powers of our past finally ceased their struggle for control of these territories, the future relationship of the English and French was anything but certain. But as a nation and a province we have flourished, because ours is a rich heritage that starts with aboriginal people, the French and the English finding a way to live together, not always peacefully but ultimately and mostly with goodwill and mutual respect and admiration. As George-Étienne Cartier said in 1865, "They were placed like great families beside each other, and their contact produced a healthy spirit of emulation."

With Premier Couillard's visit, we will continue to build on well over 100 years of healthy emulation, and move forward with a new sense of shared purpose.

This year, our provinces are celebrating our deep cultural and historic ties, as we mark 400 years of French presence in Ontario and acknowledge the rich contributions that the preservation of francophone culture and language makes to Ontario. This coming fall, we look forward to making progress at the next joint meeting of cabinet ministers in Quebec. Merci.

Le premier ministre Couillard et moi nous sommes engagés à tenir ces réunions de nos Conseils des ministres sur une base régulière. Nous nous sommes engagés à poursuivre notre collaboration alors que nous travaillons ensemble à bâtir des économies durables pour l'avenir.

We want to ensure that our two provinces move forward as the largest, most dynamic, resilient and diversified economic region in Canada—as the country's economic powerhouse.

I want to thank Premier Couillard for his leadership and his partnership.

Je veux remercier le premier ministre Couillard de son leadership et de son partenariat.

We've achieved much in very little time. By working together at the Council of the Federation on our China trade mission and through our joint meeting of cabinet ministers, we have developed a friendship, for which I am grateful. I know that we can do so much more to build each other up, to grow our economies and to create more opportunities and more security in the lives of the people whom we are so honoured to represent.

Merci, meegwetch, thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time I would like to request that the leader of Progressive Conservative Party now make presentation in response to the speech.

Applause.

M. Patrick Brown: Je vous remercie pour cet accueil. C'est un plaisir d'être ici aujourd'hui. Il faut que je remercie tous les membres pour avoir offert leur consentement de me donner l'opportunité de vous parler dans cette merveilleuse Chambre.

C'est un vrai privilège pour moi, au nom de mes collègues du caucus, de souhaiter la bienvenue au premier ministre Couillard et de répondre à son discours en ce qui est mon premier discours comme chef du Parti PC de l'Ontario.

It is a real privilege for me, on behalf of my caucus colleagues, to welcome Premier Couillard and to respond to his speech in what is really my first official speech as leader of the PC Party of Ontario.

La relation historique entre l'Ontario et le Québec est une qui est spéciale depuis presque 150 années.

I am proud that it is one of my predecessors as leader of the party, John Robarts, who did so much to build a strong relationship between our two provinces, working alongside a predecessor of your party, Jean Lesage. The Confederation of Tomorrow conference, which Premier Robarts conceived and finally held in 1967, was a seminal moment in the history of this relationship and, indeed, the history of our country. Premier Robarts believed that the relationship between Ontario and Quebec was important both to the two provinces and to the country as a whole. While the results of that conference proved to be a significant step forward for national unity in Canada, the organization of the conference itself was equally important to forging a bond and a sense of mutual respect between the two provinces at the time; indeed, a bond between our two provinces that has continued over decades. We are reminded of this by your presence here today, Premier Couillard.

Cette relation a une importance particulière pour moi parce que, en fait, j'ai commencé mon implication en politique grâce à un politicien québécois, l'ancien premier ministre du Québec Jean Charest. Jean Charest était le chef du Parti PC du Canada. J'étais en train de visiter ma tante qui vivait au Québec dans une petite ville qui s'appelle North Hatley, à côté de Sherbrooke, et, par coïncidence, au fond de la rue de Jean Charest.

J'ai fini par le rencontrer et j'ai été si impressionné par lui et sa vision pour le Canada que je me suis impliqué en politique immédiatement. Mais comme j'habite en Ontario, j'ai ressenti que j'avais un certain rattachement à la province du Québec, un sentiment qui a été intensifié par une expérience que j'ai eue un peu de temps après, pendant le référendum du Québec en 1995. Comme nous le savions tous, Jean Charest était une personnalité de premier plan pour garder la province du Québec comme partie du Canada. J'ai décidé de m'impliquer et de participer à cette cause.

I spent a great deal of time travelling around Quebec following Mr. Jean Charest, and I saw the special relationship supporting Jean Charest as he spoke passionately about what it meant to be a Canadian and what it meant for Quebec to be part of Canada. I'll never forget those rallies where he held the Canadian passport up and said how proud he was to be a Canadian and to be a Quebecer. It was that experience that left an indelible mark on me and helped shape who I am.

Ontario and Quebec have been important partners in the history of our country, dating all the way back to the

partnership of Baldwin and LaFontaine to bring responsible government to our land. While we haven't always been on the same page on every issue, there is certainly more to unite us than divide us. Part of what has united us over the years has been our provinces' abilities to show leadership on key issues.

During your time in office, Premier Couillard, you have shown leadership in many areas of importance, but there are two that I'd like to mention specifically today. First is the general economic health of Quebec; and second, which is actually part of the first, is energy rates.

Since you came to office, you have made the attainment of a balanced budget a priority. You are taking steps to ensure the long-term financial health of your province and are committed to keeping your budget balanced.

Applause.

Mr. Patrick Brown: As you can tell, this is music to my ears and certainly to the ears of my colleagues.

You realize that to be able to have a prosperous province, you need to have a strong economy. This thing gives you the ability to invest in projects and people.

A key policy that is tied to building a strong economy is the second area in which Quebec has and is showing leadership: your province's energy policy. Your energy policy is a model for affordable energy in a province. Quebec, similar to Ontario, is blessed with a natural abundance of hydroelectric power. You have embraced this power and are using it to ensure hydro rates for the people of the province remain low. This is a model of leadership in this policy area.

1000

Low hydro rates mean a better business climate. Companies see these rates as a cost of doing business rather than a barrier to doing business. Low hydro rates mean better circumstances for people. Families and individuals who don't have to carry the burden of ever-increasing rates are better able to manage their household budgets, and businesses that want to set up operations in the province don't have to worry that hydro costs, either for their operations or their employees, will be a huge burden.

Recently, you have benefited from Xstrata Copper deciding to move its business to Quebec, in large part because of the reasonable hydro rates you offer. This is the type of example that I'd like to see here in Ontario: businesses moving here because of our hydro rates, rather than moving away. Another benefit of sound energy policy is that it provides the flexibility and breathing room to investigate other alternatives. For example, you are able to adopt a cap-and-trade policy because you have reasonable hydro rates. It is my hope and plan, as leader of the Ontario PC Party, to look further at how you have managed your energy issues in Quebec, and to see how we can make changes to our policies to position ourselves similarly.

Premier, you know how to do it: You focus on cheap power, and you are able to attract jobs to your province. I applaud this initiative. However, I hope that one day

Ontario will be rivalling you for those jobs, much like we have been rivals in hockey in past years—okay, maybe not past years; maybe past decades, which is painful for Toronto Maple Leafs fans. But I should say that I have been a bit preoccupied, the last few weeks, and on that note I should say that tomorrow night I certainly will be cheering for your Montreal Canadiens.

I'd like to conclude my remarks by returning to John Robarts and his feeling for, and relationship with, Quebec. One of his advisers said of Premier Robarts that he wanted a partnership with Quebec in fact and spirit and purpose. I don't think there are more appropriate words.

Premier Ministre Couillard, bienvenue à Queen's Park aujourd'hui, et j'espère bien de travailler avec vous dans l'avenir. Merci.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would invite the leader of the third party to provide a response.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Premier, distinguished guests, colleagues and members of the assembly, it is my pleasure to rise, on behalf of Ontario's New Democratic caucus, to respond to Premier Couillard's remarks.

Monsieur le Premier Ministre, au nom du groupe parlementaire néo-démocrate, nous vous remercions de vos remarques.

The adjournment of the House to permit an address by a distinguished visitor is not a common occurrence. In fact, this has happened only nine prior times in the history of the Legislature, and this marks only the third time that the Ontario Legislature has been addressed by the Premier of another Canadian province. On behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, welcome and bienvenue on this historic occasion.

While Ontario may not be formally known as "La belle province," I am sure you will find that our province is an incredibly beautiful province in its own right. In fact, Ontario is "Yours to Discover," and I hope that you have a chance to see some of the wonders that our beautiful province has to offer during your visit.

Ontario and Quebec have a long history of co-operation since we were Upper and Lower Canada, long before the days of Confederation. I'm pleased to see the continued spirit of co-operation between our two provinces more than 200 years later.

Ontario is proud to boast a francophone community of more than 600,000 people that dates back 400 years.

In addition to being the two most populous provinces and the two largest provinces by geographical size, today we are each other's largest trading partners within Canada. Our provinces amount to nearly 70% of Canada's manufacturing sales and, combined, we account for more than half of the country's gross domestic product.

Ontarians and Quebecers share a strong commitment and belief in the public sector and the positive role government can play in people's lives. Affordable child care, public health care and public hydro are just a few examples. There are many opportunities to learn from each other's experiences. In fact, we can look to Quebec on many matters to see how programs are being imple-

mented and how its experience can assist in Ontario providing better services to our people.

Dans bien des domaines, bien des occasions nous sont offertes pour partager nos expériences avec nos voisins et apprendre les uns des autres.

Quebecers receive excellent public health care, and we can learn from each other how to continue to provide the best possible care across very spacious provinces.

Quebec is also a model for the whole country on the provision of affordable child care. Dans le domaine des services de garderie abordable, le Québec est un exemple à suivre.

Ontario's New Democrats believe that all Ontarians should have accessible, affordable child care. Affordable child care helps parents get back to work. It helps pull families out of poverty and gives our children a chance to learn and grow in a safe and enriching environment.

New Democrats believe that the Ontario government should be looking to Quebec as an example with regard to the reduction and distribution of electricity as well. On this point, I know we respectfully disagree with Ontario's government of the day. Quebec provides reliable, inexpensive and, importantly, public power. Le Québec fournit à sa population des services d'électricité fiables, peu coûteux et publics.

The people of Quebec, with their public system, pay electricity bills that are less than half of those of Ontarians. That's more money in the pockets of Quebecers, it is a lower overhead cost for Quebec businesses and it is a competitive advantage for Quebec's industries. Between taxes, the hydro dividend and investment, Quebec receives a substantial yearly return from their public hydro system.

The Ontario NDP caucus believes in public power, but we also believe that the most affordable and greatest power is the power that we don't use. Quebec has made a number of significant investments in conservation that we in Ontario would do well to explore.

The hydro systems of our two provinces are not completely analogous, but I believe there is an important lesson here. Public power is good for a province's economy and is good for its people.

I was glad to hear Premier Couillard's perspective on Quebec's cap-and-trade program. As was mentioned, in 2008, Ontario and Quebec signed a deal to launch a cap-and-trade system. The Ontario NDP caucus supported enabling legislation for an Ontario cap-and-trade system, which was set to be implemented by January 2012. We were pleased to see that Quebec and California were able to meet the 2012 deadline and that progress is being made to bring Ontario along.

Quebec and California were successfully able to integrate their systems, which will provide a more robust market and, ultimately, lower cost to businesses. The Ontario NDP eagerly awaits details about the government's plan. Nous attendons avec impatience des détails sur le plan de plafonnement et d'échange de droits d'émission du gouvernement.

Speaker, it's been an honour to have the Premier of Quebec address the Ontario Legislature. We are proud of the strong relationship between our two provinces, and we hope to see that partnership continue to grow and flourish.

As a caucus and a party, we are proud to share the Quebec government's commitment to federalism. Along with Canada's NDP, who hold nearly three quarters of Quebec seats, we believe that this commitment to federalism is good for Quebec, good for Ontario and good for all of Canada.

Le NPD de l'Ontario vous sait gré de nous avoir fait part de vos idées. The Ontario NDP caucus thanks Premier Couillard for his insights and perspectives.

Au nom du groupe parlementaire NPD de l'Ontario, nous vous remercions chaleureusement de votre présence. On behalf of the Ontario NDP, we thank you for being here and are honoured with your presence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, by motion, we will be recessed until 10:30 for question period. I invite all of our guests to stay for question period.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Legislature, merci beaucoup, monsieur le Premier Ministre. Thank you very much.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce, from Community Living Stratford and Area, Trevor McGregor, Tom McDermott, Alex O'Reilly, Monica O'Connell and Sue Dickson, and from Community Living North Perth, Mike Town.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to introduce a friend of mine up in the Speaker's gallery: Marc Kealey. He's with a gentleman who I know you're going to introduce later.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'd like to introduce to the House, in the members' east gallery—originally from Thunder Bay, but doing her schooling down here in Toronto now and working with me as an intern—Jenny Comisso. Jenny, welcome.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'd like to introduce Amanda Whalen, who is in the press gallery this morning. She is the Queen's Park press gallery summer intern, and she just finished her master of arts in journalism at Western University. Amanda will be with us until the end of August. Welcome, Amanda.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm so pleased to be able to welcome a family member here today. My cousin Daniel White is sitting up there, and I'd like to invite him to come down here and sit in the members' gallery.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a bit of a family day here in the Legislature. Ian Shaw, my senior adviser for strategic initiatives, is here with his mother, Manjit Shaw. Welcome, Ms. Shaw. Good to see you.

And my legislative assistant, the hard-working Alexandra Oakes, is here with her father, Robert Oakes. Welcome, Robert. Good to see you.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I would like the members of the Legislature to welcome Adam Thompson, Jeremy Huntley, Barbara Squirrel, Mary Ann Lancaster, Colleen Curran, Michelle Busby and Michelle Hartley from Community Living Dufferin in the great riding of Dufferin-Caledon.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to welcome the grade 10 students from Marc Garneau to the Legislature this morning. Welcome. Great to have you here.

Mr. Jim McDonell: This morning I want to welcome Tina Arvanitis from the Ontario Energy Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I understand that Mary Cruden, the president of Canadian Parents for French, Ontario branch, is here today. What a great day to be here, when Premier Couillard was here.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Mississauga-Brampton South and on behalf of page Thomas Atkinson, it's my pleasure to welcome Thomas's mother, Cindy Atkinson, and his godmother, Denise Edwards. They'll be in the public gallery this morning. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I mentioned it this morning; I think it bears repeating: The former Prime Minister of Canada, John Turner, is in the room. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Today, 817,000 more students are now impacted by the chaos this government has created in our province's education system. With no EQAO testing, parents and students will lose out on this important assessment that lets them know how they're progressing in class. The absence of report card comments will likewise keep parents in the dark, and that's just the beginning of this strike action.

The education minister said parents shouldn't be put through this uncertainty, but I remind you, Mr. Speaker, that it is this government that has created this uncertainty through their flawed negotiation process.

Premier, the education minister can't get the job done, and she won't step aside. Will you fire your Minister of Education, end this chaos for Ontario parents and make sure that children get the full education they deserve?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you. I appreciate it. I may have to re-enact my original Thursday issue. When I stand, it stops. No shots.

Premier.

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

I know that the Minister of Education is going to want to comment, but let me just say that we want very much for the teachers, the support staff, the students all to be in class across the province, no matter what board, no matter what region of the province. Obviously I'm encouraged, in terms of the elementary students in the public system, that they'll remain in the classroom. I'm pleased to see that ETFO has returned to the central table, because the only way to get a deal is to be negotiating.

We do believe in the collective bargaining process, and that is a real difference between us and the party opposite. We believe that the collective bargaining process should be allowed to work. There is a new process in place that recognizes that there is a central process and a local. That was necessary in order for us to move forward, and we look very much forward to getting those deals at the table.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, Premier, not only are the 817,000 elementary school students impacted; there are still nearly 72,000 students locked out of their classrooms. This government needs to think about those students for just a minute.

Think about the Brock High School rugby team in Cannington, who have practised so hard all year and now may not be able to compete at OFSAA. Think about the grade 12 student from Sudbury who has been practising all year for a senior solo at a farewell concert that may never happen. Think about the student at Sinclair Secondary School in Whitby. She needs to be in her calculus class as she tries to prepare for an Ivy League education.

Premier, make these students your top priority. Fire that education minister so these students can get back to school.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I do think about those students. That's exactly what I think about when I think about how important it is that we have a world-class education system in this province. That is exactly why it's very important that we have a process in place that allows us to work with our teacher and support staff partners, that we get a deal at the table, that we honour the collective bargaining process. That's very important to the relationship between all of the adults involved in the education system.

I'm not happy with the fact that there are kids out of school. I'm not happy at all about that. In fact, I got involved in politics mostly because of the 26 million student days that were lost because of the previous government's inability to have a partnership with the education sector at all.

We are absolutely committed to making sure that the collective bargaining process works, partaking of that and continuing to build up the best education system in the world.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Students are being used as pawns in a process that this government has created. It's now obvious that no one seems to even know what the rules are. When both the education minister and the leaders of teachers' unions make conflicting comments about what's an issue at the central bargaining table and what's an issue at the local table, is it any wonder that a settlement is nowhere in sight?

Premier, for 16 days, Durham students have been without an education. For 11 days, students in the Rainbow district have been without an education. For six days, Peel students have likewise been denied an education by your government. Now, with over 800,000 elementary students impacted by your two-tier train wreck of a bargaining system, it's clear the education minister is not up to the job.

Once again, I ask you to do the right thing: Fire that education minister, get negotiations going and get the kids back in the classroom.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You can ignore me all you want, at your peril.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

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Hon. Liz Sandals: Obviously we share the concern of everyone in this chamber, from all three parties, that there are students are out of school, and we want to support those students. But what I would point out is that we are committed to the collective bargaining process. Durham, where it is a local strike, there are local talks continuing. ETFO, the elementary teachers, have returned to the table and discussions are continuing. That's how we're going to solve the problem, by negotiations—and negotiations are going on.

But we are very concerned about those students, particularly those secondary students who are out of class. In fact, on Friday—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Nepean–Carleton and the deputy House leader.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —I met with Colleges Ontario, I've met with the Council of Ontario Universities and we've met with the boards repeatedly. We're working to make sure the Internet courses are there to support—

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

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: To the Premier: Our guest this morning, Premier Couillard, has taken real steps to balance Quebec's budget. Premier Wynne's budget balancing plan involves a fire sale of assets that belong to the people of Ontario. Furthermore, Premier Couillard has shown leadership with his province's energy policy. He understands that low hydro rates are fundamental to create a climate where business can prosper and families can thrive. You, on the other hand, are intent on bankrupting Ontario's businesses with your government's energy policies, forcing them to flee this province and set up shop elsewhere just to keep operating.

Premier, will you take a lesson from Quebec about the direct relationship between low hydro rates and keeping businesses here in Ontario?

Interjections.

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

All right, so we'll apply it: Next one when I'm standing and I get quiet and someone wants to interject, they're named.

Premier?

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

I neglected, at the beginning of my first answer, to congratulate Patrick Brown on his leadership win this weekend. Having been through leadership myself, I know that he must be very excited and anxious as he goes into these coming weeks. So I just wanted to congratulate him.

The member opposite reminded me—because of course the new leader touched on this issue in his remarks. When we talk about the relationship with Quebec, and we compare and contrast our realities, I know that the member opposite understands that we have different geography than Quebec. I know he understands that. I know he understands that the tilt of the land is different in Ontario than it is in Quebec. But we certainly will work with Quebec to do everything we can to make sure that we maximize our partnership.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ontario's Xstrata Copper moved its operations to Quebec in large part because of the competitive hydro rates in that province. This past month, Goodyear chose to open a plant in Mexico instead of Ontario because of our ridiculously expensive hydro rates. Ontario needs businesses to come here because of our hydro rates, not to run away because they can't afford them. Your government's failed energy policies have already cost this province over 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs.

Premier, how much longer will you ignore the exodus out of Ontario of solid job creators like Goodyear before you take real action to lower Ontario's hydro rates?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member will know that in northern Ontario we have the NIER Pro-

gram, which is an industrial support program that takes 25% off the price of manufacturing facilities in northern Ontario. In northern Ontario, we have among the lowest rates—industrial rates—in North America.

The new leader of the Progressive Conservatives talked about basing our energy policy forward in building new hydroelectricity capacity in the province of Ontario. We've used that all up; there's no more capacity. We spent \$2.6 billion expanding the —

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton, second time. The member from Lanark.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We spent \$2.6 billion expanding the Lower Mattagami hydro dam. We spent \$1.2 billion building a new tunnel to expand Niagara's capacity—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the Premier: Quebec has embraced the fact that a prosperous province needs to have a strong private sector economy, an economy that allows governments to invest in its people rather than sell off public assets to buy labour peace.

Quebec wisely chose to build its energy system around its strength: a natural abundance of hydroelectric power. You, on the other hand, insist on subsidizing expensive wind and solar projects that are costing Ontario families and businesses thousands of dollars each year.

Today the Premier touted Quebec's accomplishments.

Premier, will you follow Quebec's lead and adopt a realistic, affordable, provincial energy plan?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Energy?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Last month, Ontario's manufacturing sector gained 1,200 new jobs. We saw the manufacturing sector gain over 800 jobs the month before. Since 2003, our government has announced over \$1.6 billion in support of Ontario manufacturers, leveraging over \$15 billion from the private sector to spur innovation.

We are also among the lowest in North America in terms of industrial pricing because of our programs that we have, such as the ICI and IEI, which lower significantly the prices that our businesses have to pay.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Let me first congratulate Patrick Brown on his election as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario and also congratulate the other members who participated in the race for leadership.

My question is to the Premier, Speaker. Not a single person in Ontario voted to sell Hydro One, and now the Premier is refusing to hear from people about what they think of this short-sighted scheme.

More than 28,000 people have sent this Liberal government a message that selling Hydro One is wrong. Ontarians don't want to pay the price for yet another bad decision by the Liberals. They want the Premier to stop her privatization scheme before it's too late.

Why is this Premier refusing to listen to Hydro One's owners, the people of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the leader of the third party knows full well, we ran on a platform of building this province up, and a cornerstone of that plan is investing in infrastructure. A cornerstone of the plan to be able to come up with the dollars, to come up with the funding to do that investment was that we were going to look at the assets owned by the province of Ontario, owned by the people of Ontario. We said that clearly in our budget; we said it clearly in our platform.

The leader of the third party knows full well that they ran on the same assumptions. In fact she said, just on May 7, "So there's no doubt we did talk in our platform about looking at some of the physical assets that the province owns."

I think the leader of the third party knows that it is very important that we invest in the roads and the bridges and the public transit that are needed in this province. We can't do that if we don't have the funds to do it, and that's why we need—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A physical asset is not a hydro system for the province of Ontario, and this Premier should know that.

She has scheduled four days of hearings on the Hydro One sell-off—four days—and not a single one of those hearings is going to be held outside of Toronto. Selling Hydro One will hurt forestry and mining in the north. It will hurt farmers in our agricultural heartland. It will hurt manufacturing, our innovation sector and small businesses across this province. It is going to kill jobs and make life less affordable, more expensive. It will hurt families in every single part of Ontario.

People deserve to be heard, so why is this Premier refusing to hear from the people who will pay the price for her wrong-headed decision to sell Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, let me just correct the leader of the third party. She knows there are six days of committee hearings that are happening. She also knows that discussion of the amendments of a bill is part of the committee hearings, so that is why it is six days of hearings that are happening on the bill.

The fact is that if we do not invest in the transit and roads and bridges that are needed in this province, then we will hobble the ability of this province to move forward. We will not ensure the growth and the economic viability of this province or our competitiveness globally if we don't make those investments.

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What we are doing in terms of opening up the ownership of Hydro One, retaining 40% ownership, keeping regulatory and price controls in place—we're working to

make that a better company to work better for the people of this province.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps the Premier's House leader should send her a copy of the motion before us that we're debating today, which says four days of hearings and two days of clause-by-clause.

Every day, more people are sending the Liberals a message that selling Hydro One is the wrong decision, and they don't want to pay the price for it. This is one of the biggest decisions in a political generation and the Premier is shutting people out.

The Premier talks about transparency—oh, she talks a lot about transparency, Speaker—but she's only holding four days of committee hearings. She talks about openness, but she's ramming this short-sighted plan through this Legislature like a Harper-style omnibus bill.

If the Premier is so proud of her plan and thinks that people actually support it, why is she so worried about giving people their say through hearings across the province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that in the six days of committee sittings—and I understand that two days are clause-by-clause, but I spent a lot of time in committee, and it seems that me that the discussion that happens in clause-by-clause is extremely important, because that's where the synthesis of what has been heard gets expressed in amendments.

I hope that the leader of the third party is not suggesting that clause-by-clause is irrelevant, because that is when the bill gets analyzed, every clause-by-clause. I would just—

Interjections.

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

Go ahead.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just in terms of the conversation that we have had with the people of Ontario, I would remind the leader of the third party that there were pre-budget consultations across this province: Windsor, London, Toronto, Mississauga, Cambridge, Ottawa—across the province.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. While the Premier might believe her own spin about broadening ownership, people see through it, and they know that selling Hydro One leaves them paying the price.

I was in Brantford this weekend listening to people. Laura Duguid owns a bakery. Hydro heats the ovens and runs the air conditioning during the summer. She says that the higher bills she's going to have because of the sell-off of Hydro One could mean that she will not be able to hire employees and in fact may have to lay off.

It is clear that selling Hydro One is bad for small businesses. What does this Premier have to say to people

like Laura Duguid who have small businesses and don't want you to sell off Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I would say to businesses across the province, to residents and ratepayers across the province, is that we are in the process of making changes that are going to put downward pressure on rates. We're not interested in rates going up; we are interested in a more efficient, better company that is actually going to help the constituents of this province.

In terms of people having their input, there has been much opportunity. There will continue to be, as I said, in the six days of hearings. I would remind the leader of the third party that under the NDP in 1991 and 1992, there was one day of committee consideration for the budget—one day—and we have got six days—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to remind the leader of the third party that we are putting in place ample opportunity for people to delegate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it is not just small business people who are going to pay the price. Kim Prince and her husband are barely making ends meet as it is. She is distraught and she is angry. Kim says that if her hydro bills keep going up, she and her husband will literally be on the street.

What does the Premier have to say to people like Kim Prince and her husband, who can't afford to pay the price of selling off Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I would say to people across the province, including in Brantford, is that we must invest in infrastructure. We must invest in infrastructure in every region of the province. We must make those changes, and those changes will help individuals, because they will help them get home sooner to their families and to get to work in a much more efficient way. They will also help businesses. The one thing that business says to me, particularly businesses that want to come to Ontario or want to expand, is that they need investment in infrastructure.

I understand that the member for Timmins–James Bay has said that their plan would be just to borrow more money. They would just keep borrowing. They have no other plan, and that's not viable. That is not a tenable solution. There must be a multi-faceted solution. That's the plan that we put in place so that we can make those investments that are so critical to the businesses and the individuals in this—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, nobody voted in favour of selling Hydro One because this government was not upfront during their election campaign about the fact that they were going to do that, and they know it. It is the wrong decision for businesses. It is the wrong decision for families. There's only one party that's actually taking the time to listen to Ontarians standing up

for public ownership of Hydro One, and that is the New Democrats—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York—excuse me; I’m sorry. Stop the clock.

The member from Beaches–East York will withdraw.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Speaker, I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Bills need to stay under control in this province, not rise because of the sell-off of Hydro One. We are standing up for the protection of the money that Hydro One actually brings in each and every year, which helps us make investments in Ontario.

