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of Debates
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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 28 May 2015

Jeudi 28 mai 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 28 May 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 28 mai 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 27, 2015, on the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to acknowledge that I'll be sharing my time with the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I also want to correct my record from yesterday. In my enthusiasm about dissecting this bill, I had a bit of confusion between invasive species and endangered species. I wanted to acknowledge that I did make an error.

Actually, there is a parallel with this four-page programming motion, because there are some endangered species here at Queen's Park. One of them is a travelling committee, a committee that actually has province-wide hearings. In the old days, you would have a bill that would travel extensively around the province. You would go to all corners of the province to actually ask citizens what they thought of a particular piece of legislation. But I have to tell you, Speaker, since this Parliament began, that is all but an endangered species in this area.

What is also an endangered species is the words that this government said in its throne speech, the fact that they would put partnership above partisanship. Over and over and over we've seen motions similar to this; we've had a plentiful crop of closure motions—time allocation motions.

So there are endangered species in this Legislature: the rights of individual MPPs to represent their ridings, to be able to have meaningful input at the committee process and to be able to have meaningful input to provide amendments to bills that actually reflect what our constituents and the province of Ontario want in legislation. It's all but extinct, to use a phrase from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change when he talks about the planet and extinction. Our rights as members are increasingly being diminished by this government. Again, this four-page substantive motion that programs bills is the icing on the cake of this government saying one thing and doing something completely different.

As opposition House leaders, we sit at meetings every Thursday at lunchtime—myself and the third party opposition House leader—and we talk about trying to cooperate. We talk about bills that the government would like to move forward. There are some bills in this substantive motion that we've agreed could have a few days of hearings and move forward. But there are some bills that we require, because of the constituents we represent, that they have a far more substantive opportunity to go around the province and get input from people in all corners of Ontario.

Yesterday, I talked about the leader of my party, Patrick Brown, and the fact that, right after he was elected leader, he decided that the north was a priority and decided to go up with the member from Nipissing to look at the Ring of Fire. Not one—not one—of these bills that are part of this substantive motion is going anywhere north of the committee room on the first floor. None of them are going north of that, Speaker.

Again, this bill—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Actually, they've been to the legislative library; that's a little further north.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you for that geography lesson for the Legislature.

This is just not the way we discussed that a bill should be dealt with in this place. Time after time, we've had negotiations where all of a sudden the government stops talking to us and presents bills that will either choke off debate or move bills through quickly without hearing from constituents.

It's interesting: Many times I have quoted the chair of caucus, the member for St. Catharines. There are miles and miles of speeches that the member has made about his concern about time allocation. But there are many other members—many distinguished members of the Wynne government—who have said the same thing. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Mr. McMeekin, said on December 9, 2002: "We use closure so often around this place, one would almost be led to the belief that everyone has sort of sanitized views on everything"—"sanitized views on everything." That's what this government has now adopted after that member expressed those concerns back in 2002.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Do they have a minister of sanitation?

Mr. Steve Clark: You know, that was something we found out with the Ombudsman's report. The Ombudsman had his report on Hydro One. He talked about the fact that Hydro One employees were sanitizing emails and communications to the Ombudsman. Speaker, that

was so concerning to myself and members of the Ontario PC Party, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, that I actually wrote to Commissioner Vince Hawkes yesterday and asked the OPP to investigate the allegations that are in that report, because I'm tired of Hydro's—I'm tired of them trying to deceive this House. I stood up and made a point of privilege; I hope that the Speaker will rule on it soon.

There are other members of this government that I want to get on the record. The Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Mr. Gravelle, said on November 19, 2001: "It's just stunning that the way they choose to deal with it at the end of the day is to put time allocation on debate. It's wrong, I think everybody knows it's wrong and I think even the government members themselves know that it's the wrong way to approach it. It's certainly something we resist and that we'll argue against, but I guess as long as they have the power to do so, they'll continue to do it that way."

Wow. Those are Michael Gravelle's words from November 19, 2001.

0910

You see, Speaker, over and over again this government has tried to pledge that they want to co-operate with the opposition, that they want to work with us, that they want to hear the other side. But again, what happens is that after the negotiations are done, after the meeting is over, the government walks over to the table and they file their motions; they file their time allocation motion.

In this motion, they deal with this bill and put it forward. It's interesting that there are no dates on this bill. It's very, very interesting that it's all programmed in succession without a starting date.

The parliamentary calendar is published well in advance. Anybody can go onto the Ontario Legislature website and look at the parliamentary calendar for 2015 and 2016. But there are some rumblings around this place that this government may not bring back this Legislature until after the federal election on October 19. I don't know whether part of the time that these members opposite want to acknowledge whether that rumour is true or not, but it's just passing strange when you start looking at this substantive motion and see that it's one bill after the other after the other with no dates, with no information; it's just a little strange.

I hope, as part of this substantive debate, that someone over there can stand up and actually tell the people of Ontario what your plan is. Are you going to prorogue Parliament? Are you going to walk away until halfway through the legislative calendar? It's just a little interesting, when you start looking at this motion, to see that there's no information on whether these committees are going to meet in September, whether they're going to meet in October, November, December or maybe in February. Who knows? Who knows with this government? They operate by substantive motion; they operate by time allocation. Even their own members, when they're allowed to speak freely—

Mr. John Yakabuski: They're never allowed to speak freely.

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, I'm quoting Mr. Gravelle.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, but that was when they were in opposition.

Mr. Steve Clark: Here's one from Mr. Colle, Eglinton-Lawrence, June 20, 2001. Here's what Mr. Colle said: "For people out there who perhaps don't understand the jargon of the Legislature, a closure motion basically means that this government is trying to cut off debate.... It has a habit of ensuring that the public doesn't get the chance to find out what's going on in major pieces of legislation." That was June 20, 2001. I can say the same thing today.

Here is a government that will table a four-page motion—a four-page motion—to program all these bills with minimal debate. I went through some of it yesterday.

Bill 37, An Act respecting Invasive Species. It basically says that "the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall, on its next four regularly scheduled meeting days commencing in the week following the passage of second reading of the bill, meet for up to two days of public hearings for up to two days of clause-by-clause" on the bill. There you go: four days, that's it.

I talked about this last night. How did they market this bill? How did they let people know? Well, do you know what, Speaker? They're pulling out all the stops. This government is pulling out all the stops. They are going to put a notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel. There you go, right there. That's part of the—

Mr. John Yakabuski: We should send it out on Glen Murray's Twitter site.

Mr. Steve Clark: They are also going to put it on our website and Canada NewsWire. Do you know what? I can appreciate that the people up north, the people in southwestern Ontario and back where I come from in eastern Ontario—that's just going to run like wildfire through Leeds and Grenville.

Again, one of the things that I mentioned yesterday, and I'll mention it again today, is the fact that for every single bill they have talked about allowing people to come on a first-come, first-served basis. So let's face it, the minute this bill was tabled this government, all the ministries that are affected, put out notices to all their supporters to have them say that they want to submit to this bill.

I contend that there needs to be an amendment that does it based on a rotational basis, which has been our practice. Bill 80, which was debated yesterday—there will be a vote after question period today. That's what we ended up getting between the government and the New Democrats, that we would go on a rotational basis, that the government would pick a witness, we would pick a witness and the third party would. None of that is reflected in this bill.

I want to go through (c) and (d) just quickly before I pass it over to my colleague. Bill 52, the anti-SLAPP bill: The government has tried several times to put this on the order paper. I'll just read from the motion:

"That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy shall, on its next four regularly scheduled meeting days com-

mencing in the week following the passage of second reading of the bill, meet for up to two days for public hearings and two days for clause-by-clause....”

This is a bill that stakeholders all across Ontario, especially up in northern Ontario, want to get on the record about. Again, all the government cares about is inside this place, inside this bubble of Queen’s Park. They don’t care about other voices being heard.

Finally, Bill 66, An act to protect and restore the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin: “The Standing Committee on General Government shall, on its next four regularly scheduled meeting days commencing in the week following the passage of second reading of the bill, meet for up to two days for public hearings and ... two days of clause-by-clause....”

This was a bill that was part of the House leaders’ meeting where I believe Mr. Bisson, the member for Timmins–James Bay, talked about the fact that there were—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Your buddy.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Some days.

Mr. Steve Clark: That’s right, some days.

That was a bill he wanted to meet on across the province. He wanted to meet on this bill not just in this place. He was very clear, and every time this meeting was brought up by the government House leader, Mr. Bisson reiterated that he wanted this bill to travel. That’s not reflected.

We’ve had several House leaders’ meetings that never seem to get reflected in this government’s guillotine-style substantive programming motion. It’s shameful.

I picked up the quotes from the members; I was going to do a couple more quotes, but anyway. What we’ll do is, I will put this amendment on the floor regarding the committee hearings.

Speaker, I move that the motion presented be amended as follows:

In each section—(a), (b), (c) and (d)—that bullet number two be struck out and replaced with the following:

“—That the deadline for requests to appear be 2 p.m. on the Thursday of the week that the bill receives second reading; 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 6 p.m. on the same date; and

“—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists.”

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Clark has moved an amendment as follows:

In each section—(a), (b), (c) and (d)—that bullet number two be struck out and replaced with the following:

“—That the deadline for requests to appear be 2 p.m. on the Thursday of the week that the bill receives second reading; 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 6 p.m. on the same date, and;

“—That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists.”

Mr. Clark.

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m going to defer debate. As I said, I share my time with the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank my colleague our House leader, Mr. Clark, from Leeds–Grenville, for opening up this debate on our behalf.

I see a number of the folks on the other side who were elected in 2014. It’s good to see them here. They worked hard in their campaigns, and it’s nice to see them. But they’ve never had the opportunity to see this House work under different circumstances like we did in a minority Parliament prior to the election of 2014. I can just picture the conversation that went on in the Premier’s office after the election of 2014. It would have been all of these high-powered folks like the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change sitting around the table and saying, “We lived through that minority, and it was painful to have to put up with the opposition and the third party, and having to give in sometimes and actually make this place work representatively for all of Ontario. It really was painful. So you know what we’re going to do? Here’s the plan: We’re going to say all of these nice, flowery things in the throne speech, and we’re going to talk about how we’re going to have partnership as opposed to partisanship and co-operation as opposed to coercion.

0920

“So what we’re going to have is all of this nice talk in our speeches, and we’re going to say how much we love those folks on the other side, and then we’re going to bring the hammer down. Then, when push comes to shove, we’re going to shut this place down.”

In fact, I was a little curious when the cabinet was named and the long-standing member from St. Catharines was named a minister without portfolio. You see, even that part of it was somewhat sanitized, because he should have been called the minister of sanitation, based on the quotes from the now Minister of Municipal Affairs, when he was a backbench member of the Liberal opposition, talking about how closure on debate and time allocation motions amounted to the sanitation of Parliament.

Well, the member for St. Catharines, the minister without portfolio—they’ve even sanitized that part of it, because he has been the champion of sanitation of this Parliament, if you take the words of his colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs into account, because closure is the order of the day.

But now we’ve even got something—they’ve progressed, even for Liberals. They’ve taken it to another level. Now we have omnibus closure—omnibus closure. It’s not enough for them to bring closure on one bill.

They bring motions on a multitude of bills, shutting down debate in this Parliament.

Everybody here, when they ran for election—and I guarantee you, everybody in this House, when they were out campaigning or when they were talking to the people on the street or when they were in debates—I guarantee you that at some point—do you know what word was used by everybody, because we respect the system we have so much? The word “democracy.” I guarantee you that every one of you over there uttered that word more than once. Unfortunately, you forgot what it means, because in this chamber, you have shut down democracy. You have decided that debate is not necessary, that public hearings are not necessary, that travelling across Ontario is not necessary.

The programming motion that we have here is more than substantive. It is more than substantive. It covers four bills: Bill 9, Bill 37, Bill 52 and Bill 66, all bills that are important to the people of Ontario. I’m just going to focus on Bill 66 for the time being, the Great Lakes Protection Act.

We are so fortunate in this part of the world. We probably have the greatest natural resource that exists, and that is the Great Lakes. Nowhere else in this world will you find a source of fresh water that even comes close to the Great Lakes. What has that meant to our country, to our continent—and, in fact, to the world—sitting in the middle of the two greatest democracies in the world, in my opinion? Democracies: Remember that word. I know it’s hard for you to think of it from time to time over there: democracies.

I’ve got to believe—listen, I’m not always right—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have got to believe that the people in Huron–Bruce would like to have something to say about Bill 66. I’ve got to believe that those folks in Leeds–Grenville, where the St. Lawrence River runs right by Brockville, they would like to talk about Bill 66. I’ve got to believe that the folks up in Prince Edward–Hastings and in the Bay of Quinte would like to talk about Bill 66.

Mr. Steve Clark: Simcoe North.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Simcoe North.

Mr. Steve Clark: Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Sarnia–Lambton. I could go on and on and on.

But the way they’ve decided who gets to speak to Bill 66—it’s really going to be the same people who speak to every bill, because they’re the people that follow that massively read—what do we call it? The Ontario whatever? Parliamentary programming—there must be “programming” in it somewhere. So the notice for these—

Mr. Steve Clark: Ontario parliamentary channel.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Ontario parliamentary channel—oh my God, it’s one of my favourites, you know. I just push the button, turn on the TV and it automatically comes on, like everybody else in Ontario, millions of people. It’s the number one favourite channel on the—

Interjection: PVR list.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —PVR list or whatever. They’ve got to document everything. So I’m sure that all of those people—and even if they are watching that channel—I think it’s a fair question to the minister of sanitation. Do you think it’s fair—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to withdraw. We should show a little respect to our own colleagues.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw, but was I referring to anyone in particular?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We don’t have a minister of sanitation. Again, I ask for respect to your own colleagues.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, okay. I withdraw. Perhaps we have a minister of thin skin. I don’t know; we’ve got ministers—everybody’s—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Now you’re showing disrespect to the Speaker. I just asked you to refrain from showing disrespect, and you say now we have a minister of thin skin.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Is that what I said?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I’d ask you to withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw. As soon as you asked me, I withdraw.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Proceed.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I’ll let what’s going on here speak for itself, Speaker. I don’t even have to.

I’ve got to believe that people across this province would like to have their say on these bills, but this government is ensuring that they don’t. This government is ensuring that they control not only what happens in this chamber, but essentially they’re controlling the air-waves as well because they’re limiting access to the public to even know what’s going on. On top of that, even if they do find out what’s going on, their ability to actually get involved is extremely limited. In the case of some, it’s one day of hearings and one day of clause-by-clause, and in the case of one bill—

Mr. Steve Clark: No, two bills.

Mr. John Yakabuski: In the case of two bills, it’s two days of hearings and two days of clause-by-clause. But that’s all taking place right here—according to what the Liberal government believes is the only place that matters—in the city of Toronto, right here at the Legislative building.

All of those people that would like to speak to this bill—if you’re living up in Timmins–James Bay, it’s really easy to get here, isn’t it, sir?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It is—Porter Airlines.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, Porter. And they fly out of where? Timmins?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Timmins.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. But is that the whole riding?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh. When I'm thinking about up in the James Bay end of it—does Porter come and pick you up? Do they have a shuttle—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member for Timmins–James Bay to come to order, and I would ask the member that is speaking to address the Chair.

0930

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay; sorry. Maybe I could ask you, Speaker, then: Do you think it's very easy to get here from the northern reaches of the riding of Timmins–James Bay? Or is it easy to get here from the northern reaches of Kenora–Rainy River? Is it even easy—I can tell you, it's not that easy to get here from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The people in my riding would like to have a say on some of these bills as well. There is no plane service to Toronto from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. There is no train service to Toronto from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. You've got to get into your vehicle and drive. You've got to get on the road and drive. Now, wouldn't it be nice and wouldn't it be—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member for Ottawa–Orléans is asking me how many people live there. Is this how we now decide whether people have a voice? We have to do a count? Are those 100,000 people in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke not important? I say to the member from Ottawa–Orléans: Please apologize to my people. They are important. They are every bit as important as the people in Toronto.

Now, on top of all that—and I'm so glad that my colleague had a chance to speak to this ahead of time—no dates have even been established. So not only are we coming closer and closer to a dictatorship here, it's an open-ended dictatorship. They don't even tell you what day they're going to rule with an iron fist. They don't even tell you what day they're going to shut down democracy. They just say, “We'll let you know when it's coming”—no dates for any of these hearings on these bills. At no time does it talk about a date.

“That the Standing Committee on General Government shall, on its next four regularly scheduled meeting days commencing in the week following the passage of second reading of the bill, meet for up to two days of public hearings and for up to two days of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill”—no dates.

We know what the legislative calendar says when we're coming back. The government knows that. I think it would be quite easy for them to establish a couple of dates for each of these bills as to when we're going to debate them next and as to when clause-by-clause hearings will take place. But no, they just want to keep it open-ended.

The member from St. Catharines—minister without portfolio and deputy House leader—has been here longer than anybody. The mortar on this building has been re-chinked twice since he's been here. He loves to bring in closure motions and time allocation motions, but in the

past he and his colleagues, when they were in opposition, thought that they were the worst thing that could ever be done.

I know that the member for Ottawa South was waving his arms there earlier—I don't know if there were mosquitos in here or what, or if he was trying to get my attention—and he implied that somehow I was here when the previous government used time allocation. But I was not here, I say to the member. I was not here; I only got here in 2003. I've only had to sit through the painful years of Liberal government here. But I look forward to the day when the tables have turned and the people of Ontario say, “Trop, c'est trop. Enough is enough,” and they throw this Liberal government out on its ear, and bring back true democracy to this chamber.

But let's hear Mike Colle—the member for Eglinton–Lawrence; pardon me. So, you have to ask, “Why all the closures? Why do they always want to stifle debate? Here they're pretending”—well, I wonder if the member from Eglinton–Lawrence would say the same thing about what's happening today. Or would he simply push the programming button that each one of those members has installed directly from the Premier's office, so that every time they stand up in debate, they just say exactly what they've been told to say from the Premier's office?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, there are few members whose discourse I enjoy more than my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's, but I must insist that he reread standing orders 23(h), (i), (j) and (k), which, among other things, prohibit him from imputing a motive or making an allegation against a member, including the member for Don Valley West. He was doing just fine until he strayed into that. I would ask that the Speaker enforce standing orders 23(h), (i), (j) and (k).

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for that point of order. I return to the member, and I would ask you to refrain from those comments. I've requested that of you twice.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you. Apparently, nothing requires withdrawal, so I'm not really sure what I said that was wrong. But I will say this to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville: I will pledge to reread those sections of the standing orders, as requested.

Let me put things another way. It would appear, to most casual observers and also to those people who religiously watch the proceedings of this House, that the utterances of the backbench members of the government seem to be eerily similar whenever talking about pieces of government legislation. It would almost appear that the speeches have been somewhat vetted and/or perhaps even written by persons receiving directions from the Premier's office.

That is only my humble view, based on what I hear from real Ontarians out there. They'll say to me sometimes, “Yak, I watch that channel sometimes. I see you get up and speak, and nobody possibly could have writ-

ten that stuff”—because they wonder sometimes where it comes from; I wonder myself.

But they listen to some of the speeches from the government members, and they say, “Wow, it’s funny: They all say exactly the same thing. They’ve rephrased it slightly differently, but they say exactly the same thing. Are they being told what to say?”

I say, “You know what? I’ve never sat in government. I can’t believe that it works that way. But I share your concerns that it seems they just do whatever they’re told.” They just do whatever they’re told. And I say that respectfully to the members. They’re fine people; I don’t fault them. I want to make that very clear: I would never impugn the motives of a member of this House. I want to make that perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker. I would never do that, because I’ve gotten to know some of these people on a personal basis a little bit. They’re fine people. I’m going to say this in general: It is the control that we see too much in government.

I remember when my father was a member of this Legislature, elected in 1963. A lot of folks in this Legislature weren’t even born yet.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: When?

Mr. John Yakabuski: In 1963. You were, because you were born in 1957; May 14, if I recall.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That’s right. June 14 for you.

0940

Mr. John Yakabuski: But there is concern all across Legislatures and jurisdictions across this great country of ours, Canada, that governments exercise way too much control over their members, that the members themselves don’t really get to speak for their own constituents sometimes because the government message overrules even those local concerns. Those are not my words. You can read many political analysts who are saying the same thing.

Back in the day of my father being a member of this Legislature, things were different. Members came here and made sure that they were fighting tooth and nail for their constituents. I know that there are members on that Liberal side who have to support legislation even though they believe it is not in the best interests of their constituents.

I understand that for a government to be electorally successful, it needs to have a certain amount of control. But is that the only thing they care about over there, retaining power? Is that the only thing that matters to the people on the other side, power at all costs? My goodness gracious, whatever happened to government of the people, by the people, for the people, as Abraham Lincoln said in his Gettysburg address? Whatever happened to that? That’s something I think the Liberals need to pay more attention to when they’re running the show here now that they’ve got their majority back.

I heard the government House leader yesterday. Oh gosh, it was wonderful when he started talking about this motion; he just couldn’t get it out quick enough. “The people of Ontario gave us a tremendous mandate last June re-electing our government to a majority; therefore,

everybody loves us. Everybody thinks it’s right, and they want us to run this”—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, my goodness. Have I got the floor? I’ve lost control. I don’t even have the floor anymore. Speaker, give me a hand.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): If I could have a little quiet, I may be able to hear the speaker. If I could ask the folks on the right-hand side not to indulge in crosstalk.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I know where you’re coming from, Speaker. Sometimes in this place I have a hard time hearing myself. It just gets way too noisy.

I did enjoy that little exchange between the member from Timmins–James Bay and the member from Sudbury over the last provincial election. It would stand to reason that the member from Sudbury, at the time of the last provincial election, wasn’t knocking on many doors for Andrew Olivier.

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: You might want to check that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, I’m sure we can check that, but I’m pretty confident that there might have been an NDP member running up in that riding.

Anyway, I don’t want to get away from the matter at hand, the programming motion. It’s very important.

Hon. Liz Sandals: You’re straying.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I did stray a little bit. The odd time, I do stray from the topic here. What happens is people get heckling me, and I stray from the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can you speak through the Chair? Then you won’t worry about the heckling.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay, but do I always have to look at you?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It would be a good idea.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Okay. I have a hard time standing still, Speaker. I’m not suggesting that it’s hard to look at you, okay?

We’ve got four bills that they brought in a huge programming motion for, a huge programming motion so that we will be dictated to come the fall. This is not going to happen before we leave here next week; this is going to happen in the fall. We know that come September or October—or when? Could we get a straight answer from the Liberals as to whether there’s any truth—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs just gave me the first straight answer I’ve gotten from a minister in this House, and do you know what he said to me? He said, “Never count on us for straight answers.”

Hon. David Zimmer: No, that’s not what I said.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That’s the first straight answer that I’ve got.

Hon. David Zimmer: I said you can always count on us.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, I heard “never.”

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, come to order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: But if he wants to stand and correct his record, go right ahead.

Anyway, come the fall—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. Point of order.

Hon. David Zimmer: I’ve been invited to correct my record, and I would like to correct my record—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You’re not on the record.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, wrap up.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, could I request more time?

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Come September—we’ve seen some low days in this Legislature since June 12 of last year, and July 2, when we came back, but we’re going to see some low days here in the fall, because now we have gone from closure to omnibus closure—omnibus closure, coming in September, coming to a Legislature near you. That might be the movie ads this summer: You know, “Blockbuster coming in September.” Democracy-buster, coming in possibly September, possibly October, possibly November, or whenever Justin Trudeau tells you you can come back to work here. That’s scary.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I’ve just got to say this is a bit of an odd motion that the government is bringing forward. I’m waiting for the clerks to send me some information that I’ve asked them to bring here, so as soon as they can get it, I can go through the other part of what I want to raise in this debate.

The government is moving, by way of a substantive motion, four bills together, in order to be able, after six and a half hours, to move a time allocation motion that will allow the time allocation motion that’s contained within the substantive motion to be passed. So it’s a time allocation motion that’s leading to a time allocation motion that’s going to pass a time allocation motion. I believe you don’t see that very often. They’ve put it under the guise of a programming motion, and I just want to speak to that, first of all.

A programming motion is when the parties agree. The three parties get together and they agree on whatever a program is, as far as being able to pass legislation through the House. We have done that here before—not a lot, but it has happened at times. It’s an agreement amongst the three parties that you sign off on. Normally, it’s done by unanimous consent, so you don’t have to have a substantive motion. It is a substantive motion that is passed with unanimous consent, so that you don’t have to have a full debate on the substantive motion.

In this particular case, the government is calling it a substantive motion, but this is not a substantive motion, because I, as the New Democratic House leader for our

team and for our leader, Andrea Horwath, have not agreed to this. I know that Mr. Clark, the House leader for the Conservative Party, has not agreed to this either. So you can’t call this a substantive motion, because in fact, the two opposition parties have not agreed.

So this, by any other name, is a time allocation motion. It’s an omnibus time allocation motion, to be specific. Let’s put that out there, right at the beginning.

What’s interesting is that what’s contained in this substantive motion are bills that you don’t even have to time-allocate. This is really, really silly. For example, last night, here in the House, we had a bill before us which had had two or three hours of debate in regard to third reading for the immigration act. There was an agreement amongst the parties that we all agreed, and we allowed the bill to pass to third reading within about three hours.

The night before, on Monday night, we were debating what?

Mr. John Vanthof: Ag insurance.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Ag insurance, which eventually passed, right? Was that at third? That was at third, yes, because we have to have the vote on it.

We had the Agriculture Insurance Act, which had got to third reading—naturally, through the second reading stage, through committee, and back in to third reading. The parties supported that, and there was some minimal debate. I think there were about six or seven hours of debate at second reading, and there were probably about six or seven hours at third reading. But that’s because a number of members happen to represent rural constituencies and—surprise—guess what? People wanted to be on the record, having to do with an issue that is related to their riding. That’s what this place is all about.

The government seems to think that we’re somehow being dilatory. People watching back home, if you wonder what “dilatory” means, it’s that we’re being silly buggers trying to muck things up by debating bills that we want to be on the record on—not the case.

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It is normal for a bill at second reading to get anywhere from two hours to eight hours of debate. If you go back and look at all of the Hansards dating back to when I got here in 1990, there are some bills that have had far more debate than that. But on average, I would say between two and eight hours. On second reading, normally that’s what gets done.

If the government is wise—and this government at times has chosen to do this and I give them some credit for that—you allow bills to go through the House in their natural progression. That allows for members of the assembly on all sides to put on the record the issues they’re interested in, representing their constituency and putting their thoughts, thinking about what it is that has to happen once the bill gets to committee, and just let the bill go through its natural process by which it’s going to get into committee. That’s normally what happens.

In this particular case, we have a substantive omnibus motion that’s going to time-allocate four bills.

Bill 9 is the act in regard to the cessation of the use of coal. That’s a bill we all agreed to, which passed second

reading. I believe it went naturally; I don't think it was time-allocated. Maybe the Clerks can clarify that for me. We ended up going through committee and now we're here. The bill is at six hours and 32 minutes of debate time.

Guess what's going to happen, guys? You don't need to time-allocate this thing. Actually, we're at second on this one. It's six hours and 32 minutes. Let me rephrase that: We're at Bill 9, cessation of coal; we're at second reading, we're at six hours and 32 minutes.

The three parties agree and I would imagine we're probably almost done debate on that particular bill. If the government was to call that bill on one of those long midnight sittings, my guess is you'd probably get it.

Let's look at the other one: Bill 37, invasive species. I've given my lead. We're at second reading; we're at six hours and 50 minutes. I don't think there's a lot more debate to be done on that one. I think we're going to be pretty well done. I'm not sure how many more members of the House want to speak to it but I can't imagine there are all that many.

Then Bill 52, which is the anti-SLAPP legislation. We're again at second reading; we have six hours and 50 minutes. Again, I don't think there's all that much more debate left in this one. The government is putting this in an omnibus bill in order to move it out of second reading and into committee.

And Bill 66, which is the Great Lakes Protection Act, which is at almost four hours of debate.

My point is, when you look at these four bills, they're on the cusp of going into committee without even having the time allocated. Here's the other thing: If the government decided to time-allocate all four bills, you would probably get those four bills faster just by calling the time allocation motion because the time allocation motion is two hours. Four bills times two hours is eight, so it's eight hours of debate.

Guess what's going to happen with this substantive motion? I'll tell you now, we will talk this out because there are a number of amendments we want to be able to make. We believe that the way this thing was written was in such a way that leaves a little bit to be desired when it comes to hearings. You'll be hearing from us a little bit later on that. You're going to have six and a half hours of debate minimum on this substantive motion, plus a two-hour debate at time allocation for eight and a half hours. So you're actually slower using a substantive motion to move these bills through the House than you would be—thank you Monsieur Clerk—if you just did it naturally.

I don't even think that most of these bills would be time-allocated. I think there's a number of these bills that will probably go into the House pretty darn quick without having to go through a lot of debate in regards to going into time allocation.

You've got to ask yourself: Why is the government doing this? It's kind of bizarre, isn't it?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Because they can.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Because they can, my good friend from Niagara—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Welland.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —Welland says, because they can.

I think it's one of those things where the government says, "We're going to show you. We're the government and, by God, we got a majority in the last election and we're going to show that we've got the authority to put our business through."

But who are you really serving when you do that? Are you serving the public? Limited time for public hearings, limited time for members to be able to put on the record their concerns or their support on those particular pieces of legislation: You're not serving the purpose of the public. You're only serving your own purpose, and I don't think this is what this place should be all about.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're not serving their own constituents.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So I just say—well, they're not even serving their own constituents; I think you're right.

The point is that I don't think the government, quite frankly, is well served when it does what it's doing.

If you look at what's happened in the House up to now since the beginning of this session, there's a number of bills which the government has worked with the opposition on. We've gotten agreements to pass bills without even having to do time allocation to put bills into committee.

There are 25 bills that have gone through processes of second and third reading—at least second reading, and some at third. From the count, about half of those 25 bills have been time-allocated. In other words, the other half have gone the natural process.

I'm just saying to the government across the way that I'm a little bit perplexed as to why you've brought this particular motion forward. What you end up doing is doing an omnibus bill to time-allocate a bunch of bills that normally would be accepted by the assembly by the natural process of debate and the natural process through the committee.

For example, on the issue of cessation of coal: Please, is anybody opposed to the cessation of coal? Stand up; I'd like to know who you are. Each political party has had in their platform that we would phase out coal for over 15 years now. I know that we as New Democrats did. The Conservatives did for sure, and I know the Liberals did. We all agree that the use of coal is something that had to stop. We didn't stop it in the timelines we all wanted to, as far as what the government finally ended up doing, but we've actually reached the goal we had all set ourselves in our electoral platforms. So why is the government time-allocating a bill that, quite frankly, everybody in this House agrees on, that already has six hours and 32 minutes and probably is going to pass not too much further beyond at 6:32?

If you look at the Invasive Species Act, again, it's the same story. We're at six hours and 50 minutes on invasive species. I spoke to this bill. I thought I was clear. Maybe the government didn't understand what I was saying during my lead, and maybe they didn't understand what our members were saying, but we support the bill.

We never said we're going to hold up the bill. We never said that we're not going to allow the bill to go forward. We agree that something needs to be done in regard to invasive species. It's a problem in this province, and we need to be able to deal with it. Nobody has indicated from the Conservative caucus, like New Democrats, that they want to hold this up. We're fine.

But you know what members are doing? Members are putting their views and their constituents' views on the record. That's what this Legislature is about. I think part of the problem we get into is because we now have this tool called "time allocation" in our standing orders, the government, more and more, moves away from what the intent of the Legislature is supposing to be all about; that is, to be able to voice our concerns or to voice our support on particular bills and to suggest what we think is lacking in the bill so that when it gets to committee, those items can be looked at but, more importantly, to give the public the ability to have their say when it comes to what the bill looks like and what it should be doing by way of amendment for it to go back to third reading.

So it's penalizing members in the public to do what it is that we're supposed to do within our rights as members and the rights of the public to be able to come and present to committee. Why are you penalizing the public? What has the public ever done to you that you need to time-allocate a bill that naturally is going to pass anyway, and all that the public wants is their ability to have their say?

For example, the government is moving on the privatization of Hydro through the budget bill. What have you got against the public that you don't want to allow them to have their say on Hydro privatization? Are you afraid they may say something that you're going to take offence to? If somebody does, well, welcome to politics, and welcome to government. The minute you get elected, 50% of the people are going to be opposed—maybe not opposed, but may not be onside with whatever you're trying to do. That's just the nature of things.