Will this Premier and her Liberal government stop the sell-off of Hydro One and do right by the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party knows that the Ontario Energy Board sets prices now. The Ontario Energy Board will set prices in the future. The regulatory regime that is in place will remain in place.

We have made a decision based on the reality that we must invest in infrastructure. We’ve made a decision based on the reality that no matter what region of this province, whether you go to the north—I was in Sudbury talking to FONOM this week. Every municipality in this province is interested in the provincial government working with them to invest in infrastructure. In the north, that means roads and bridges. In the greater Toronto–Hamilton area, that means trains and means public transit. In London, Ottawa, Kitchener–Waterloo and Brantford, it means transit.

We are going to work with those municipalities. It would be great if we had a federal partner working with us, but we’re going to work with those municipalities—

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

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Premier, for five years you’ve chosen to risk the lives of Ontarians to save a few bucks on your substandard winter road maintenance contracts, five years in which the auditor revealed that continued lax standards meant uncleared roads that were the direct result of your government’s flawed cost-cutting contracts. You knew the dangers for years, and yet you did nothing. You failed to act—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Actually, all of you know better.

Continue.

Mr. Michael Harris: Premier, you failed to act and people actually died. Why did you refuse to lift a finger when ministry staff warnings cried out for your action to prevent untimely winter road deaths?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for that question.

As I said last week, when the auditor brought forward her report, it contained eight recommendations. As I’ve said and as the ministry has said, all eight of the auditor’s recommendations have been accepted, and we will continue to go forward working on those recommendations.

But it is important to remember that in 2013 the Ministry of Transportation undertook an internal review. That was before the public accounts committee asked the auditor to do her work. So in 2013, as a result of the internal review that the ministry undertook, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, second time. The member from Stormont and the member from Lanark, second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I said, as a response to the internal review that we did conduct in 2013, over 100 new pieces of equipment have been added, both for northern Ontario and for southern Ontario. Additional materials have been brought forward and additional oversight. We’ll continue to work hard on this matter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.
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Mr. Michael Harris: I’ll remind the minister that the problems on Ontario roads started in 2009, not 2013.

Premier, ministry staff repeatedly issued stern, serious warnings for winter road clearing under your new, substandard contract regime, but you chose to ignore them. You made calculated decisions to save a few bucks by carrying on with your new substandard winter road clearing contracts, and people lost their lives.

Carol Milojkovich, the wife and mother of Robert and Daniel, still wants answers. The families of Alyssa McKeown and Jessica Chamberland deserve answers.

Premier, you ignored warnings. You’ve ignored your responsibility to Ontario families. Why are you ignoring the calls for a coroner’s inquest into these wrongful deaths?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I’ve said repeatedly, whenever I hear of a fatality on a highway anywhere in Ontario, whether it takes place in winter or any other season, of course I feel heartfelt sympathy. I offer condolences to the friends and family of anyone who loses their life on an Ontario highway. It’s why it is so fundamentally important at the Ministry of Transportation to make sure we maintain the strong track record that we do have, Speaker. For the last 13 years, Ontario has ranked first or second for highway safety across all of North America. In fact, in 2012 the only other jurisdiction in North America that had a better record was the District of Columbia.

In 2013, the ministry did conduct an internal review of the winter maintenance program. As a result of that internal review, more equipment has been added. More oversight has been added. We have a new procurement out in the Kenora area. We've accepted all eight of the auditor's recommendations and I have asked the auditor to come back next year—

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. I was pleased to hear from the Premier of Quebec this morning. I understand the Premier regularly speaks with Mr. Couillard. As the Premier knows, a hydro bill in Quebec, from Quebec's public hydro agency, is about half of the hydro bill in Ontario with our mess of privatization. And now, before Ontarians can have their say, the Premier is planning a sell-off of Hydro One, privatizing even more of the system. The lesson is clear: Well-managed public hydro is affordable; privatized and fractured hydro is expensive and dysfunctional. Can the Premier explain why she doesn't get this?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, first of all, going back to the 2014 budget, we made it very, very clear that we were going to examine all of our assets to see if we could repurpose those assets for infrastructure investments. We've done that. We are moving forward with a plan that will see us broaden the ownership of Hydro One. It will not be privatizing. We will have a minimum of 40% ownership moving forward. No other entity will be able to own more than 10%.

Speaking of rates, we've said it over and over again: The Ontario Energy Board decides what the rates are going to be.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Timmins—James Bay, second time.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: They decide, whether it's a municipal utility, whether it's Hydro One or whether it's a hybrid. There are some utilities now that have private interests in them. The Ontario Energy Board will be strengthened. The Ontario Energy Board will ensure that the interests of the public will be maintained.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, as you know, majority private ownership means privatized.

In 2014, Hydro-Québec's dividend to the province was \$2.5 billion, which is up from \$2.2 billion in 2013. But selling Hydro One will cut our dividends. Ed Clark says selling 15% of Hydro One will cost Ontarians \$150 million per year, and it's only going to cost more money as the Premier sells more. The lesson is clear: Well-managed public hydro puts money into provincial bank accounts so we can invest in the province; privatized hydro costs the province money. That means less money for the public to invest.

Why does the Premier refuse to look at Quebec as a model instead of plowing ahead with her fire sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I don't hear the opposition talking about the price of natural gas in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Two-way conversation is not going to happen.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I don't hear the critic talk about the price of natural gas in Ontario. Natural gas in Ontario is rated and is regulated by the Ontario Energy Board. Union Gas and Enbridge are 100% private companies, and their prices are managed by the Ontario Energy Board. In Ontario, for Hydro One or for OPG or for municipally owned utilities, we see reductions in rates that have been applied for. In 2010, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for distribution and received a 9% reduction. OPG asked for a 6.4% increase; they got a 0.8% reduction. The Ontario Energy Board is working—

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

LA FRANCOPHONIE

M. Shafiq Qadri: D'abord, j'aimerais souligner la visite du premier ministre du Québec, l'honorable Philippe Couillard, un évènement historique pour la législature de l'Ontario.

Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. L'année 2015 est une année historique pour notre province. Nous accueillons les Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains et, aussi, nous célébrons les 400 ans de présence française en Ontario. La ministre a annoncé l'octroi de 1,4 million de dollars pour 62 projets communautaires qui célébreront le 400^e anniversaire. Les 100 000 francophones de la région de Toronto se préparent à célébrer lors des neuf évènements torontois, financés en partie par notre gouvernement.

Est-ce que la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones peut nous donner un aperçu des 62 projets et célébrations?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Premièrement, je voudrais remercier mon collègue d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa très, très bonne question. C'est en septembre dernier et justement à Sudbury que la première ministre a annoncé une subvention de 5,9 millions de dollars pour soutenir les projets célébrant 400 ans de présence française en Ontario.

J'ai très hâte aux célébrations, que ce soit des expositions culturelles, touristiques et historiques, la création du parc Champlain Huron-Wendat à Penetanguishene—et je sais que vendredi nous assisterons à la première pelletée de terre—le Festival franco-ontarien à Ottawa en juin, la Franco-Fête à Toronto en juillet et bien d'autres. Ces célébrations ont débuté ce mois-ci et se termineront à la fin d'octobre prochain.

Les francophones et francophiles invitent tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes à venir célébrer avec nous et aussi nos amis du reste du pays.

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones pour sa réponse. Comme l'un des 14 députés au gouvernement qui parlent français, je suis fier de voir que nous célébrons l'apport historique de la communauté francophone à la province de l'Ontario, de Samuel de Champlain à aujourd'hui.

C'est bien de célébrer cet événement, mais est-ce que la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones peut nous donner un aperçu des investissements à long terme pour assurer l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone en Ontario?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Nous parlons de plus de 1,2 million d'Ontariens parlant français, dont la moitié utilise le français tous les jours à la maison. C'est plus de 170 000 étudiants dans nos 12 conseils scolaires francophones et 190 000 étudiants de plus en immersion française. C'est 100 nouvelles écoles françaises construites ou achetées depuis 2003. C'est aussi la création de six entités de planification pour la santé en français, un système judiciaire qui opère dans les deux langues, la création du Commissariat aux services en français, une cible de 5 % pour l'immigration francophone en Ontario et bien plus. Nous sommes fiers de nos investissements.

Je voulais aussi ajouter que le système judiciaire qui opère dans les deux langues, c'est grâce à un ministre, mon prédécesseur du Parti conservateur, qui a mis sur pied cette belle initiative. Alors, je voudrais aujourd'hui lui rendre hommage.

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Local mayors, plant managers and I read the riot act to Hydro One about unreliable electricity. Two companies in my riding have had more than seven outages already this year alone, every one of them costing over \$50,000 in lost time and product. One plant's lost production now totals over \$1 million. Another manager noted that his sister plant in South Carolina pays half the per-kilowatt-hour price for electricity and has just one outage per year.

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That's your record, Minister: double the cost, seven times the outages. Yet somehow Ontario Hydro actually issued a press release last week saying that the issue was fixed. Given the facts, you know that's not true. Why don't you just tell Hydro to stop spinning and start fixing the problem?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Hydro continues to invest in infrastructure—Hydro One particularly. We also have to remind people that there are 77 LDCs—local utilities—across the province that are responsible for maintaining and providing the service. When it comes to Hydro One, they have regional plans, they have regional consultations and they have regional budgets to deal with these particular issues.

There are circumstances, Mr. Speaker, where we see some failures in the system. In fact, they've been brought to my attention by members of the opposition. I've arranged meetings with Hydro One senior people, and we're working on resolving those particular issues. But across the board, Hydro One is one of the most reliable companies in North America. It has been recognized as such, as one of the top five, and their service in terms of the infrastructure is extremely reliable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the minister: That release was an insult to the local mayors. It was an insult to those companies that met with Hydro One. Quite frankly, they're furious. It was clear to everyone in that room that the problem is getting worse, not better. Just go ask your staffer. He was sitting at the last meeting we had. You and Hydro remain in the dark. Your broken electricity system hurts our ability to bring new businesses to the riding and threatens the future of plants that we have right now. Hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of investment hang in the balance.

Prysmian Cables, GreenField Ethanol, Goodyear, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and local mayors are not making this up, Minister. What I'm asking you is, will you drag Hydro One to the table with a directive to fix this problem before it ruins our eastern Ontario economy? Will do you that, Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member should know that we're in a process now of broadening the ownership of Hydro One. There will be significant changes.

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Can you take your earpiece off the mic? Thank you very much.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we expect the new Hydro One, with broadened ownership, to have a board of directors that is more experienced in business than perhaps the one we have now. We're going to be making changes that will make a difference.

But Hydro One responds to those areas that have service problems. They put additional attention to them. If they're brought to my attention—and the member knows—he's brought matters to my attention. We've been dealing with them. Other members have done so as well. Hydro One will be a better company and Hydro One will provide service that is responsible.

The rates in the industrial sector are not preventing—

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

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. During last year's election and budget, the Premier promised that personal support workers would be getting a raise. They promised to raise PSW wages \$1.50 last year, \$1.50 this year and \$1 next year, for a total \$4-an-hour increase. The message was clear and simple: If elected, the Liberal government would be

raising PSW wages by \$4 an hour. Less than a year later, the government has delayed the pay increase to PSWs indefinitely. My question is simple: What happened?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I'm proud to be a member of a party and a government that has made such an important commitment. We recognize that our PSWs were undervalued and underpaid, and we've gone through great effort to remedy that situation and actually provide in place many other measures that will help to ensure the sustainability of that important health care profession. We've already increased, last year, the wages of our PSWs in home and community care by \$1.50 an hour. We've made the commitment to do the same this year. The member opposite knows, and we've already stated, that that increase will be retroactive to April 1 of this year.

Mr. Speaker, frankly, the reason why we're still working at this is we want to get this 100% right. We're working with all our partners—the PSWs, those who represent them, the service providers, and our LHINs and CCACs—and we're going to be able to move forward as we've committed to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: PSWs provide services to some of the most vulnerable Ontarians. They deserve to be treated with respect. All of them deserve respect. Right now, it looks like one more example of Liberals saying one thing but quietly doing something completely different. There are lots of PSWs who are watching this morning.

Can the Premier or the minister tell them when they will be getting the promised raise?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: They're going to be getting that second increase of \$1.50 very, very soon. It's going to be retroactive to April 1.

I want to remind the member and her party as well that they voted against that \$4 increase to our PSWs. It's a commitment that we made in our budget. We put it in our platform as well. We're committed to seeing it through, the \$4 over three years. In addition to that, we're increasing the minimum wage for our PSWs to a base of \$16.50 an hour.

We're doing this because we recognize that our PSWs provide such important care to Ontarians right across this province. We want to make sure they're valued. We want to make sure that their profession is recognized and appreciated. We want to make sure that we're providing them with the training to create a sustainable workforce as well. We're doing all of those things. We're following through with that commitment of a \$4 increase.

NURSES

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Today kicks off National Nursing Week in Canada. Nurses play such a valuable and important role in our

health care system here in Ontario. I've been a proud registered nurse for over 30 years. We, as nurses, are the most trusted profession in Ontario, and I know that my nursing colleagues continue to be there for people when they're at their most fragile and vulnerable. Nurses care for them, comfort them. They are a lifeline, and sometimes they're the last friendly face a patient will see before they pass away. This was certainly my experience as a nurse.

The influence and impact that nurses have on patients and this province can't be quantified or measured because they give so much of themselves in their work. The theme for this year's nursing week is "Nurses: With You Every Step of the Way."

Through you, Speaker: Minister, what is our government doing to support our hard-working nurses in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I couldn't have said it better myself. I want to thank the member from Cambridge for this important question. Even more than that, I want to thank her, as she's a nurse and she understands the important role that our nurses do around this province every single day. So happy nursing week.

Let me take the opportunity as well, on behalf of I think all of us but certainly this caucus over here and myself as Minister of Health, to thank our nurses for the incredible work they do. The front-line work they do, whether that's working in home and community care, or in our hospital ERs, intensive care units or in our public health units—our nurses are performing such exceptional service to this province. They do it often silently, they do it often without recognition, but they need to know that we appreciate the hard work they do for us.

I look forward in the supplementary to elaborating more in terms of some of the specific measures we've taken.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I thank the minister for his dedication to the nurses in Ontario.

I know that in February the minister and the Premier reconfirmed the government's commitment to move forward with a plan to expand the role of registered nurses to include prescribing drugs. I know this is great news for the nurses and the patients in Ontario.

While I was working in the emergency room at Cambridge Memorial Hospital, the role of the nurse expanded to carry out medical directives when certain conditions existed, such as ordering some lab and X-ray tests and administering some medications without a direct doctor's order, contributing to reducing ER wait times.

The addition of nurse practitioners in our hospitals allows Cambridge residents with minor ailments to be treated more quickly. As a care coordinator for CCAC, I worked closely with nurse practitioners and saw first-hand the valuable role they play.

Through you, Speaker: Can the minister inform the House of how he's recognizing National Nursing Week this year?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you again to the member from Cambridge for this supplementary question.

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Our government's investments have helped to ensure that there is a stable nursing workforce now and for the future. Since taking office in 2003, our government has added more than 24,000 new nurses working in Ontario, and there were over 135,000 nurses employed in 2014.

Our government has also focused on increasing the percentage of nurses who are working full-time. I'm pleased to say that that percentage has increased by 14% since 2003.

We've expanded services offered by nurse practitioners, enabling them to improve patient care by providing services such as admitting and discharging patients from hospitals, ordering laboratory tests and prescribing medication. Nurse practitioners will also be able to refer patients directly to specialists.

Today I'm going to Women's College Hospital for an announcement, where I will also have the chance to meet with nurses for National Nursing Week in Canada.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The Chesley restorative care unit, Minister, is a success story, but despite its success in providing transitional care for over 300 patients, mostly seniors, you're choosing to close it.

Despite its support for patients as they transition into home care, which is a focus of your ministry, you're turning a deaf ear. Despite its success in reducing return visits to emergency units throughout our area—the most costly form of care—the savings that are realized by the restorative care unit are being ignored.

Minister, no matter what numbers you throw around, and no matter how you spin it, back home we know the truth, and that is that you have turned your backs on rural Ontarians in my area, and you refuse funds to extend the restorative care unit in Chesley.

Minister, will you, once and for all, come to my area, Durham-Bruce, and visit this restorative care unit?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I understand the member opposite. She's a great advocate for her community. I have no doubt about that.

But she needs to understand that this important pilot project, and that's what it is—the South Bruce Grey Health Centre had announced themselves that the restorative care unit at their Chesley site was to close in May.

But I think she also knows by now—I would hope—that I asked the LHIN to press the pause button on the closure to ensure that the best decision could be made for the community. The LHIN has been working with the hospital to ensure that this wouldn't happen without proper community consultation.

In fact, the LHIN is leading the process of working with the relevant operators in the area to develop a long-term plan. An open board meeting at the hospital took place at the end of April. I understand this has allowed the community to have more time to contribute to the issue.

I also understand that the hospital agreed that the program would continue, to allow this review process and consultation to happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary. The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. You recently announced \$150 million to create 69 more silos of bureaucracy in our health care system. Your government also recently dumped \$30 million for administration to cover its SAMS mess. You blew \$7 million on consultants to tell you how to conduct a fire sale of Hydro One. But when it comes to our health care, you cannot find money for it for constituents in Huron-Bruce and Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Minister, how is it that your government can find money to cover partisan Liberal boondoggles, but not when it comes to keeping restorative care services in our Chesley hospital?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I hope the member knows that the health links that you're talking about already exist, and they have been lauded, quite frankly, around the world for the focus that they pay to the most complex patients in our community. They allow a team-based approach to actually provide this care.

But to get back to Chesley and the restorative care unit—if the member opposite didn't hear in the first part of my answer—despite the fact that the hospital made the decision on their own a number of months ago to close the unit, I asked the LHIN to step in and the hospital to not move forward with that decision. We put a review process in place. We've got substantial consultation with the community. In fact, when the hospital was going to continue with the closure May 1, we implored them to keep it open so that we could engage in this review process. We're doing that. I think we'll have an answer which is suitable to the community.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. As of this morning, nearly 900,000 kids across the province are being impacted by the Premier's neglect and underfunding of the education system. Our schools are in chaos, and the Premier and her minister hold ultimate responsibility. Contrary to Liberal spin, this government has already made a \$250-million cut to education, and internal documents show a plan to cut about \$500 million more over the next three years. Why is this Premier forcing students and families to pay the price for her government's wrong choices and misplaced priorities?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Once again, \$22.5 billion equals \$22.5 billion; that's not a cut. But they do seem to be quite fixated on the results at the end of last year, where my ministry showed a \$248-million savings. Let me tell you where the savings came from.

The savings came because there were less students enrolled in our 72 school boards than the boards had

originally projected. That led to some in-year savings last year that we reinvested this year, which gives us higher per-pupil spending this year.

Part of that savings came from administrative spending at my ministry. It had absolutely nothing to do with—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I will have more to say in the supplementary, with great delight.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The facts speak for themselves, Speaker: \$6 million cut from special education; 88 neighbourhood schools closed; more than 2,000 child care spaces in Toronto on the chopping block; 115 teachers in Peterborough fired; 260 jobs in the TDSB, including 50 special education staff and 100 ESL teachers, cut. And now it appears that the Liberals are flip-flopping on their commitment to keep class sizes low with caps.

When will the Premier take responsibility for throwing our schools into chaos?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, special ed has gone up \$1.1 billion since 2002-03 and did not get cut this year.

But to go back to this \$250 million they're really concerned about, do you know what happened? School board reserves are consolidated on the provincial books because we supply all the funding. Do you know what? The school boards had more money left over and put in reserves than we projected, so it got consolidated onto our books. In addition, money that we had promised for capital for new schools, new additions and new child care spaces—the people who the money was promised to hadn't spent it yet. We'll spend it in the future, but we didn't spend it last year.

You know what? They campaigned on finding more—

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

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is for the Minister of Transportation and concerns great news about an agency under his direction.

As the member for Beaches–East York, I know that many of the people living in my community use public transit on a daily basis. Transit is a key component of their everyday life, and for many, Metrolinx is an important part of their daily commute.

Just a few months ago, the minister and I, along with representatives from the TTC and Metrolinx, had an important pilot project announcement about coordinated fares in my riding at the Danforth Main station. This is why I was very interested to hear last week that Metrolinx has received special recognition for their exceptional service to Ontario.

Speaker, will the minister please provide members of this House with more information on the recognition that was recently received by Metrolinx?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member for Beaches–East York for his hard work and his tenacity on behalf of his community.

As the Minister of Transportation, it's one of my core responsibilities to work closely with Metrolinx to develop and implement an integrated transit and transportation system right across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Our government continues to work in close partnership with Metrolinx to develop long-term solutions for gridlock and transit that will help manage congestion, connect people to jobs and improve our economy.

That's why I am very pleased to report that Metrolinx has been recognized as one of Canada's top employers for young people for the third consecutive year. This competition is part of the Canada's Top 100 Employers project, which seeks to recognize community leaders who have effectively attracted and retained younger employees for their organization.

I want to congratulate the chair of the board, Rob Prichard, president and CEO Bruce McCuaig and the entire Metrolinx team for this honour.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to thank the minister for his response, and particularly for the great work he is doing to help build Ontario—to expand the transit options in the province of Ontario.

There are many young people living in my community, which is why I was so very pleased to hear that Metrolinx has been recognized as one of Canada's top employers for young people for the third consecutive year.

On so many occasions, we've heard the minister tell the members of this House that there are over \$16 billion worth of transit expansion projects currently under way in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and since 2003, we have invested over \$22 billion for public transit in Ontario, including approximately \$10.8 billion in GO Transit.

I know that those living in my community would be interested in hearing more about the projects that are currently under way. Will the minister please tell the members of this House about those critical transit investments that Metrolinx is building in the region, and especially affecting my constituents—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again I thank that member for his question.

As I often say in this House, I'm very proud to be a member of a government that continues to invest in critical transit and transportation infrastructure initiatives across the province. Of course, Metrolinx is a key partner in delivering on these important transit projects; for example, projects like GO regional express rail, which will give those living throughout the GTHA new travel options with faster and more frequent GO rail service and electrification on core segments of the GO rail network; projects like the Union Pearson Express, coming into service on June 6, which will provide passengers with predictable and reliable service to and from the airport,

while reducing congestion on our roads; and projects like the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, which is the single largest transit expansion project in Ontario's history, and will provide tremendous environmental benefits to our region.

This is only some of what we have under way. Again, I thank that member, and I—

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Energy. During a stop in Perth–Wellington, he is quoted as saying, “When we look at some of the bills coming in, we say this is unacceptable.” I want to congratulate the minister for his honesty. We agree: Skyrocketing hydro bills are unacceptable.

Could the minister tell us under whose watch, since 2003, did hydro bills rise to such unacceptable levels?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm very pleased that he raised that particular issue. The context in which I was saying it was the fact that throughout rural Ontario there is a lot of electric heating, and during difficult winters it creates a real burden. That is a legacy that's been going on through different governments. The reality is, we are taking an initiative—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings; second time. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, he should have mentioned the rest of the article, which indicated that for the first time, any government in Ontario is going to undertake through infrastructure, part of the funds for which will come from broadening the ownership of Hydro, an initiative to bring more natural gas to rural communities. It's a very significant initiative—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, come to order; and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: The minister came to Stratford and finally admitted there is a problem, after years of telling us there's no problem. Now he's blaming a previous government from over a decade ago, and he expects anyone to believe him? My constituents aren't falling for it.

The fact is that many of them can't afford their hydro bills. Two weeks ago, on-peak hydro costs spiked another 15%, with no end in sight. The only thing more unacceptable than our hydro bills is the stunning arrogance of this government.

Minister, what are you waiting for? Will you finally take some responsibility for your own unacceptable policies?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: First of all, there are three other provinces that have higher electricity bills than Ontario;

two, Manitoba and Quebec, are significantly lower than all the other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, what I was addressing was a significant issue in rural areas which has been there for decades. During cold winters, on electric heat, it becomes very, very difficult. We have in our budget and are announcing a program, which we're rolling out, to bring more natural gas service to the rural areas, an initiative we're proud of, an initiative that government never even thought of.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Cindy Forster: Yesterday marked the 10-year anniversary of the Legislature's unanimous passing of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. It mandated the government to ensure Ontario be fully accessible and barrier-free by 2025—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who is it to?

Ms. Cindy Forster: To the Premier.

The Liberals' own independent review concluded that, 10 years later, it has failed 1.8 million Ontarians with disabilities through non-compliance and lack of enforcement. The Premier promised that Ontario would be on schedule when she was running as leader of her party, but AODA enforcement is down, cut in half in 2015.

Will the Premier admit that her government has failed Ontarians with disabilities and commit to increasing AODA audits in both the public and private sectors?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: That's a good question; I actually welcome the question.

We have seen our compliance go up, Mr. Speaker, over the last 24 months, from 16% to 40%—a good increase, but not good enough as far as we're concerned.

We're now coming up to our 10-year anniversary of the AODA. What a great time to celebrate how far we have come, because we are number one in the world when it comes to making headway on accessibility. When it comes to having legislated requirements, we're the only province that has that right now. So we're number one in the world for that. But also what a great time to assess how far we've come and how far we have to go, and the measures we'll need to take over the next 10 years to reach our goal of full accessibility.

I welcome the member's input. We will continue to work to improve compliance. We'll continue to work to ensure that people with disabilities get hired throughout our employment system in Ontario. We've come a long way; we've got a long way to go. It's something we're very excited about tackling.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to recognize Yvonne Spicer, Gordon Kyle, Chris Beesley and Roy O'Leary from Community Living Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order, the member from Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to welcome Kerry Thomas, David Middleton and Dale Sheets from Community Living Welland Pelham.

RECTIFICATION AU PROCÈS-VERBAL

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Monsieur le Président, je voudrais corriger ce que j'ai dit lorsque je parlais d'un système judiciaire qui opère dans les deux langues : c'est une initiative de mon prédécesseur, le procureur général; je voulais dire le procureur général Roy McMurtry.

VISITORS

VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome Marek Goldyn, as well, to the Legislature today.

I know you'll be joining me in a few minutes outside, Speaker, for the Europe Day flag-raising event. We'd like to welcome everybody who is participating in that event.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter à la Chambre Mary Cruden, qui est la présidente de l'association Canadian Parents for French et qui est ici avec nous aujourd'hui.

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

The House recessed from 1138 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a large group of people who are here from my riding for Community Living Day, and they're in the gallery behind me.

In the gallery today are Bryan Crossett, Franke Benke, Michael Kadey, Bonnie Edwards, Jeanette Branton, Don Skiba, Sandy Stormont, Connie Shuga, Shannon Schooley, Della Derrough, Matt Hoogesteen, Connie Porter, Crystal Saunders, Sandra Bray, Doug Cooper and the CEO of Community Living Tillsonburg, Marty Graf.

Judy Biro is also here. Judy is a staff member who is retiring this week after 25 years at Community Living Tillsonburg, and I want to thank her for her years of service and welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome, from the Niagara Falls riding, from Community Living Fort Erie—they were here this morning, and I missed them: Margaret Fidler, Tyler Williamson and Terry Sampson. Thank you for coming and welcome.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to welcome everyone who is here today from Community Living Ontario. Particularly in the east members' gallery, we have Roy O'Leary, president of Community Living Ontario; Chris Beesley, chief executive officer of Community Living Ontario; and Yvonne Spicer, self-advocate president of the Council of Community Living Ontario.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to introduce to the House today three amazing people from Wingham Community Living: Deb Hopper, LouAnne Louthier and Angela McPherson. Please welcome them.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to congratulate all the great help and assistance that Community Living Algoma has provided over the years, but I also want to recognize a friend that I just met. Her name is Yvonne Spicer from Milton. She delivered a fantastic speech at the event over lunch. So thank you very much. Welcome.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I rise here in the House to welcome Chatelle Jones, Jordan Sharp, Andrew Stewart, Joe Crooks, Ashley Stekel—all from Community Living Durham. Welcome.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd also like to recognize those who are here from Community Living and especially Mike Town, who is from North Perth in my riding.

Mr. Mike Colle: We have members of the European Club of Canada here today. They just raised the European flag. We have the CEO all the way from Krakow, Mr. Europa, Marek Goldyn, Danuta Czarnik, Larysa Grant, Georgina Bencsik all from the European Club of Canada. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to welcome to Queen's Park Peter Sproul, the executive director of Community Living Kingston.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It gives me great pleasure to welcome a large contingent from Community Living Campbellford/Brighton—just sitting right behind me. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

It's worth one more time that we welcome all of our guests and friends from Community Living Ontario. Welcome.

It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCIENCE HILL DRIFTERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today, I'm pleased to recognize the Science Hill Drifters. The Science Hill Drifters is a snowmobile club based out of St. Marys, Ontario. Back in February, the Science Hill Drifters organized an event in an attempt to break the Guinness world record for the most snowmobiles in a parade. The record they needed to beat was 820 machines. Two

weeks ago, the Science Hill Drifters would receive the exciting news that they had officially set the new world record. They managed to organize a remarkable 847 snowmobiles. That's quite an accomplishment for a 26-member club.

I would like to congratulate the Science Hill Drifters, including the event organizer, Dwayne Lawrence. I know that this took a lot of work to organize and even more time and energy to submit the evidence to be eligible for the record title.

I would also like to recognize everyone who took part in the parade. People came from all over to support the Drifters and be part of this event. Again, congratulations to the new Guinness world record holders.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: A government of Ontario progress report from 2011 reads as follows: "In 2003, classrooms were crowded, schools were crumbling and teacher unrest was hurting our children and grandchildren. Our students lost too many teaching days to strikes and unrest, and that chaos drew too much attention away from their learning. Private school enrolment was on the rise as parents lost confidence in our publicly funded schools."

That statement was from a government that touted itself as the self-proclaimed champion of smaller class sizes. It was a government that promised not to cut funding for education and limit classroom supports that Ontario families want and their children deserve.

Today, this is a Liberal government that slashes funding for special education, forces the closure of our good neighbourhood schools and makes across-the-board cuts to education. It's a government that flip-flops on its class size commitments and thinks it knows better than the professionals who educate our children.

Speaker, I don't like to speculate what the future will bring, but I took the liberty of writing a future progress report. It reads as follows: "In 2015, classrooms were crowded. Good neighbourhood schools were being shut down and labour unrest was hurting our children and grandchildren. Our students lost too many teaching days, and Liberal cuts to education were throwing our schools into chaos. While parents were losing confidence in our publicly funded education system, they knew that the New Democrats were standing up for Ontario families and holding this government to account!"

PYTHONS' PIT

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I rise today to tell you about an exciting and inspiring event held recently in my riding. On May 4, I attended the third annual Pythons' Pit event. Presented by sponsors MNP and RBC Royal Bank, Pythons' Pit provides a forum for creative entrepreneurial residents and students of Halton to pitch new products or business ideas to a panel of investors and business moguls, or "pythons," from the local community.

This local spinoff of the Dragons' Den is similar in many ways to the hit TV show, but differs in that contestants receive months of mentorship and invaluable access to business professionals.

Pythons' Pit is a collaboration of all the Rotary clubs across the Halton region, with tremendous support from the community and local businesses as well.

Mentorship defines Pythons' Pit. All through the process, mentors are made available to help participants hone their business skills, including developing their value proposition and refining their pitch. Contestants enter the "pit" in two categories: the open category for entrepreneurs, with a pot of \$20,000; and the high school category, where young entrepreneurs pitch for a cash pool of \$5,000.

On the night of the event, the high school contestants pitched their ideas to the "pythons" live on stage at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre. The winners were four senior students from Nelson High School who engineered a mobile application that will facilitate a more organized and systematic "coffee run" experience.

I want to congratulate Fareen Samji and Tom McLeod, the chairs and community business leaders who led a great team of volunteers, for not only a great event but for contributing to what I'm sure is a life-changing experience for these awesome entrepreneurs.

INGERSOLL PLAYGROUND

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to recognize everyone who has contributed to a new cheese-themed playground in the town of Ingersoll. This playground was built as part of the popular TVOKids series Giver, which teaches kids about citizen engagement by providing them with opportunities to see how their good intentions, combined with hard work, can benefit an entire community.

Everyone can tune in to TVO at 6:30 tonight or at the screening party hosted at the Fusion Youth Centre in Ingersoll and watch how Ingersoll's cheese-themed playground came to life.

The playground is the result of the hard work of six kids from Ingersoll and more than 120 volunteers who helped them. This is truly a community project, with contributions from the town of Ingersoll Playright committee; Sinking Ship Entertainment; Amico Infrastructures Inc., which contributed excavating services; and Allen Lumber, donating all the wood. It celebrates our proud cheese and dairy industry history in Ingersoll.

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I want to thank TVO for choosing Ingersoll. To date, the Giver series and dedicated volunteers have constructed 33 new playgrounds throughout Ontario that will provide a legacy of new community facilities for generations to enjoy.

I want to commend everyone who was involved in creating this great playground for children in Ingersoll. And I hope everyone will take the time to tune in to TVO tonight and join TVOKids community volunteers, the

Ontario Parks Association and Sinking Ship Entertainment to celebrate the construction at the special screening event.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

I'm happy to say we had the Premier from Quebec here, who gave an excellent speech today. I'm happy he was here so I can illustrate a point. The Premier of Quebec's province is one of five provinces in this country that currently regulates gas prices in some way. Though they all do it differently, there are regulations in place which help to stabilize the market and, in some cases, protect the consumer against unnecessarily high gasoline prices.

In my riding in Niagara this weekend, gas prices rose 14 cents a litre without any large change in the price of oil—that's around a 56-cents-a-gallon increase. Oil prices since the start of this year have not increased substantially. We enjoyed paying 85 cents a litre then, yet gasoline prices have steadily climbed since then and now we're paying \$1.13—an increase of over 30%. People are having a hard time covering these bills. Everywhere they look in Ontario—gasoline, hydro, food prices—everything is rising.

This government needs to take a serious look into the price of gasoline. If other provinces have turned to regulating their gas markets, why wouldn't we at least talk about it? If oil prices are dropping, then we may have an opportunity to make sure that people can drive to work for less and have a few extra bucks in their pocket to spend in their communities.

HELEN HENDERSON

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is with great honour that I rise in the House today to pay tribute to a trail-blazer who raised public awareness for people with disabilities, Helen Henderson.

As members of this House are aware, Helen Henderson, former Toronto Star life section editor and disabilities columnist passed away on Saturday, April 11. Henderson began her career at the Star as a business reporter in the 1970s. While beginning her journalism career, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which led her to pitch to the Star a disabilities column focusing on information and advocacy. Reflecting on her career, she was able to connect with the grassroots issues and put them into the mainstream, shining a much-needed light on disability issues.

After retiring from the Star, she served as the chair of the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, an organization that provides people with disabilities education to gain independent life skills to facilitate integration into the larger community.

To end, I would like to use the same Neil Marcus quote that Helen Henderson concluded her Ryerson TED

talk with, "Disability is not a 'brave struggle' or 'courage in the face of adversity'. Disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live." This is the message of Helen Henderson's lifetime work, and this must be the same message we continue to communicate to make Ontario more accessible.

SCHOOLS IN ROCKWOOD

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, in spite of the current uncertainty in our schools in Ontario, last Monday was a momentous day for education in the community of Rockwood in Wellington-Halton Hills. That morning, the ground breaking of the new Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School took place, and in the evening, the official opening of École Harris Mill Public School was celebrated—both in Rockwood.

École Harris Mill Public School, which first opened its doors to students this past September, is a dual-track school with both English and French immersion from JK to grade 5. And when it opens its doors in September 2016, Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School will be home to over 270 students from JK to grade 8. It will become the first new school to open in the Wellington Catholic District School Board since 2010.

With a safe and inspiring teaching and learning environment, I know that students at both these schools will receive an outstanding educational experience, leading to achievement and success. I've always believed that learning is lifelong and that our teachers are caring, dedicated professionals. With the positive support of parents, community and government working together in the best interests of our students, our schools are second to none in Canada.

As the member of provincial Parliament for Wellington-Halton Hills, I want to extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to the Upper Grand District School Board, the Wellington Catholic District School Board as well as all the parents, students, teachers and staff who are involved in these new schools. Together, we can work to give our students the finest education possible. We owe them nothing less.

HYPERTENSION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is a pleasure to recognize my constituents, Thuy Pham and Rosemarie Childerhouse, and representatives of Hypertension Canada who are at Queen's Park to share their expertise on vascular health day.

Hypertension, or high blood pressure, affects 20% of Canadians, and will affect 90% of those who live a normal lifespan if we ignore the condition.

In our fast-paced, stressful lives it is important that each of us be aware of the risk associated with this condition including heart, kidney, cerebrovascular disease and even dementia. Having no obvious symptoms, it can be a silent killer, and it is a leading cause of death and disability.

The work of Hypertension Canada includes recommending evidence-based clinical treatments and educational materials. Early detection is important to reduce its harmful impacts.

Today, many of my colleagues had the opportunity to join Hypertension Canada and their partner Valeant Canada in room 228 to learn more about vascular health.

I would like to thank Hypertension Canada and Valeant for the work they are doing, and I encourage Ontarians to have their blood pressure checked at a clinic, pharmacy or by their doctor.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION ONTARIO ACT, 2015

Mr. Rinaldi moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr19, An Act respecting the Supply Chain Management Association Ontario.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

SAFER ROADS AND SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ROUTES ET DES COLLECTIVITÉS

Mr. Natyshak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 99, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to safety cameras / Projet de loi 99, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les caméras de sécurité.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The bill authorizes the minister and municipal councils to require the use of safety cameras in construction zones and community safety zones.

Section 205.14.1 is added to the act to create an exemption for the demerit point system for persons who are convicted of an offence based on safety camera evidence.

The bill amends subsections 214.1(1) and (2) of the act to provide that a highway or a part of a highway may be designated as a community safety zone if the highway adjoins or is adjacent to land on which a school, schoolyard, daycare, seniors' residence, community centre or playground is located.

The bill changes all references to photo-radar systems in the act to safety cameras.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY JOURNÉE DE L'INTÉGRATION COMMUNAUTAIRE

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I rise today to recognize Community Living Day at the Legislature. Let me begin by welcoming our guests from Community Living Ontario and its many Community Living groups across the province.

Depuis plus de 60 ans, les organismes d'intégration communautaire défendent les droits des personnes ayant des déficiences intellectuelles. Tout a commencé avec des familles qui ont constitué le mouvement originel d'intégration communautaire et qui se sont battues pour que leurs enfants aient le droit de suivre leur scolarité dans les écoles publiques.

That movement soon broadened into one championing the right of all individuals with developmental disabilities to be full and equal participants in all aspects of community life. Today, everyone in the Community Living movement can look back with pride on these accomplishments.

Today, people with developmental disabilities live in the community. Today they participate, more than ever before, in regular daily activities that others in society might take for granted. And increasingly, many are becoming gainfully employed.

The Community Living movement continues to lead the charge against the biggest barrier of all: the lack of awareness and understanding about people with developmental disabilities. That battle is not yet fully won, but old prejudices are slowly receding.

Inspiré par le mouvement d'intégration communautaire, le gouvernement de l'Ontario est en train de concevoir un plan à long terme de modernisation de ses services aux personnes ayant des déficiences intellectuelles. Nous collaborons avec les organismes d'intégration communautaire et nos autres partenaires pour rendre le système plus équitable et plus homogène à l'échelle de la province et pour le rendre financièrement viable sur le long terme.

We are supporting this work with the largest single investment ever in services and supports for people with developmental disabilities in Ontario. We began rolling out this investment last year, with a three-year, \$810-million investment in community and developmental services. This is an investment not only in the skills, development and personal growth of thousands of Ontarians; this is an investment in their independence, empowerment and inclusion in our society.

Together with our partners in the developmental services sector, including Community Living, we have made tremendous strides already in using this investment to help thousands of Ontarians. Last year, we promised to provide new direct funding to 21,000 people over four years, and in March of this year, I confirmed that we have eliminated the 2014 wait-list for the Special Services at Home Program, well ahead of our two-year target. Now, 8,000 more families can afford programs for their children with special needs to learn new skills or pay for family respite.

We have already approved new Passport funding for 6,000 adults, reaching almost half of our four-year target in just eight months. In addition, more than 500 adults now have new residential supports. Our new Developmental Services Housing Task Force has now concluded its first proposal call for innovative housing solutions for adults with developmental disabilities, and we're very excited about a series of new projects that we are supporting through our employment and modernization fund, many of which are sponsored by Community Living organizations.

L'engagement que nous avons pris l'année dernière est toujours valable : d'ici à 2017-2018, l'engagement du gouvernement de l'Ontario en matière de services aux personnes ayant des déficiences intellectuelles s'élèvera à plus de 2 milliards de dollars par année. Alors que nous entamons la deuxième année de notre plan, nous continuerons d'investir avec sagesse et prudence.

We continue to transform the developmental services system, bringing more consistency and fairness to how the system works, focusing on inclusion and community-based supports, and making it easier for families and individuals to choose the services that meet their needs. These are more than dollars; these funds mean greater community inclusion, personal growth and independence for thousands of people. Yet none of this would have been imaginable without the drive and inspiration of the families and caring individuals in the Community Living movement. C'est grâce à elles que les personnes ayant des déficiences intellectuelles mènent, de nos jours, une existence plus satisfaisante et plus enrichissante.

Let us continue to work together to build a more inclusive society and an Ontario where everyone belongs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: As the PC critic for community and social services, I'm very happy to welcome all of the representatives of Community Living Ontario back to the Legislature today.

Earlier today, I met with some of them: CEO Chris Beesley; president Roy O'Leary; communications director Ron Laroche; policy director Gordon Kyle; and the chair, Yvonne Spicer. And Yvonne, great job at the luncheon and your speech—great job.

I also want to do a little shout-out to Mike Town. Mike is in the gallery from Listowel. His dad, Don Town, and I were rec directors way back in the day, and it's

great to have you at Queen's Park—and for all the great work you do.

It is always a pleasure to hear about the work you do as it is important for so many people in this province. Over the many years that you've been advocating on behalf of Ontarians with an intellectual disability, the way these issues are viewed has changed significantly. Even in the past 15 years, since you have been holding these days, people's perspectives have changed. It has taken time, but we have all come to realize the contribution people with intellectual disabilities can and do make in our province, and that's a great thing.

We all made great strides just last July, when all three parties in this Legislature endorsed the report of the all-party Select Committee on Developmental Services, which was started by our PC caucus colleague Christine Elliott. But we have to continue to work on other issues so that we keep moving forward to help the people who require assistance.

Of primary concern is figuring out a way to ensure that when children and adults require residential services, they are able to find them in fairly close proximity to their home communities. To have to move far away or, as one parents' advocacy group put it, "to have to schlep our children far away from their families and communities and everything near and dear to their heart," is just not right.

People thrive best when they stay close to their support network, which is their community, their family and their friends. Everyone needs a support system, and to be wrenched away from yours makes the adjustment to a new living arrangement even harder. It doesn't matter whether you're a child or an adult; it will have an adverse effect on you.

Additionally, housing should not only be as close to the home community as possible, but it should also be age-appropriate. It is not right for people with intellectual disabilities to have to be placed in long-term-care facilities because appropriate community-based options are not available. It is not the correct setting, it is not the correct care, and it is not the correct environment or respect for those folks who need it. This type of wrong placement doesn't do anything to help an individual, and it might make their situation worse. Beyond this, it's not as if we have an overabundance of long-term-care facilities in this province.

Finally, we need to sort out funding issues and how and when the funds are best provided to the people who need them. This is not an easy issue to deal with, especially given the economic situation in the province, but it is something that must be addressed in the way that makes the most sense. I was pleased to hear the minister say they're going to look again at the \$100 cutback they were potentially looking at.

It is not just the size of the funds involved however, but also how they're able to be used that needs to be looked at. The restrictions that exist on using funding to provide the full range of support a person needs in his or her home is something that should be reviewed. We all

know that it's best to be in our own homes whenever possible, and if we can figure out how we can best do that with the funding that exists, everyone will be better off.

I'm glad that I've had the opportunity to speak today on the very important issues associated with people who have intellectual disabilities. I thank all of the staff, all of the volunteers and all of the family members for the care that you provide to our most very, very special people. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

And I look forward to having you back at Queen's Park in 2016.

Ms. Cindy Forster: On behalf of New Democrats and Andrea Horwath, it's a pleasure to rise and speak today at Community Living Day.

Community Living supports more than 12,000 clients across this province. They've been celebrating Community Living Day here at Queen's Park since 2000, and it is great to see so many people here and how it actually has grown over the years.

Community Living promotes inclusion; it promotes citizenship; it promotes equality in people who have intellectual disabilities.

I want to welcome our guests from Community Living Ontario, and locally, I want to welcome my guests from Community Living Welland Pelham: Kerry Thomas, who is the community liaison coordinator; Dale Sheets, treasurer for People First; and David Middleton, of course, from Welland/Pelham, who is the president. Thanks for being here today.

1330

For over 60 years, Community Living has advocated for people with disabilities to be fully included in all aspects of our community so they're able to live in dignity and with respect, share in all elements of our communities and have the opportunity to fully participate. Over the years, the movement has become far more than just the right to an education; it has become about inclusion and about changing public attitudes about people with developmental disabilities.

We heard the minister speak about the investment of significant dollars pledged in the most recent budget, but as my party's former critic for community and social services, I think I'd go as far as saying that we have a long way to go yet in this area, and that in some areas we actually have a crisis in developmental services: 21,000 people—adults and children—still can't get the help they need, and wait times for some services are as long as four years.

Recent announcement cuts, like the Work-Related Benefit, are not helping this sector at all, and every day we hear stories about seniors actually looking after seniors with developmental disabilities. One woman in my riding has two sons who are in their sixties; she's almost 90. When she came out to the town hall meeting around the select committee, she said, "Who is going to look after my two boys when I'm no longer here?" There aren't any housing supports available for them. I know that people hear that everywhere in our communities.

The select committee came up with a lot of good recommendations—I think that 46 had all-party support—so I'm hoping that over the short term, and not over the next 20 years, a lot of those recommendations in fact get implemented, including the lack of daycare programs, respite, and group homes, as children finish school and transition into adulthood. The Auditor General's report said that there were serious problems in autism services, including wait times of up to four years.

The developmental services sector is closely tied to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act—I talked about that briefly in question period today—but the Liberal government has failed to implement adequate and timely standards, and 2025 is the target year. Clearly, we know that 60% of the private sector is not compliant with filing the reports, and maybe they're not even compliant with doing what they need to do by this period of time. I think that we, as a government, need to make sure the AODA is implemented and audited regularly, and ensure compliance, because without compliance, we don't have inclusion for the people who are here today and for the thousands across the province.

In conclusion, on Community Living Day, I'd like to thank our guests for being here, and for their continued work, day in and day out. I'd like to thank the staff. Having some connection with my own Community Living, I know how hard the staff work. It's not an 8 to 4 job; they're out in the community with their clients all the time. I want to thank the thousands of volunteers—the families and other volunteers—who commit to all kinds of programming so that the clients can actually live in an inclusive community.

I'd like to encourage the government to bring back the Work-Related Benefit, so that people who are out in the workforce, or are able to go out in the workforce, will have those supports to help them with transportation and other things that they need. There is much more work to do, and I encourage Community Living Ontario and the hundred branches across the province to continue with their strong advocacy for the clients to ensure that we all have inclusive communities in Ontario.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

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

"Whereas the Ontario government's proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

"Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

"Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

“Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

“Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

“We, the undersigned, do not support implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and petition the government of Ontario to axe the pension tax.”

I fully support it and will send it with page Ashton.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Kim McNab from Lively in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Health Sciences North is facing major direct care cuts, including: the closure of beds on the surgical unit, cuts to vital patient support services including hospital cleaning, and more than 87,000 nursing and direct patient care hours per year to be cut from departments across the hospital, including in-patient psychiatry, day surgery, the surgical units, obstetrics, mental health services, oncology, critical care and the emergency department; and

“Whereas Ontario’s provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row; and

“Whereas these cuts will risk higher medical accident rates as nursing and direct patient care hours are dramatically cut and will reduce levels of care all across our hospital;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to “(1) Stop the proposed cuts to Health Sciences North and protect the beds and services;

“(2) Improve overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces.”

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here.

“Supporting the Implementation of a Cap-and-Trade System in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing mankind;

“Whereas climate change is already hurting Ontario’s environment and economy, causing extreme weather like

floods and droughts, and increasing the cost of food and insurance;

“Whereas right now, polluters are allowed to emit greenhouse gases into our environment for free;

“Whereas good environmental policy is good economic policy and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels will create jobs now and form a central pillar of our prosperity in the coming years;

“Whereas Ontario has demonstrated leadership in tackling greenhouse gas emissions by banning coal-fired plants;

“Whereas Ontarians have been consulted on the path forward for pricing carbon and other greenhouse gases;

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognize that we have a responsibility to take action now, and support a cap-and-trade system for Ontario as the most effective method for significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

I agree with this petition, sign my name and leave it with page Ethan.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

“Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

“Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015 shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost ...

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry’s goal of increasing employment and the provincial government’s poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government’s plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

1340

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition presented to me by Alvin Lamb.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario communities are connected across long distances by bus service; and

“Whereas the ONTC bus service is the only form of public transportation available to many northern Ontario residents; and

“Whereas reduction of customer service and the closure of stations will cause deterioration of the overall system of public transportation of passengers and goods in northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario committed to providing enhanced bus service to alleviate the loss of the ONTC passenger rail service;

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

“Ontario Northland Transportation Commission bus service must be enhanced to ensure reliable and continuous accessibility including uniform provision of adequate public transportation for all communities and people of northern Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly agree, add my signature and bring it to page Cailyn.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water.

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, a concentration providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentration to protect against adverse health effects; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices

across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and I’m going to sign it, affix my name and send it to the table with Misha, a page from my riding of Davenport.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m so glad to stand here in support of my colleague the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka with this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it has been over a decade since regulation 316/03 of the Highway Traffic Act has been updated to recognize new classes of off-road vehicles and a motion to do so passed on November 7, 2013, with unanimous support of the provincial Legislature;

“Whereas owners of two-up ATVs and side-by-side UTVs deserve clarity in knowing which roadways and trails are legal for use of these off-road vehicles; and

“Whereas owners should be able to legally use their vehicles to access woodlots, trails and hunting and fishing destinations;

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

“That private member’s Bill 58, which seeks to update the Highway Traffic Act to include new classes of all-terrain and utility task vehicles, receive swift passage through the Legislature.”

I’m pleased to support MPP Norm Miller. I’ll affix my signature and I’ll send it to the table with page Colton.

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition entitled: “Maintain the John McGivney Children’s Centre Preschool Program.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre annually helps about 2,500 children with physical, neurological and developmental challenges;

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program is an exceptional program administered by expert faculty and staff that offers youth and their families a transformative experience that they would not receive in a less specialized setting;

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program faces a shortfall in provincial funding;

“Whereas families raising children with special needs incur increased costs for care which the income test does not properly reflect;

"Whereas compliance with the provincial requirements means that the John McGivney Children's Centre preschool program is unable to be sustained;

"Whereas the John McGivney Children's Centre preschool program closure will mean a loss of a valued skill set of expertise from teachers and support staff in our community that will leave some of the area's most vulnerable children and families without proper child care;"

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

"To make up any funding shortfalls that result from transitioning to a fee subsidy model so that the John McGivney Children's Centre preschool program can remain operational and consider changes to the income test to better reflect the increased costs families raising children with special needs incur."

I support this petition and give it to page Jae Min.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water," and as it has been read once so far I will abbreviate it a little bit.

"Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and ...

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

"That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

Speaker, I have thousands of these petitions. I am pleased to sign and support it and to send it down with page Ethan. Thank you.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition with regard to health care in Muskoka, and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we categorically reject the notion that core services such as surgical procedures should ever be moved to one hospital site in Muskoka and that doing so would have an adverse effect on our municipalities;

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

"We urge our leaders to act now to reject single siting of surgery and/or other core services that would result in the closure or downgrading of either acute care site in Muskoka. We believe the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care needs to address the health care funding model as it applies to Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare, which will avoid the situation as it stands."

I support this petition and will give it to Misha.

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: These petitions keep coming in. These ones are from Mr. and Mrs. David Kelso from Markham. They've got a couple hundred more signatures.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

"Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

"Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

"Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In so doing, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients' groups within one year."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Colton to bring it down to the Clerks' table.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas some establishments have instituted unfair tipping practices in which a portion of tips and gratuities are being deducted and kept by owners;

"Whereas employees in establishments where tipping is a standard practice, such as restaurants, bars and hair salons, supplement their income with tips and gratuities and depend on those to maintain an adequate standard of living;

"Whereas customers expect that when they leave a tip or gratuity that the benefit will be going to the employees who directly contributed to their positive experience; ...

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support Bill 12, the Protecting Employees’ Tips Act, 2014, and help shield Ontario employees and businesses from operators with improper tipping practices while protecting accepted and standard practices such as tip pooling among employees.”

I agree with this petition, having brought in the private member’s bill, and leave it with page Madison.

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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 91, An Act to Implement Budget Measures and to enact and amend various Acts, 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 Finance and Economic Affairs; and,

That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday, May 20, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday, May 21, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and Monday, May 25, 2015, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., in Toronto 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 91:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Thursday, May 14, 2015; and

—That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear; and

—That the members of the sub-committee prioritize and return the list by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2015; and

—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists; and

—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 9:30 p.m. on Monday, May 25, 2015; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 10 a.m. on Tuesday, May 26, 2015; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, May 28, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and Monday, June 1, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., and 9:50 p.m. to 12 midnight in Toronto, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Thursday, May 28, 2015, at 5 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. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, June 2, 2015. 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 Finance and Economic Affairs, 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, one hour of debate 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 shall 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 government notice of motion number 21.

I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this motion as it relates to Bill 91. I very much look forward to hearing comments from other honourable members from all parties in the House.

Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act (Budget Measures), 2015, is the result of consultation with many Ontarians across this great province of ours. Through direct talks in town hall meetings, telephone town hall meetings and input through our Budget Talks website, Ontarians spoke, and we have listened. It outlines our government’s plan to address the needs of Ontarians now and to build Ontario up for a strong and prosperous future.