What governments try to do and what members try to do individually is to do the best we can to represent the needs of our constituents and the needs of the province. But this government is saying, "No, no. Let's not do public hearings on the road over the privatization of Hydro. We know best as a government because Kathleen Wynne, the Premier of Ontario, is real smart, and she knows what's best for everybody. We don't need to listen the public. Oh, God, no, because the public may have something to say, and we don't need to take that into consequence."

We're not giving the public their due, and the due of the public in all of these bills that are contained within this particular omnibus bill, the substantive motion—the public should have an ability to have its say.

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When I first got here in 1990, we didn't have time allocation. Here's what used to happen: Let's say there were 20 bills on the order paper. The parties would get together—because an opposition party or an individual

member could hold up a bill as long as they wanted. I hearken back to the days of Peter Kormos.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Seventeen hours.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There was a 17-hour debate by Mr. Kormos over a period of two days when he held up this Legislature on auto insurance—which was his right. I'm sure that the government wasn't happy. I can tell you that Bob Rae wasn't, because I heard the story. Bob was trying to shut him down, which is a whole other story. But Mr. Kormos had the right to try to slow that bill down to make the point that he was trying to make. That's what a Legislature is all about. But do you know what? Even though the government of the day did not have time allocation—and the member from St. Catharines was here at the time—there was a process entirely within our caucus by which our leader, the future Premier of Ontario, Mr. Rae, dealt with Mr. Kormos and got some kind of an agreement in regard to hearings that travelled, that went on the road, where Mr. Kormos was able to get constituents to come and speak to the bill.

Who got the short end of that deal? Certainly not the public; the public actually got their say. And that's what this Legislature should be all about. It shouldn't be about a private club called the Liberal club of Ontario or the Conservative club of Ontario or the NDP club of Ontario when it comes to whoever sits on the other side of the House and they only do what it is that they want. This is about the people. This is the people's chamber. This is where legislators gather in order to be able to debate issues, try to represent our constituencies and, more importantly, give the public the opportunity to come to committee to be able to speak to bills.

When I got here in the 1990s, when there was no time allocation, there were some bills that travelled for two and three weeks in the intersessions, either winter or summer. Do you know what? It allowed members to go out across Ontario to get to know this province a little bit better, to get to know each other a little bit better as members and to get to know the issue a lot more. We got members who got to be quite expert on particular subject matters as a result of the work they were doing on committee.

Here is the beautiful part about it: The public got a chance to have its say. So you would go to Kenora; you would go to Sioux Lookout; you'd go to Cornwall and Ottawa and London and other places around Ontario, and the public would gather at these hearings. They would come because they knew that the Legislature was listening. And guess what we did when we listened, Mr. Speaker? We used to amend the legislation, because we used to say, "You know what? The public came forward. We've had four or five presentations where they pointed out that this particular clause in the bill doesn't make a lot of sense for the following reasons," and we would amend.

I'll give you a good example. Michael Harris—do you remember him? He was Premier of Ontario for some time here. I was an opponent of Mr. Harris. I thought most of what he did—I was completely on the opposite side of it.

But we had a bill in order to allow snowmobile clubs to charge a licence to ride on trails, and it became mandatory. It was a bill that most members of the House accepted; I certainly supported it, and I know that the Liberals at the time—Mr. Bartolucci was on committee with me; he accepted it. But we went out and we travelled the bill.

I remember that we ended up in some community somewhere in northern Ontario; I forget where it was. Somebody came forward and pointed out something in the bill that didn't work. There was a section of the bill, the way it was written, that would completely stymie the ability for snowmobile clubs to get agreements to do their trails on crown land—when they had to go across a hydro right-of-way or whatever they were trying to go through. And this person came before the committee and said, "I've been reading this—and I'm not an expert; I'm just a lawyer and I love my snowmobile. When I read this, as a member of the snowmobile club of" whatever town, "this section does completely the opposite of what it is that you're trying to do."

I remember that the government person who was taking lead on the bill—I forget who it was—said, "No, no, no. You're wrong. We've done this," and he challenged the person in the presentation. But then, even the Conservative members started going, "Hang on. We've got a problem here."

Guess what we did? We amended the bill. The service that that individual brought to this Legislature by coming before the committee to point out that there was an error with the bill, which we then amended and fixed—he did us a service, not a disservice, because we now have legislation that works. That's what this place should be all about.

What the government does when they do omnibus time-allocation motions or individual time-allocation motions and don't allow bills to go through the natural process—you're shutting the public out, let alone my right as a member to speak; you're shutting the public out. People have views. People want to know that when they have a view, they can express it, and if it's on a bill, that they can come to committee and say what they have to say.

Like I said, when I got here in 1990 and there was no time allocation, if there were 20 or 25 bills on the order paper, there were probably only about four to five bills that got a lot of hearings—a week or two or three weeks of travel in the province. Most other bills went through the House fairly quickly, but the rule was always that you would allow the bill to go to committee, in order to give the public an opportunity to have its say. Why? Because the bills that were like the ending coal bill and the invasive species bill and others were bills that everybody agreed on. They tended to go through a lot more quickly.

On other bills that were more controversial and more substantive, yes, there would probably be 10, 12 or 14 hours of debate, because they were more substantive and they demanded more time. But that was an agreement that was done with the House leaders. You would say, "Okay, we're fine on invasive species. We're only going to put up two speakers"—one party would say. The other

party would say, "I'll put up two or three, and that's all we'll do, but we're going to put up more people on this other bill." That's the way this place worked.

The government, by doing this omnibus bill—by which they're bringing forward four bills in one in this omnibus time-allocation motion—I believe are not helping themselves, because it's going to take them longer to pass it this way than it would to do it naturally.

If these were controversial bills, like the budget, like privatizing hydro—serious bills that the opposition has opposition to, like the Tories, for that fact, on the Ontario pension plan bill—then I would understand why they're trying to time-allocate. I still wouldn't agree, but I'd understand: because there would be substantive resistance in the House to having that bill go through. But these four bills are hardly bills that the opposition has a problem with. Bill 66, Great Lakes Protection Act, is at second reading with almost four hours of debate. Bill 83, the anti-SLAPP bill; Bill 37, the Invasive Species Act; Bill 9, ending the use of coal: They're all bills that the opposition in both parties support. So why are we time-allocating stuff when, quite frankly, there's an agreement in the House?

It tells me there are a couple of things going on. One is that the government doesn't want to listen to the public in a meaningful way. Yes, there are going to be some hearings in this time allocation motion. I see we're going to allow witnesses to come forward for a day here or two days there, depending on what the bill is, but we're not going to travel any of these bills. For example, on the use of coal—it would be kind of interesting to go up to Thunder Bay–Atikokan. We shut down a coal plant there; maybe the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan would like to have their say. Guess what? The people of Sarnia–Lambton want to have a say as well about what this has meant to their communities. So why are we not at least travelling the bills to the communities that are affected? "No, we're only going to do it here in Toronto."

With regard to the Invasive Species Act, there's hardly a community in Ontario that is not affected. Now, I'm not arguing we should have to travel the Invasive Species Act for weeks and weeks to a hundred communities, but there are a number of people across Ontario who want to speak to it, and what I'm saying is that this motion is going to limit the ability for the public to have their say. The only place they're going to be able to come to do that is the mother ship called Toronto.

I just want to point out to members of the assembly that I love Toronto. I think Toronto is a great city. It has been voted the number one city in the world, and I'm quite proud of that as an Ontarian. But you know what? There's Timmins, there's Welland, there's Ottawa. There are all kinds of communities around Ontario that are just as important—

Interjection: Sudbury.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sudbury—and hearings—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Niagara Falls.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I said Welland, so I'm going to give you one, not two. All right, we'll give you Niagara. We'll do Niagara. You're welcome.

But my point is, those communities are just as important as Toronto. Why are we only doing hearings here? It's not as if we've never had a practice of travelling bills.

The first thing you're doing by this time allocation motion, this omnibus time allocation motion, is you're in fact selling the public shy. You're actually not respecting the public. You're actually not respecting the various regions of this province, to have their say. I think that is disrespect, and I think, eventually, that's the type of thing that's going to come up to bite the government. They say it's not opposition parties that defeat governments; it's governments that defeat themselves. I think the government, by doing what they're doing, is actually writing their own demise, because at some point the public says, "You know what? They're not listening to me. If somebody is prepared to listen to me, maybe I'll vote for them."

It's a little bit like what happened with the NDP in Alberta, with Rachel Notley and Mr. Prentice. What happened in Alberta wasn't just a question of how the NDP ran a great campaign—which they did; it was a question of how Mr. Prentice defeated himself. Mr. Prentice made a number of errors going into that election, where the public said, "You know what? We've had these guys for 44 years, and these guys just don't get it. So whoever out there who is prepared to speak to how I feel and counter what Mr. Prentice and the Tories are doing, I'm prepared to vote for it." And Rachel Notley ran a very strong campaign. She's an amazing leader in the sense that she's very charismatic, very dynamic, and in the end she basically won a majority government in Alberta, a place that you would never have thought the NDP would actually form the government, let alone get a dozen seats.

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What I'm saying is that the government here, by doing what you're doing with these time allocation motions, is doing the same kinds of stuff that quite frankly defeats governments. I will argue that there's probably a darned good chance that Mr. Harper is going to lose the next election federally, and I think there's a good chance he's going to lose it to Thomas Mulcair. Why? Because that government is forgetting what they're there for. At the end of the day, it's about the public. The problem with governments, after they're there for a long time—of all stripes; I'm not going to sit here holier than thou and say that doesn't happen to the NDP as well—is that they tend to forget what they're there for. They become an institution unto themselves, and they say, "Oh my God, I've got to get my legislative agenda through." It doesn't matter who stands in the way. The public—who are they? And they do time allocation in the way that they're doing now. So I just say to my colleagues across the way that it is not the way to do things.

On the Great Lakes Protection Act, Bill 66, I know there are people who want to speak to that in and around places like southern Ontario, along Lake Ontario, the various Great Lakes, Niagara Falls—

Ms. Cindy Forster: St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. I know there are people who want to speak to that. Again—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Port Colborne.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Port Colborne. Again, do we need to send the committee to every community in that area? Absolutely not, but we can pick some communities so that the public can have their say, and guess what? The government might learn a few things. You might actually get into a situation where you're told things and you start to open your ears and hear what the public has to say, and you might make a better bill. But again, I just say and I—

Mr. John Vanthof: It's the Great Lakes basin; that goes right up to the Arctic watershed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, it goes right up to the Arctic watershed, which is in your riding and mine.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's the Great Lakes basin—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The watershed is where?

Mr. John Vanthof: In my riding.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's actually in your riding. Actually, it's not in my riding; it's in your riding. That's right.

Mr. John Vanthof: Not everything is in your riding. You've got whales; I've got the watershed.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I know, I've got whales and you've got the watershed. Okay, let's get that straight.

I just say to the government that I think you're really not helping your own cause by doing this, and you're certainly not helping the cause of the public. We, the opposition, will survive. We'll live to fight on another bill. You know, it's not as if the government is never going to bring another bill forward, so who are you fooling?

Again, in the last two or three minutes that I have, I just want to make the point that you're going to have a six-and-a-half-hour debate on an omnibus motion to time-allocate four bills for which you're probably going to time-allocate the omnibus substantive motion for another two hours. It's actually going to take you longer to time-allocate this stuff than if you just let it go naturally. Even if you wanted to time-allocate the bills individually, it still would be faster just to time-allocate individually. I don't understand the House management strategy in the government House leader's office, because if I was the government House leader, first of all, I think and I hope I wouldn't use time allocation. I hope, but who knows? Anything is possible in this place. That's the one thing that I've learned. But I would hope I wouldn't. But if I did have to use time allocation, I'd be looking at these bills and I'd be saying, "Listen, I can probably make a deal on all four of these bills somehow to allow them to go forward in exchange for something with the opposition," like more hearings on some of these bills or other bills; or, in the case of New Democrats, severing out the Hydro portion of the budget bill and allowing the Hydro portion to travel out in committee. If the government wants to do that, I'll pass all of these bills today. I'll put it on the record here today: If the government is prepared to travel out the Hydro portion of this bill, we'll agree to the terms of these time allocation motions for travel without any difficulty.

But again, will the government do that? No, because I believe the government is locked into this process where they think they know better than the public, and I think, Mr. Speaker, that's just not the way to do things.

I'm watching the clock. You want me to go for another minute? Okay, well, let me just say this because I'm trying to keep some time for the next time we come. I'll have about 30 minutes, which is good. I just want to say again, it's just not the way to do things. I look at these types of approaches—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's that?

Mr. Wayne Gates: What's wrong with listening to the public?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, there we go; there's 30 seconds of debate anyway. What's wrong with listening to the public? You're never wrong. Can you imagine—think of it this way: We all get phone calls from constituents, on all sides of the House. Imagine if we took the policy that we're not going to return the calls? How long would we hold on to our seats? Not very long. So I decided that I think the government should be listening to the public and answering these calls when it comes to committee.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm very pleased to welcome page captain Jessica Terry's family here today to the Legislature. They're in the members' west gallery. Her mother, Shena Terry; father, Dean Terry; and brother Josh Terry are all here to see page captain Jessica Terry.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I ask all members to welcome representatives of CUPE's 55,000 education workers, including members of their bargaining team: Bonnie Dineen, Sue Hanson, Rod McGee, Sylvain Piché, Heather Skolly and Laura Walton.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Mr. Speaker, please help me welcome to the House today two guests from York region: Hilary Jacob and her son, Matthew Merrick.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my delight to introduce to the House today grade 5 and 6 students from Annette public school who instituted an anti-bullying program for LGBTQ kids—on their own. It wasn't their teacher who did it. They did it on their own.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure to welcome to the gallery today my OLIP intern, Clare Devereux, and her mother, visiting from BC, Katherine Meredith. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm honoured to welcome two friends to Queen's Park today who are CUPE educational workers: Tracey Newman, an educational assistant who supports the learning of children with special needs; and Susy Viana-Azevedo, who is a designated early child-

hood educator teaching in the full-day kindergarten program. I want to welcome them here to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'd like to welcome high school students who participated in the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Championship held in Hong Kong last month: Martine Duffy, who finished third in overall competition; Olivia Railton, from my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, who claimed top slot in the debating category; and Sarah Hick, who finished fifth in the overall competition. Welcome to them and their families here today.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege to introduce a friend from Oshawa, Arnaldo Beni, who has made his way to Queen's Park to take it all in today.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have the pleasure of welcoming two groups of people here today.

First of all, we have page captain Luke Woolcock's family here today in the members' east gallery. We have his mother, Vita Peri; his father, Mike Woolcock; his sister, Michaela Woolcock; and his brother Christopher Woolcock. Welcome to Queen's Park.

I'd also like to acknowledge the CUPE education workers who are here from my riding of Etobicoke Centre and from across the province: Bonnie Dineen and the rest of the team. Welcome.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to welcome Hope Robertson. She is marketing and PR manager for Wightman Telecom, which is located in Clifford, in my riding.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It gives me great pleasure today to introduce Ann and Peter Walters, who are joining us today from Oakville.

I'd also like to introduce the girls from St. Mildred's-Lightbourn School. They're the members of the robotics team that just won the world championship down in St. Louis. Their names are Ria Kalra, Michelle Dhar, Vicky Wang, Marie Jolicoeur-Becotte, Ayra Kathuria and Amy Li. Their teachers and mentors are Nathan Chow, James Chaykowski, Ken Rogerson and Sarah Sils.

Speaker, please give them the congratulations they deserve for making Ontario proud.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me great pleasure to stand up again to welcome my page, Robert Heckbert, a student from Henry Larsen Elementary School in Ottawa–Orléans. But most of all, I would like to re-welcome his mother, Susan Bellamy, a very dedicated mother who spent a week with him at Queen's Park. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to introduce the secondary school Glendale High School. The teachers and students are arriving as we speak.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I know that they're arriving here in the next couple of minutes. I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today delegates from the Sporting Clube de Portugal, the very club that Cristiano Ronaldo started his career with. They are here today to join us for part of question period.