As you know, Speaker, our government's plan to create jobs and growth has four major components. The first is building modern infrastructure. One of the biggest barriers to jobs and growth in our province is congestion. Our roads and highways are filled with trucks carrying parts that need to get to manufacturing plants, products that need to get to market and people who need to get to work. But today congestion is choking our growth potential.

Often in this House we have talked about the congestion and traffic situation in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. We all know that this region of the province—the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—is the economic engine of our province. We all succeed in terms of both our economy and the quality of life we enjoy so much if we make the necessary investments needed in our public infrastructure, especially as it relates to transit and transportation, to allow for traffic to flow better, to allow for our commerce to flow better and, of course, for Ontarians to be able to get to work and back to their family in a reasonable time.

Speaker, as you know, I have the great fortune of representing the city of Ottawa, particularly the great riding of Ottawa Centre, which is the downtown community of Ottawa. We in my community of Ottawa Centre are the economic centre, the economic hub, for major employment across the whole city of Ottawa—in fact, the greater Ottawa area, the region on both the Ontario side and the Quebec side.

I can tell you, Speaker, given that I live in that community, that you can see the impact on weekdays when traffic comes at peak hours in the morning and then when people go home in peak hours in the afternoon. As the city is growing and the National Capital Region is growing, we see very similar challenges when it comes to our economy, the potential future growth of our economy in Ottawa, but also in the quality of life. The kinds of investments we need to make in infrastructure—the ones we are talking about in this budget, Building Ontario Up—are extremely necessary for communities like the one I represent in Ottawa through investments in our light rail transit plan, both phase 1, which is ongoing thanks to the support of the provincial government, and the future expansion of that project through investments in phase 2 of the LRT; not to mention investments in other modes of transportation, for example, bicycle paths, so that those in the downtown core who choose to walk or ride their bike to work have safe opportunities to do that; and, of course, expanding Highway 417, or as we refer to it, the Queensway, so that members of communities in other parts of the city—the suburbs; the Kanata, Orléans and Barrhaven parts of town—have easier ways of getting downtown and beyond that, as well, outside Ottawa.

That's why our government has chosen to make proper investments in infrastructure a very important priority. It's something we have heard from Ontarians, day in and day out. In the last election campaign, we were told by Ontarians that they want the government to invest in infrastructure. It's something we heard in the

lead-up to this budget, in the extensive consultation that was done, both from the Minister of Finance, as he travelled the province, and also from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The people of Ontario want us to invest in our infrastructure, which could mean public transit like light rail or subways in urban areas, but means highways, bridges and roads in smaller communities in rural and northern Ontario. We treat them all equally, and we understand that that's a priority that Ontarians have asked us to place.

To build roads, bridges and transit infrastructure is something that our economy in the 21st century needs, to make sure that our economy continues to grow and produce jobs. That is why our long-term plan, under the leadership of our Premier, calls for investments of more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure over 10 years. Let me repeat that because it's an impressive number and it's an important number to illustrate our focus and our desire to invest in our infrastructure: We are committing to invest \$130 billion in public infrastructure over 10 years. That's an incredible, incredible investment in our public infrastructure in all communities across the province over the next decade. That also includes dedicating \$31.5 billion over 10 years for public transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure right across the province under our Moving Ontario Forward plan.

1400

To help make these investments, we are taking steps to unlock the value of some of our provincial assets. We are following the recommendations of the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets. As you know, Speaker, we are proposing to modernize Ontario's distribution and sale of beer, improving choice and maintaining our commitment to social responsibility in the process.

For the first time in its history, for instance, Ontario would permit the sale of beer in grocery stores. This is an issue that I've been fairly active in on behalf of the craft breweries that exist in my riding of Ottawa Centre. I would like to mention two—those who enjoy beer, I strongly encourage them to try both Kichesippi Beer and Beyond the Pale, both locally made in Ottawa Centre by local entrepreneurs who continue to create good-paying jobs every day.

The changes that we're bringing forward are going to allow small businesses like Kichesippi and Beyond the Pale, which started as local neighbourhood breweries, to grow even further and be able to supply these great products not only to citizens in Ottawa Centre but in Ottawa and beyond in the province. Those are the kinds of changes we know consumers have been asking for. Of course, we enforce social responsibility as key in making sure that there are laws there to support that.

We are also proposing to broaden the ownership of Hydro One through an initial public offering, or IPO, that will unlock billions in value for the benefit of Ontarians. We will do so while protecting the public interest. Following the IPO, the Ontario government will remain

the largest shareholder and is proposing, by law, that no other shareholder or group of shareholders be permitted to own more than 10% of the company. Most importantly, the new Hydro One will not set the rates for consumers. This will remain the job of the independent regulator, the Ontario Energy Board.

By broadening the ownership in Hydro One, we intend to invest billions of dollars more in critically needed infrastructure that will fuel our economy. That takes me to the point that I made earlier: In order for us to invest in our economy, and in order for us to grow our economy and make sure that we have good-paying jobs along with the quality of life that we deserve so much, we need to invest in infrastructure. I mentioned that we are planning to invest \$130 billion over 10 years in our public infrastructure. This kind of step, by broadening the ownership of Hydro One, is going to allow us to get that necessary investment that we need so that we can build more public infrastructure in our communities across the province. This essentially puts Ontarians in a better place because they will own more public infrastructure that is so needed in the 21st century, like our subways, like our light rail transit system and like our roads, bridges and highways that are key to growing our province and our economy.

The second part of our plan is to invest in our talent and skills. We know that a well-educated workforce is a competitive workforce. Let me give you one such example: I'm proud to say that, if passed by this House, we will renew Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy by investing an additional \$250 million over the next two years. That will bring our total investment in youth employment programs to more than \$565 million over the next two years to help young people get that first job, or find a mentor or start their own business.

Investing in talent and skills is helping to ensure that we have the workers we want and need for continued economic growth. Our natural resource in the province of Ontario, if I can call it that, is our people. We are a province quite different than Alberta and Saskatchewan, which can rely on the natural resources they have in the ground. Our natural resource is our people. It's their talent and skills. That's why it's imperative that we invest in that natural resource and we help grow that natural resource, which means investing in the talent and skills of Ontarians. That is why the investments that we continue to make in our education system, starting from kindergarten all the way to PhD, are extremely important, because what we are doing is harvesting that skill and talent.

I'm very proud to have some incredible schools in my riding. Given the downtown community that I'm in, a lot of the schools in my riding are now celebrating their centennial. Just last weekend, Elgin Street Public School in my riding celebrated their 125th anniversary. It's incredible to see that the school continues to grow in the downtown core. Connaught Public School in Hintonburg, in the same week, celebrated their 100th anniversary.

At the same time, we're building a new edition to Mutchmor Public School, which is an older school in my riding in the neighbourhood of Glebe, and building a

brand new Broadview Public School in Westboro because of the investments that our government is making.

Similarly, I have the great privilege of representing Carleton University as their MPP. I turn around and we see—I know, Speaker, that you are very close to Carleton as well, given that your son is attending Carleton. If you ask your son, he'll tell you about the kinds of investments we're making on that campus, from building a brand new library to brand new labs, and state-of-the-art buildings with state-of-the-art technology. Why? So that our students can get the best education so that they are ready to take on this global economy that we live in. That is why investments in the youth jobs strategy, which is so much a part of this budget, Building Ontario Up, are key.

The third part of our plan for growth is to help create an environment where businesses can be more competitive and succeed. Ontario's combined federal and provincial general corporate income tax rate is lower than the comparable tax rate in every US state. Ontario is the top destination for foreign direct investment in North America. That is a better position than our natural competitors, like California, New York and Texas. But we need to do more and we will continue to do more to grow our economy and make sure that our businesses are successful.

Allow me to give a few more examples. For instance, we launched a 10-year, \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund to partner with Ontario companies to increase productivity and innovation, and help them export to other parts of the world. If approved by this Legislature, we will enhance the Jobs and Prosperity Fund by an additional \$200 million to attract more business investment and creation of jobs.

We would also make the forestry sector eligible for support through this fund, which will be a huge boon for northern Ontario. If approved by this House, we will partner with private investors and business leaders to create Scale Up Ventures, a new \$50-million venture capital fund designed to support Ontario's most promising start-ups through a unique combination of investment and mentorship.

All these investments are critical to make sure that our businesses in Ontario are growing. Again, given that I'm from Ottawa, I like to cite examples from my community of Ottawa. We look at companies like Ciena. The Premier was just visiting Ciena and helping them celebrate their growth in our community in Ottawa. It's incredible. Ciena is a home-grown company, and now they are increasing their footprint, building more space because they continue to hire people. They're building state-of-the-art Internet-related technology.

Similarly, we've been able to attract companies like Huawei, one of the largest companies coming out of China in this Internet age. Huawei's global R&D centre is based where? In Ottawa. Why? Because we've been able to create the right climate to create those highly skilled, highly paid jobs in our province. Ottawa is a great beneficiary of that because of our talent coming out from Carleton University, from the University of Ottawa,

from La Cité collégiale and, of course, from Algonquin College.

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The fourth part of our plan is ensuring that everyone has a secure retirement. As you know, Speaker, we will be introducing an Ontario pension plan to help ensure that all Ontarians can retire securely. The framework legislation for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, or ORPP, has now received royal assent. The next step, which is part of Bill 91, is to establish the ORPP Administration Corp. Of course, the creation of that administration is incumbent upon the passage of Bill 91.

I look forward to the healthy discussion on this initiative, because I know that it is the right thing to do to help build Ontario up. We need to make sure that the 70% of Ontarians who do not have a workplace pension have retirement income security. And one of the best ways to do it, in the absence of enhancing the Canada Pension Plan, the CPP, which is what we would hope to do, that the federal government will in fact enhance CPP—but in the absence of any action by the federal government, we are proposing, as you know, Speaker—and the legislation has passed, the bill to create the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan—that those 70% of Ontarians who do not have a workplace pension do have the security of retirement by making sure that we're making investments today that could help our hard-working Ontarians in their golden years.

Speaker, as you can tell, all four parts of our plan to build Ontario up are encompassed within Bill 91. That is why it is that much more important for all of us, I would argue, to pass Bill 91 in a time frame that ensures that we move forward with those critical investments in our infrastructure, in our talents and skills of Ontarians, and, of course, ensuring that we have retirement income security and viability of our businesses in our communities.

It is important that Ontarians have the opportunity to speak to the 2015 budget and that members from all parties are given the opportunity to examine this important legislation. That is why we did a fair amount of research on this. We have presented a proposal to both opposition House leaders that would increase the standard for committee consideration to six days. This is more committee time than almost any budget over the last 25 years. As I mentioned, we have done a fair amount of research to see that we're almost tripling the number of days for committee consideration when it comes to a budget bill.

Let's compare some previous governments as to how much time they allotted for consideration of budget bills. Under the PC government in 2002, there were zero days of committee consideration—zero days in 2002. In 2000, there were only two days of consideration. In 1997, there were, again, only two days of consideration for the budget bill. In 1996, again, there were only two days of consideration. That repeats again and again and again.

Now, I know the NDP likes to claim that they are open and democratic and transparent. But it's just now talk, because as we know, they have formed a government in

this province, and there is a track record on their part as to how much time they have spent considering bills. Under the NDP, both in 1991 and 1992—and I know the member from St. Catharines will remember that, because he was a member at that time. Both in 1991 and 1992, how many days did the NDP consider the bill? Well, Speaker, it was—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There seems to be an echo at the other end of the chamber. I need to hear the government House leader, so I would ask all members to respect that.

The government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'll repeat it again, just in case you missed it: We know that the NDP has been in government in this province as well. They do have a track record, so they should not be speaking in a vacuum. Let's look at their record. In both the 1991 and 1992 budgets, respectively, the NDP only allowed for one day of committee consideration. They tabled two more budgets after that, both in 1993 and 1994. I'm sure the member for St. Catharines will remember: How many days did they allow for budget consideration in 1993 and 1994—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Agriculture and Food and the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek are having a conversation. I would ask them to lower their voices a little bit so I can hear.

The government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'll go back again to the 1993 and 1994 budgets.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Zero.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The member for St. Catharines is absolutely right: It was zero days of consideration for those two budgets.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Social contract.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Yes, I think they were looking at something like the social contract, which was a big deal then and is still a big deal today, I would argue. But that budget had zero days of consideration. I would just remind my friends from the NDP to be mindful of their rhetoric as to the number of days for consideration when they're speaking on this motion.

Speaker, as I mentioned, we have looked at the last 25 years of committee consideration and we've tripled that to about six committee days because we want to make sure that Ontarians have the opportunity to participate in this very important process. That's why we're spending three times more days in committee consideration than other parties when they were in government, not to mention, as I mentioned earlier, the various town halls that were done by MPPs—I hosted one; I host one every year; it was very well attended—the tele-town halls, and of course the travel that the Minister of Finance did—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I say to the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, you can't make your hands into a megaphone and shout across the

chamber. It's not permitted under the rules. I would ask him to refrain from doing that and return to the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I was mentioning, the Minister of Finance travelled across the province as well, throughout the regions of the province. Then the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which does excellent work, also presented a very thorough report and travelled the province, including the north, including places like Fort Frances. So there has been more than the usual consultation on this bill already. Of course, we're enhancing that by ensuring that there are six days of committee consideration so that the work can be done and the budget can be passed for the important reasons that I outlined earlier, before the House rises in June.

Speaker, I would say to you that we have presented a very fair and reasonable proposal to the other two parties. Ontarians are counting on us to establish the body that will administer the new ORPP so that it will be up and running by January 1, 2017. That's a very important timeline that we have outlined, and we wish to fulfil that commitment and get all the necessary work done to get the ORPP set up for Ontarians.

Also, we want to amend the Liquor Control Act so we can enter into a new framework agreement to bring beer into grocery stores to help create more jobs in our province, especially as they relate to craft breweries. I mentioned two in my riding that are excellent.

Also, we will amend the Insurance Act in order to ensure that insurance rates continue to decrease as quickly as possible. We know the NDP likes to talk about this, but then they have done everything in their power to ensure that insurance rates don't come down. One remembers the budget bill last year, one of the most progressive budget bills we have seen in the history of our province, which the NDP voted against not once, but twice.

It was ironic that today they were talking about pay raises for personal support workers, which we—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. The government House leader is about six feet away from me and I can't hear him. I would ask the members to come to order, please, and I again return to the government House leader, who has the floor.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I'm glad you didn't say that I'm six feet tall because clearly, I'm not. Yes, I am standing close to you.

As I was saying, I was reminding you earlier of how the progressive budget that we tabled last year had increases for our personal support workers. It was ironic to hear the member opposite from the third party talking about that. When they had the chance to support it—

Hon. James J. Bradley: They voted against it.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —they voted against it, not once, but twice. It takes quite a feat to get yourself on the record against a progressive budget two times, for a party that claims to be progressive. I think they should be mindful of their track record when it comes to ensuring

that we're helping vulnerable Ontarians, and when it comes to ensuring that we're building our infrastructure.

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This budget, Building Ontario Up, is necessary to ensure that we have good public transit and transportation infrastructure across the province; that we are ensuring that consumers have more choice; that we are fostering and growing our schools, colleges and universities by investing in the talent and skills of young Ontarians; and, not to mention, that we are enhancing and ensuring that there's retirement income security for hard-working Ontarians.

That is why I ask the members of this assembly to support Bill 91, the Building Ontario Up Act, 2015, and to support this motion so that we can get this bill passed before the House rises in June and ensure that we are building Ontario up.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm not going to say that it's a pleasure to speak to this closure motion for the government.

You know, this is a government that—last July, we sat here, the day after Canada Day, and listened to a throne speech. The government talked about trying to be dealing with partnership over partisanship. So I think it's a bit rich for the government House leader to say he presented a proposal to myself and Mr. Bisson, as the two opposition House leaders, and then almost immediately move forward with the motion. I think we were both very clear, as House leaders, in expressing concern about the quickness of passing the budget, regardless of the history in this province. I think we all acknowledge that this budget is a big deal to Ontarians, that people in my riding—and I think my riding is pretty representative of a traditionally rural riding. They want to have some hearings on this bill. From our perspective, we gave a very clear message back to the government that it wasn't enough time.

This government, over the last several months, has systemically “choked,” using a word that the member for St. Catharines used when he was in opposition—they've really choked off debate of most of their bills. This bill—to be a budget bill, and for me to stand here and realize that, after less than seven hours of debate on the budget bill, I've only had the opportunity to have four of my members be able to speak to that bill. To have 85% of the opposition for the Progressive Conservative Party not have a chance to put local comments on the record—I think it's pretty terrible that the government would move forward that fast.

We've seen them, at 10 hours, invoke closure; we've seen them time and time again use time allocation. But to have a budget bill where we clearly came out, prior to the budget, with five proposals that we felt were pragmatic, that we felt were representing our constituents—first of all, to have them not incorporated in the budget bill is one thing, but then to not allow us to be able to put forward proper debate—I just think it's going in the wrong direction.

In question period this morning—quite frankly, I have to hand it to the leader of the third party. She brought up a number of concerns regarding this schedule that the government has put forward. I was quite frankly surprised with the Premier's comment that she would actually feel that—you know, she may have said it was six days of hearings, but the recommendation today from the government House leader is pretty clear. There are four days of public hearings when the public can have their say, and two days of clause-by-clause. So it's pretty bad to be able to say to Ontarians that, you know, you've got five minutes to come to Toronto and make a presentation and that's all—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I guess I need to remind some members that the member from Leeds–Grenville has the floor right now. I would ask all members to listen to what he has to say. He has that right; we owe him that courtesy. We owe that courtesy to all members who have the floor. I would ask all members to do that.

Member for Leeds–Grenville, I apologize for having to interrupt.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker. Don't take my word for it, members of the government. Why don't you take the word of the dean of the Legislature, Mr. Bradley, for it. I'll quote Mr. Bradley, a speech that Mr. Bradley made on November 24, 1993. He was speaking about closure motions, exactly what you folks have put on the table today. Here's the member for St. Catharines: "I'm concerned about the closure motions because I think they limit legitimate debate"—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Who said that?

Mr. Steve Clark: Jim Bradley.

"I recognize that a government ultimately might have the opportunity to close down a debate that's been going on a very long period of time. But as I've indicated to the House in days gone by, the purpose of these debates is to canvass public opinion, to make the public aware of what is happening."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's when Jim was a radical.

Mr. Steve Clark: I agree with the member from St. Catharines.

He goes on to say, "All of us have experienced the situation where we have encountered our constituents and they've said, 'What is this particular bill all about?' or 'How did this bill get passed and I didn't know anything about it?' They are legitimate questions. One of the reasons is that the bills tend to get passed very rapidly in this House.

"Sometimes there are hearings. There is going to be a bit of an opportunity for hearings in this case. I think there should probably be more time provided for that, but also I think it's important to provide more time to discuss the amendments that might be"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry to interrupt. The member from Etobicoke North knows full well he can't take photographs in here. I don't know what he was using his device to do, but it appeared to me he

was taking a photograph. I have to ask him to surrender it to the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Here's what Mr. Bradley said: "If the hearings are going to be meaningful, if the hearings are going to be worthwhile, then I think it's exceedingly important for there to be legitimate debate over the amendments that flow from those hearings. That's what makes a bill stronger."

I could go on and on, Speaker, and quote the member for St. Catharines with some very pragmatic words. But I look at the budget that he didn't talk about, the 2001 budget, where the government actually went to St. Catharines, Ottawa, London and Sudbury and had four days of hearings in Toronto. Ultimately, there were eight days of hearings for that 2001 budget.

Speaker, from our perspective, I think the best way to move forward is to actually have some meaningful debate about hearing dates today. I'm quite prepared to move that the motion be amended.

I move that the motion be amended by deleting everything following "the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and" and substituting the following: "That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Ottawa; Wednesday, May 20, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Thunder Bay; Thursday, May 21, 2015, from 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Windsor; and Friday, May 22, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in London for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

"That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Monday, May 25, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday, May 26, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; Wednesday, May 27, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and Thursday, May 28, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Toronto; and may sit during question period 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 91:

"—Notice of public hearing on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly's website, and Canada NewsWire; and

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"—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Thursday, May 14, 2015; and

"—That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear; and

"—That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 14, 2015; and

"—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists; and

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

“That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 10 a.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015; and

“That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, June 1, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.; Tuesday, June 2, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. to 12 midnight; and Wednesday, June 3, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. to 12 midnight in Toronto, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

“On Wednesday, June 3, 2015, at 4 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. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

“That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, June 4, 2015. 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 Finance and Economic Affairs, 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, one hour of debate 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 shall 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.”

That’s my amendment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Clark has moved that the motion be amended by deleting everything following “the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and” and substituting the following:

“That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 19, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Ottawa”—

Mr. Steve Clark: Dispense.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to rise on behalf of New Democrats to say very clearly that the Liberal government has no mandate to sell off Hydro One. Hydro rates will go up in this province if the Liberal government privatizes Hydro One. Not a single MPP on those benches opposite actually told the people who voted for them that they had the intention of selling off Hydro One. Shutting people down is not the right thing to do. Hydro One is owned by Ontarians. They’re the ones who should decide.

In that vein, I move the following subamendment: that everything after “the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and” be deleted and replaced by the following:

“That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet over the course of the 2015 summer adjournment for 20 days for the purpose of public hearings on the bill, which shall conclude by Friday, August 14, 2015; and

“That the committee shall be authorized to travel for the purpose of public hearings, with all details related to the hearings and written submissions determined by the subcommittee; and

“That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill shall be noon on Friday, August 21, 2015; and

“That the committee be authorized to meet from Tuesday, September 1, 2015, to Thursday, September 4, 2015, and Tuesday, September 8, 2015, to Thursday, September 10, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on each of the respective days for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

“On Wednesday, September 9, 2015, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of 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. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

“That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, September 14, 2015. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

“That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, 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 is called, six and a half hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, with speaking rotations recognized pursuant to standing orders 24(a) and 24(b)(ii). 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.”

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Can we have a bit of a recess? The way I heard that, it sounded like a substantive amendment. I haven't got a copy of it, either. Do you think you can get—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, you did.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I do need to confer with the table staff to determine whether or not this is in order.

This House stands in recess for 15 minutes.

The House recessed from 1437 to 1453.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I find that the amendment to the amendment is in fact in order.

Ms. Horwath has moved an amendment to the amendment that everything after “the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and” be deleted and replaced by the following: “That the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic and Affairs be authorized to meet”—

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

I recognize the leader of the third party to continue debate.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker.

The point of the subamendment is to force the government to do the right thing by the people of Ontario, go out to hearings across this province and hear what people have to say about a move that will change the way we deal with electricity in this province, which will impact them in a very negative way financially and which they had no say on, because the Liberals did not run on this in their platform. Nobody knew this was coming. This subamendment actually gives people the chance to have a voice. It's the least Ontarians deserve when it comes to the sell-off of their hydro system.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's interesting today that we have this rush by the Liberal Party, and a lack of transparency to the people of Ontario in terms of meeting throughout Ontario—which both opposition parties are looking forward to doing.

Let me tell you why this government does not want to stand and speak about these amendments, or why they don't want hearings in other communities; I can tell you. We're talking about hearings in Thunder Bay, Windsor, London and Ottawa. Let me tell you what happened when the pre-budget consultations went to Ottawa. We heard from a couple of different groups. I'd like to tell you about these groups, because they pertain specifically to pre-budget consultations and why they don't want to hear from groups.

We heard from a woman—this is in our Hansard. Her name is Jennifer. She stood in front of the committee. She's an ODSP client. She stood in front of the pre-budget consultation. All three parties were there, Hansard was there, the translators were there: it was a full legislative committee that travelled there to hear from the people of Ontario. Jennifer stood up—God bless her, Speaker; you know, this was the first time she had ever been to any kind of a hearing such as this. She stood in front of us and said, “I have to tell you my story about my hydro bill.”

She told us that she has to turn off her hydro at 6 every morning until noon every day—shut it off completely—and then turn it on at noon, but shut it off again at 3 every afternoon until 7 o'clock. This was before a week ago Friday, when those peak-hour hydro rates increased by 15% for people like Jennifer and for companies throughout Ontario that now have left. Jennifer stood there and had to tell us that she has to choose between whether to heat or eat; she has to choose between food and fuel.

This is the message we heard when we were on the road in Ottawa. That's the message they don't want you to hear. That's the message. That's exactly why they don't want to take this out to the people of Ontario, because Jennifer will be there again in Ottawa, and Jennifer will say to all of us, “I was here only a couple of months ago, the week of January 29. I was here in front of you, and I begged you to do something about hydro.”

Instead, not only did they not do anything about hydro in the budget; on May 1, only a few days ago, she saw her hydro bill go up 15% in the very hours when she has to shut her power off. To keep warm in the winter, she wears an extra sweater. That's what Jennifer does. That's what Ontario is reduced to.

We also heard from Julie Allen, who is the chief financial officer of Fuel Industries. It's unrelated to fuel, in this case; this is the digital media fuel that is fuelling Ontario. I quote from Hansard—she's talking about tax credits that are helping to fuel her business: “It comes to my attention that the OI DMTC”—that's the tax credit for the digital media industry, Speaker—“is under review as one of the tax credits that you're looking at, and I just want to talk a little bit about how I feel it's important to the province and to interactive digital media.”

Julie Allen goes on to say: “The OI DMTC is really a big part of the economic growth in Ontario. There's so much growth potential in the interactive digital media industry. Interactive digital media: The founders are entrepreneurial, high-risk taking, high-growth companies.” This is what Julie is saying to the committee. “I feel it's something that should be taken into account and focused on because there's so much growth potential.”

“It's also a very young industry ... and still growing. This sector influences the way we live, we learn, we educate and we entertain. It also creates very valuable jobs for the province of Ontario.”

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Julie goes on to describe, at our committee: “We have grown 140% from 2007 to 2014, and this is how long

we've been using the Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit. The support of the program has meant so much to our growth and our ability to stay in Ontario and continue to evolve." This is the message you hear when you get out and you meet with the people and the businesses in Ontario.

She said, "I think the OMDC, as well, is really important to help with global competitiveness. It's necessary to grow this industry, but the interactive digital media ... has no physical boundaries. We are constantly competing on the global market. One hundred per cent of Fuel's revenue ... is export; we don't have any Canadian sales. All of our time and effort is focused on competing with international companies. Again, there are no physical boundaries with interactive digital media. We need to be competitive...."

"We're ... competing for labour resources on the global market. We're recruiting resources out of province and out of country to attract skilled labour, highly educated individuals, to come to permanent full-time positions."

She ends with saying, "I think OI DMTC," the tax credit, "is a beneficial program for the province and the growth of interactive digital media. The program promotes economic" development and is "a very young industry that has amazing potential. It also helps Ontario companies be globally competitive in the industry and creates very high-paying, skilled jobs in Ontario and keeps our youth here and working."

Well, Speaker, they didn't listen. They did not listen to Julie Allen, chief financial officer of Fuel Industries, about the digital media tax credit. They didn't listen to anybody who is in the industry because the government is reducing support. That's what this budget did, it reduced support through narrowing the eligibility for the Ontario Interactive Digital Media Tax Credit, the exact tax credit that Julie spoke of that helped her get started. The second it's gone so are these businesses.