We have board member and head of Sporting Clube de Portugal, Mr. Bruno de Mascarenhas; youth technical director, Mr. Virgilio Lopes; the head of grassroots, Mr. Luis Dias; technical director of sporting academies, Mr. Nuno Figueiredo; as well as technical director of Sporting Football Club of Toronto, Mr. Pedro Dias. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would like to welcome individuals from CJPAC, the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, to question period this morning. Joining us today are Jaime Reich, director of outreach and programming, and their summer interns, Michelle Naftalis, Jonathan Glustein, Kelly Bryant and Lorne Geller. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wanted to congratulate the curious, intelligent, well-mannered and a little shy page Abby Deschene, who was page captain yesterday. I forgot to honour her, so I thought I would do it today.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, it's almost like it's Oakville day. In the gallery today, we've got a young man who has just got an incredible voice. He came to sing for the Premier today. His name is Colin Brennan, standing right there in the pink shirt, with his dad, Gordon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: My colleague introduced Sarah Hick and Martine Duffy, who we're enormously proud of, but the whole family's here: Simone, her sister; John Duffy; and Jill Presser—very impressive family, great policy minds, great lawyer, great kids. Congratulations there, dear friends and constituents.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, I'd like to welcome members of CUPE here today, especially CUPE Local 1022.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I don't have a list of names, so I'm just going to try to welcome all the CUPE members who haven't already been welcomed by a member in the chamber.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's one of my old tricks.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Premier, your back-to-work legislation isn't going to fix the chaos you've created in Ontario's classrooms. Yesterday, your Minister of Education said she thought a sense of urgency is really important. She said you had a sense of urgency when you asked the Education Relations Commission for a ruling. I'm not sure, and we're not sure, how waiting 10 days for the ERC to tell you the school year was in jeopardy was showing a sense of urgency, especially since the official opposition gave you the same ruling weeks ago.

Premier, will you finally show a sense of urgency and get a deal done so grade 8 students can receive the proper transition they deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Education will want to comment on the specifics, but our primary objective has been to get kids back into the classroom. That's why we have been working at the table. There are negotiations going on right now. As we speak, there are conversations at various tables to try to get deals. We will continue to work to get that central deal.

The Education Relations Commission is the body that has been in place for decades that rules on jeopardy in a school year. I know the party opposite doesn't necessarily like to follow due process, doesn't necessarily believe in the process, whether it's around collective bargaining or otherwise, but we do. We think it's important, when there is a process in place, that we follow that process. That's what we've done. The kids are back in school, and that's where they need to stay.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: The government has already damaged one school year, and we've been told, just a little while ago, that it won't be business as usual in Ontario Catholic schools in September. Along with the 800,000 elementary school students, Catholic school students will be without any activities outside of regular class this fall. We know there will be a full-blown strike by the end of September. That isn't a leak. That isn't speculation. That is what the four unions have said.

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Premier, will you get a deal done before the end of this school year, or will you leave the parents and children wondering if the classroom doors will be locked next fall?

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: You spoke about the English Catholic teachers. I'm here to report that we're negotiating with the English Catholic teachers. We have a number of dates working with them over this week and the next couple of weeks.

My intent is to be at the table and bargaining. There's lots of rhetoric out there, but there are three months before the school year starts. I intend to be at the table bargaining, just as we will be with the English Catholic teachers in the next couple of weeks.

Memos go out and statements get made in the media, but the important thing is what actually happens at the table, because the only place we can get—

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: Premier, you've had three of 72 school boards go on strike this past month. Now you have all four unions threatening to strike in the fall. Parents need to prepare, and children don't need this uncertainty.

Come September, we will have over two million students not receiving the education they deserve, at the rate things are going. Your minister hasn't been able to do the job, and you've shown no sense of urgency.

So may I suggest, Premier, as an incentive, that you say today that you will fire your Minister of Education if

there are any strikes this fall and put a minister in place that will get the job done?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, what I'd like to do is get a little bit of clarity on their plan for the rest of the day, because what I heard Tuesday night from the official opposition was that they didn't think that we needed to pass the Protecting the School Year Act, that it was an irrelevant bill. It will be coming up for second and third reading, I expect, this afternoon. I'd like to know what their position is going to be when that act comes up, because that act is standing between 72,000 students and a strike that will start on June 10 if we don't pass the act. So I want to know if they still think that act is irrelevant.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, we will be supporting Bill 103 at second and third reading, okay? Today, with the passage of Bill 103, we will only put a finger in the dam. It's simply a band-aid, and you know that.

Since last September, the two-tiered disaster Bill 122 has seen virtually no bargaining take place with any results. It has simply been a process of finger pointing with no leadership taking place at your ministry.

September 8 is only 102 days away, and that's when the kids go back to school. Turmoil is about to break out. Since September 1, 2014, 268 days have passed, and all we can say is that back-to-work legislation will pass today. That's all we've got.

Minister, do you believe Bill 122 is good legislation for the education sector in our province?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, I do. It's interesting: The party opposite was against Bill 122 in the first place. The Labour Relations Board actually said that the interpretation that the government had of the legislation was the correct interpretation all along. But what I find really surprising is this party, which campaigned on getting rid of 10,000 education workers—22,000, actually, if you did the math carefully—thought they'd just get rid of people. Is that their solution for how you handle the issues quickly? Because I think the way is to use those 102 days or 103 days and make sure that we get agreements in place before we go back to the school year—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Back to the minister: Patrick Brown and the PC caucus believe that Bill 122 is nothing more than a tool for you to avoid transparent bargaining. With only 102 days before turmoil breaks out in all 72 boards in Ontario—

Interjections.

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

Please finish.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We simply cannot see almost two million students being faced with education disruptions this September. With all the teacher federations and school boards unanimous in the fact that no bargaining is actually taking place, we are heading for an education tsunami.

Will you fix Bill 122 now so that our students, parents, teachers and boards can do what is best for education, and that is simply to teach?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I find it quite fascinating. I followed their leadership campaign pretty closely, and I don't remember Patrick Brown ever having a single thing to say about what education policy would be in Ontario if he happened to be the Premier—other than, of course, on sex ed. We know what he thinks about that—nothing else.

But what I really want to say is that the—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: What I really want to talk about is what has happened in the schools this week. The party opposite wants to talk about chaos—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You want us to solve all your problems.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew—second time.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —which they presume will break out in the fall. I presume we're going to negotiate. But I want to talk a little bit more about what went on in the schools this week.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, the education turmoil is growing. There are many people very disgusted with the fact that Bill 122 has been a disaster.

Here's an email I got this morning: "All the teachers, janitors and secretaries, and even the rats and mice, are on the verge of walking out in September of this year if this continues to go on."

You think a summer of bargaining under the current legislation will result in all boards and federations coming to agreements. Patrick Brown and the PC caucus believe that next fall will be spent with one back-to-work legislation being introduced after another.

Minister, will you show—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Please wrap up. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, will you show leadership, admit the two-tiered system is a complete failure, and bring in new legislation that will allow everyone in the education system to bargain in good faith, and not disrupt the education of two million students next fall?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I don't believe we have a central table for rats and mice, so we won't be bargaining with them—everybody else, yes. But I want to talk about what happened in the schools yesterday.

What happened in the schools yesterday was that the teachers came back to work. I had a conversation with all three school boards this morning. What each and every one of them reported is that our professional teachers were happy to be back in the classroom, our students were happy to be back in the classroom, and the teachers were delighted to be able to get back to learning and teaching students. There is a lot of commitment in each and every classroom to making this school year a success. Passing the legislation this afternoon will ensure that happens.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier believe that Ontarians deserve a right to have a say on whether their Hydro One is sold off?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I do, and in fact, it's why we were very, very clear in our platform and in our budget about what our plan was. We were very clear that—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just go through some of the public statements, Mr. Speaker. In an April 11 news release before the 2014 election, Hydro One was in the headline. The quote was, "The Ontario government has appointed a council to recommend ways to improve the efficiency and optimize the full value of Hydro One...."

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The 2014 platform, our platform: "Our Moving Ontario Forward plan includes a balanced and responsible approach to paying for these investments. The funds will be from dedicated sources of revenue ... asset optimization...."

Hydro One is mentioned three times in our budget in reference to asset modernization. It was fully public that we were going to be looking at our assets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Not a single Ontarian voted to sell off Hydro One last year, because as the Premier has just admitted, the Liberals did not run on it. For months they denied that it was even their plan. They stood in this House—in fact, that Premier stood in this House and promised that she wasn't going to sell off and privatize Hydro One. But here we are: The Premier is selling off Hydro One.

Will she stop this sell-off and give Ontarians a chance to have their say through a referendum?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just continue. In our budget: "The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

Page 164 of the budget: "The province's valuable assets include large and complex government business

enterprises ... such as the LCBO, Hydro One and OPG. To identify opportunities to optimize the full value and performance of these core assets, the government will launch an in-depth review process."

Page 257: "Exploring options to unlock the full value of a wide range of valuable provincial assets, including those of large and complex government business enterprises ... specifically, the LCBO, Hydro One and Ontario Power Generation."

We made it very clear that we were looking at our assets and that we were going to be reviewing them in order to optimize their value.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians own Hydro One and they deserve a say as to whether or not it gets sold off.

They also deserve honesty from their government. The Premier, just six months ago, said that she was not selling off Hydro One. She said this in this very chamber. It is in Hansard; it is in black and white. That's what she said in this chamber. Yet, lo and behold, six, seven months later Hydro One is on the auction block.

Will this Premier do the right thing and take this question to the people of Ontario, and let them have a referendum on whether their hydro utility is sold off to Bay Street?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to read a quote from Hansard from the leader of the third party, but Mr. Speaker, just remember that what we are talking about here, what the leader of the third party is talking about is not having the funds to pay for the transportation infrastructure around the province that she knows is critical. She knows the Hamilton LRT is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Transportation and the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek come to order—second time for the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: She knows that those investments are critical but she does not have a plan to pay for them.

Here is what the NDP leader said just days after the last election. It was so clear that we were optimizing, that we were looking at our assets and all options were on the table. Here's what she said: "The budget says in black and white that the government is looking at the sale of assets, 'including ... crown corporations, such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario.'" NDP leader, July 9, 2014.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. You know what? That's because I was saying to the people of Ontario, "Your Premier is about to sell off

all of your assets.” Thank you for letting them know that I told them about that back in June.

Speaker, once this Premier sells off Hydro One there will be no going back. Bills will skyrocket. We will lose control of an asset that supports education, that puts money into health care, that helps support our investments in infrastructure each and every single year.

Does this Premier really think that she has the right to sell off Hydro One without ever asking the permission of Ontarians who own it? Will she do the right thing by the people: Will she actually take a step back and give them their say and hold a referendum on this sell-off?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party knows that we will retain 40% ownership. The people of Ontario will retain 40% ownership of Hydro One and control of the board. She knows that. She knows full well that the regulatory protections that are in place now will continue to be in place in terms of where assets will be built around the province and the price controls. She knows all of that.

She also knows that in a role of responsibility and leadership, there are difficult decisions. We made a decision that we were going to invest in infrastructure in this province. The leader of the third party does not and has not supported that, which in my opinion, is irresponsible. In order for this province to grow, we must invest in infrastructure: in roads and bridges and transit. She doesn’t want to do that. She has no plan to do that. We do. We ran on it, and that’s the plan that we’re implementing.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nobody believes this Premier’s rhetoric. The bottom line is, I have been talking to Ontarians. I’ve been listening at town hall meetings across this province to what Ontarians have to say, and I can inform the Premier that Ontarians across the province have been saying that they don’t want their Hydro One to be sold off.

The Premier and every one of her backbenchers know that Ontarians cannot afford to pay the price of the sell-off of Hydro One because they have been getting thousands upon thousands of emails from Ontarians. If the Premier is so sure of Ontarians’ support for her sell-off, then she has no reason whatsoever not to have a referendum.

Will this Premier agree to ask Ontarians whether they believe in public control of Hydro One or a scheme to sell it off to energy speculators, to foreign owners and to Liberal friends?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do believe in public control, and that’s why we’re retaining 40% ownership.

A year ago, the NDP asked us to take our plan to the people of Ontario. We did that a year ago, and this is why we are here implementing our plan.

Here’s the rhetoric that the leader of the third party is pointing to: the rhetoric of the Barrie GO line electrified, weekly trips that will move from 70 to 200; the rhetoric

of a Kitchener line, weekly trips of 80 to 250; the rhetoric of a Hamilton LRT; the rhetoric for connecting links being built around the province; the rhetoric of building bridges in communities across the province. That’s what she’s calling rhetoric.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The conversation between members on one side and the other is going to stop while the question is being put and the answer.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is not rhetoric to invest \$230 million in rural and northern gas expansion. It’s not rhetoric to invest \$15 million—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Find another source.

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

Finish—one sentence.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—fifteen million dollars a year in Connecting Links. That’s not rhetoric. That’s action, and that’s what we’re doing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, \$8.2 billion is what the AG criticized this government for wasting—eHealth, Ornge air ambulance, the gas plants. This is the most wasteful government in the history of Ontario. That money should have gone into infrastructure.

Not only that, this government continues to give new tax loopholes and other giveaways to the corporate sector that are going to cost us \$1 billion each and every year, Speaker. On top of that, we’re going to lose \$300 million at the very least in revenues from the sell-off of Hydro One.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Economic Development, second time.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This does not belong to the Premier in terms of a decision. It does not belong to the cabinet. It does not belong to the Liberal Party. It belongs to Ontarians. It’s their decision to make, and selling Hydro One without listening to the people of Ontario—who own it—is completely undemocratic.

Will she do the right thing? Will this Premier ask the people of Ontario their opinion through a referendum?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we’ve been very clear. In April 2014, we produced and delivered a budget that talked very clearly about the need to reinvest in our economy, to grow our economy and protect the interests of the public.

The NDP chose not to even show up to the lock-up and deliberate over this budget. Instead, they copied parts of that budget—most of it, in fact—and used it in their platform, talking about optimizing assets, talking about how do we cut various—we didn’t cut.

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We're doing everything possible to reinvest in our economy. In fact, in July, I got a chance to reintroduce that same budget. In October 2014, we introduced a fall economic statement again reaffirming what we were doing. Then, in April 2015, we put forward a tremendous budget, which talks about investing in our economy, growing the economy, reinvesting and improving our returns for the people of Ontario.

HYDRO ONE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, we've asked you questions about the Ombudsman's report into the shameful billing practices at Hydro One.

Hon. James J. Bradley: He's been on Twitter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So far, you've only paid lip-service to the pain and suffering this disaster has caused hundreds of thousands of Ontarians.

As the energy critic for the PC caucus, my office was frequently copied on emails to you from Ontarians in crisis because of Hydro One's disastrous billing practices. This went on for months and months and months. Yet, it was the Ombudsman who had to step in because you didn't care.

Minister, is the reason why your response to this crisis has been so unsympathetic—and I should say pathetic—that the people who have suffered are largely from rural Ontario and not represented by your Liberal caucus?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The response to the problems with the IT billing system have been dealt with over the course of time. There were serious issues that created serious inconvenience with customers across the province.

The reality is the Ombudsman did an investigation at the request, I think, of the critic, and he received 10,000 complaints, which is a lot. Some 3,500 of them were referred to Hydro One. Of those 3,500 referred to Hydro One, 98% of them have been resolved.

Yes, there was inconvenience, which Hydro One has apologized for, the government has apologized for, but there has been no financial loss to any of the customers affected. They have been reinstated and the money has been refunded to them. They have been given time to pay it if they didn't receive their bills—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It was the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, but it certainly didn't come from you, the request to the Ombudsman.

Minister, no one believes for a second that if over 10,000 complaints had been made to the Ombudsman about Hydro Ottawa or Toronto Hydro that your ministry wouldn't have responded with lightning speed to the crisis with all the resources you have at your disposal.

Now the situation for Hydro One customers in rural Ontario is about to get even worse. When your budget

bill passes, no officer of this Legislature will be able to serve the interests of Hydro One customers because you are removing oversight.

Minister, Hydro One customers deserve a whole lot better than what you've been giving them. It brings your whole plan for selling Hydro One into question. Will you commit today to this Legislature to remove the sale of Hydro One from your budget bill?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: What we're committing to today is to leave in the legislation the provision that we've put there that requires Hydro One to have an ombudsman. Not only do we require Hydro One to have an ombudsman, but we have retained the services of former Auditor General of Canada, Denis Desautels, to oversee the implementation of an ombudsman in Hydro One to ensure accountability and transparency. That is more than any other Toronto Stock Exchange company will have, and it will be meaningful, it will be accountable and it will be a responsible response.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. The Premier might not know this, but I spend many evenings and weekends going door to door talking to my constituents. Whether they follow politics, whether they're Liberals or PCs or NDP, they're telling me they didn't get a say on the Premier's plan to sell Hydro One. They don't want the Premier to sell Hydro One.