We've also seen now changes to the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit, the Ontario Film and Television Tax Credit—I'm going to read letters from those folks as well—the Ontario Production Services Tax Credit, the Ontario Sound Recording Tax Credit, and the Ontario Computer Animation and Special Effects Tax Credit.

The government is cutting that tax credit and they're doing it immediately—not grandfathering in the businesses that have already started their production here in Toronto, in my community of North Bay, and Sudbury, Thunder Bay and the Soo,—the northern communities that are so blessed to have attracted so many films. Here in downtown Toronto, so many films are under way; so many TV shows are under way—it's amazing. What do these guys do? The first scent of good news in a sector—boom. They're going to save \$10 million, according to them. They're going to lose a billion, but they're going to save themselves \$10 million. You talk about that expression "can't see the forest for the trees," well, we know they can't see the forest—that gets us into the Far North Act and the 63 businesses in the forestry sector that are

gone. They can't see the forest for the trees; that is the problem. That's why they don't want to get out and do these hearings throughout Ontario.

When they go to Thunder Bay, Windsor and London—last time, they heard loudly and clearly from businesses talking about the Ontario registered pension program; they heard from these businesses that said, "This is going to kill our business." This is the one where the employees and the employers each have to put 1.9%. The employees' salaries will be reduced by 1.9%; the employer now has to add more money. When we were in London, a business in London said to us, "I got to tell you. I got 15 employees today. When this ORPP thing comes through, I'm firing one of them, and I'm going to take their salary and I'm going to give that money to the employees, because they're darned well going to ask for a raise. They can't live with 1.9% less on their salary. They're going to ask for a raise, and I've got to top them up 1.9%. So I'm going to fire one, use that money to pay my share for the other 14, and I'm going to make them work harder." That's what we heard when we were in London. That's exactly why these guys do not want to get out there, back into Ontario. I can't imagine what kind of armour they're going to have to wear to get out there and face the Jennifers of the world who can't afford to heat or eat.

This is exactly what we heard. In fact, we talked about the fact that their own document that was written by the Ministry of Finance—it's called Confidential Advice to Cabinet. This is under the sub-headline "Not recommended." This is exactly what they told the Premier would happen: "Any increase in taxes would have negative long-run macroeconomic impacts on GDP and employment." That payroll tax would have "the largest negative impact on employment." That's what the Ministry of Finance told the Premier, and that's exactly what all these businesses, including the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and private businesses that came—but not just businesses; charities, people like the YMCA, those types of groups also. They all have to pay the ORPP. They have no idea where they're going to get the money, and they are the very people who are saying, "We're going to have to let somebody go to pay this money."

The Ministry of Finance told the Premier that this payroll tax will cost 18,000 lost jobs in Ontario for every \$2 billion that is raised. That is exactly the punishment that will be inflicted on these businesses.

Did they listen? Nope. They went ahead a week ago, passed the ORPP and patted themselves on the back. Last week, it received royal assent, and the businesses are speaking loudly and clearly already, right across Ontario.

We had 2,700 fewer businesses last year in Ontario than were there the year before. This is the kind of discussion they don't want to have by going to Thunder Bay and Windsor and Ottawa and London, because we heard loudly and very clearly from all these businesses.

I'll read you another letter from one of the employees of one of these people in the film industry that this

government is punishing. We are going to see immediately hundreds, and very shortly thousands, of jobs lost, because these jobs are very, very mobile. They are mobile, Speaker.

“As a citizen of Ontario and an employee working in the film industry in visual effects, I am writing to you to express my concerns with the proposed changes.

“The film industry makes money for Ontario.” The guy in the film industry understands that, Speaker; they don’t. “We generate millions of dollars of revenue for the province through income tax of staffers working in the industry and through supporting local businesses.” Think about the hotels. Think about the restaurants. Think about all these businesses in downtown Toronto. Think about the businesses in Powassan, where I attended while they were filming a movie recently. Mattawa, a small community in my riding, had two major movies, one for Hallmark. When you think of the stars that come up to Mattawa and Powassan and downtown North Bay and Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay, who have been in and out of there in the last year, kiss all that goodbye, because under the current tax credit system, film production and visual effects services—their spend has almost doubled in the last decade. Well, Speaker, as soon as these guys see somebody succeeding, spending money and bringing tax revenue in, the first thing they want to do is shut the tap off, cut the industry. No, no, no, they don’t want to generate all these billions of dollars in revenue in Ontario. They’re ready. They want to save \$10 million.

1510

I remember the last time they saved money. Very tragically, we heard about their winter road maintenance. They wanted to save \$36 million. There are priorities and there are choices to make. And one of their choices was to knowingly and purposely cut back on winter road maintenance, and it resulted in deaths throughout all of Ontario. I tell you, Speaker, how much it hurt and how much it pained me over that Christmas period. December 27, 2011, to January 3: In that period, 10 people under the age of 20 died. Eight of them were teenagers; one was eight years old.

This is what happens when you do the cuts that they did to winter road maintenance. The Auditor General told us that. It wasn’t about the privatization that worked well for nine years; it’s since these guys came in in 2009 and changed the rules and took away the oversight. That’s the \$36 million they saved. That’s their idea about savings, and we saw the result.

Now they’re going to crush an industry, an industry that generates billions of dollars. They’re going to crush that industry to try to save \$10 million. I don’t even know if they can save that. We don’t believe any of the numbers they’ve presented to us, Speaker. I have no idea how they imagine they’re going to save \$10 million.

Why don’t we have any credibility in the numbers? I’ve spoken about my favourite chart of all time, my absolute favourite chart. Here it is in Building Ontario Up, Budget 2015; it’s what I’ve referred to many times in

this Legislature as the fake chart. This tells you why the people of Ontario do not believe any of your numbers—page 199 of the budget. Here’s the fake chart, the one that we showed in the Legislature many times—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I appreciate that the member wants to make reference to the budget, but he can’t use it as a prop.

I return to the member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. When I saw the minister use it so many times, I presumed you were allowed to do that in the House. I apologize; I did not know that.

Let me tell you about the chart in the Ministry of Finance’s own words—why I call this “the fake chart.” In my copy of Focus on Finance, which you can download at fedeli.com—my shameless plug again. Let me read to you from page 14 and 15. I put the fake chart in here and referenced the fake chart. The wording goes on—and I’ll have to use it carefully, because I know I had to withdraw two words the last time I read this. I remember the words now, and I will make sure I don’t use those two words.

“In fact, the Ministry of Finance admits the benchmark of progress—an estimated \$24.7-billion deficit—is a complete fiction, ‘was never a real expectation’ and ‘was a deliberate policy’ to project ‘a worst-case outcome.’” In other words, what we saw in the chart is not real. “They also admit ‘the path to balance was then drawn from there, assuming a straight-line trajectory of declining deficits.’” What it’s saying is, they have a chart where they start out with a fake number, \$24.7 billion, and they want to get to zero, so they draw an absolutely straight line and then fill in the lines down, and that’s going to be their deficit number for the year. Every one of those numbers was made up—absolutely and completely made up.

In fact, “‘It was assumed that spending would be constrained to whatever it takes to hit these targets.’” That’s what they said: “We drew these imaginary lines, and wherever the line went across, that was going to be our budget number.” Throwing a dart at a chart on the wall could have been even more accurate than this, Speaker.

It goes on to say, “Essentially, someone laid a ruler across a graph, drew a straight line, and that’s the extent of the government’s plan to balance the budget.” So you wonder why we don’t believe any of the numbers we get from these guys. “They also divulged, ‘Over the medium term, we have notional targets by sector that add up to the deficit numbers, but not yet full plans to deliver on them.’” It means, “We know what the number is going to be. We have a notional target. We think it’s going to be—”

Of course, they were wrong. They didn’t even match their own fake chart. They went from a deficit of \$9.2 billion and it got bigger, to \$10.5 billion, and it got bigger, to \$10.9 billion. It went the wrong way; they couldn’t even meet their own fake numbers here. But they have “‘not yet full plans to deliver on them. For the

extended outlook, neither sector targets nor plans yet exist.” That’s an exact quote from the Ministry of Finance. “The once-secret document”—that we got through the gas plant scandal—“concludes ‘in order to hit the deficit targets, spending growth going forward has to decrease dramatically.’ But as we’ve seen, that restraint never materialized.” The budget has \$2.4 billion in increased spending.

We’ve got a fake chart, fake numbers, and we’ve got a government who will not go back out to the people because they sure as heck did not like what they heard from them last time. They did not like hearing from the film and digital and apprentice groups, all three, who spoke very clearly. They knew it was coming. They heard the rumblings from this government that the life-blood for their very industries was about to be cut. They knew what was coming. They warned us, they warned everybody in the committee, and yet this government went ahead. Despite all of the good advice they got from people, they went ahead and rammed through this budget.

They’re time-allocating everything, Speaker. They do not want debate in this Legislature on any of our issues. They do not want to hear from the people. They do not want to hear from the legislators, the lawmakers. They don’t want to hear from anybody because they may have a differing opinion. They don’t pay attention to our own slogan in here about hearing the other side. Speaker, they don’t want to hear the other side. This budget was made a long, long time ago.

When we saw the budget binder—it’s about four inches thick. The budget was read on a Thursday and on Friday, the budget binder was out with details about the sections in the act. That whole thing with the Ed Clark committee and the report? A facade. The details on how to convert that into laws was all done, section after section. Stripping away all the powers of the Integrity Commissioner, taking away the powers of the Auditor General, taking away the sunshine list, taking away the Financial Accountability Officer; the moment one share is sold, taking Hydro away from crown agency status: All of that was already done, and they’re pretending it got done within days, if not hours, of the time that the budget was passed. What a pile of nonsense.

They talked to us about this \$130 billion in infrastructure, which is nothing more than a reannouncement. If you want further proof of that, when you look at last year’s budget 2014, which I won’t hold up as a prop, but I’ll read from it: “dedicating proceeds from 7.5 cents of the existing provincial gasoline tax for public transit and transportation” etc. The new one, page 44: “dedicating proceeds from 7.5 cents of the existing provincial gas tax,” again and again. It’s the same words. They did nothing but a cut and paste over the budget here. It’s the same announcement. They made it sound like it’s all brand new, all-new, big information—none of it.

But there’s one tricky little part of this \$130-billion announcement that is new. In last year’s budget 2014, they talked about how they needed \$3.1 billion of asset

sales to make it happen: \$1.1 billion this year, a billion the next, half a billion the year after and half a billion the year after. They talked about it being the GM shares, the sale of LCBO warehousing, the sale of the OPG building. All that was accounted for in the \$3.1 billion. But now, this year in the budget, all of a sudden they need to sell Hydro One in order to make their plan. They’re talking about selling Hydro One, putting a portion of the money against the debt of Hydro One—and they changed the law to make that happen, because it was against the law to do it. Speaker, they do that and, sadly, that is going to raise your hydro bill because you’ve still got the mortgage. It’s like you sold the house, took the cash and bought a car with it instead of paying off the bank. That’s exactly what they’re doing. The bank loan, the mortgage on Hydro is still owed. It’s got to come from somewhere. It’s going to come out of your pocket, Speaker. It’s going to come out of the people. It’s going to come out of Jennifer’s pocket in Ottawa, which is why they don’t want to go to Ottawa and face her yet again.

Here we are now. They’re telling us they’re going to take the other part of that Hydro sale and put it into transit. Well, that is absolute sheer nonsense. According to their own budget, that money was already budgeted. They can ostensibly say that they’re putting it into transit, pat themselves on the back again, but then all they do is haul out the money that was already there and bail themselves out of their awful deficit that went from \$9.2 billion to \$10.5 billion to \$10.9 billion.

That’s what they’re doing, Speaker. It’s a shell game with our money. That’s exactly what they’re doing. Their own budget tells us they only needed \$3.1 billion to make it work last year and now, this year, they’re going all in. They’re taking the \$3.1 billion, plus they need the sale of Hydro. That does not fix the overspending problem they have. The problem is not a revenue problem in Ontario; they have a spending problem. They cannot help themselves from continuing to spend, spend, spend. It’s a tax-and-spend: They tax you and spend your money. That’s exactly what they’re doing.

1520

Now, they’ve got this extra money that came from the sale of an asset. They didn’t fix the core problem, what we call the structural deficit. It’s still there. The expense is still there. When you sell that asset this year, what are you going to do next year? What are you going to sell at that volume next year to eliminate your deficit if you haven’t solved the core problem?

These guys have not found a tax they don’t like. I’ve told this story a couple of times and it just boggles my mind. Here’s an example of the sort of tax-and-spend that they’re all about. Here you’ve got a company, one of the very few left exploring in northern Ontario after the Far North Act got forced through by these guys—you’ve got a company that found diamonds, the only company in Ontario that found diamonds. So they begin to go into the construction of the mine. Now, De Beers has already spent millions on getting that mine up and running. It’s not quite running at the time. These guys knock at the

door and tell them, “Congratulations. Welcome to Ontario. Guess what? We’re putting in a diamond tax today.” Can you imagine? But they said, “Oh, don’t worry; we’re going to tax every diamond producer in Ontario.” Of course, there’s only the one and there will only ever be the one. This is what they’re all about. They will tax anything that doesn’t move and some things that do, and spend your money.

When I think of the Ring of Fire, the place in the Far North where I’ve been to four times, and I saw the hundreds of people in 2011, 2012 and 2013 working there—more than 250 people. When I was there in 2014, you know what happened? Cliffs resources was moving out that day. I watched as they packed up their boxes. Not only did they move out of the Ring of Fire, they ended up moving out of Ontario. They ended up not only selling their base camp; they sold their claim. They’ve given up on Ontario. Why? Because these guys can’t put two and two together. They could not put the deal together.

Chromite, the mineral that makes stainless steel, was discovered there eight years ago now. There is still nothing there after eight years because these guys can’t put it together. Do you know what the mining companies have told me in my office when they come in for stakeholder meetings to talk about it? “Vic, we need everything you can do to help us with the Ring of Fire.” They say, “You know one of the things that worries us? That diamond tax they did to De Beers after they were in for billions, they’re going to do that to us. They’re going to bring in a chromite tax.” I know the member from Parry Sound stood in this Legislature and asked that very question, and did not get a no from this government. They would not say no when asked if they are going to implement a chromite tax once these companies are halfway through.

This is exactly what this government is all about. They do not want to get out there, throughout Ontario, and travel and confront—that’s what it will be—confront Jennifer who has to decide between heat or eat, food or fuel. They do not want to confront all of the film industry. That’s why they will not travel.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: During the last election in June 2014 or during the pre-budget consultation in January of this year, the Liberals never once said, “We are selling Hydro.” They never once said, “We are privatizing Hydro.” Yet this is such an important decision because it is irrevocable.

That’s why we have moved an amendment to give people a chance to be heard. We want the people of Ontario, the people of Nickel Belt, from Ivanhoe Lake to Alban, from Nairn Centre to Wanapitei—we want to give them a chance to be heard. Because once Hydro is sold, it is irrevocable.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, people in Windsor–Tecumseh had no idea the Liberals were going to sell

60% of Hydro One. They didn’t campaign on it in the last election. It’s not even spelled out in their budget. We want a legislative committee to come to Windsor and Essex county and listen to our voices on this major and drastic policy change.

In 1907, 19 municipalities held a referendum and voted for public power in Ontario. Public power: huge support in Toronto, Kitchener, Waterloo, London, Hamilton—right across the province. By 1913, more than three dozen communities, including Windsor, voted for public power. Hydro One is still the only transmission network that was created by a direct vote of the people it was meant to serve.

If you start selling Hydro One—it’s a shameful repudiation of the most democratic referendum process in Ontario’s history. Shame on you for even thinking about it. Take it on the road. If you believe in it, sell it.

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

Ms. Horwath has moved an amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion number 21. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I’ve received not one but two notices of deferral: “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to the amendment to government notice of motion number 21 be deferred until the time of deferred votes tomorrow.” It is signed by the chief government whip.

Vote deferred.

2015 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2015, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to debate the budget motion. I wish to let you know I will be sharing my time with the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Essentially, in addressing this budget motion, the most important issue that we are addressing is what I consider to be the grave financial situation across the province of Ontario. My colleagues and I have identified that. Actually, well before the budget we identified a number of issues that we raised and that we felt were very important for people in Ontario to have us go forward to support this budget. We laid this out ahead of time. I feel that there were probably five sensible approaches—five budget asks, if you will—that we specifically routinized in the form of a motion. It was a motion that was debated before this Legislative Assembly just a day before the

budget was released, and there was a very clear indication that we would base our support on fulfillment of these requests, five to be specific.

Number one, we requested that this government walk away from the proposed Ontario registered pension plan, the ORPP.

We requested a commitment to not levy a carbon tax under the guise of a carbon trade-and-tax system.

1530

We were adamant that this government indicate a sensible plan to fix the home care issue that many elderly people are dealing with—the kind of pressures we're seeing on our hospitals indirectly because of not only a lack of long-term-care facilities, but, very simply, an inadequate approach to treating people at home.

Dealing with energy prices was our fourth request.

Last, we requested a commitment to a credible plan to balance the budget by 2017-18. We know that the members opposite indicate that they are going to balance the budget by 2017-18, but they still have not presented a plan that makes sense, in our view.

We debated that motion the day before. Items were voted on. You may recall, Speaker, that our motion didn't pass.

Just to go back to the ORPP, the proposed pension plan brought forward by Premier Wynne, the plan would see both employees and employers dinged through a payroll tax. Employees would pay 1.9% of their total salary into a general pool. As a result of this payroll tax alone, just on the employee side of the ledger, obviously people in Ontario—those who are working—will see less money in their pockets. They're going to see the place where they work have an increase in the cost of doing business. Specifically, businesses themselves will also have to pay 1.9% into this, essentially, payroll tax.

This government had a number of documents. Information was acquired that indicated that every \$2 billion that is collected across the province through this payroll tax would result in the loss of something on the order of 18,000 jobs. This was advice to the government. They ignored the advice and forged ahead anyway.

The second area of concern for us was the carbon tax, the cap-and-trade proposal. This was discussed at great length this morning by all three parties, including the Premier of Quebec. A cap-and-trade proposal seems to essentially be designed to drive up the cost of any carbon-based fuel. We already have some of the highest energy rates in North America; now we are staring down the barrel of a cap-and-trade, cap-and-tax system. Essentially, it will become a tax on just about everything. It will make it more expensive to heat your home, operate your car or run a tractor, a truck or a tractor-trailer, and by extension it would raise the cost of essentially every energy-dependent consumer good we produce, import or transport across the province of Ontario.

According to Environment Canada, Canada generates something like 1.8% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions nationwide. These are carbon dioxide emissions. It's always odd for me to hear people talking about a

carbon tax. It's not a carbon tax; it's a carbon dioxide tax. But I guess some of these details aren't that important to some people.

Sure, it might be good to lead by example. We certainly saw that down in my riding with the termination of coal-based electricity generation at the gigantic Nanticoke generating station. That was a tremendous hit to our coal-based economy in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. You can argue that it's good to lead by example, but the truth is that Ontario's contribution to carbon dioxide emissions—Canada's contribution, essentially—is relatively minor.

A carbon tax—a cap-and-trade system—will obviously put Ontario's manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage. That does not go very far, as far as luring new industry or new business to the province of Ontario.

I made mention of home care. Government spending habits are resulting in people being turned away from home care. CCAC operations, for example, do not appear to be linked to outcomes. That's partly an administration issue, a management issue, but the ultimate responsibility lies in this Legislature. We've talked about this at great length. We feel that we should do everything possible to increase the quality of home care to allow people to stay in their homes and hence have more hospital rooms available for those who need them the most.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Did you mention you're sharing your time with me?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Oh, I thought I did mention it. I am sharing my time with the member from Sarnia-Lambton. Who knows? If I did mention it before, well, he got his riding mentioned twice in the House. That's all good. That's Bob Bailey, by the way.

When home care is not available adequately, when people are unnecessarily in a hospital bed, that's essentially a government closing hospital beds by not making them available.

There's not only a lack of home care, but since this group opposite took power, we have not seen the construction of long-term-care beds. When we were in government, there were something like 20,000 long-term-care beds constructed across the province of Ontario.

Electricity, and I qualify that: rising electricity prices. It's another reason we, those of us in opposition, are pushing for change through this budget process. This government's long-term energy strategy essentially has been one fiasco after another, from defective smart meters to the gas-fired power plants scandal. The most recent addition to the list would be the proposed sale of Hydro One. We now know 77% of Hydro One full-time employees and 80% of OPG employees—Ontario Power Generation—are on that sunshine list, the \$100,000-a-year sunshine list.

The global adjustment electricity tax on business: This was a tax to pay for this government's long-term green energy plan, the solar and the wind turbines that still don't make any economic sense. Global adjustment on business has increased by 1,200%. It's collected something like \$50 billion since 2006.

One other point: balancing the budget. This is a very important call from our opposition. It's been our call for 12 years. It's still not in sight. For the third straight year this deficit has increased. We're obviously heading in the wrong direction. Ontario's Auditor General warned us to that effect and indicated that if the deficit, let alone the debt, isn't brought under control, it will crowd out essential services like home care, health care in general and education.

Essentially, we do not support this proposed budget. People can no longer afford a budget like this and they cannot afford to support a government like this.

I should wrap up, Speaker. My colleagues and myself, we can't support this budget. We laid out five major reasons for that, five areas that we felt should be included in the budget that would help make people in Ontario a little better off. None of them were addressed, certainly not addressed in the way that we requested. In fact, in some areas it was totally the opposite. These were the minimum. This was all we asked for. Regrettably, this government did not come through.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: On behalf of the residents of Sarnia–Lambton, I'd like to take this opportunity to speak to the government's budget motion before the House. The budget motion as it is before the House reads, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government."

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After more than eight years as the member of provincial Parliament for Sarnia–Lambton, I believe that I can say with absolute certainty that the residents of Sarnia–Lambton do not approve the overall budgetary policy of this government.

As a border community, located about three hours by car and even longer by train from Queen's Park, the feeling most often expressed by Sarnia–Lambton constituents to my office is that this government has ignored many of our concerns, instead focusing on the greater Toronto area.

It's worth noting that in the Premier's only visit, as Premier, to Sarnia–Lambton, she stated to the Sarnia Observer, the local newspaper, that Sarnia–Lambton would not be forgotten on her watch. Despite not receiving any specific mention in the 2015 budget, Sarnia–Lambton patiently waits for the Premier to keep her promise to Sarnia–Lambton.

We have a number of very important projects, such as the Lambton College health sciences building and the SABER petrochemical project, which would benefit not just this community but the province as a whole. We patiently await attention. I look forward to the Premier's commitment on these projects in the near future.

While Sarnia–Lambton was not mentioned specifically, I would like to point out that there are some elements of the budget bill that I do see as positive for Sarnia–Lambton, including expanding the natural gas network to rural Ontario. This is a long-overdue move by

the government to work towards expanding Ontario's natural gas network into the rural communities of Ontario.

There is an abundance of affordable natural gas at Ontario's doorstep, and Ontario should be taking advantage of this resource, though I recall a vote just last Thursday which could call that into question. As I recall, we had a vote last week which could restrict that kind of gas. Fifty per cent of the gas, ladies and gentlemen, at this time in Ontario, in Toronto homes powered by electricity—50% of that gas today comes from the north-eastern United States. That's part of the Marcellus shale gas. That's something I'm going to pursue and I think that this government really needs to take a look at it.

This gas expansion would mean lower energy costs for farmers and all small businesses in rural Ontario, and another option for consumers to heat their homes. Surprisingly, even in a community like Sarnia–Lambton, which probably has more pipeline infrastructure than any community in Ontario, there is the potential to positively affect many farms and households in this initiative. That's in my area; I know many other communities with Ontario could benefit from this.

Secondly, I believe that the Connecting Links program, which provides funding for municipal roads that connect to provincial highways, also has a potential to benefit the community of Sarnia–Lambton. I'm hopeful—and I will work for this—that a way will be found for this program to improve our local infrastructure, including the long-overdue expansion of Highway 40, which connects Highway 402 to Sarnia. The expansion of Highway 40 has been long talked about by many governments, not just this government. With the increased traffic that we are seeing to Sarnia–Lambton's Chemical Valley and the further expansion of residential development in that area, it's time the province had a serious look at this project because of safety matters and others. Those are just two small initiatives that the government has put forward in this budget.

I would be remiss if I also didn't mention some of the issues with this budget that constituents in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton are concerned about. One of those, in particular, was the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. You will recall that the opposition—our party—had five budget asks of this government prior to the release of the 2015 budget. One of those was that they walk away entirely from their plans to mandate another payroll tax in the ORPP. Of course, in the budget the government recommits to establishing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan by January 1, 2017. This triggered many emails to my office.

I'd like to read one from a local constituent, Ted Vanos, who is a very successful financial planner in Sarnia and has helped many individuals to achieve their financial goals. Mr. Vanos writes—this is from his email:

"Dear Mr. Bailey,

"I can't believe that Ms. Wynne and her associates are seriously going to go ahead with this Ontario pension plan. No one I know or speak to is in favour to it."

With the Ontario debt now ballooning to over \$280 billion with an annual budget deficit—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I regret to inform the member that eight hours of debate on the budget motion has now been reached. Pursuant to standing order 58, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some nos.

All of 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.

I would like to inform the House that I’ve received from the chief government whip a deferral notice asking that this vote be deferred until the time of deferred votes tomorrow.

Vote deferred.

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity 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, May 25, 2015, from 2 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 6:

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

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

—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 Monday, May 25, 2015; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Tuesday, May 26, 2015; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, June 1, 2015, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Monday, June 1, 2015, at 4 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. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, June 2, 2015. 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, one hour of debate 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 shall 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. Bradley has moved that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Dispense.

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

The chair of cabinet.

1550

Hon. James J. Bradley: First of all, I may say that the enabling legislation for this particular motion was legislation passed in 1993 by the NDP government with, then, Dave Cooke, a Windsor member, being the member who brought in the rule changes which permitted some of the machinations that take place in the House today, and by the previous government under Premier Michael Harris, who brought in changes to the rules of the Legislature which enabled motions of this kind to be made—just so we know who the authors of these changes happened to be that enable motions of this kind which are so enthusiastically supported by the member for Leeds–Grenville and others on the opposite side.

Building infrastructure—modern infrastructure, in particular—is part of our government’s plan to continue growing the economy and creating jobs. That is why

we're investing, in fact, over \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years. These investments build much-needed infrastructure in every corner of the province and will support over 110,000 jobs annually. Experts agree that investing in infrastructure is an investment in our economy.

An April 2013 report from the Conference Board of Canada found that each dollar invested in public infrastructure in Ontario raises gross domestic product by \$1.14 in the near term; in other words, that much for every investment that's taking place. So that's really good news. In addition, our own studies show that the returns on this dollar grow to \$3.1 in the long term while supporting jobs and facilitating private investment. That's something that, of course, we want to encourage.

Bill 6, if passed by the Legislature, would require our government and future governments to regularly prepare long-term infrastructure plans. This will ensure that all governments recognize the importance of long-term planning. The Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act is part of our plan to continue building a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. The proposed legislation would increase the opportunities for apprenticeships in a wide variety of trades. All parties have stated in the Legislature that they will be supporting this bill during second reading. So there we have it: We have the support of all the parties in the Legislature, and I'm delighted to see that is happening.