Will the Premier agree to a referendum on her scheme to sell our Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hope that the member opposite, when he is walking around Toronto–Danforth and he's talking about our plan to broaden the ownership of Hydro One, mentions that we are retaining 40% ownership. I hope he mentions that no entity or individual can own more than 10%, that the government will continue to own 40%. I hope he mentions that the regulatory protections that are in place now will remain in place. I hope he also mentions—because Toronto–Danforth is a very urban riding—that this was a difficult decision that was made because there is a need to invest in transit and transportation infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, and that, without that decision, we wouldn't be able to make those investments. I hope he mentions all that as he walks around Toronto–Danforth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, I do let them know that bankers in Tokyo, New York and Frankfurt will get an opportunity to own their hydro system, absolutely. But Hydro One belongs to the people of Ontario, and selling it will affect every single one of them. They deserve a say. Will the Premier agree to listen to the people and hold a referendum before the Premier sells off Hydro One?

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I think it's important that we actually look at the record. Here's what the NDP leader

said just days after the last election: “The budget says in black and white that the government is looking at the sale of assets, ‘including ... crown corporations, such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario.’” That was July 9, 2014.

That was a budget that we introduced before the election and one that we campaigned on, Mr. Speaker. That budget was introduced before the election and afterwards. So the people of Ontario and the leader of the third party knew exactly what we were looking at, exactly what we were contemplating, and it’s disingenuous for her to stand up and make the accusations that she’s making here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask the minister to withdraw.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Withdraw.

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

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, you have made it clear that your ministry is pursuing a mandate of transformation for the services it offers people living with disabilities. With these efforts, last week you were in my riding of Durham at Vos’ Independent Grocers, announcing more resources for people with disabilities to achieve their employment goals. Vos’ is known for their community stewardship and the opportunities they provide for persons with developmental disabilities.

During your visit, you announced that your ministry is contributing \$800,000 to help create a new Centre for Excellence in Employment Services, which will provide local community employers across the province with training and resources to find best practices, share information and create environments where individuals with disabilities can fully participate in the workforce. Minister, Durham was glad to hear it, but could you please provide the House with more details on how this new centre will assist individuals and employers?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I want to thank the member from Durham for his question. I think all members know that he’s a very strong advocate for people with special needs.

An initiative like the Centre for Excellence in Employment Services is an example of the work that we are doing to create an inclusive society which allows for meaningful, competitive employment for those with developmental disabilities.

The centre for excellence will become a hub of knowledge and expertise in this province on the best ways to match the abilities of individuals to different types of employment. This is a critical factor for success.

The Centre for Excellence in Employment Services is one of 38 projects receiving funding from the employment and modernization fund. This fund is set to deliver \$15 million over three years and is part of our \$810-million investment in developmental services.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Minister. This new employment and modernization fund is a strong example of the way our government is using the innovative leaders in the developmental services sector to make a tangible difference for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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However, this was not your only announcement. Last week, on your travels, you made a very significant investment in the violence-against-women sector. Our government is helping create a new women’s shelter to serve Elgin county. Your ministry is investing more money to replace the existing shelter, to better meet the need for services. Their current location is a 98-year-old single-family home which has reached its capacity and has minimal outdoor space for children to play.

Minister, can you please explain to the House how this investment is supporting the government’s commitment towards the reduction of violence against women?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Our investment of \$1.93 million is something that I’m very proud to speak about.

I want to acknowledge the amazing contribution of individuals from Elgin county who raised over a million dollars towards this project. The new Women’s Place emergency shelter will provide a range of services to women and children who have experienced abuse. The new shelter will be almost five times the size of the existing shelter, with bedrooms for families and a large secured yard where children can play safely.

Protecting women and children from domestic violence is part of our government’s plan to provide more security, protection and equal opportunity for all Ontarians. Currently, my ministry funds more than 2,000 beds annually, dedicated for use by women who experience abuse and their children.

This particular investment will help ensure that more women experiencing violence can live in safety, free from threat, fear or experience of violence and harassment.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Premier. The Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment has heard from a number of witnesses on the devastating impacts of human trafficking. There is a very clear consensus from witnesses, who consistently said there is a severe lack of resources and support for women who want to leave the sex trade. One witness from Rising Angels stated that there needs to be a plan in place to offer these women a way out.

Premier, it is clear that human trafficking is a serious problem in Ontario. This is why I tabled a motion on May 14, which was unanimously supported, that called for the creation of a provincial task force that would offer a coordinated team of officers, crown attorneys and support services for victims. Premier, will you immediately strike the task force?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for the question as well as for her work on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment—all the members who participate on that.

I think we all agree that human trafficking is a deplorable, deplorable activity. It's one I take extremely seriously, as the minister responsible for women's issues.

As I talked about in the House last week, we've already taken action on this issue, along with my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We invested over \$9 million over the next three years in our language interpreter service, so we can expand service to victims of sexual violence, including human trafficking. Last year, we provided \$225,000 in funding to the White Ribbon Campaign to help develop and promote resources to help end human trafficking.

We know there's more work to do, and I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Minister, it's about coordination, which I said in the motion. These young women are moved from one community to another—particularly along Highway 401—where they are prostituted through online ads and social media. The efforts of law enforcement are hindered by multiple investigations into the same perpetrator for crimes in multiple areas.

Based on debate on my resolution in the chamber two weeks ago—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Unanimously.

Ms. Laurie Scott: We need a task force. It was passed unanimously. I'm asking you today: Will you take the necessary action by creating a provincial task force to combat human trafficking here in Ontario?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I couldn't agree more that addressing this very serious issue of human trafficking indeed requires a coordination across government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles:—so, a whole-government approach—the Attorney General, the minister of safety and corrections and the Ontario Women's Directorate. We are working together to help eliminate human trafficking.

I congratulate you on receiving unanimous consent on your motion on human trafficking issues. I'm looking forward to working with all parties on this.

As you know, we have a permanent round table on sexual violence and harassment. That involves representation from the entire sector around sexual violence. The issue of human trafficking, I'm sure, will be addressed there, as it is in your select committee. I really look forward to more work in this area.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Our schools have been thrown into chaos because of this

Liberal government's chronic underfunding of our children's education. The chaos is only growing as the Premier's hand-picked Minister of Education fails to do her job and negotiate a deal with teachers.

Instead of protecting our schools by getting a deal done, the minister is more focused on cutting funding for our kids. She cut \$250 million last year. She's cutting \$36 million from textbooks and supplies this year. She's planning even deeper cuts to come. Now the minister is repeating her mistakes by dragging her feet on talks with education support workers, who have wanted to negotiate since last June. That's almost a year, Premier.

When will the Premier ask the Minister of Education to resign and appoint a minister who knows how to do the job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just say to the member opposite that there has been negotiating going on. I understand that there are some discussions that haven't taken place yet, but they will. As I said, we are engaged in negotiating right now.

It's important that we have that collective bargaining process, that we find those deals at the table with the education workers. Whether they're teachers or whether they're support workers, they are all critical to the education of our children. The Minister of Education is actively engaged in those negotiations right now.

What I would say to the third party is that there's a piece of legislation in front of us that will make sure that kids stay in school. It's very clear that that piece of legislation needs to pass in order for kids to be in school. I hope that they will be lending their support to that legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Premier: It was your mess that created where we are now, so you guys can fix it.

The Minister of Education is creating more chaos in our children's schools by failing to do her job. Rather than negotiating a deal with teachers, she's cutting what matters most: \$250 million cut last year; 88 schools closed since 2011; and millions cut from special education in schools right across this province.

Now, we know that this Liberal government has put class size caps on the table, and families know that means one thing. It means even bigger class sizes and even less support for the students who need it most.

The Minister of Education is creating chaos for students, and she needs to be fired today. When will the Premier do the right thing and fire the Minister of Education?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: We had 72,000 students who were out of school. I agree: That was chaotic. But it was this party that didn't want to pass the legislation to end that strike. Fortunately, the Ontario Labour Relations—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: Fortunately, the Ontario Labour Relations Board ruled that it was an unlawful strike. I'm

delighted to report that yesterday we had 72,000 students back in schools. Their very professional teachers were back there in the classrooms doing their job teaching.

My question is, are we going to allow that strike to resume on June 10, or are we going to pass the legislation that keeps—

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

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. In November 2013, not only was I proud but I was also delighted to represent rural Ontario when I introduced a motion that sought to update Ontario's regulatory framework for off-road vehicles, specifically regulation 316/03. I want to thank all members of this House for the unanimous support they gave me on this particular initiative.

But as it stands, only single-rider ATVs may travel along certain roads in Ontario, as determined by the province and our municipal partners. This outdated regulation does not consider new models of off-road vehicles such as two-ups and side-by-sides, which are used by many of my constituents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and across the province.

1120

I understand the minister has conducted consultations. I'm asking the minister this morning, could he please update—

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his question, but also I want to say that that member has been an exceptionally strong advocate for his community. That's why he was the first person to introduce a motion on this very important issue. That member understood that those living in northern and rural municipalities depend on ATVs and ORVs for tourism and local travel.

When I became minister, I committed to a collaborative approach to developing solutions for this issue. That's why MTO's been consulting with both the public and stakeholders on updates to the regulatory framework for ORVs. In-person consultations were held on January 15 and 16, and over 30 different stakeholder groups took part. In addition, proposals were posted to both the regulatory registry and the Environmental Registry until April 13, 2015.

I want to assure the member that the stakeholder feedback has been incredibly positive, and I appreciate the member's continued advocacy on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: I want to thank the minister for his solid and unwavering support on moving Bill 31 through this House. I'm very happy to hear we've received a lot of positive feedback throughout the consultation process.

But as I indicated earlier, many of my constituents in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell rely on ATVs and ORVs for

tourism, travel and recreation. I'd like to take this opportunity to officially invite the minister to my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell to see exactly how useful these vehicles are to those in my riding and across Ontario.

While it's important that we update the existing regulations, Bill 31, Making Ontario's Roads Safer, also contains provisions relating to off-road vehicles. Could the minister please tell the members of this House more about the off-road vehicle provisions within our government and our road safety regulations?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Once again, I want to thank that member not only for his advocacy but also for his eloquence in the House here today.

Many members of this House have already contributed to debate on Bill 31. This bill not only serves to protect drivers on our roads, it also introduces a number of provisions that will help keep pedestrians and cyclists safe in Ontario. Bill 31, if passed, will also eliminate the prescriptive definition of low pressure bearing tires that could affect the future of off-road vehicles bylaw authorities in municipalities.

As I've said many times in the House, my number one priority is road safety. The provisions in Bill 31 are a key step forward on this issue. However, I hope to be able to provide further updates on off-road vehicles soon.

I should add that members on this side, including those from Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Northumberland–Quinte West, Sudbury and others, have long been champions with that member on this important issue.

VACCINATIONS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, last month, I spoke to you about one of my constituents who was looking for help regarding her son's vaccination for meningitis. Peel Public Health told Ms. May that her son would have to get a second shot because he was vaccinated one day before his first birthday—one day, Minister.

There comes a point when common sense trumps memos and directives. Will you intervene with Peel Public Health to ensure Ms. May's child doesn't have to get a second shot?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate this question. It's unfortunate that an error was made by the practising primary care provider in this case where that vaccination, I understand—I think there were two that were delivered prematurely.

The law requires certain vaccinations prior to school entry, and I know the member opposite agrees with this policy. It's important. It's about the safety of our children as they grow into adults. It's because the evidence is there that vaccinations protect lives. It's very effective.

Now, with regard to this specific vaccination, I know that Peel Public Health, the ministry and Public Health Ontario reviewed the guidelines that are available, and there's a reason—I'll get into it in the supplementary—why it's important that we wait till that first year, that

first birthday before we vaccinate against MMR—measles, mumps and rubella—as well as meningitis, which are the vaccines in question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, I'm not trying to assign blame. I'm trying to solve a problem.

I have a second family. Cheryl Fulcher has been warned that her son will be suspended from school because he got his shot two days before his first birthday. As Cheryl says, "They kept saying 'it's less effective if it's before the first birthday,' and I'm thinking, 'It's two days!'"

I'm not a physician, but I have a hard time believing that the efficacy of these vaccinations decreases so dramatically in a day or two that it would warrant the additional cost to the health care system and the inconvenience to these families.

Please intervene on behalf of these two families and stop the madness for one or two days.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, this isn't about threatening suspension. This is about the safety of the child.

It's an interesting coincidence, actually, that my PhD in public health at Oxford University was granted based on a thesis that I did on immunization of children in their first year of life, and the timing of the administration of the vaccine. The science is obvious and present. It's federal legislation—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —and it's Ontario legislation and guidelines as well—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —it's the science.

Children, when they're born, have maternal antibodies that protect them against getting these diseases. Those antibodies wane over time. Science around the world—whether it's the World Health Organization, the federal health agency or Ontario—agrees that it is premature to put that child at risk, if you're vaccinating them prior to one year of age.

That is the policy across this country, Mr. Speaker. It's there for a reason: It's to protect the safety of the child.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. The Toronto 2015 budget for revenues, marketing and ceremonies has gone up from \$106 million in 2013 to \$139 million last year to \$157 million last Friday. That's a 48% increase in two years in the budget to attract people to the games. Why is that, and are they having trouble? That's one question.

Speaker, with all honesty, if they sold out every seat, the total ticket revenue from the entire games wouldn't cover those extra marketing costs.

Premier, how much extra revenue is the \$51 million in new spending expected to bring in? Is it, in fact, less than the \$51 million they've spent?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Paul Miller: Have you even checked to see?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm happy to take this question. I was happy, also, to join the member opposite as we officially opened the Hamilton stadium last week. I was very proud of that. We had the mayor out; we had city councillors out. It was an incredible event.

Mr. Speaker, I have to speak—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's kind of odd that I have to ask the government side to be quiet while the answer is being put.

Thank you.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The member opposite knows that these games are about selling tickets; they are about supporting our athletes. But they're also about supporting our infrastructure for the future. Going out to a place like Hamilton, knowing that there's a game being played in Hamilton this weekend, England versus Canada—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: The operating budget is what we're all worried about, Minister, and we don't know what the final bill will be until after the games.

Year after year, we have seen consistent increases in six of the eight lines in the operating budget: 25%, 27% and 32%. But all these cost overruns have been magically offset by two tricks—two tricks.

First, they have halved the budget—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, second time—and stop.

Please finish.

Mr. Paul Miller: First, they have halved the budget for the essential services, such as security, which is quite a trick since security costs have doubled in the last two years. Second, they've practically wiped out their contingency funds, either because they've blown through it or because they needed to make the overall numbers look good.

Premier, if these games go \$200 million over budget, will you still be paying those executive bonuses?

Hon. Michael Coteau: What the member opposite won't tell you is, when it comes to infrastructure, we're \$57.5 million under budget. Those are the things they won't tell you about.

In addition to that—and I spoke about this yesterday—we've held very detailed technical briefings for the member opposite, for both critics, and I don't think I've seen the member show up once.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—while I'm speaking—is warned.

Finish, please.

1130

Hon. Michael Coteau: We put forward these technical briefings to update our members in this House—the critics opposite—to provide that detailed information. On one side, he is saying we're not doing enough to sell tickets, and on the other side, he's now saying we're spending too much to advertise. I don't know where the NDP sits when it comes to the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, but on this side of the House, we believe in our—

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

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, our government introduced legislation that will add fairness and accountability to the condo sector. As a person who does live in a condo, I've heard extensively from my neighbours and also from constituents in Kitchener Centre about the need for better oversight of their relationship with condo boards.

Modernizing our condo law will be a source of relief to the 1.3 million people in Ontario who do live in condos. It's astounding that 50% of the new houses being built in Ontario today are condos. Our government is committed to improving this robust sector of the housing market, which already is valued at \$43 billion and employs over 300,000 Ontarians every year.

Can the Minister of Government and Consumer Services please inform us about the proposed protection of condo owners act?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for her question and for her advocacy for condo owners. This is, in fact, great news for Ontarians. Buying a condo is a significant investment; in fact, maybe the largest purchase in an individual's lifetime. With the many changes in the condo sector over the last 17 years, it's critical that we modernize the Condominium Act to address current concerns.

Through our comprehensive public outreach process and an expert panel, we received over 2,200 submissions from condo owners, developers, lawyers, property managers, agents and members of the public. The act incorporates key recommendations protecting the investment of condo owners and ensuring that they're treated fairly with consistent standards administered by licensed and qualified condo managers.

By giving owners better information on their rights and responsibilities, as well as creating new governance requirements, we are making significant changes to improve this sector's legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for the informative response, and his ministry for the work they are doing on this very important issue. I understand that the act is going to allow for the creation of what is called delegated administrative authorities.

One is going to license condo managers, making sure they have the training and qualifications to effectively manage these organizations. The second proposed delegated administrative authority is going to provide a modern, cost-effective dispute resolution system that is going to see that issues are resolved faster, and also do this at a much lower cost, saving condo owners tens of thousands of dollars compared to the current legal process.

Can the minister please speak to the creation of these delegated administrative authorities, and how they're going to add accountability and fairness for condo owners in Ontario?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again, thank you to the member from Kitchener Centre for the question.

The creation of the new delegated administrative authorities is a critical step in adding accountability and oversight to this sector. Delegated authorities have a strong track record of overseeing consumer protection. In particular, these two new delegated authorities will include specific measures like salary disclosure and a process for freedom-of-information requests. They will be reporting to the Auditor General through oversight, and the ministry will be selecting the chair of the board, as well as 49% of the members who make up this board.

The condo authority, in addition to providing faster, cost-effective dispute resolution, will provide training for condo board directors, and create standards, forms and stronger rules for record retention to prevent some of these disputes before they even happen.

This legislation is a game-changer for the condo owners in this province, and I look forward to working with members of this House to see this legislation move forward.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Earning an income doesn't come easily for a person with a disability. A person who is deaf or using a wheelchair faces all kinds of barriers in the workplace and beyond. As such, I think it's fair that Ontario recognizes this challenge and supports them in their work efforts with the monthly \$100 Work-Related Benefit. The Work-Related Benefit helps many gain employment, retain employment and, equally important, feel good about being able to contribute to their community and be included in our society. Clearly you disagree, Minister, which is why you're moving ahead with plans to cut the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.

Minister, can you please explain why you're cutting job opportunities for people with disabilities?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for the question. Certainly our government does agree that we need to ensure that those with disabilities have every opportunity to participate in the workplace.

Obviously, along with my colleague the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, we are working very hard in terms of accessibility

opportunities, and there are many different initiatives that our government, in fact, is taking. In relation to the employment-related benefit and the idea that our government did propose to fold all seven existing employment-related benefits into one, including the Work-Related Benefit, I'm sure the member is aware that we have delayed implementation of that particular benefit at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Community and Social Services: I'm glad that you are actually delaying it, but what we need you to do is ensure that you're not going to cut that out. People in my office came and said, "This will be the difference between me keeping a job or not keeping a job," so we need to look at that.

You've used the words "streamlining" and "flexibility" as code words during your messy SAMS implementation that left vulnerable people with payment delays and stress. If streamlining means cutting job opportunities for people with disabilities, then you should back down now and not implement that cut. By cutting the Work-Related Benefit, you're forcing people with disabilities to face a very difficult choice: to be trapped at home and not work, meaning they'll need much more in the way of support from your government, or risk injury or even death by working without adequate supports to address their health-related needs.

Minister, your actions are unjustifiable. They are discriminatory to people with disabilities. You need to reverse your decision. Will you please do that?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm sure that my critic is well aware that one of the mandates given to me by our Premier is social assistance reform, and we will be embarking on that very shortly in terms of consultations. This is a very complex process and it will represent changes for clients.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton Mountain, second time.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We're going to look at the employment-related benefit in conjunction with social assistance reform. At this point in time, we are not implementing the change that was previously proposed and we remain committed to minimizing any negative impacts on any changes that we make, especially as it relates to employment.

We have introduced a number of measures to improve employment outcomes for those on social assistance so that individuals receiving social assistance can now earn up to \$200 per month without having their monthly benefits impacted. Beyond \$200, for every dollar earned, their monthly benefits will be—

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

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Two weeks ago, the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit

program, or OSEB, was arbitrarily cancelled, with no warning, no notice and no consultation.

In my community, the OSEB program has launched hundreds of successful small businesses, creating jobs for many more Londoners and pumping millions into the local economy. The OSEB program filled a unique role by supporting people on EI to become successful entrepreneurs.

Premier, how can your government justify cancelling a program that has helped hundreds of unemployed Londoners to start small businesses and create jobs, and has already been rigorously evaluated as successful?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member for that question.

Ontario's skilled workers are our greatest asset. Our Premier often refers to the people of Ontario, saying that the people of Ontario are our greatest assets. That's why our government has been investing in our people.

Every year we invest about \$1.2 billion through Employment Ontario's various programs and services to about one million Ontarians who benefit from the services we offer in the government.

This program, the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit program, has been a very costly program. That's why we have been reviewing it and we have decided to stop that program and divert the funds to another program. I will speak more on the specifics of this in the supplementary.

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

1140

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West on a point of order.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Point of order, Speaker—they got here late. Allow me to introduce my fellow Rotarians from the Brighton Rotary Club in the very back row in the west gallery. Welcome.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Point of order: I'd like to welcome—they arrived a little bit late to the Legislature here today—delegates from the Sporting Clube de Portugal. With us here today: board member and head of sporting clubhouse, Mr. Bruno de Mascarenhas; youth technical director, Mr. Virgilio Lopes; the head of grassroots, Mr. Luis Dias; technical director of sporting academies, Mr. Nuno Figueiredo; as well as technical director of Sporting Football Club of Toronto, Mr. Pedro Dias. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Also, with us here today, members from The Stop Community Food Centre—a wonderful organization in my riding.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I would also like to introduce in the members' east gallery Mr. Manraj Furmah, our sum-

mer student in our constituency office in Mississauga–Streetsville.

DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO SOCIETY
FOR THE PREVENTION
OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ
DE PROTECTION DES ANIMAUX
DE L'ONTARIO

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

Bill 80, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animals for Research Act with respect to the possession and breeding of orcas and administrative requirements for animal care / Projet de loi 80, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario et la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche en ce qui concerne la possession et l'élevage d'épaulards ainsi que les exigences administratives relatives aux soins dispensés aux animaux.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats?

On May 27, 2015, Mr. Naqvi moved third reading of Bill 80.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Gretzky, Lisa	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Orazietti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Zimmer, David
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 74; the nays are 18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

ONTARIO IMMIGRATION ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR L'IMMIGRATION
EN ONTARIO

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

Bill 49, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 49, Loi portant sur l'immigration en Ontario et apportant une modification connexe à la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1151.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 12, 2015, Mr. Chan moved third reading of Bill 49. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hardeman, Ernie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hatfield, Percy	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Natyshak, Taras
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Orazietti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Clark, Steve	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Martow, Gila	Thibeault, Glenn
DiNovo, Cheri	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John
Duguid, Brad	McDonell, Jim	Vernile, Daiene
Dunlop, Garfield	McGarry, Kathryn	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McMahon, Eleanor	Wilson, Jim

Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1154 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests?

I'm looking for the member from Eglinton–Lawrence to do introductions of guests. I'm just ragging the puck a little bit because I know they're on their way in.

Mr. Mike Colle: They're just getting through the security system.

I'll just begin my introduction here. Mr. Speaker, today we have some special guests. They're here with an organization called FAST. It's a foundation to help bring awareness and find a cure for Angelman syndrome. We have with us today Na'ama Uzan, who's the founder of the Angelman syndrome lemonade stand initiative. Na'ama has raised \$50,000 by their lemonade stand to help her brother Nadav, who is diagnosed with Angelman syndrome. Na'ama is here; she's five years old. There's Na'ama there.

Also, Na'ama's mom is here, Ru Uzan, who is a spokesman for the foundation. Na'ama's dad, David Uzan, is here. Also, her grandparents are here, her bubbes and her zaydes are here on both sides.

I'd like to welcome Na'ama Uzan, the superstar fundraiser, and her family for being with us here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. She's going to do one at my house—a lemonade stand.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PESTICIDES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to thank the members from Ottawa–Orléans as well as Toronto–Danforth because this morning they sponsored a breakfast whereby we heard one side of the neonicotinoid issue in Ontario. The speaker was from France and he shared a lot of good information, but I want to make sure that in this House we have balance in information that we access and we understand, in order to make informed decisions.

I just want to share with everyone that right now, here in Ontario, many farmers are being left in the dark. Regulations are not clear and this government would not give the details that farmers are looking for. I recently read an article by Lyndsey Smith—actually, it was published just yesterday, May 27. This reporter was fiercely trying to find information and get answers on neonic regulations. The reporter contacted the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, OMAFRA, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change—the minister's office directly—all to no avail. The worst case scenario was concluded by the reporter in saying that “the MOECC is really out to get pesticide use in agriculture” but the “best case scenario,” Speaker, is that “they're incompetent.”

Ontario farmers just ask that their industry be predictable, bankable and sustainable, and we need answers before July 1.

SCHOOL DRESS CODES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today as MPP for London West and NDP women's issues critic to applaud the leadership of two young women, Laura Anderson, from my community of London, and Alexi Halket from Etobicoke. These secondary school students are challenging sexist attitudes and rape culture by questioning their school dress codes. Both were sent home from school this week for wearing clothing that school officials said violated their school dress codes—a tank top in Laura's case and a crop top in Alexi's. In response, solidarity protests by their female and male peers were organized at both schools and social media hashtags #MyBodyMyBusiness and #CropTopDay have gone viral.

It is fitting that public and media attention is being focused on this issue during the month of May, Sexual Assault Prevention Month. These young women and their supporters point out that some school dress codes may perpetuate rape culture by objectifying and oversexualizing women's bodies and stereotyping men as sexual animals unable to control themselves at the sight of a woman's bare shoulder or midriff. They may perpetuate victim blaming by conveying the message that it is women who must be responsible for keeping men at bay.

Let's teach boys to treat girls as peers instead of sexual objects and look for other ways to teach students about appropriate dress in the workplace.

KITCHENER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It gives me great pleasure to share with you news today from my riding of Kitchener Centre, and it concerns our main public library, which is a very much valued community resource.

Named as the new chief executive officer is Mary Chevreau, who has lived in our region since 1989 and has served on the board and the library foundation. She said that this is “such a great opportunity,” adding that the library that we used to use as kids is certainly not the library of today or what we're going to see in the future.

Back in 1884, when our first free public library opened its doors, the collection included 3,000 books and a reading room that had newspapers and periodicals. Today, the main branch on Queen Street, after a \$40-million renovation project, supported in part by our province, features a two-storey atrium, a children's library, computers, a digital media lab, a 3D printer, make-your-own-music stations, a spectacular public art installation at the entrance and, of course, lots of books.

Ms. Chevreau has said that one of her goals as the new CEO is to find ways to attract more people to the library. Soon they're going to launch an interactive survey to learn what people want to experience at our library.

Mr. Speaker, it's still one of the best deals anywhere. A free library card can open a world of knowledge to anyone of any age.

I wish her and the staff at KPL much success.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I can't tell you how disappointed I am today to learn that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has denied an application by Durham College and RESCON for training delivery agency status for tower crane operators at Durham College. This would have introduced competition into the system. It would have been at absolutely no cost whatsoever to the province of Ontario, the government of Ontario, and it would have improved safety and actually give competition to this very valued trade. Apparently, the minister has denied it, and there will be no appeal.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker: This is wrong. As the community college system turns 50 years old in 2017, they've actually created hundreds of thousands of jobs, and they are the leading training agency for the province of Ontario, yet we've got a minister who doesn't want to add competition to the system. One union, the power engineers, is taking credit for the whole program. They do it under their terms, and there's no competition for this very valued industry.

I want to thank Durham President Don Lovisa and Richard Lyall, executive director of RESCON. I can tell those folks that this fight is a long way from over. We will not put up with this kind of nonsense. This is completely wrong in our community college system in Ontario, and I hope everyone will fight this all the way.

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I rise today to say how proud I am of the high school students in my riding, the riding of Sudbury, as well as Algoma-Manitoulin, who rose and organized themselves in reaction to the recent teachers' strike. My office was originally contacted by a student of Nickel Belt, who was on strike, on Tuesday afternoon about a petition that, at the time, over 2,600 students had signed.

The petition was written by a new student organization that call themselves Ontario Students Right to be Heard. The petition called on the Ontario government to make

school boards negotiate and respect the OSSTF teachers' right to strike. Their request was simple: No to back-to-work legislation; yes to negotiation. They know that back-to-work legislation is a quick fix that leads to future disruption.

It was a pleasure to introduce their petition. It stood at 2,600 signatures then; it is now at over 5,400 signatures.

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In turbulent times, sometimes leaders are born. Listen to these names: Spencer Pylatuk and Greg Lee from Lo-Ellen Park; Benjamin MacKenzie and Anna-Lisa Shandro from Sudbury Secondary; Mack McGrady from Barrydowne College; Daneen Maher from Espanola High; Max Chapman from Manitoulin Secondary; Baylee MacInnis and Phoenix Ellis from Lockerby Composite; and Vincent Leduc from Confederation Secondary. Congratulations to these young people.

RICH GRIFFIN

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I rise today to pay tribute to a bright Sudburian who our community lost tragically and unexpectedly this past weekend.

Rich Griffin packed a lot of life into his 52 years on Earth. Most importantly, he was an incredible father to five-year-old Zoe, and he was a loving husband to his wife, Nancy. The two had lived what many called a legendary love story. To them both, our deepest condolences.

I knew Rich as a friend, and most of us knew him as the radio host for KiSS 105.3 in Sudbury. Mr. Speaker, it seems like just three weeks ago that we were at the Father Daughter Ball raising money for kids with cancer in northern Ontario, and as usual, Rich and Gary were the hosts. Rich was there having fun and dancing and enjoying himself with all of the girls in attendance.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" For Rich Griffin, the answer was clear: He gave selflessly. This is a man who went above and beyond his work duties and helped a number of community organizations by hosting their events and fundraisers. He was always there to offer help and advice, and sometimes just to listen.

In typical Rich fashion, his last act on Earth was to give one more time as an organ donor. His final gift will help eight people live better lives. This is who this wonderful man was. Sudbury is truly a lesser place without him.

While our community is mourning the loss of a wonderful human being and a committed father and husband, we will also celebrate the precious years we did have with Rich. On behalf of Sudbury, I honour and remember him today.

HYDRO ONE

Ms. Laurie Scott: This week Ontario Ombudsman André Marin released his much-anticipated report on Hydro One's billing practices.

The reported highlighted what residents in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock have experienced first-hand, that Hydro One issued faulty bills to more than 100,000 customers. They mishandled the problem and tried to cover it up. For nearly two years, customers have struggled with pathetic customer service while trying to correct or pay their hydro bills.

Instead of rapidly fixing the problem, Hydro One deliberately kept the situation under wraps while the Minister of Energy turned a blind eye, despite warnings and warnings and warnings like my open letter in January of last year to him. The total cost to fix the botched revamp of Hydro One's billing system rang in at \$88.3 million, which will, sadly, be passed along to ratepayers.

The Ombudsman's report also revealed that Mr. Marin was misled and lied to by Hydro One officials as he investigated billing problems. That is why the Ontario PCs have asked the Ontario Provincial Police to conduct an investigation into the serious breaches of conduct committed by employees of Hydro One.

The CEO of Hydro One and the Minister of Energy have both claimed that all of the problems impacting the billing process have been resolved. However, that is not the case. My constituency office continues to receive and investigate new or recurring complaints. The Ombudsman tweeted that his office has already received 90 new complaints since the report's release on Monday.

This government has been consistently missing in action, and my constituents don't want to take it anymore.

ASIAN AND SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and talk about a very special month-long celebration that has been going on in our province for the last few days.

May is Asian and South Asian Heritage Month in Ontario. It's a time to take a moment and remember our roots, and it's a time to celebrate—celebrate our diversity, our amazing province, and the contributions of Canadians of South Asian and Asian descent.

Today, our Asian and South Asian communities number close to two million people and are made up of people from all around the world. They speak many languages, practise many religions and have many ethnicities.

These various communities may have distinct identities, yet together—together—their contributions have helped to define our country, our province and our region's rich cultural identity. But it's not just about the numbers. The contributions of these communities to our province in business, science, culture, civic life and more are immeasurable, and we are stronger for it.

Mr. Speaker, our diversity makes us stronger as a region and as a province. It's the thread that binds us together and forms the amazing tapestry that we know as Ontario. That's why I was so pleased to host a reception for Halton's South Asian community at my constituency

office last Friday, and then, on Sunday, to visit one of our local gurdwaras. It was great to see so many familiar faces and to celebrate the way that these communities have helped to transform our province.