For instance, the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex stated in the Legislature that the PCs will “support the bill at second reading.” The member for London West stated again during debate that the NDP will “support” Bill 6 during “the second reading process.” With all-party support for second reading, it is time we move forward with Bill 6.

In the last Parliament, this Legislature—I think many objective observers observed—was ground to a halt and essentially unable to move forward. Only 39% of government bills were passed in the last, minority Parliament. That's compared to more than three quarters of bills that were passed going back to 1990. Voters of Ontario sent a clear message last June. They wanted our government to get on with the business of governing in their best interests.

Speaker, as you know, we introduced this bill in July. This bill has been before the House for over 10 months now. In fact, this proposed act is substantively similar to Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, which was introduced on—get this—November 26, 2013. Prior to the dissolution of the 40th Parliament, debate on Bill 141 at second reading had concluded and it was referred to committee. There had been considerable debate on this bill and the ideas in this bill, and we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives.

I think most fair-minded people would conclude that we should end second reading and refer the bill now to committee. Committee stakeholders will present their views, and committee members will have an opportunity

to move amendments to the bill. At the same time, this House can move to substantive debate on other matters.

There are a number of important pieces of legislation that have already been introduced on which the government would like to proceed with debate in this House and move forward through the legislative process. Let me mention some of them: Bill 9, Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act; Bill 37, Invasive Species Act—I'll resist what I was going to say in that regard; I was thinking of last weekend when I thought of invasive species, but I'm going to avoid that because I don't want anybody to be crestfallen by my mentioning that—Bill 52, Protection of Public Participation Act; Bill 66, Great Lakes Protection Act; Bill 85, Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

We would like to spend time debating some of the other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but of course it's difficult to do so until Bill 6 is dealt with.

Now, here's my expectation: My expectation is that there will be negative speeches from the opposition about this. I'm told that when some people who are now on the government side were on the opposition side, they made speeches of this kind. Of course, you would realize, having been here since 1990, Mr. Speaker, that there was good reason in those days for those speeches. Today, I could not conclude the same thing. So I expect there will be some partisan barbs that may be directed across the floor. I accept the fact that there will be those partisan barbs and representations made.

There are times in this Legislature when we can avoid that, when we can rise to the occasion and be non-partisan. We had one of those this morning, where we had the Premier of the province of Quebec—and they have many of the same pieces of legislation before them. The Premier of the province of Quebec addressed this assembly, and the three party leaders had an opportunity to offer their remarks and could have been very statesmanlike. I'm thinking at the present time that probably the member for Whitby–Oshawa would be the kind of member who would have given a very statesmanlike presentation to the House, and that did not happen with the new leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party. But I want to get away from that, because I see you leaning forward, which tells me that it would only generate some unnecessary confrontation with the opposition.

So what I want to do right now, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, is to urge all members of this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible, particularly in light of the fact that all of the parties represented in this Legislature are in favour of the bill. I look forward to the opposition parties, if they see fit, supporting this particular motion. I am always optimistic. That may or may not happen, but I'm always optimistic. It would send a good message, I think, if the opposition were to say to this Legislature, “You know something? There are occasions when we think bills should proceed to committee, and this is one of them.”

So I look forward with anticipation to the debate which will ensue in the next two or three minutes.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm going to speak on the government's closure motion on Bill 6.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's a time allocation, not a closure.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, it is time allocation, so we're choking off debate, to use a term that you used in the Legislature, honourable sir. I'll be quoting you more extensively in a few moments.

First of all, I want to thank the government for allowing the unanimous consent motion that allowed the new leader of my party, Mr. Patrick Brown, to speak today in the Legislature. It was a historic day. He spoke extremely well. I think he really showed the excitement that we have in our party with the election of our new leader. Again, I want to thank the government for allowing him, by unanimous consent—and the third party as well—a chance to speak to the Premier of Quebec's address today. So, again, thank you for doing that.

1600

I want to speak again, as I did earlier today, about this government's—really, they don't even come and talk to the third party House leader and me about bills like this anymore. I remember this bill being brought up in a very early House leaders' meeting in July; as the member for St. Catharines notes, it was tabled in the House for first reading on July 7. We didn't hear much about it at House leaders after that—I think it was grouped in with a number of bills—but this government can't seem to get its priorities straight.

The member from St. Catharines mentioned the minority Parliament. This government had a terrible problem: They couldn't seem to get any legislation through. They had a real problem managing the minority. They brought up bills, and it just seemed that they were more intent on getting these bills to the point where they could time-allocate them or, in some cases, invoke closure.

Here's a bill, for all the rhetoric on the other side, that we've debated now—we've only really had three of our members speak to this incarnation of this bill, Bill 6. It has really only been debated for just a little over six and a half hours, so there was ample opportunity, I think, for the government to work with the opposition parties on a bill that we do support, to get it through and get it moved forward.

But, you know, there's not even any offer when it comes to Bill 6 anymore. There's not even any recommendation on how we can collaboratively move the bill forward. It's just, again, that there's a time allocation motion tabled, and the government thinks that four hours of public hearings at second reading is adequate—four hours, with five minutes for each deputant and nine minutes to respond.

So here, Bill 6, their major infrastructure bill, which back in July they told our party and the third party is a priority for them—the priority is to hear less than 10

people appear before them as deputations. Ten Ontarians can come and give feedback on this bill. That's it, that's all: one day of hearings—four hours—and one day of clause-by-clause.

This was a bill that the government told us, when they got elected, was a priority, yet it went from July 7 to December 9 before it was ever brought back on the floor. You yourself, Speaker, as our critic, didn't actually finish your response until March of this year, after the bill was tabled.

The member from St. Catharines may talk about the bill being on the order paper or on the table for 10 months. Well, the bill was only called five times for second reading debate. As I've said, we've only had three of our members speak on the record on this bill. Again, the government says one thing and does something completely different.

The deputy House leader for the government says we're going to be partisan. I'm going to quote him. I'm going to quote the member for St. Catharines—the esteemed member for St. Catharines. This is what he said on December 11, 2001. This is Mr. Bradley: “This is indeed an interesting bill, but what's even more interesting right now is the time allocation motion that faces us. For the people who are watching this perhaps on their television sets at home, I should clarify that. That is the choking off of debate, the ending of debate or the government allocating how much time there shall be for the debate on a piece of legislation.”

There's the famous quote from Jim Bradley, the member for St. Catharines, about choking off debate. So here he is talking about time allocation, and he's the one who is presenting the motion. If he wants to talk about being partisan, here are his own words, right back at him, about being partisan. This was a bill that ultimately chokes off debate.

I can use his remarks that day, again, almost right back at him. Here's later on in that speech from December 11, 2011: “We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That's most unfortunate, because it's what you would call anti-democratic.” That's what he said then. He went on to say, “Today the strongest person is the party whip. The party whip simply tells the members of the committee what shall happen, and it happens. That's unfortunate, because on all sides I think members”—

Interjection: The government whip is running away.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes. There he goes.

“That's unfortunate because on all sides I think members have something to contribute: the opposition to concede when the government has made moves that are acceptable and good, and the government members to find problems that might exist in government legislation. But that is virtually gone. It is virtually dictated now by the Premier's office. The speeches we hear in the House tend to be speeches which seem to originate from the government caucus service bureau, and I understand the need for some research for speeches, but they are virtual-

ly meaningless, because they can't influence the government or the procedures that take place. That's most unfortunate."

I wholeheartedly agree with the member for St. Catharines. I wholeheartedly agree with him in that speech from 2001 about choking off debate. I believe that this bill, which has support from all three parties, could have been part of a discussion by House leaders. It could have been something we could agree with and move forward on.

We have lots of bills on the order paper from both of our parties; good bills that should be moved forward, good pieces of public policy. Just like we did a few weeks ago when we had three bills move forward, one from each party, this bill could have been part of such an agreement. This bill could have been brought forward to committee and piloted back to the House, but again, it's just the heavy-handedness of this government, the fact that they will just simply move a motion, shut down debate, or to use the words, "choking off" debate, as the member for St. Catharines has said. I've only had three members speak to this bill. I have members sitting in the House today right behind me who are ready, willing and able to debate this bill. We get absolutely no opportunity. I think that's wrong.

We're going to vote against this time allocation motion, and I hope that the government backbenchers will put down those talking points from the government caucus bureau and allow their constituents to have a say in committee and allow other MPPs to have their say in this House.

Thank you for giving me this chance. I am voting against this motion.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, here we are again. The government is bringing forward a time allocation motion, just as they did earlier, on the privatization of Hydro. It seems to me that there is nothing to be lost by talking to the people of the province about public policy. Where is it wrong, where do we lose anything, if a government says, "I have a major initiative, policy-wise, that I want to put forward, such as the privatizing of hydro"—where is the downfall, where is the problem with giving the public the opportunity to have their say?

I think what is really galling, as we listen to the debate and the time allocation debates—as we heard earlier on the budget bill and we're hearing now—is that because the government says, "We've had six and a half hours of debate in the Legislature and we're going to let the bill go to committee for one or two days here in Toronto," that, somehow or other, makes everything okay.

I could understand if a government ran on something and said, "If we're elected government we're going to do X," and people voted on that, being a major campaign issue. I guess I wouldn't like it, but in the end it would have to do with the government actually trying to do what it said it was going to do in an election, and the people would have had their say. I wouldn't like it, but I

would understand it. I still wouldn't agree, but at least I'd understand the reasoning.

In this case, the government did not run on hydro—they didn't run on the privatization of electricity—they ran, essentially, against Tim Hudak and 100,000 jobs, is what they did, and they tried to present themselves as people ready to lead Ontario with progressive ideas. Nobody would have thought that being progressive meant you were going to sell off or privatize Hydro. My God, nobody would ever have got that idea from that kind of debate. But this government, now that it's in power, is acting as if they're Conservatives in a hurry. At this point, they're outflanking the Conservatives when it comes to how right wing you can be and how much privatization you can have.

1610

The auditor reported that we wasted over \$8.5 billion of taxpayers' money on—what do they call them? Public-private—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Partnerships.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —partnerships. I don't like using "P3s" because maybe people out there don't know what it means. But the government, instead of doing infrastructure, as we normally did, which is, a municipality does a debenture and the province pays for it up front, or finds economies within their own ministries or borrows money to do it—what this government is doing is they're making all these deals with the private sector and having them build our hospitals, bridges and other things, not just doing the physical construction work, which they always did—that was always the case—but they're getting them to run the jobs and to essentially own the buildings in the end. The auditor has come back and said it's \$8.5 billion more to do that. Here this government argues it's got to sell Hydro in order to raise what is \$4 billion that will go—I will argue it won't even go to transit, but go to general revenue. They would save \$8.5 billion if they wouldn't do all these public-private partnerships—P3s, as they're known—on infrastructure.

I just say to the government across the way, you never ran on this. Now, to come in and say, "Oh, we're having more hearings than we've ever had before"—the Premier was a bit confused today. She talked about six days of hearings. Well, it's not six days of hearings, it's four, because two of those six days are clause-by-clause, where only members sit in the room and are able to speak at committee. The public can watch—there's nothing wrong with the public coming to look—but it's the members amending the bill, so there's really only four days of hearings.

What happens if you live in communities across the province? If you live in northern, southwestern, south-eastern or central Ontario and you have a want to be able to come to speak to this whole issue, the government is not giving people the ability to have their say, and they didn't run on this in the last election.

Ms. Cindy Forster: We had more days—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, exactly.

I would just say that the government doesn't want to hear from the public because their own polling numbers tell them what it is. This is not popular with the public.

The Premier was in Sudbury on Friday at the FONOM meeting, where the municipal leaders from across northern Ontario gathered. The Premier herself, in an answer to questions from the floor—in other words, municipal politicians from the north—said, “I understand this is not popular and I understand we're going to take some political hits,” she said to the municipal leaders. Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of Ontario, understands this is not popular with the public. She's able to admit to politicians in northern Ontario that what she is doing is going to give her a political hit and it's not popular and she didn't run on it in the last election—all the more reason why you should give the public the opportunity to have their say.

That brings me to the time allocation. I just want to finish on that, because I know other members of my caucus want to speak.

The other part of this whole thing is this concept that, somehow or other, allowing the public to come to have their say is a terrible way of doing business because it's not efficient for the passage of the legislation.

Listen, when I got elected in this place, there was no such thing as time allocation. Essentially, this place worked as a minority government, because any opposition party, as Mike Harris did to us when we were in government, could hold the government up for days on end in order to force the government into negotiating hearings or into doing whatever. Governments had to respond. If they wanted to get their legislative agenda through the House, they would have to accommodate. The quid pro quo was that an opposition party, such as Mike Harris's of the day, would stand in the House and read the names of every lake as an introduction of a bill. That would hold up the House, because back then, there was no time limit on how long you could introduce bills, and the government, in this case the Bob Rae NDP government, had to sit back and say, “You know what? All right. How do we get our budget through the House?” So we made a deal where there would be public hearings in the intersession having to do with matters within the budget so that people could have their say, but the essential parts of the budget were passed. That was the compromise.

What's wrong with the government doing a similar thing now? If they feel so strongly that the privatization of Hydro One is a great deal, maybe they're going to learn things from their friends the bankers and their friends the people who want to invest in Hydro One when they go on the road, and they may have some things to say on the record that quite frankly would make a very bad deal at least a little bit better.

But no, the government doesn't even want to do that because it's in this mindset that six and a half hours of debate is just enough, and one or two days of hearings at Queen's Park without giving the public the chance to have their say is more than enough. You know, “Those

darned voters, those citizens of Ontario, those pesky people, let's just move on with our business at hand.”

This is the danger of what happens when a government relies too much on time allocation. I just think the government would be wise—and I know my good friend the member from St. Catharines, or wherever it is, his riding, Mr. Bradley—I don't know the riding. Sorry.

Hon. James J. Bradley: St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. He's one who understands because he's been in this Legislature beyond all of our years in this Legislature. He served in minority Parliaments and served in the House before time allocation was introduced and the rules were changed. He's correct: It was my good friend Dave Cooke who changed those rules. At the time, I thought—being a newbie, I did what every newbie does in government and applauded what goes on from the backbench as a trained seal, to a certain extent. But I finally understood, after a few years in this place, that actually that was not a good idea. I did it myself. I'm not accusing you of anything I haven't done myself.

I just say that the government would be well served to allow the public to have their say because, at the end, who are we? We are the servants of the people we represent, and when we give them voice to have their say, I think that strengthens democracy to whatever side of the argument you come from. I would ask the government to reconsider and find ways in its dealings so that we actually have more time to allow the public to have their say when it comes to the very important pieces of public policy we deal with in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I want to thank you for assuming the chair so that I'd have the opportunity to speak to this particular time allocation motion on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, the official opposition in this House.

As you know, this is a time allocation motion, and I think we use jargon around here that sometimes isn't well understood, so I'm going to attempt to explain what that means. The government, in its wisdom, has determined that six hours and 40 minutes of debate on this particular bill, Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, is enough debate. They're sick and tired of hearing from the opposition on this issue and they've decided that it's time to send this bill to committee, and put strict parameters on how long the bill will be discussed and debated in committee. Again, they're ending the debate in this House so that other members of the Legislature who may very well wish to speak to this bill and offer their thoughts, ideas, suggestions, their participation on behalf of their constituents—that is being taken away, unfortunately, if indeed the House passes this time allocation motion.

Again, it's my understanding that this has been debated for six hours and 40 minutes, that there have been what we call 20 principal speakers on this particular bill. Of course, there are 107 members in this House, Mr.

Speaker; I don't need to remind you of that. Thirteen of those speakers were government members, and all of those speeches of course were in favour of the bill, but I would point out that in most rounds of the debate the government members shared their time. So in each round there were up to three to four government members speaking for only two or three minutes at a time, in some cases. It's my understanding there were 11 opposition member who had the opportunity to speak, but I think our House leader said three from our side of the House. The fact is, there hasn't been very much debate on this particular bill.

We have seen in recent months the government becoming increasingly impatient with the debating of legislation in this House and having, in a number of cases, brought in closure motions, actually, forcing the Speaker to make a determination as to whether or not sufficient debate has taken place. You, Mr. Speaker, have been faced with that choice, as have I. Of course, we have a responsibility to the House, working with the table staff, recognizing precedents as well as other considerations that are parliamentary tradition, but at the same time, it has meant that in some cases debate has concluded.

This is the other mechanism that the government has to curtail debate, choke off debate, as has been said by our House leader, and that is the time allocation motion. Of course, if this time allocation motion is passed, Bill 6, the infrastructure legislation, will be sent to the Standing Committee on General Government. It would be given the opportunity, that standing committee, to have public hearings for one day only, May 25. There would be some publication of the fact that these hearings were taking place. There would be literally one afternoon of hearings. There would be a deadline for the filing of amendments that is fairly tight as well. Then there would be clause-by-clause the following week, June 1, right through till 9:30 p.m., if necessary, to deal with the clause-by-clause determination of the bill. Then the bill would be referred back to the House and, if necessary, all the amendments would be deemed to have been moved, even if they hadn't been moved. So it's a fairly, I would say, harsh schedule that has been set aside if indeed this time allocation motion passes.

1620

We've discussed this, of course, and we've had some fun with quotes that were read into this House going back a number of years. Many of us have been privileged to serve in the Legislature on both sides of the House, and I think that those of us who have served in government as well as opposition understand that, from time to time, governments will bring in time allocation motions or closure motions. But I think it's a sad day when we see this being used as a routine measure in terms of management of the House's business.

We would expect and anticipate that the House leaders, in their weekly meeting, would have a chance to have some give and take as to which bills and which motions are going to be called for debate—that there would be true negotiation, not just a government House

leader sent into that meeting with orders from the Premier's office, but that there would, in fact, be some give and take so as to ensure that the opposition's concerns, which of course emanate from our ridings and the people we represent, could be taken into consideration too in terms of the discussion of the government's business. But what we see in many cases now, I think, is the corner office making the final decisions, the government House leader being sent into those meetings with really no opportunity to consider what the opposition has to say, and then we're given the details of what's going to be debated the following week in the House, and that's it.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in a perfect world—which is what we should be aspiring to, in my opinion—there would be discussion and give and take at that House leaders' meeting, the opposition would have an opportunity to express some of its views, and some of those views would be taken into consideration. But we apparently don't have that.

Getting back to Bill 6, I have said in my second reading speech—I had an opportunity to speak at length on this bill, and I was glad to have that opportunity—that our caucus would support the bill at second reading. Yet we will not support this time allocation motion, because it curtails debate—in other words, chokes off debate—and does not give many of our members who would wish to have an opportunity to speak on the infrastructure issues in their riding, I assume, and to offer constructive suggestions and advice on a bill that we intend to support at second reading—those members will not be given that opportunity. We have 27 members in our caucus, Mr. Speaker, as you know, and if only three of them have been given an opportunity to speak, how is that fair? How is that a situation whereby members have been given adequate opportunity to participate?

We're all here on behalf of our constituents, all of us having been re-elected not even a year ago in the election of June 2014. Surely the government should recognize and understand that members of the Legislature would want to have a chance to participate in debate, to talk about the infrastructure issues in their riding, and to try to make constructive suggestions, as I said, in second reading debate.

We would hope that the committee process will provide for that, but even the committee process is curtailed by the time allocation motion, which suggests that there are strict parameters around when it will conclude.

Mr. Speaker, we see a government that is becoming increasingly overwhelming in the application of its authority in this Legislature, putting the boots to the opposition from time to time with these time allocation motions. It is quite distressing and unfortunate.

During the course of this debate, we have talked a bit about what took place earlier today. I was very pleased to have had the opportunity to meet the Premier of Quebec, the Honourable Philippe Couillard, who was here and gave his presentation. I thought it was interesting to hear from each of the party leaders, to hear their response to his speech. I thought, in every case, that the welcome that was extended to the Premier was gracious.

I want to compliment our new leader, Patrick Brown, on his presentation. I thought what he was trying to do was to emphasize the areas of solidarity that he feels as a newly elected leader of the Ontario PC Party. The fact is, he complimented the Premier of Quebec for many of the policies that they are pursuing. Of course, the government members showed, I think, their displeasure. I thought that was unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because certainly when we heard our Premier, Premier Wynne, in her response, she did the very same thing. She talked about the areas of solidarity that she felt with the Premier of Quebec. That's exactly what she did. So I wondered how it was that the Liberal members were so upset with what our new leader did.

But the fact is, we had an interesting morning, and it was wonderful to have a guest in this Legislature and to have all three leaders welcome the Premier of Quebec. It was an interesting day, certainly, and something that I'll always remember as a member of the Legislature. I don't think there's been another example where we've invited a guest to speak on the floor of the Legislature going back 25 years—probably going back to the time Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa was here to address the Legislature, which was actually, I think, in the late 1980s. So, again, it was an interesting opportunity for all of us to hear from that particular distinguished guest.

Getting back to the bill that we are considering here, in effect, with this time allocation motion: The bill requires the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to develop a long-term infrastructure plan, which must set out a description of government-owned infrastructure assets, a description of anticipated infrastructure assets for at least the next 10 years and a strategy to meet those needs. Each plan must be made public. If the bill comes into force after consideration by the Legislature, the government would have up to three years to table its first report. The plan would be at least 10 years in scope and would be tabled in the Legislature no later than five years after the day the previous report was tabled.

The government, if Bill 6 is passed, would have to consider a list of criteria when prioritizing proposed projects for the construction of infrastructure assets: Infrastructure planning and investment would take a long-term view and would take into account the needs of Ontarians; infrastructure planning and investment would take into account any applicable budgets or fiscal plans; infrastructure priorities would be clearly identified; infrastructure planning and investment would ensure continued provision of core public services; and infrastructure decisions would promote economic productivity, competitiveness, job creation and training opportunities.

If Bill 6 is passed, the government must require that architects and persons with demonstrable skills in infrastructure design be involved in the construction design of infrastructure assets. The government must require that certain numbers of apprentices be employed or engaged in the construction or maintenance of infrastructure

assets. The Lieutenant Governor in Council would add services covered under infrastructure or remove physical structures or facilities from the definition.

The purpose of the bill is to encourage long-term, evidence-based infrastructure planning and support job creation and training opportunities, economic growth and environmental protection. That is what the government would have us to believe.

We see, in the most recent provincial budget—which was tabled in the Legislature not that long ago—some interesting numbers. I think that it's important to continue to talk about the fiscal context upon which this time allocation motion has been presented this afternoon and, indeed, the fiscal context upon which the bill is ultimately going to be considered. So we see a deficit this year projected in the provincial budget that was tabled a few days ago; a deficit of \$8.5 billion. It is down somewhat from last year's deficit. Again, when I say \$8.5 billion, we're talking about this fiscal year, 2015-16, which actually started April 1, just over a month and a half ago, or thereabouts. An \$8.5-billion projected deficit: That is the shortfall that the government expects in terms of a comparison between its income or its revenue and its expenses.

Again, last year, the fiscal year ending at the end of March 2015, the deficit, the government told us, was \$10.9 billion. So the deficit, in fact—I have to acknowledge—is coming down modestly. It's down from what they had projected the deficit would be last year, which was actually \$12.5 billion, if you'll recall. So the deficit is coming down modestly but not as fast as we would have expected. I think that most Ontarians, having heard the government's repeated promise to balance the budget by 2017-18, would expect to see a greater acceleration of the reduction of the deficit if we're going to achieve that particular target the government has talked about repeatedly, over and over again, and has committed itself to.

We, alarmingly, see a considerable increase, again, in the net debt of the province. The projected net debt this fiscal year, the number that is included in the budget, is \$298.9 billion; rounded off, it's \$299 billion. That is up \$14.7 billion from last year. Last year, the projected deficit was \$284.2 billion.

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That's a lot of numbers, but the bottom line is that we're creeping up very close to a \$300-billion net debt. In fact, year over year, the debt has gone up \$14.7 billion. The government would have us believe that they're doing a wonderful job of controlling and constraining government spending, and in fact, the debt is going up \$14.7 billion this year. That is taken from the government's own budget papers, *Building Ontario Up*. That's the number that they themselves have presented in the budget process, and it was presented to the House with the budget speech.

We see that provincial government spending continues to go up as well. This year, they project to spend \$131.9 billion—rounded off, \$132 billion. That is up from \$129.5 billion last year, an increase of almost \$2.5

billion. Again, the government would have us believe that they're taking these great steps and in fact have made great progress in controlling government spending, but we see that the spending continues to go up this year, going up by \$2.4 billion more than last year.

Another important indicator of the severity of the debt on the provincial taxpayers: The net debt per capita, which again is the amount that each of us owes as Ontarians—every man, woman and child—has gone up again this year. It's now standing at \$21,642. Every man, woman and child in the province of Ontario, in effect, owes \$21,642 because of years and years and years of provincial government overspending and an inability on the part of the government to show fiscal discipline and live within its means. That number, again, is up \$870 from last year. Last year, it was \$20,772. So in fact, the indebtedness of individual Ontarians continues to grow.

Another very important illustration of the level of debt in the province of Ontario is the debt-to-GDP ratio. What we do with that number is we compare the total amount of the provincial debt in relation to the size of the economy, the gross domestic product, the value of all of the goods and services that we in Ontario produce, the economic value of all that taken together. That gives you a number, which allows you to compare our debt to the total value of the goods and services we produce, and shows the ability, really, of the province to service that debt. Right now, the debt-to-GDP ratio coming out of the Building Ontario Up budget papers shows that that ratio is up to 39.8%, up from 39.4% last year.

Just to compare, before the recession in 2007, 2008 and 2009—that time frame—the debt-to-GDP ratio was 26.2%. So the fact is, the debt-to-GDP ratio has increased dramatically, and the government really has no answer to that other than a vague commitment to reduce it at some point in the future. But it's something that should concern every one of us who cares about the future generations in the province of Ontario, our children and grandchildren. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the government, in its budgetary planning and processing, seems to have discounted and dismissed the interests of the future generations of the province of Ontario. They seem to be totally unwilling to live within their means and to exert the kind of fiscal discipline that is necessary to ensure that our children and grandchildren will inherit a province that we can be proud of. Instead, we're leaving a legacy of debt.

Another important number that is in this budget document is the interest payments on the debt. We know that the interest now is the third-largest line item in the provincial budget in terms of the expenditures; health comes first, education comes second, and now third is interest costs. This year, they're budgeting to spend \$11.4 billion on interest, up from \$10.7 billion last year. Again, this is the fastest-growing line item in the budget. It is expected to continue to grow an average of 5.7% in the foreseeable future, going out to 2017-18. We know that with every increase in interest rates, the government is expecting to have to spend an additional \$400 million.

This is a serious concern for the people of Ontario. As the government continues to overspend and deficit-finance and add to the debt, we see a growing debt, we also see growing interest costs to service that debt and we see no end. So that is really the situation that we're facing as a province today as a result of now a dozen years of Liberal overspending in particular, where they have more than doubled the debt since they took office.

Again, I know there's a great deal of concern about that in our communities, but it appears that people need to be more informed about the financial problems that the province faces with respect to its finances. We continue to point these out in the Legislature, and have an obligation to do so. But at the same time, we know that the government plans to spend \$130 billion on infrastructure over 10 years. That seems like a large number, and it is, but I also would point out that the government plans to spend on infrastructure this year \$13 billion, I believe. So even though it seems like a huge number—\$130 billion over 10 years—the government is trying to, with that presentation of the numbers in that way, suggest that they're doing a lot, that they're going to be spending a great deal, when in fact, what they've done is take the fact that they're spending \$13.5 billion this year—scheduled to spend—and then extrapolated it over 10 years. So they're not even planning to spend, over a 10-year period, the same amount that they're spending this year. I think that has to be put into perspective.

I would also say that, yes, the government intends to spend massive amounts on infrastructure. I am here as the member for Wellington–Halton Hills representing my constituents and I would remind the government and the members opposite that we have infrastructure needs in our ridings, too. Given the fact that they're going to spend the money anyway, I'm certainly prepared to advocate on behalf of my constituents for the infrastructure projects that we need.

I look at the Highway 6 Morriston bypass: This is something that I have advocated for for quite a number of years now. I'm starting to get impatient because I think there is an awareness on the part of the government side—a number of the government members are well aware—that this project needs to be moved forward. When I raised this in the House, in the special summer sitting of the Legislature after the provincial election, I was pleased that, the very next day, the Premier acknowledged in her response to one of the questions from our side of the House—and I'm paraphrasing her somewhat, but she more or less said that she thought it was a priority, too, and should be acted upon.

As a former Minister of Transportation, she herself must know how important this project is.

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: And there's another former Minister of Transportation here in this House. I would ask all of them to exert some influence on their colleague the current minister to ensure that this project is in fact added to the five-year plan.

What I am asking for is eminently reasonable, in my view. The government has a five-year plan for new high-

way construction which they call the southern highways program. Each year, after the provincial budget is tabled in this House and passed by the House, the Minister of Transportation has an opportunity to review and revisit the projects that are on the five-year plan. Obviously, the ones that are completed will be checked off. That creates room for new projects, and I continue to suggest and submit that we need this project on the five-year plan.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity on Saturday to speak to the current Minister of Transportation, at an event that we both attended which was held in Toronto. I again impressed upon him the need for this particular project. I invited him, again, to visit our riding to announce it. Actually, in the last week I sent a letter to him, an email, on behalf of the township of Puslinch and on behalf of the Morriston Bypass Coalition, which is a large group representing employers, chambers of commerce, area municipalities, and, Mr. Speaker, you'll be pleased to know, well represented by Hamilton companies as well as the city of Hamilton, if I'm not mistaken, as well as the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.

This came together after a request by a former Minister of Transportation, actually Bob Chiarelli, who met with the mayor of Puslinch a while ago and urged him to put together a coalition like this to speak up. So we did exactly what the minister requested. I know that the group has had trouble getting into to see the current minister, but I've asked the minister to meet with them. He, in fact, indicated to me last week that he would agree to such a meeting, and I hope that we can put together something very quickly. But the Morriston Bypass Coalition includes the township of Puslinch, the county of Wellington, the cities of Guelph and Hamilton, as I said; both the Guelph and Hamilton chambers of commerce, as well as prominent businesses such as Tim Hortons, Maple Leaf Foods, Nestlé Waters, Sleeman Breweries, Canada Bread and Cargill. It's also true that the township of Puslinch commissioned an economic study carried out by Dr. Clarence Woudsma of the University of Waterloo, which concluded that the traffic jams in Morriston are costing tens of millions of dollars a year. The government has that economic study, and again, we look to the government to respond in the appropriate way.

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First of all, what the government needs to do is have the minister meet with the Morriston Bypass Coalition and the township of Puslinch—I would want to be there, too, to represent my constituents—and then we would invite him to come to our riding and announce that the project is being put on the five-year plan of the ministry for new highway construction: the southern highways program. I leave that with the minister.

We also need a new courthouse in Halton. The existing courthouse was built more than 50 years ago. It's no longer adequate to meet the needs of one of the province's fastest-growing regions. The existing facility is aged, overcrowded and inadequate in terms of security and privacy. We have heard from judges and from other

courthouse users, as well as lawyers and staff. I've had a chance to tour the existing court facilities and I know that shortly after that tour took place, some of the other government members who represent Halton were able to tour it as well. The member for Burlington, the member for Halton and the member for Oakville, on a separate date, had a chance to tour the court facilities, and we are trying to work together in a non-partisan fashion to bring that issue forward to the government to consider it. We've been assured that we are a high priority. I've raised it in the House with the Attorney General, had a number of conversations with her, that when new funding becomes available for new courthouses we are, supposedly, led to believe that we are a high priority. Again, I submit to the government that we need a new courthouse in Halton and we have needs that need to be addressed.

On a number of occasions, I have called upon the government to approve a new Holy Cross Catholic school in the community of Georgetown. This was brought to my attention by Mark Rowe a while ago, who is a trustee with the Catholic board in Halton, and we worked together to try to bring this forward as a concern.

This particular school, the existing Holy Cross Catholic school, was built in the late 1950s. I have seen it—I visited it on a number of occasions at the invitation of the board. The school is in a deteriorating condition, and a recent facility condition survey indicated that the building will require over \$5 million in repairs over the next eight years to maintain it in an acceptable condition. They're going to have to spend \$5 million if they don't build a new school. This is one reason that I brought it to the attention, before the election, of the Minister of Education, and at that time it was the Halton Catholic board's number one priority for new school construction. We were disappointed not to receive the approval of the ministry to move forward, but we continue to highlight the need.

I have also, on a number of occasions, raised the need for improved GO train service to my riding and, actually, in December 2008—it's hard to believe it was that long ago—I tabled a private member's resolution calling upon the government to extend GO train service to include stops in Acton, Kitchener and Waterloo by September 2011. I used that date, September 2011, which was three years after, to give the government time to proceed, but we also knew that the government's mandate was going to be concluding and the House was going to be dissolved in September 2011, so I knew I was going to be here at least until that time. We encourage the government to proceed.

There was a new service that was finally operational in January 2012, a few months after my requested date, including a stop in Acton, which has been well received in that community, and certainly we appreciate the government's investment in improved GO train service to my riding.

We were also very interested in the government's promise and commitment in the most recent provincial

election campaign to extend two-way, all-day GO service between Waterloo region and the GTA, which motivated me, when the House resumed sitting in the summer of last year, to table, on the very first day it was possible to do so, a private member's resolution which called upon the government to keep that commitment. I think it is a service that continues to be well appreciated by its users, and I know we need to continue to improve transit services in the province of Ontario. Certainly in my riding, because of its proximity to the GTA, increasingly we have a large number of commuters who are trying to get to Toronto on a daily basis and need to ensure that they can do so in a safe manner.

I'm looking for my private member's resolution—I believe it's the second one on the order paper. It was tabled on the very first day it was possible to table a resolution, July 3 of last year, asking that “the Minister of Transportation should immediately move forward to fulfill the government's commitment to provide full-day, two-way GO Transit train service on the Kitchener line between Waterloo region and the GTA, with stops in Wellington–Halton Hills.”

Of course, we have seen the government making statements about more express trains between Kitchener–Waterloo and Toronto. We'd like to see those trains stopping in Wellington–Halton Hills, to ensure that our constituents can actually access that service as well.

I will also call attention again to the need for provincial government assistance to help the town of Erin with their waste water management system. The town has been working for years on a service and settlement master plan, which they call the SSMP. The town of Erin is perhaps the largest southern Ontario community without a waste water management system for the community, impacting the town's ability to attract commercial and industrial investment, and forcing ratepayers to pay increasingly higher taxes. The town cannot afford to build the new waste water treatment facility without the support of the provincial government.

The town of Erin has a population of approximately 11,000, and approximately 4,500 people live in the hamlet of Hillsburgh and the former village of Erin. According to published reports, the potential capital cost to provide sewage treatment and sanitary services for both communities of Erin and Hillsburgh is estimated to be as much as \$58 million, with annual operation costs of \$900,000. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely cost-prohibitive for a community that small, and we need the provincial government to support that.

I would conclude, again, with the appreciation that has been brought forward on the part of some of our municipalities for the government's decision to reinstate the Connecting Link Program, something that we on this side of the House called for, and we express our appreciation. But I would add my question: whether this is new money or just a reallocation of existing money, and whether or not the government is going to ensure, as in some previous years, that up to \$25 million is available through the Connecting Link fund for the communities that are along connecting links routes.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed an honour to stand in the House this afternoon. It's not an honour to talk about—what is it?—foreclosure, no. What's it called?

Interjection: Time allocation.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Time allocation. You're foreclosing on my time to speak.

Speaker, the government is looking for ways to create jobs and prosperity. I say, come to Windsor, reopen the slots at the harness track at Windsor Raceway—

Ms. Cindy Forster: And Niagara.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: —and Niagara and Fort Erie. You've got 3,000 jobs in Windsor that you killed with that stupid bill to get rid of the slots at Windsor Raceway. Even if you don't bring back the slots, let us have our own harness track. I don't care if you call it Caesar's harness track or not. We have so many people down there fighting to get those jobs back.

The little track in Leamington—

Hon. Jeff Leal: A great track.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, it's a little track—great people. Minister, I'll say there are great people working at that Leamington track, but it's a little track and they need more help. In the back stretch, they need more barns, more paddock. They need some satellite feeds to get some off-track betting in there. It's a not-for-profit. The people in Lakeshore say, “Hey, work with us on this. We'll build a new track in either Lakeshore or the town of Tecumseh, and we'll reinvigorate harness racing in southwestern Ontario.” When the people in southwestern Ontario come to Leamington on those, what, 10 or 12 dates year—our betting handle is better than the other small tracks across the province, because people in Windsor and Essex county really support their harness racing industry.

I told you before, Minister, that the reason I'm a New Democrat is because the Liberals killed the slots at the harness raceway in Windsor. That's what got me interested in running provincially. That got me interested in joining a political party for the first time in my life and becoming a New Democrat, and I'm so proud of that, to be somebody who comes here and stands up for the people in Windsor and Essex county on a daily basis and says, “You made a mistake. There's no harm in admitting that you made a mistake. Just reverse it.”

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Don Drummond led you down the garden path on that one. He said that you were subsidizing the tracks. You weren't subsidizing the tracks. You were not allowed to even put a slot machine there unless the harness people said, “Yes, come on in. But when you come in, you're going to augment the pool. You're going to augment the size of the handle that the drivers can win.”

Anyway, you killed it; they're gone. And it's not just there. There are thousands and thousands of jobs lost—Sudbury—across the province because of a very stupid decision by a former government.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Is that unparliamentary, to call people stupid?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Well, I didn't say that the people were stupid; I said that the decision was stupid.

If you want to create some more jobs, listen. I'll give you another way to create more jobs and develop prosperity in Ontario. It's very simple: work. Work with Unifor. Work with the automotive industry—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sit down, please. I'll tell you what is—I won't use the word he did—aggravating. It's when people are yelling at each other and not going through me.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: It's amusing for you to say that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, well. Thank you, Dr. Killjoy.

Continue.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you for that intervention, Speaker; they really needed it.

Seriously, folks: You want to create jobs? Work with us. Work with the automotive industry. Work more. Come up with an automotive strategy. Come up with a manufacturing strategy. Work with the federal government, if you can convince them. I know it's a tough job; someone's got to do it. You're in power. We need an automotive strategy in this province. We need a manufacturing strategy in this province. We cannot continue to lose all of our jobs. They're all going to Mexico.

We had an opportunity in Windsor, not that long ago with the Ford plant, to get together and build a new engine. That would have created thousands of jobs. I know that a couple of women in my riding went out and started their own petition to try to convince the Liberal government to get back in the game and try to get that Ford plant re-energized with an engine for the future. That didn't happen. The government of the day wasn't ready. This government wasn't ready at that time. I think that would have created thousands more good-paying jobs, good union jobs, that would have created a better economy for the entire province.

We're talking jobs and prosperity; let's talk infrastructure for a while. I know that if you want to get serious about some joint funding of infrastructure projects, you'll find a long list of possibilities in Windsor and Essex county. The member for Essex was up the other day talking about Bruce Crozier's Way. Some of you remember Bruce, the tomato king, a good friend of mine. I loved the guy. I know his daughter works for one of you. Bruce Crozier was a heck of a politician, a good Liberal, a good Deputy Speaker.

I bought a couple of bow ties the other day. I said, "I want to look like Bruce Crozier and Glen Murray." I still haven't figured out how to tie them.

Bruce Crozier was the tomato king, as Robert Fisher used to refer to him on CBC Radio. After he passed away, just a day or two after he said he wasn't going to run again, the Liberals—God bless you—named this stretch of the highway down our way in Essex county Bruce Crozier's Way or the Bruce Crozier highway.

You were going to expand it and double the lanes out on Highway 3, and that hasn't been done. It was

announced with good intentions, and it's been out there. A little bit of work was done one year and a little bit of work the next year, but there is a lot of work yet to be done on this. We're really hoping that under the jobs and prosperity plan, some money will be found to keep Bruce's memory alive. I wish you success with that. You'll have full support from the NDP when you decide to do that.

Earlier, the member from St. Catharines was talking about fair-minded people, what fair-minded people would do, if they would say, "Okay, you've talked about this long enough; let's send it off to committee." I say fair-minded people would also, given an opportunity, like to be able to speak on a lot of things across the province, be it the proposed budget bill or anything else. You just might find, when you go talking to people about the budget, that people would give you ideas on how to stimulate the economy, how to create jobs, how to build prosperity back in Ontario. But you're not going to do that, unfortunately. You don't want to listen to fair-minded people. That is unfortunate. My leader said today to the Premier of Quebec, "Ontario is yours to discover." Why not go out and discover and give our various communities the opportunity to speak to your budget bill and see what people have to say to that?

We've also heard a lot this afternoon, Speaker, about choking off debate with time allocation. It's what you want to do on your budget bill as well: You want to choke off debate. I see a bit of hypocrisy going back there.

But go on tour. Get the band back together. Get out there. Take it on the road and see what kind of ideas you can get. There's nothing quite like a road trip to see what's going on, and get ideas on jobs and prosperity.

I know down our way, we're trying to build a hospital. Former Minister Duncan said, "Yes, we should have a new hospital." He put former Minister Piruzza on a committee with Dave Cooke from the NDP, whom Minister Bradley was speaking about earlier today, and a former PC, Tom Porter, who was on city council for a long time—ran federally and lost to Howard McCurdy, but that's old history.

We had this committee looking at a new hospital, and the first plan was, we had to combine the existing hospitals somehow. That happened. Nobody thought the two hospital boards would ever get together, but they have. So the acute care hospital is being run by the Windsor Regional people, and the Hotel Dieu people are now doing more of the long-term care and rehab. That's working wonderfully, Speaker. There's a process to follow, and they've asked us to sit back and watch the process unfold, and that's what we're doing.

They have had a site selection committee. My favourite site was at the Windsor airport, but it didn't happen. They don't want the new hospital at the Windsor airport. But what's going to happen sometime over the summer is, the site selection committee is going to say, "This is the spot that we think this new hospital would go on."

After you get the site, then you come back to the government for the next phase. You say, "We've done all of

our homework. We've chosen the site. Now we need the money for the design stage." That is the next step in the process.

After that, of course, if you design it, we would hope you would build it, but even after you have the design, you have to get permission to go ahead and build.

Just letting you know: We're still on the record. The Premier has promised us she's not going to forget about Windsor and Essex county. I know she has said that in other parts of the province as well. That is something that will create jobs and prosperity down our way. If you're building a new hospital, that's a lot of money, a lot of construction jobs going on.

The Herb Gray Parkway is about to open this summer. I'm hoping the minister will invite us all down to that opening. I remember being on city council when we first started talking about this. The government was proposing, what, five or 10 lanes in each direction just of flat highway? We fought like heck to get some overpasses and underpasses and some parkland. We hired the world's expert, Gridlock Sam Schwartz, the man who coined the phrase "gridlock," a former traffic commissioner of New York City. He came down and gave us a plan. We worked with him on a plan. We eventually, after much arm-twisting, convinced the provincial government that indeed this was a good plan. This was the gateway to Canada if you were coming in from Michigan, or this was the last thing you would remember of Canada if you were leaving to go to Michigan, the Herb Gray Parkway—named after a good friend of mine, Herb Gray. I know members opposite know him well. I covered his campaigns from the 1970s and the 1980s and the 1990s. Speaker, I told you before that I worked as a reporter with the CBC for 30 years in Windsor. On my last day on the job at CBC Windsor, my phone rings and it's Herb Gray. That's the type of man Herb Gray was. He called me up, and he wanted to wish me well. He said, "I hear you might be going on to a political career"—of course, that was municipal—and he wished me well.

1700

I'm sure he would be very pleased that I'm standing here today. He might not be overjoyed that I'm on this side of the House, but he would wish me well, because that's the type of man Herb Gray was.

I look forward to the day, be it as a former city councillor and as a current MPP, when I get the invitation to attend the official opening of the Herb Gray Parkway. It's a wonderful job. It was the biggest highway construction project—not the longest stretch of road, by any stretch of the imagination, but the most expensive highway project in many, many years, if not ever, for one piece of highway in Ontario.

I don't want to stand up here and take everybody's time today, but I just wanted to say that time allocation—I know you have the ability to use it. Cutting off debate: It's in the rules that we work within; you can do that. Is that the best way to get the best ideas? I'm not so sure about that. But you do what you think you have to do. On

this side of the House, we will do what we think we have to do, and that's to give you ideas, and we hope you listen. We hope you're listening, we hope you're taking notes and we hope you'll say, "Yes. You know, he did mention a couple of ways to create jobs in Ontario."

Speaker, at this point, I'll sit down, because I know other members of my caucus are ready to jump up and give you some more good ideas this afternoon. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It was interesting earlier, to listen to the Minister without Portfolio. He has been here the longest, I think, out of anybody in this Legislature—unless Mr. Monte—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No, I don't think Monte has been here the longest.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No? So he has. He has this institutional memory, and he said that Cooke, under the NDP, first started this process around early discussions around time allocation, and then, of course, Mr. Harris finished the job. So Cooke and Harris cooked up these mechanisms to manipulate debate, to limit debate.

But that doesn't make it right. It doesn't make it right in this context. It certainly doesn't make it right, especially within the facade of this open and transparent new culture that we're dealing with, where, actually, debate has been shut down extensively and the back-and-forth between the government and the opposition parties, I think, has to be at its lowest form. The shift from that minority government to the majority government was a bumpy transition, and, certainly, there is not this feeling, I think, that all of us in this House can contribute to legislation.

The time-allocated piece of legislation is Bill 6, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015. I had the pleasure of standing up and sharing our concerns on this piece of legislation last year. We're right to share our concerns. That is the right thing for us to be doing. Actually, that is our job.

We were right on a lot of things. If you look at the record with this particular government, we've been right on a number of issues. We were right to raise the concerns on eHealth, for instance. We were right to raise the concerns on the Ornge air ambulance scandal. We were right to pursue the gas plant scandal, which had a price tag of \$1.1 billion when the government originally said it was only going to cost \$40 million. We were right to push this government and to expose what happened in Sudbury. When the elections officer says that there has been an apparent contravention of the Election Act, that's something that we care about. The people who we represent, they care about that as well. We were right to raise the concerns around the privatization of road maintenance, for instance.

So when you time-allocate and you limit the debate, you're shutting down the opportunities for the opposition members, quite honestly, to do our job, and I think the people in our respective ridings don't appreciate that very much.

All of this happens within the context of so many little public consultations. There was an article in the paper this weekend—there are currently 18 public consultations or expert advisory panels. It's like this government does not even remember how to make a decision, period. Yet, when it comes to this House, we're going to have only four days on the budget. People have serious concerns around the budget. It's true, there will be four days of consultation and then two days of clause-by-clause, but by the time you get to clause-by-clause—we've seen this movie. We know how it ends. If the committee structures, as they have existed in this majority setting, are any indicator of how successful we're going to be, I think we know how that movie is going to end.

The very fact that this is all happening around the sell-off of Hydro One—I was in my riding, of course, this weekend, and I have to tell you, the lady at the Twice is Nice store wagged her finger at this government. She said that they did not have a mandate: "They did not ask me if I wanted Hydro One sold." They see it for what it is. They see it, quite honestly, as a very misguided move.

You can avoid making mistakes when you truly do consult and not just go through the motions, like the Ed Clark panel, for instance—the free, pro bono work that Mr. Clark did for the Premier that only cost us \$7 million. That definitely is not free or pro bono. There isn't anything pro bono about a \$7-million price tag.

On Hydro One, I want to connect it to infrastructure for jobs and prosperity, because, obviously, the economy is reliant on strategic infrastructure investment. On the Hydro One issue, I have to say that I'm just trying to understand how the government can possibly extract cash from an over-mortgaged Hydro One without assuming more debt, all the while paradoxically claiming no other choice but to sell Hydro One since the government can't assume more debt. Following an asset sale, according to Bill 91, the government must pay the OEFC, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., the sale proceeds in one of three forms. This is in the budget. They must pay either (1) by cash, (2) by loan forgiveness or some set-off, or (3) an IOU. The OEFC doesn't owe the province any money, as far as we can tell. On the contrary, the province already owes the OEFC billions from previous IOUs, and the province wants to keep \$4 billion in cash, ostensibly to pay for transit, so that really just leaves new debt. In other words, in order to avoid new debt to pay for transit, the government says it must sell Hydro One, which requires the government to assume new debt.

This is the kind of logic you need to consult on. You need to take these numbers out to the real people in the province of Ontario.

Even though you gave Mr. Clark a mandate; you said, "Make the argument for us to sell Hydro One"—I remember that very distinctly because we were in the lock-up, in a very dim room, to receive the banker's report. I thought it was foreshadowing, personally, in my own mind, to be in a dark room listening to how we're going to sell Hydro One and—

Interjection: Turn the lights on.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The lights were on, but, really, nobody was home.

It defies logic. The government swaps \$4 billion in new public debt for \$4 billion in old hydro debt, and the only thing that really changes is that a profitable Hydro One winds up in private hands. This is the kind of logic which is ruling the day here at Queen's Park. It makes no sense whatsoever.

We should be talking about how to strengthen infrastructure for jobs and prosperity, but it's impossible not to focus on how many times this government has already gone wrong on infrastructure. This government says that it's committed to \$130 billion worth of investment in transit over the next 10 years, and yet, two and a half weeks ago the government deferred the Sheppard East LRT project, which has been formally funded since 2009. The minister said there wasn't enough capacity—crews or workers—available to handle the two LRT construction jobs at once. If \$250-million-per-year's worth of long-planned LRT construction can no longer be accommodated at the same time as another long-planned LRT project that will cost \$300 million per year over four years, then how does the government expect to accelerate transportation infrastructure construction in this province by over \$3 billion every year for 10 years above existing plans? For the next year, it doesn't.

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For us, it's the Groundhog Day story on the GO train service in Kitchener-Waterloo. I mean, we're currently doing the timeline, and we're documenting every time a Premier or a minister or a candidate said "five years," "electrified," "15 minutes," "high-speed rail," "bullet trains." We have it on the record.

But more importantly, though, Mr. Speaker, is the people of Kitchener-Waterloo, who have made a compelling business case for that investment. I have to get up at 10 after 4 in the morning and drive into town. I know you do that very early drive as well. What's crazy is that it's getting busier and busier.

It's not trucks; it's people just trying to get to work, which is ultimately a productivity issue. It's a productivity issue; it's an environmental issue; it's an investment issue.

Really, for us to be talking about Bill 6 and infrastructure—actually, to be talking about how we're not allowed to talk about it anymore—is that it is really about priorities, and it really is about choices on infrastructure for jobs and prosperity.

I can't help but think that back in 2010, when, obviously—the Premier says each and every day that she has no choice but to sell Hydro One in order to raise \$4 billion for transit. We should remember, though, that in 2010, when she was transportation minister, she chose to cut \$4 billion from transit so her government could give corporations a tax break that cost the provincial treasury \$2.5 billion every year, an amount that could completely fund the Big Move with enough left over to restore provincial funding for transit operations. So it's rewriting history in some respects, every time the Premier gets up and talks about this.

But time-allocating the debate on this piece of legislation really does limit the ability for us to hold you to account. I see that they don't like it. I mean, it's uncomfortable, especially when we have the evidence right in front of us—the dates, the times, the places, the quotes, the words, the public record. For them to time-allocate this, it contributes even more to the cynical politics which has become the new culture here, compliments of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

I know that my colleague would like to comment. It has been a pleasure to voice my concern on behalf of the people of Kitchener–Waterloo about the time allocation motion with this piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I think I've got a couple of minutes left. What I'm concerned about here is, I understand that infrastructure has to be addressed. We have to move ahead with repairing bridges, roads and things. I understand those things, but what I don't understand is how we got here.

The bottom line is this. I don't have to go through the list of scandals, but I will anyways: Ornge, gas plants, eHealth, MaRS—it goes on and on. But the total amount of money is billions of dollars. If you did a forensic audit of every ministry in this government, I could come up with hundreds of millions more money that could be put towards infrastructure. We could have had billions of dollars, and we wouldn't have had to touch Hydro. It's my understanding that even when they touch Hydro, it's going to be less than 3% of the total budget for doing all these repairs and investments.

Why would you take one of your biggest money-makers—even when they were considering the Liquor Control Board and they were considering Ontario gaming and lottery—these are the money-makers for our government. These are the money-makers that put dollars in our pocket so we can do these projects. If you put all this in the private sector, we won't have the income to do anything, and the next thing that will be going up for sale will be this building.

The bottom line is, you can't give away your assets. You can't give away the jewels from the crown. If you do, you're going to end up with a tainted crown. So if this government can come together—

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: Even my colleagues over there are interrupting me. Okay.

If you can put all these things in abeyance for now until you go through an audit, until you go through all the losses and savings that we could bring forward—which would be billions of dollars that were wasted before—then, possibly, we wouldn't have to be selling our biggest asset, which is Hydro.

I think we're going at this too quickly. They call it a fire sale; I would call it putting the cart before the horse. There are so many other things we could look at to save money in this government, and we don't. What we do is jump. What we do is jump into a knee-jerk reaction. It's

not good because, at the end of the day, we're going to end up paying through the nose, our kids are going to pay through the nose, and so are our grandchildren.

The bottom line is this: Why would you go ahead quickly with something when you haven't looked in your own backyard to clean up the mess and the waste before you go pursue something and give away something that's probably the backbone of this province? It's a sad day in Ontario when they sell Hydro.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always a privilege to speak in this House, though today I do so reluctantly. It's on a time allocation motion regarding Bill 6. The thing about time allocation that really bothers us and bothers me is not the fact that we get to talk less in this House; it's the fact that people in the majority of the province get to have less input.

This bill has got something about apprentices, that you have to have apprentices in government contracts.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: And we need that.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm not saying I'm against that, but we need to have a full discussion.

I'll give you an example. Someone in my riding, Barret Leudke from Temagami Electrical Services, has two journeymen and two apprentices. One apprentice is almost a journeyman, so he could get another apprentice, and he's got two. In Temagami, they don't come along every day. He called the Ministry of Labour, called the Ontario College of Trades to see if they could work something out. And no; the answer is no. Their suggestion was, "Perhaps you could hire one for five weeks and the other one for five weeks." Barret should have had the chance to come talk about whether he's going to be able to bid on contracts because he might not have enough apprentices, and he might not be able to bid because of that.

That's why time allocation is bad. Not only do you time-allocate people here—we talk for a living—but you also stop people who actually have life experience of something that we could fix from presenting to a committee. That's why we are going to vote against this motion. That's why we believe that committees, especially on big bills like the budget, should travel the province at length: because people have experiences. We all are here from life experience, but other people have had life experiences which we haven't had and we need to know about.