Asian and South Asian Heritage Month is a perfect time to recognize the contributions of these communities, and I'm glad to have been able to participate in this month-long celebration.

ANGELMAN SYNDROME

Mr. Mike Colle: Later today I'm introducing a private member's bill, and it's a very important private member's bill. It will be putting forth an initiative to mark February 15 as Angelman Syndrome Day in Ontario.

With us today in the gallery we have Na'ama Uzan, who is five years of age. Her brother Nadav has been diagnosed with Angelman syndrome. What she did was she took it upon herself to set up a lemonade stand—and many lemonade stands—to help raise money for research into Angelman syndrome. Young Na'ama has raised over \$50,000.

Applause.

Mr. Mike Colle: I appreciate the support of all members of the House, because this is the kind of initiative we could all support.

We're just trying to bring awareness to this syndrome. Dr. Weeber from the University of South Florida, who we spoke to, said that the cure is very close. They have identified the chromosome. It's chromosome 15. If we can get some research dollars to the doctors, we can help a lot of children like Na'ama's older brother, Nadav, who has it. That's why we're here today, and we'll be introducing that bill later on.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure; I would like to recognize two outstanding executives with a company called Spin VFX. They help bring us all the special effects in movies that you see on the big screen. We have Neishaw Ali and Kenny Girdharry. Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Again, I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on health human resources from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves adoption of its recommendations. Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled Health Human Resources—Section 3.02 of the 2013 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to thank the permanent membership of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Lisa MacLeod as Vice-Chair, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Harinder Malhi, Julia Munro, Arthur Potts and Lou Rinaldi.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and HealthForceOntario for their attendance at the hearings. The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in the legislative research service for the province of Ontario.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

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INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LISTENING TO ONTARIANS ACT (HYDRO ONE AND OTHER ELECTRICITY ASSETS), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA NÉCESSITÉ D'ÊTRE À L'ÉCOUTE DES ONTARIENS (HYDRO ONE ET AUTRES ÉLÉMENTS D'ACTIF LIÉS À L'ÉLECTRICITÉ)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 107, An Act to require a referendum before the disposition of the Crown's electricity assets / Projet de loi 107, Loi exigeant la tenue d'un référendum préalable-ment à la disposition des éléments d'actif de la Couronne liés à l'électricité.

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.

M^{me} Andrea Horwath: Merci, monsieur le Président. Le projet de loi modifie la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité afin d'exiger la tenue d'un référendum avant que la Couronne vende ses intérêts dans des personnes morales qui transportent, distribuent, produisent ou vendent au détail de l'électricité, notamment Hydro One Inc. Les règles énoncées dans la Loi de 1999 sur la protection des contribuables à l'égard d'un référendum tenu sous le

régime de cette loi s'appliquent à un référendum tenu sous le régime de la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité.

Speaker, this legislation basically amends the Electricity Act, 1998, to require a referendum before the crown sells the crown's interest in corporations that transmit, distribute, generate or retail electricity, including Hydro One, Inc. The rules in the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999, respecting a referendum under that act apply to a referendum under the Electricity Act, 1998.

ANGELMAN SYNDROME DAY ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE JOUR DU SYNDROME D'ANGELMAN

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 108, An Act to proclaim February 15 as Angelman Syndrome Day / Projet de loi 108, Loi proclamant le 15 février Jour du syndrome d'Angelman.

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. Mike Colle: Mr. Speaker, I am introducing this bill in order to bring public attention and awareness to this disease, Angelman syndrome. As a result of the great work of Na'ama Uzan, who has raised \$50,000 towards bringing awareness, this bill and the direction of this bill will work with the family and with Na'ama Uzan to let us all know about this syndrome so we can raise more research dollars and find the cure for Angelman syndrome. Hopefully, in some small way, this will help all these children who suffer from this syndrome.

EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'EMPLOI ET LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL

Mr. Flynn moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et les relations de travail.

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 minister for a short statement.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'm happy to rise to introduce the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015, which, if passed, will bring increased fairness and efficiency for working people in our province.

The proposed legislation would promote increased fairness and protection for injured workers by amending the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

It will also amend the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997, to help reduce the potential for disruption and delay following events in the broader public sector to which the act applies, an example being amalgamation or restructuring.

It would also amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, to bring it into greater alignment with the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

Strengthening protections for workers while supporting business is part of our government's plan to build Ontario up and create that just society we all want.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the extension of the appointment of André Marin as the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“To the Lieutenant Governor in Council,

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, request an extension of the appointment of André Marin as Ombudsman for the province of Ontario to September 14, 2015, or until the effective date of the appointment of a permanent Ombudsman on an address of the assembly, whichever comes first, as provided in the Ombudsman Act, R.S.O. 1990 c. O.6, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act.”

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. MacCharles moves that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“To the Lieutenant Governor in Council,

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, request an extension of the appointment of André Marin as Ombudsman for the province of Ontario to September 14, 2015, or until the effective date of the appointment of a permanent Ombudsman on an address of the assembly—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Dispense. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the appointment of Ellen Schwartzel as temporary Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister seeks unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“To the Lieutenant Governor in Council,

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, request the appointment of Ellen Schwartzel as temporary Environmental Commissioner for the province of Ontario, as provided in the Environmental Bill of Rights act, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing May 19, 2015, until September 14, 2015, or until the effective date of the appointment of a permanent commissioner on an address of the assembly, whichever comes first.”

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. MacCharles moves that an humble address—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? That's how I can get through it without making any mistakes. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 27, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Are we agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that the order of the House dated November 20, 2014, referring Bill 27 to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged and that the bill be referred instead to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, and that the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall meet on Monday, June 1 between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. for the public of public hearings, and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 27; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, continue to respect the arrangements that were made by the Standing Committee on the

Legislative Assembly in its May 27, 2015, meeting respecting the following with regard to Bill 27:

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

That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Friday, May 29, 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 4 p.m. on Friday, May 29, 2015; and further,

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

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

That the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the final day of public hearings; and

That the research office provide a summary of the presentations by 5 p.m. on Friday of the same week following the public hearings.

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got to say the first word.

Ms. MacCharles moves that the order of the House dated November 20—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a notion without notice regarding Bill 77, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 regarding efforts to change or direct sexual orientation or gender identity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Minister?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy shall be authorized to meet on Wednesday, June 3, 2015, between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings, and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 77; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 77:

First, notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly website and Canada NewsWire; further,

That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Monday, June 1, 2015; and also,

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

That the members of the subcommittee prioritize and return the list by 4 p.m. on Monday, June 1, 2015; and

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

That 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 written submissions is 3 p.m. on the day of public hearings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. MacCharles moves that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense? Agreed. Carried? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

PESTICIDES

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

“Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make regulatory changes to the Pesticides Act that will have a considerable negative impact on virtually all of Ontario’s corn and soybean farmers;

“Whereas comments on the proposed regulations need to be submitted by May 7, 2015; yet the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs plainly states on their website that ‘[t]he optimum planting date [for corn] is on or before May 7 in southwestern Ontario and May 10 in central and eastern Ontario. Delaying planting past the optimum date can result in yield reductions averaging about 1% per day of delay in May.’;

“Whereas the ministry’s website also says: ‘The highest yields of soybeans are obtained from early plantings, generally the first 10 days of May. Later plantings are likely to incur significant reductions in yield ...’;

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

“Instruct the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to extend the comment period ... beyond the planting season for corn and soybeans as defined by Agricorp planting deadlines to allow farmers to farm, and be properly consulted on these proposed regulations that will significantly impact their livelihoods.”

I agree with this petition, I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Emma.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today I have thousands of petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the decision to close the Welland general hospital was made without consultation with the residents

of south Niagara, and without regard for potential social and economic impacts of this closure; and

“Whereas the recommendations to the government contained in Dr. Kevin Smith’s report on restructuring of the Niagara Health System included no evidence to support the closure of the Welland general hospital; no needs assessment for the residents of south Niagara; no costing of the entire restructuring plan; and no proposals to mitigate the impact of reduced hospital access; and

“Whereas the catchment area of the Welland general hospital includes four municipalities, with a population of over 90,000, including a high percentage (+25%) of seniors and people living in poverty;

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

“(1) Stop the planned closure of the Welland general hospital;

“(2) Conduct a proper third-party evidence-based study to assess the present and projected health care and hospital services requirements of residents in the catchment area of the Welland general hospital;

“(3) Hold public consultations, not only during the assessment process, but also on recommendations resulting from this study.”

I fully support this petition and I affix my signature.

LEGAL AID

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Population-based legal services funding,” and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds ... and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I am pleased to sign and to support this petition and to send it down with page Brady.

TAXATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: A “stop the carbon tax” petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn’t necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart

meter program that failed to conserve energy, and households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

“To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

This is signed by hundreds of people in my riding, and I’ll hand it to page Ram.

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LYME DISEASE

Mr. Michael Mantha: “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 and present it to page Jany to bring down to the Clerk.

LEGAL AID

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My petition is for population-based legal services funding.

“Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

Mr. Speaker, I sign my name to this petition, and I'll send it down to the table with page Robert.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Julia Munro: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Liberal government has brought forward a payroll tax in the form of a mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP); and

“Whereas the Liberal government has not conducted nor released a cost-benefit analysis of this new payroll tax; and

“Whereas internal Ministry of Finance documents show that the Liberals are aware that the ORPP will increase the cost of doing business in Ontario and kill jobs in the province; and

“Whereas a McKinsey and Co. survey shows that more than four out of every five Canadians already save enough for their retirement; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has stated that a majority of its members would have to lay off workers; and

“Whereas the government's plan would force the cancellation of many existing retirement plans that have better employer contribution rates; and

“Whereas low-income earners will have their retirement savings clawed back under this scheme; and

“Whereas Ontarians cannot afford another tax on top of their already skyrocketing hydro bills and ever-increasing cost of living;

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

“To abandon the idea of an Ontario pension tax.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature and give it to page Emma.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition to present to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on behalf of hundreds of people; perhaps you heard their voices over the lunch hour on the front lawn.

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another wrong choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there's no return; and

“We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I fully agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to my buddy Duncan to take up to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. John Fraser: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Credit Unions of Ontario support 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

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

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, I'm affixing my signature and giving it to page Dale.

ALCOHOL SALES

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

“Whereas Ontario is the only one of two remaining provinces in Canada that cannot serve alcohol at licensed establishments prior to 11 a.m.; and

“Whereas LCBO agency stores across Ontario can choose to sell alcohol as early as 7 a.m.; and

“Whereas customers of Ontario golf courses enjoy opportunities to golf earlier in the morning, when they finish their shift work or just start their day; with many charity events and tournaments actually concluding before 11 a.m.; and

“Whereas Ontario golf courses are dealing with frustrated customers because they cannot purchase alcohol at the golf course, if they choose, during their rounds of golf prior to 11 a.m.;

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

“To recognize that eight other jurisdictions in Canada offer alcohol at the golf courses prior to 11 a.m. and that we respectfully request that an equal playing field is established in Ontario so that the golf courses are permitted to serve their customers in a similar fashion.”

I agree with this petition, Speaker. I will affix my signature and I'll send it to the desk with Ram.

PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'ai reçu des pétitions de Ron Robert, le président—Les enseignantes et enseignants retraités de l'Ontario. Ça me fait plaisir de la présenter.

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l'Ontario continuent d'être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l'essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d'essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l'essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d'écarts de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d'essence annualisés inférieurs. »

Ils demandent à l'Assemblée législative :

« D'accorder à la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l'essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

Je suis d'accord avec cette pétition. Je vais la signer et je demande à Star Jewell de l'amener à la table des greffiers.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

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

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“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

I am going to sign my name to this petition and give it to page Emma.

PESTICIDES

Ms. Laurie Scott: A petition regarding the Pesticides Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario is proposing to make regulatory changes to the Pesticides Act that will have a considerable negative impact on virtually all of Ontario's corn and soybean farmers;

“Whereas comments on the proposed regulations need to be submitted by May 7, 2015; yet the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs plainly states on their website that ‘[t]he optimum planting date [for corn] is on or before May 7 in southwestern Ontario and May 10 in central and eastern Ontario. Delaying planting past the optimum date can result in yield reductions averaging about 1% per day of delay in May.’;

“Whereas the ministry's website also says: ‘The highest yields of soybeans are obtained from early plantings, generally the first 10 days of May. Later plantings are likely to incur significant reductions in yield ... ’;

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

“Instruct the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to extend the comment period on EBR posting number 012-3733 beyond the planting season for corn and soybeans as defined by Agricorp planting deadlines to allow farmers to farm, and be properly consulted on these proposed regulations that will significantly impact their livelihoods.”

I pass it on to page Jany.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time for petitions has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ministry of Education should develop and implement a comprehensive curriculum on financial literacy to teach our youth the necessary money management skills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's an honour to speak on motion number 50: teaching our youth financial literacy.

First of all, I want to thank Preet Banerjee, who I consider to be a guru in the field of financial literacy and financial management. If he's watching today, I just wanted to say, Preet, thank you very much for all your insight into this very important topic.

Financial literacy is defined as the ability to use knowledge and skills to manage financial resources effectively for a lifetime of financial well-being. Personal financial literacy is more than balancing a chequebook, comparing prices or getting a job. It includes skills like long-term vision, planning for the future, and the discipline to use these skills daily.

Mathematics is an integral part of every curriculum. How to use mathematics for planning a budget or managing money, however, is not often part of the curriculum.

Financial literacy is critical to the prosperity and well-being of all Canadians. It is more than a nice skill to have. It is a necessity in today's world—and, moving forward, should be treated as such by policy-makers, educators, employers and other stakeholders.

The need for this has arisen because young people are now bombarded with information through the Internet. There are no checks and balances or criteria on posting information. People, especially youth, take this information at face value which, in some instances, turns out to be incorrect.

Research has shown that stress affects a large number of Canadians and in most cases it is a direct or an indirect result of financial matters

Australia, Singapore, Britain and the United States have already instituted programs that allow people the opportunity to learn about financial literacy. The curriculum should focus on the following main modules or areas:

Module number 1: Making sense of your money. This module would impart a basic understanding of the financial world as it relates to you. It aims to enable you to set smart financial goals and work out how much you need for your goals. You will also be able to develop a budget by tracking your spending, how to cut down on expenses and how to save on a regular basis by using the spending plan. You will also understand how the effects of compounding interest can impact your savings.

Mr. Speaker, most of us have a credit card, and this credit card usually has an interest rate anywhere from 15% to 20%. But in actuality, when we take into consideration the compounding effect, that turns out close to 50%, something that most people do not know.

Module number 2: Fraud, unfortunately, is on the increase, where almost every Canadian has been approached to buy or participate in programs that provide vast financial benefit. Last year, Canadians lost \$74 million to fraudsters, and in 2013 this figure was approximately \$60 million. Governments at all levels have their hands full investigating fraudulent sources. Our goal should be to educate individuals so they can separate the wheat from the chaff. An additional in educating our youth about fraud prevention is that youth can help inform our seniors, in some simple terms, or maybe in

their own language, about fraud prevention, especially through the Internet.

Module number 3: Credit education. This module aims to enable you to find out if you're borrowing too much, types of loans and associated costs. You will be able to understand the consequences of over-leveraging and the implications of bankruptcy, learn how to avoid borrowing too much, and how to resolve debt issues.

A few decades ago, credit was only used to buy a home or car. Nowadays, credit is on the fingertips of people, and those who are unable to manage it end up with financial and psychological problems. Mr. Speaker, I feel this is probably one of the most important aspects of this motion, or one of the most important things that a person should be concerned about when considering their finances.

I had a story in my constituency office where one of my constituents co-signed a loan on behalf of somebody. This somebody made late payments or didn't make some payments, which ended up costing this constituent dearly in terms of getting financing on a home. After having received financing, he realized he wouldn't be able to get a competitive rate.

This is also more important for newcomers to Ontario, because oftentimes these folks have no idea what a credit score is, mainly because in the place where they come from there's no such thing. So it's really important. Oftentimes, unknowingly, some of our newcomers fall into some very serious situations as to not knowing that their credit score is being affected by some of their activities.

Module number 4: Financial planning, and it begins now. This module aims to help you understand the process of financial planning. You will learn how to assess your financial situation and discover your financial fitness through the use of financial statements and ratios. You will have an overview of the financial plans; namely, saving, insurance and investment, and how they can help you achieve your financial goals.