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

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 22. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

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 unless I receive a deferral notice.

I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice from the chief government whip asking that the vote be deferred until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

Vote deferred.

1720

ENDING COAL
FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015
SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON
POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 7, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / *Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this bill, the member for Parkdale–High Park presented her thoughts. Now we go to questions and comments with respect to the presentation in the House by the member for Parkdale–High Park.

I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I do recall hearing about half of what I thought was quite an articulate speech from the member from Parkdale–High Park. Just having had the opportunity to lead a trade mission to China, along with my colleague the Honourable Michael Chan, you could certainly see over there the challenges that they have in terms of how, for many, many decades, they have principally generated their electricity from coal, and what it's done to their environment, but more importantly, what it's done to soil conditions in mainland China. Everywhere you go, the Chinese leadership will be very frank in admitting this fact: that many, many decades of generating electricity from coal has created a lot of heavy metals indeed in their soils.

One of the things that they want from the province of Ontario is to acquire more and more of our freshly grown and processed food, because they recognize that Ontario has branding second to none when it comes to food quality, and they want to take advantage of a great strength we have in this area.

Give credit where credit is due: I don't mind Prime Minister Harper when he's around with all those signs, "Canada's Economic Action Plan." If there was an outhouse anywhere in Ontario, I think they would put another one of those signs up, "Canada's Economic Action Plan."

The fact of the matter is that China is looking at our technology here in Ontario, where we can clean up the air. The member spent some time talking about that. It was a very good speech.

We in this House want to do everything we can to improve air quality, and Bill 9, Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, 2015, is a great way to do so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to provide a few minutes of questions and comments on the speech from the member for Parkdale–High Park. I wasn't here in the House for her speech, but I took the opportunity during debate on the time allocation motion to read the speech.

I have to say, I was very impressed. I was certainly a lot more impressed with your speech that I read than the speech I just heard from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, because I certainly appreciate the hard work of Prime Minister Harper and his government, and I don't begrudge the government for their work on infrastructure. I actually applaud the work of members of his government. In fact, I know my own MP, Gord Brown, has been extremely hard-working in our riding over his term, and I know he's been a champion for eastern Ontario and projects in our community.

The member for Parkdale–High Park opened up her speech on this bill in, I think, a very classy way. She applauded the deputy House leader for the government, the member for St. Catharines. She also applauded you, Speaker, in your capacity as MPP for Wellington–Halton Hills. She appreciated the institutional knowledge that both of you brought to debate on this bill earlier that day in the session. And I have to compliment her on her mention of Elizabeth Witmer in her role as a minister closing down, or beginning the process to close down, the coal plants.

I do appreciate that she used the words "after-the-fact bill," which I thought was a pretty good tone. I also remembered that she was elected in 2006, so she got to hear the government's promise in 2007, 2011 and 2014 on this issue. So I thought the speech was great.

The only thing I disagreed with you on was the NoJetsTO. I think it would be a good plan. You were against it. We can agree to disagree on that point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I, too, was not here for the member from Parkdale–High Park's speech, but apparently it was quite informed. I also would like to compliment the member from St. Catharines. He has always been a champion for fighting pollution, and that's a good thing. I commend the government when they're moving ahead with anti-pollution legislation.

But speaking from a personal perspective, I spent 32 years in a steel mill and I know the results of tar pitch volatiles. I worked on what are called coke oven batteries in the mechanical department. In those days, when I first started, we didn't even have masks. I would say that 70% of the people I worked with are dead from various types of cancer—lung cancer, any cancer; you name it, they got it. There were tar pitch volatiles; there was naphthalene; there was cyanide. I think I've breathed every known carcinogen. Asbestos: We used to knock asbestos off

pipes to weld them. We didn't know. We'd be covered in white powder, and that was the stuff you could see and not the microscopic stuff that can kill you. One of those fibres can kill you.

So I saw many, many people pass away in the steel industry from exposure to coal and coke dust, and also by-products—light oil. That's another nightmare you can get leukemia from. So there are lots of people that have died from workplace hazards, and that's why legislation has to continue in that direction to protect workers, because I've seen hundreds and hundreds pass away, especially in my community.

So anything that fights things that are polluting our air and our water—there are so many people getting cancer now that they say that 50 years from now, one in four Canadians will have some type of cancer. That's pretty scary stuff. So I would encourage the federal government in the Kyoto, which they did not follow. I would encourage them to continue to look at what they are doing to their own country, whether it be the tar sands or anything else. It's not good, and they've got to do something about to it protect Canadians, to protect our grandchildren and protect our kids.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me pleasure to speak also to the member for Parkdale–High Park and add some questions and comments to her remarks. The member is known as a great defender of environmental programs. I admire that about her, the tenacious way that she does want to protect air and protect people's health. In Parkdale–High Park, as in Beaches–East York, that's an extraordinarily important consideration.

I know that in her heart of hearts she agreed with the government in closing the coal plants. She often speaks, as she did during her remarks, about the distrust that she has for the private sector running power. Like the member beside her from Toronto–Danforth, she tends to say no a lot to new innovation and doesn't trust the private sector. To some extent, we may be actually aligned on this issue, because what this particular bill seeks to do is to ensure that the private sector and the public sector don't have an opportunity to come forward and create power using coal. So I know in her heart she agrees and supports that.

As a result of us closing those coal plants, as she would know, Ontario's new power generation is 99.7% greenhouse-gas-free. That's an extraordinary accomplishment when you think about it, and understand that we're still going after that last 0.3%, right? Because this is without a doubt the single most successful climate change initiative in North America.

So that's why I'm very supportive of what we're trying to do in this act, because it does protect these initiatives as we go into the future. We said no to coal and we said no to clean coal. But as a result of this initiative that we've done by closing the coal-fired plants, we are now creating new, clean, biomass opportunities at some of those plants. As the member for Toronto–

Danforth repeatedly went after the generation of gas in the community that I live in by saying no to gas power, what we have to recognize is the other side of the equation. When you close coal, you have to find ways of generating, and there's no better generation system than having distributed generation, which shares loads across the province.

I appreciate your work on this, your support on this bill.

1730

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's all the time we have for questions and comments in this round. I return to the member for Parkdale–High Park for her reply.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to everyone who weighed in on this debate. It's interesting: A bill is supposed to announce what a government is going to do. This is a new kind of bill. It's a bill that announces something that has already been done, which kind of begs the question whether it's really a bill or simply an announcement or, hey, a photo op—but whatever. As we heard, they promised in 2003 to close the coal-burning plants, then in 2007, then in 2011. Finally, we got it done in 2014, and that's a good thing.

To the member from Beaches–East York: I would simply bring his and others' attention to Gord Miller. We should give him a round of applause, because he's retiring. He has done phenomenal work as our Environmental Commissioner. That work has been deeply critical of the government's attempts around greenhouse gas emissions. Time after time, he said that they have failed to meet their targets. That was Gord Miller.

In fact, today we heard about the cap-and-trade. We would love, in the New Democratic Party, to see the cap-and-trade proposals of this government. We have yet to see them. Again, it's an announcement of something to come, but it's not here yet. And we have an announcement of something that has passed, but yet another announcement. They're very, very good at announcements.

Meanwhile, here's what's happening. Meanwhile, we are burying nuclear waste beside Lake Huron. Meanwhile, we are potentially flying jets in TO without environmental assessments. This is what's going on. Meanwhile, on your hydro bill, the cost overruns of investing in nuclear—billions into nuclear—are still ongoing. As we see, with the waste being buried by Lake Huron, we don't know what to do with the waste.

So I would caution the government: Yes, closing coal-fired plants was a good thing. Let's get on with the rest of it.

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

M. Shafiq Qadri: J'ai le plaisir de parler au sujet du projet de loi 9, un grand plaisir aujourd'hui, particulièrement en célébrant la présence et le discours de l'honorable Philippe Couillard, premier ministre du Québec. Aussi, je veux déclarer tout d'abord que je veux partager le temps pour mon discours avec le ministre des Transports et mes collègues les députés de Northumberland–Quinte West et de Scarborough–Agincourt.

Speaker, with your permission, I would like, first of all, at the outset, to speak directly in support of this bill, but perhaps from a slightly different perspective. While my colleagues have spoken about the parliamentary side, about some of the administrative side—we've heard the honourable member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek talk about some of his own experiences as a steel mill worker for 30 years plus, and some of the direct pollution that he was exposed to—I want to salute, honour, remember, codify, stratify and enshrine the fact that this particular bill is the largest single reduction of greenhouse gases in the history of North America.

I say to you earnestly that as a physician, as someone who has helped—whether it's adults or kids, patients and their families—overcome varying levels of respiratory disease, whether it's early-onset asthma or end-stage chronic obstructive lung disease, and to see the pollution effects first-hand, I want to tell you that this is an extraordinary legacy piece on behalf of the Premier of the province of Ontario, to whom I am the parliamentary assistant.

Speaker, I want to speak, for example, if you'll indulge me, a little bit on the medical side. Asthma, as you know, is a Greek word which means difficulty breathing—

Interjection.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Speaker, I have the endorsement of the Minister of Agriculture and Food. I feel quite pleased.

We have as well the other condition, as we call it, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. These are fancy doctor words. Basically, it means that the lungs have been trashed, whether it is from chronic smoking—usually, by the way, it's a mixture—or whether it's the excess pollution, for example, or whether it's car exhaust. As my colleague cited earlier, there's a whole segment now of occupational asthma or occupationally induced COPD.

We must do our part, as the stewards of the environment and, of course, of the economy in general, to lessen this particular burden.

For example, three million Canadians, as we speak, have asthma. It is responsible, unfortunately, for some 500-plus deaths annually. There is something on the order of two million unscheduled urgent care visits that occur because of asthma.

We've heard about climate change and extreme weather. Of course, that's happening on a large geographic basis. But if we do not purify our air or take steps to clean up the environment—again, it's the air or the water—we affect our own bodily local environments. That's what's happening. That's why we have an explosion of things like childhood asthma, occupational asthma, adult asthma, hospital emergency room visits, things like premature deaths, increased hospital admissions, and so on.

Mention has been made—I guess provocation has been issued from the members opposite: Why are we officially speaking about this yet again? It's already been

accomplished. Well, this took a lot of political will to do, to actually close down coal-fired electricity generation. As the Chair of the justice policy committee who sat through those hearings, I know first-hand the political will that was expended. It wasn't such an easy accomplishment; it was something that required a lot of alignment.

Having said that, when we're attempting to codify this, to enshrine this, to make it essentially an irreversible loss of Atikokan, Nanticoke, Lambton, Thunder Bay, these, Speaker, are the types of initiatives that I think will be spoken of in a praiseworthy manner on a historical basis.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, as I am almost always saying at the outset of adding my voice to discussion here in this chamber, it is my pleasure to rise to talk a little bit about Bill 9 in my capacity as the MPP for the community of Vaughan. It's also a real pleasure to follow my colleague, the member from Etobicoke North, who, as he mentions—and I know it's well known here in this chamber—serves as a medical doctor. He's someone who spoke very eloquently, as he always does, both in English and in French, about the importance of this bill.

It's interesting, Speaker, because before I heard my colleague speak this afternoon, I had given some thought to what I might say with respect to this bill, but after listening to him speak, I've actually decided to take a slightly different approach. He mentioned, of course, what we all know with respect to this decision the Ontario Liberal government made with respect to stopping or ending the use of coal.

It's interesting, what my colleague from Etobicoke North mentioned, as it relates to COPD and it relates to the incidence of childhood asthmas and the dramatic reduction we've seen in Ontario in terms of smog days. It actually got me thinking a little bit about my own grandmother, my mom's mom, who passed away a few years ago, someone with whom I was very close.

For the last year or two of her life, she was suffering from COPD. She wasn't a smoker; my grandfather had been a smoker many years before. I think the combination of second-hand smoke in their household and also, likely, although not necessarily confirmed, a number of environmental external factors contributed to the final stage of her life in which she was afflicted with COPD. Having had the chance to witness that as her grandson—again, someone I was very close to—it was very difficult to witness and watch the health challenge that she had to face in her early and mid-80s grappling with COPD. So when I heard my colleague talk about the positive impact that our decision to stop using coal had from a medical perspective, it did certainly put me in mind of my own grandmother.

Also, as the father of two very young kids, a seven-year-old and a four-year-old—two girls—it does make me very proud to be part of a government that took this action, that made this decision and now, with this bill,

seeks to enshrine this decision so that we can continue to go forward and generate electricity without using coal. It makes me very proud to be part of this government because that helps me believe, helps me understand, that as my daughters grow up in this beautiful, wonderful province, the likelihood of them and their friends in the schoolyard and on our street and others of the same cohort suffering from childhood asthma and other related respiratory challenges as a result specifically of what they're breathing in the air is dramatically reduced.

I think this government deserves a great deal of credit for having shown that leadership many years ago, decisively taken that action and helped produce that result.

1740

I can remember working here in this building as a staff person to other members of provincial Parliament, including my own predecessor from Vaughan, Greg Sorbara. I can remember a time when here in the province of Ontario, in the course of a summer season, we were consistently having to confront a number of smog days. When you look at the numbers now and you look at the incidence of childhood asthma here in this province, you do see a fairly dramatic improvement. Of course, as with all other things that we deal with, it doesn't mean that the work is over; it doesn't mean that the work is complete. But the decision to enshrine this bold move on the part of our government here in this bill, Bill 9, is something that is extremely important and very much deserving of support from members.

I've heard from others on both sides, from the NDP caucus and the Conservative caucus, talking about, "Well, it's backward-looking," talking about the fact that perhaps it took a little bit longer to deal with this particular matter than was originally anticipated. Both of those concerns or suggestions may be true to an extent, but of course that doesn't eliminate the fundamental fact, which is that this was a globally leading decision. I think the member from Etobicoke North or someone else on our side of the House did mention earlier today that this is perhaps the single largest greenhouse gas emission move or manoeuvre or tactic that has ever been undertaken, not just by a sub-national jurisdiction, but by perhaps any jurisdiction around the world over the last number of years.

Bill 9 is something that, for all of the very personal reasons that I've articulated here this afternoon, for all of the economic reasons, for the environmental reasons, for the social reasons, is very much deserving of support. So I sincerely hope that the members of the Conservative caucus and the members of the NDP caucus, as I always hope, will move away from taking the opportunity to engage in excessive partisanship on this particular matter, will support Bill 9, and will help us go forward and support our efforts to make sure that we do continue to live in a coal-free jurisdiction.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's a pleasure to rise today in the House to talk about Bill 9 in the few minutes that are allotted to me.

Speaker, a lot of it is repetitive, frankly.

A couple of weeks ago, I was speaking on Bill 9, and in my two-minute response I talked about one of my grandkids and how today's society is much different than the time frame I grew up in or that my parents grew up in. We used to drive big, gasoline-guzzling boats. The miles per gallon didn't really mean anything. It was how much power they had and how fast they would go—

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi:—full of leaded gas. But today, society expects more.

Speaker, it's worth repeating. You've heard me say many times that I have nine grandkids. One of them was about nine or 10 years old at the time, last fall. We went to the Belleville Bulls games, which we can't go to anymore because they moved to Hamilton. Here's what a nine-year-old would see when it comes to the environment. I think it's the only paper mill in southern Ontario, on the shores of Lake Ontario, in Trenton. There was a smokestack with white—he said to Grandpa, "What's that white smoke coming out of the chimney? It's bad for the environment." I know that this particular corporation had a steam reformer to help them generate energy to run their paper mill. I said, "A.J., it's not smoke. It's steam." I tried to explain the benefits. After reflecting a little bit, he said, "Grandpa, you can call it whatever you want to call it. It's coming out of the chimney, and it's going in the air. It's bad for the environment." Certainly, I didn't think of those things when I was nine or 10 years old, but in today's society, that's the way they are.

We've heard from both sides in the opposition, "Why are we doing this? We've done it already. It's finished. So why are we spending time dealing with this legislation?" Well, Speaker, I'll be honest with you. Certainly things went through my mind, but I'll tell you what changed my mind today. It just happened this morning. We had the honour and pleasure of hosting the Premier of Quebec this morning with a full House here. I'll tell you what worried me, and this is why we should do this as soon as we can—by the way, congratulations to Mr. Brown for being elected leader. From his speech this morning, he will try to lower energy prices at whatever cost. By passing this legislation, we'll make it a little bit tougher to go back to coal, because I've been convinced that he would go back to coal.

The question that they've asked all along is, "Why do we need to do this?" It's because of people like those on the other side who will revert to any action. The environment doesn't mean anything—absolutely nothing.

I think it's important that we pass this. We've come a long way. We've come a long way, and I think this will kind of finish the package up if anybody in the future wanted to bring coal. We know that coal, by every study that people tell us, is bad for the environment.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's terrible.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's terrible—something that we've been breathing all along.

I would say, let's get this done. I know they're going to get pressure from their own constituents to support this bill, because it is very important to do.

You've heard this before, and it's worth repeating: Today, 99.7% of energy is produced with no greenhouse gases. We're not quite 100%, but we'll get to 100%. I'm confident. I must tell you, we've come a long way. Pretty well every jurisdiction, every profession, supported us when we eliminated coal. Now this is the final seal of approval.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 9, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague said earlier about the economic costs—I'm just going to reiterate the piece—Ontario's coal-fired plants cost the people of Ontario an estimated \$4.4 billion per year in terms of health, environmental and financial impacts. So at the end of the day, it's not just about health, as my colleague from Etobicoke North said so eloquently. It is of significant financial cost to the entire system.

The other piece is, just recently, the Ministry of the Environment talked about how the early closure of the coal plants in Lambton and Nanticoke would save the province approximately \$95 million through the reduction of operating and maintenance costs. Again, there are financial costs with this continued use of coal.

The other piece is the proposed legislation, if passed, will mean that we will be amending the Environmental Protection Act, first listing the four coal plants that we would be closing—everybody knows we already closed Atikokan, Lambton, Nanticoke and Thunder Bay generating stations, after December 31, 2014. More importantly, we'll be sending a very strong signal in terms of maximum fines that the EPA will be levelling against anyone who breaches the legislation.

The government of Ontario is committed, when it comes to the health of all Ontarians, to ensuring that if anyone breaches the EPA, there will be maximum fines for corporations for specified offences of up to \$6 million. Again, at the end of the day, we want to send a message to those potential violators that there will be consequences if you breach Bill 9, if passed.

We also want to send a signal that we are committed, as a government, to ending the use of coal in stand-alone electricity generating facilities. As a government, we want to protect the entire province, making sure that we have clean, reliable and affordable power; that we as a government are investing in people, building on infrastructure and supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs talked about earlier.

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At the end of the day, the Ontario Lung Association spoke so eloquently: If you cannot breathe, nothing really matters, especially for those asthmatic patients, especially for those patients with chronic obstructive lung disease. We hear about those constituents on a regular basis, because we know coal is harmful to health. We also know we have a responsibility collectively in this

Legislature, and I believe the member from High Park spoke eloquently earlier about this particular legislation.

I'm very interested to hear the newly elected official PC leader's position on this particular piece, because if we have unanimous consent on this bill, we will move this bill to committee. Hopefully, we can get this passed before the House rises for the summer.

The other piece here is that as a former nurse, I can tell you that working with patients with chronic obstructive lung disease, as well as with cystic fibrosis—every day they depend on good government legislation, on legislation like this. I dealt with patients with chronic lung disease, where every day they are concerned about air quality; every day they need to check smog days; every day they need to make sure they have their puffer and their medications; every day they need to look at the environment before they can go out; and every day their quality of life is being affected by the legislation that we in this Legislature pass or don't pass.

I'm very, very pleased that the government of the day is taking leadership in bringing this bill forward. And the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change needs to be thanked for his leadership, because he brought this legislation forward last July.

I'm hoping that all three parties in the House make speedy passage of this bill, because this is what every Ontarian needs to have.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the speeches by the various government members, led off by the member for Etobicoke North and the Minister of Transportation, on Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities.

I have to say that this bill, which is all of one page, seems to me to be a completely unnecessary bill that's all about optics. I can't say how many times I heard the government promise they were going to be shutting down coal-fired generation. I thought, maybe because I heard it so many times, that they had actually achieved that. Wasn't it in the 2003 election—maybe the government members can help me out. I believe it was going to be in 2007 that coal-fired generation was going to be shut down. Maybe the government members can correct me if I'm wrong. But then I think it was 2011—it was back a few years. But please tell me you've actually done it now. You've talked about it so much. Do you really need this one-page piece of legislation to accomplish your goals?

I would say to you that the bigger problem in the energy field is what you're doing to energy prices. I think we'll probably hear loud and clear this Wednesday, when there's going to be a significant protest on the lawns of Queen's Park—I'm sure hearing from my constituents who can't afford to pay their electricity bills because of all the various schemes you come up with, like the Green Energy Act, which is, again, as much about optics as it is about anything else.

The one thing the Green Energy Act has accomplished is dramatically higher prices. I would say to anyone interested, read the Auditor General's report from last December, in particular the smart meter section, where you'll learn about the global adjustment and how it's paying for above-market prices. So you have accomplished dramatically higher energy prices, including a recent 15% increase. We'll be hearing about that from constituents on the lawns of Queen's Park on Wednesday.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: From a health perspective, certainly this bill is a good thing. But the bill is what it is: It really is doing something that's already done or is already finished.

I can tell you, as a nurse having worked for many years on the front line, the prevalence of COPD, I think, has decreased and will continue to decrease with this kind of non-use of coal. There is no worse death. I worked in the intensive care unit for many years, and there is no worse death than someone struggling to get a breath of air into those lungs and knowing that there isn't anything that you can do for them. So it's a good thing.

I come from the Niagara region, where we had many, many manufacturing plants. I can still remember the days when the sheets were black when people hung their wash out on the line before the days of electric and gas dryers. The women in the house would have to take that laundry in and rewash it, and hang it out another day when the prevailing wind was going in the opposite direction.

So I have to agree with some of the comments here that, really, this is a photo op. It's an announcement that will get a photo op at first, second, third reading and at royal assent. But having said that, I guess the bigger piece is that it is good for the health of Ontarians, and I'll close saying that.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, a point of order.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I know it's appropriate to always correct your record. When I responded earlier today to the member for Parkdale-High Park, I talked about being in China, but I did forget that it was eight cities. Just for the historical record, we also visited Hong Kong at the same time to really look at the activity that's going on in Hong Kong towards improving air quality in Hong Kong.

I wanted to actually relate that. I wanted to make sure that the record was corrected. I know the orders of procedure allow me to correct my record. I just wanted to do that, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Yes, standing orders provide for that.

Point of order, the member for Beaches-East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: We'll be closing shortly, but I wanted, from our side of the House, to actually have an opportunity to formally recognize the new leader of the

official opposition. I met Mr. Brown in the hallway as he was coming through. I'll tell you, I was very impressed. Not only did he know instantly who I was—he has obviously done his research and his homework; I was very impressed by that. He's of course well known in hockey circuits; he's well known amongst all the hockey rinks in Ontario, and I'm looking forward to getting to know him better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Of course, I'm honoured to be able to take my two minutes and talk about the leadership that we're showing on this side of the House when it comes to enshrining this law to ensure that we're protecting our children, our youth and our future generations, because it's important to recognize, Mr. Speaker, through you, that it's our children that will be dealing with climate change for decades to come. Hopefully, this is one step that we can take to really help them, because it's our generation—most of us in this room right now—that will be the last generation to know what normal climate is all about, because we're seeing right now, right around the globe, changes to our climate.

What we're doing today is debating and talking about a bill that is going to enshrine that coal will no longer be used in Ontario, and we will start protecting the air that our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren will be breathing. So it's for our pages that we're doing this today, for our children and for everyone in Ontario that needs to breathe clean air.

I know we've all talked about our experiences growing up. I grew up in Sudbury. I remember—

Interjection.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: Yes, and I know the honourable member from St. Catharines did as well.

I remember, and he will probably remember as well, breathing blue air. Sulphur in the air from the smelter—riding our bikes and tasting like a match just went off, and trying to figure out where that taste was coming from, who was lighting that cigarette or whatever it was. But to know now that we've seen changes in technology in the mining sector that that doesn't happen, and to know that this government is enshrining that coal will no longer be polluting our air—that's something that we're going to be doing to protect generations to come.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to be able to stand and talk to this bill, and it truly is important for me to be able to get through and talk about the importance of climate change and addressing all of that that comes with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: I just want to point out to the people listening that it was actually Elizabeth Witmer from our party who made the first motion to shut down coal. We just heard the last speaker talk about how concerned he was about the children and youth and our pages. It took them over 10 years to actually do it, and now they're

bringing back a bill to say, “We won’t do it anymore.” It’s unbelievable.

What people talk to me about, that they want to see as a priority in this House, is hydro rates. By the way, there is going to be a protest here on May 13. I hope every member of the government goes out and listens to the people who come to Queen’s Park from all across this province to truly talk about hydro issues that matter today.

Community Living was here—concerns about beds available. They talked about services and programs. Are they bringing legislation forward on this, Mr. Speaker? I don’t think so.

The closing of the RCU in Chesley, Ontario, that my colleague from Huron–Bruce and I spoke about today: They don’t seem to want to talk about that in here.

People come into my office crying because they can’t find enough mental health services, and we bring this type of legislation to waste our time.

Twenty-one per cent of youth in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound are unemployed. It’s deplorable. It’s the lost generation. And they don’t bring that.

We just lost GM in Oshawa and Goodyear—a thousand jobs a pop. Are we talking about that in here? No, I don’t think so.

They don’t want to talk about the record debt.

The member talked about helping climate change for our youth. If we had that \$23,000 that they’ve burdened them with debt—think of what that could do for our environment and the positive we could do. Mr. Speaker, the debt that they put us under is burying us.

The things we should be talking about in here, how we find jobs for our youth—these pages need jobs.

The environment is not going to be here if these guys keep spending the way they are and overspending.

It’s all a bunch of fluff, this bill. They should have been doing it 10 years ago. It’s deplorable that they’re actually bringing this forward and taking happiness out of “We brought this forward,” when they didn’t close them 10 years ago and they could have.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West can reply.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I’d like to thank the members for Parry Sound, Welland, Sudbury and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

To the member from Welland, thank you very much. I think you talk from experience on the effects that dirty air and the environment have on all of us. Some of us, in lay terms, don’t quite get it sometimes and we’re a bit stubborn. So thank you for bringing your perspective and, obviously, your support.

I want to just comment on the comments from the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. If I’ve got this right, it’s a waste of time talking about the effects on our environment; it’s a waste of time to talk about the environment. That’s what I heard this morning. That’s what I heard again. I just don’t get it. They don’t care about our kids, our grandkids or our great-grandkids. It’s all about them today.

Speaker, the other comment was, we should have done this 10 years ago. Well—

Hon. James J. Bradley: They opposed it 10 years ago.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: —you opposed it 10 years ago.

Speaker, they really need to find a road that they’re going to go down, because right now they’re all over the map. They’re not sure, depending on the time of day, depending on the day of the week.

I look forward to them coming to their senses and supporting this legislation—

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Well, I have my doubts.

But, Speaker, I really hope they see the light at the end of the tunnel—that we’re going to keep lit up—and they’ll vote on this bill.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1804.

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Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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