Mr. Speaker, insurance literacy, I believe, is lacking in most people, with insurance plans from all aspects, from disability insurance to life insurance. They can be very, very complicated to understand. We can always remember the saying, "Always read the fine print," but unfortunately, the fine print doesn't make sense to most people. So it's important to deal with an adviser who can put this fine print into some understandable terms so you know exactly what you're getting.

I had my house broken into and lost some valuables, and I didn't know that I had to get extra insurance to cover some of the items I had lost. The coverage was limited. Again, I did not check into the fine print. It makes it increasingly more of a topic that we should teach our youth.

1400

Module number 5: Money management for youth. Youth need to be educated as early as in high school about the need and impact of loans—student loans, mortgages, credit card debt—timing the buying of a house

and evaluating a job prospect. Again, job prospects may not be such a big thing for people to analyze, but when you get a job, there's a salary involved, there are benefits involved and there's travel relocation. It can all be very tough, and it's very important to have the tools to assess the different types of options that are available to you, because at the end of the day the amount of money you could lose or gain could be substantial.

Module number 6 and other modules: Building a nest egg—very important. We should have the tools available to us to calculate whether an RSP, a TFSA, paying down the mortgage or a combination of those is the right step to take in terms of realizing your goals.

Introduction to personal financing: understanding risks, financial markets, stocks, bonds, debentures, options and warrants.

Insurance: Again, it's very important to learn about the policy you're getting and the potential benefits you will receive or will not receive.

The government of Canada convened a task force to study how to impart financial literacy. The task force recommended a special focus on how to impart financial literacy. Their main recommendations are summarized as follows:

- appointment of a financial literacy leader;
- integrate financial literacy into the formal education system, including high school, post-secondary and formalized adult learning activities;
- financial literacy to be included as an essential link in its Essential Skills framework;
- integrate a financial literacy component into the Canada Student Loans Program for students receiving funding;
- financial literacy training programs for young Canadians eligible for funding through the Youth Employment Strategy;
- provide financial information and education services for recent newcomers to Canada through its orientation services. There's no mention of anything about financial literacy in the packages that newcomers receive once they arrive in Canada.
- work with employers to incorporate financial literacy training into their current workplace training programs and communications. Often employers have different ways of giving their employees benefits, and a person should have an understanding of how to maximize the profit they get from what they're receiving.
- promote financial literacy through programs that reach Canadians directly, with a special focus on young Canadians;
- help Canadians maximize the financial benefit of government funding. For example, as a person with young children, I was fortunate enough that one of the first things I did when my kids were born was to buy an RESP. Even with a small amount of interest and the idea of forced saving, I cannot tell you how useful it has been for me to know that I'm put putting away a little bit every month that will help me greatly when and if my kids do decide to go to a post-secondary education institution.

Today's financial challenges are a testimony to a growing need for specific education, as more and more families and individuals become victims of their financial illiteracy. Such challenges are among the major causes of bankruptcies, foreclosures, divorces, homelessness and even murder-suicide.

While monetary issues seem to be the main source of such hardships, the root cause can be tracked back to lack of character development in individuals. In response to this need, Mind Treasures has developed a unique curriculum, ABCs of Wealth, which combines character development with financial literacy in order to raise an entrepreneurial generation that is mentored to become financially stable and independent, so it can use various forms of wealth, knowledge and expertise to build and establish stronger families, neighbourhoods and a new world.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the time you have given me to present my motion on this important topic.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise to speak to this motion today. Few things we debate in the Legislature are as important as discussions about our children's education. Every day, we can look to the pages here in this House and be reminded that we do have a duty to ensure the success of the next generation and those who will lead it. Therefore, we do our best to make sure Ontario's curriculum equips these young people with the skills and knowledge that they will need to succeed when they get older. The success of our children will ultimately drive the success of our province and our country. Aligning our education system in a way that provides students with the skills most in demand in the 21st century helps them succeed in our competitive global market, but also ensures the strength and competitiveness of our economy.

We focus on math, although our scores aren't that great these days, and sciences, and they're not that great either. We can improve those, but they are focused on so that we can hopefully have skilled trades programs in our high schools and post-secondary schools. Well, we can do better at that also. While focusing on those subjects, it's important—it sometimes overshadows the need for a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum.

When a student enters the public education system, there's no telling what they will become. A varied course load allows them to find out what they're passionate about, hopefully, and continue that pursuit as an adult. You can go to a student who might want to be a computer science programmer and another one who wants to work with their hands and maybe become an electrician, or decides that they want to take on the agriculture sector—in the field of agri-business—or become a farmer, we hope.

We can be sure that in any of these professions that these students go into, in their different career paths they all have to manage day-to-day finances. Basic things such as not spending more money in a week than you make or saving money for a rainy day are learned

concepts. As we know from looking at the past Liberal budgets for 12 years, if you don't learn these concepts at an early age, bad habits of spending outside your means can carry over into adulthood.

Statistics Canada has put out a basic financial literacy test. It is actually a survey to determine the level of financial literacy and money management skills of Canadians. Guess what? The results have not been pretty. Canadian adults, on average, score 67% on this test. It should therefore surprise no one that roughly 20% of Canadians face serious difficulties in four out of five dimensions of financial capability.

When I talk about financial capability, I'm talking about the framework that StatsCan used to assess people's ability to manage their finances. The five dimensions of the framework are making ends meet, keeping track of finances, planning ahead, choosing financial products, and staying informed. I emphasize again that these concepts are learned concepts; nobody is born with the above knowledge. It should be clear by now that, for a skill that everyone needs, financial literacy and money management capability among Canadians is inadequate.

I certainly want to commend the member from Brampton West for bringing this issue to the forefront. We all understand the value and importance of financial literacy for every citizen. Therefore, I believe, Ontario should have a comprehensive financial literacy curriculum. I know that Primerica was in this week, and they left pamphlets for parents to help guide their children on how money works.

The most reliable way to help our children is through acquiring knowledge through the school system. So, for that reason, I'm happy to support this motion today.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise to talk about the motion brought forward by the member from Brampton West on the financial literacy curriculum. This is a topic that I could probably take much longer than 12 minutes on.

I'm going to start my time speaking about a wonderful thing that happened today. I'm about to embarrass my daughter, probably. I got a text message during question period—don't worry, my phone wasn't on. She was very excited to announce that she just got her first job, and she starts next week. During that conversation, I said to Morgan—or, after question period, I called my daughter, Morgan, and congratulated her. I said, "Tomorrow night, when I'm home, we'll go out for a special dinner," and that I had put money on her bank card so she could go buy some clothes for her new job. Then I followed that by, "In two weeks, when you have your first cheque, you can take us out for dinner," and her reply was, "No, Mom. I need to save my money." So she kind of gets it—she doesn't really understand that I might need to save my money too—but she does kind of get it.

1410

I think this is a very important motion. I think the topic is very important. Kids today often don't under-

stand what it means to get a job, how difficult that can be, and then once you get it, how to plan for your future. They have to understand that sometimes expenses pop up that they're not thinking about, so they need to set money aside for that. They need to understand that, although they think they're never going to get old, someday down the road, that will happen. It happens to the best of us. They need to put money aside for that as well. And they need to understand that they need to put money aside for the things that they need, for bills and for being able to go out and buy the clothes they want to wear. There is a lot involved when it comes to financial literacy.

It's a very complex subject that many adults struggle with. In fact, there are many in communities across the province, mine especially, who struggle to make ends meet to begin with, so it's even more important that they know how to stretch every penny, how to make it go as far as it possibly can.

I'm looking at the member's motion and noting that the government has a majority; the minister could have easily brought this forward as a government bill. I acknowledge the effort from the member from Brampton West for bringing this to light now.

There was a report that came out in 2010; the Ministry of Education received it. It was from the Working Group on Financial Literacy. It was entitled *A Sound Investment: Financial Literacy Education in Ontario Schools*. I won't have time to speak to all the points, but there were some very key points that are definitely worth mentioning. They mention the importance of financial literacy education and supporting success for all students. I think I spoke to that when I mentioned that down the road, they have to know how to allot their money for the things they want now, the things they're going to want later, the things they need now and the things they're going to need later. They need to understand how to prioritize. Is it a want or is it a need?

They note the potential for financial literacy education to address social inequities. That's another very important topic, especially in my riding. It's a very diverse riding: I have some very affluent neighbourhoods, we have a lot of middle class, and then we have an area where it's all low-income and people struggling to make ends meet. So I think it's important that students understand that the financial situation for their family may not be the same for every family. They need to understand that there are differences.

A very important one is the need to support teachers in the classroom. We need to make sure that the teachers have what they need in order to provide good programming to the students to help the students be able to make good decisions in the future.

The importance of engaging and consulting with teachers, students, parents, families and other key stakeholders: I can't say enough how important I think that everybody involved—the students in the classroom, the teachers in the classroom, the parents and the families of these students—they all need to be engaged in these conversations. The saying is, "It takes a village." That

couldn't be more true, especially when it comes to financial literacy.

They note the need to optimize technology in support of financial literacy education. Often we find in our education system that there are the haves and the have-nots. There are schools that have laptops, enough laptops for every student. There are schools that have iPads for every student. Then you'll find schools in other areas that don't have a single computer for the kids. They don't have laptop carts; they don't have iPads for their students. There's a real inequity there. We need to make sure that every student in every school in every classroom has the same resources and that the teachers have access to those.

Another point was "Introduce and integrate financial literacy education into the Ontario curriculum as early as possible, in a relevant and age-appropriate way." That's important as well. We need to know what students we are going to reach in the best way and at what age. We need to know what to teach and when. It needs to be supported right through their career in our public education system.

"Continue to embed in the curriculum the core content and competencies required for financial literacy." I would say that goes back to literacy and numeracy. We need to make sure that the students are getting the supports in the classroom on the core subjects in order for them to fully understand what we're talking about when we're trying to teach them financial literacy. If they can't read, and they don't understand basic math, it's going to be very difficult for them to understand when we're talking about financial planning.

"Encourage teachers and educators to foster responsible, engaged, and compassionate citizenship as part of student learning in financial literacy education." I think it's safe to say that every day, our teachers do the very best they can to make sure that students receive the best education they can, that they have individualized learning, and that they reach every student and teach them to be responsible and respectful citizens.

I know that the member from Parkdale–High Park is going to want to speak to this too, so I'm going to wrap it up for now. Like I said, Speaker, I could probably go on all afternoon on this. Thank you.

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

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

I'm also very supportive of this initiative and this motion. Financial literacy is an essential skill that needs to be ongoing. I remember when I went to school and I got my first credit card, how important it was for me, and if I'd had the financial literacy skills that I needed at that point, I wouldn't have gone out and spent everything on it and thought that I could get anything I wanted and I had to pay later, so it was okay.

It's very, very important that we focus on teaching—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Designer handbags.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Yes—the designer handbags and all the other great things that you see when they give

you those applications during frosh week and they have all those people out saying, "Get a credit card now and everything will be great."

We need to focus on telling kids that you do have to pay that money back. Our OSAP loans do have to be paid back. Our credit card bills do have to get paid. If we teach these skills at an early age, kids will better manage their money. I for one worked from the day I was 15, but the credit card still was like this golden opportunity to go spend money that I didn't have. That's why financial literacy is so important: From a young age, you set the stage; you're setting an attitude, a type of life, where people will be more responsible with their money.

A recent opinion research survey found that only one third of Canadian youth ages 10 to 17 years say that their parents regularly talk to them about money and finances.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: It's the bank of Dad.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: That's right.

The research, conducted by Ipsos Reid on behalf of ABC Life Literacy Canada and sponsored by TD Bank Group, found that money is one of the least-discussed issues between parents and kids.

It's concerning that parents appear reluctant to talk to their children about money and finances. Perhaps it's because they believe their kids aren't interested in money or they're only interested in getting their parents' money, not how they spend it.

This is a subject that is hard to understand. Since learning about essential life skills usually starts at home, parents should be open to having these conversations, and schools should offer to open that conversation up for the parents to make it easier for them to start those conversations and build on that skill of responsibility.

It is a certain responsibility, if you start giving your kids an allowance at a young age and tell them how to manage that allowance and what it will do if they're able to save it. How much further will you go if you start a retirement fund at 19, as opposed to 40?

The first step in improving financial literacy is to take the fear out of finance. Parents need to speak with their children about money management to help teach and guide them, and to help increase every family member's financial literacy levels.

More than 30% of youth surveyed wish their parents would talk to them more about their family's finances.

That's an important point, because a lot of kids will not understand—like the member said previously, you have families with different financial needs and financial restrictions and not everybody can have everything, so it causes quite an unfair balance. If we show our kids how to be responsible with their money, it makes it a more balanced playing field for everybody—because people don't feel privileged, whereas other people may not be as privileged, so the kids will better understand an environment that they're growing up in.

Financial literacy can provide a step-by-step process to complete financial wellness. The first thing that we have to do is to commit to change by talking about finances, by letting children know how important it is to

talk about our finances, what credit ratings are and how credit ratings work and why it's important to have a good credit rating, so that they can build a secure future for themselves, so they can make wise investments and continue to grow those investments. Without a credit rating, they won't be able to do any of that. When kids don't understand what a credit rating is, why they're saving their money, why they have to build their credit rating, it's a recipe for disaster, so it's very important that we start teaching them at a young age.

The other main objective is to be able to assess your financial situation and to know what kind of financial situation you're in so that you can better manage that financial situation—so that children will learn to live within their means and not above their means. You don't want them to be in constant debt and living to pay off that debt.

The third point would be to make your money count; make the most of every dollar. When I was 15 years old, when I started working and I wanted that \$100 pair of jeans, I know my parents always said, "You can have them, but you're going to put up half the money." It always made me not want them quite so much. That's a way of teaching them how much their money means and what the value of money is.

1420

Another good way to manage your money is to document where you spend it. I checked myself how much money I spend at Tim Hortons in a month. I'd be surprised to see what I could save over the course of a year by not going to Tim Hortons at all. Documenting is a great way to teach kids—that way, they see their money coming in and they see their money going out—and to protect yourself by performing regular checks, always checking on your finances, checking on your investments and checking to see where your money is going, whether it's growing or whether it's not growing.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that I think this is a great motion. I think it's a great thing to implement for our kids so that we can teach them about the importance of responsibility, the value of a dollar and how to work hard for your money, and to also teach them how important it is for us to respect people in different families from backgrounds that may have financial restrictions.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure to join this debate today because this is something that I'm confident we all feel is important: financial literacy. It's an essential skill, really and truly. In today's economy, it's vital that individuals must have a high level of financial literacy.

I want to share some stats with everyone in the House at this moment. According to Life Literacy Canada, seven out of 10 Canadians are not fully confident that their math and money management skills will help them plan for a secure financial future. Further to that, the Credit Counselling Society conducted a financial literacy

survey just in 2014 and found that 64% of Canadians frequently carry credit card balances, which usually means they're paying higher interest rates than other types of loans, yet these people claim to be financially literate.

Among those surveyed with household income of more than \$100,000, 82% claim to be highly financially literate, but about half of that number said they don't follow a budget or a spending plan. The CCS survey also says that 76% of respondents aged 25 to 34 report that they follow a budget, but that more than two thirds are stressed by having moderate to significant amounts of non-mortgage debt. The conclusions of this study found that many Canadians believe that they are financial stable and aware, yet their bankbook and financial decisions say differently.

I want to share with you that my colleague from York-Simcoe has done a lot of work on this issue over a number of years. I congratulate the member from Brampton West for bringing forward this motion, because it reinforces what the member from York-Simcoe found and shared during her paper. That paper was called Preparing Students for Challenges of the Twenty-First Century. I want to remind everybody of the good work that the member from York-Simcoe has already done.

In her paper, she explained that we should take the solid financial literacy work already done by groups like the Investment Funds Institute of Canada, the Jr. Economic Club of Canada, the Financial Planning Standards Council and Junior Achievement Canada, and introduce it in a structured way into our schools, beginning at the earliest level, so that all of our children will develop financial literacy.

Our member from York-Simcoe went on to explain in that paper that having a solid understanding of money helps build the foundation for the entrepreneurship that Ontario needs to go forward successfully in an economic perspective. Needless to say, this motion falls perfectly in line with this PC view, and that's why I'm happy to say that we are supporting it.

I know that many times in classrooms, students are taught very valuable science, English and math skills. However, we often miss the critical life skills that can help our youth grow as they face financial challenges in their lives, such as doing your taxes, investing your money and obtaining a mortgage. I feel that proper education would prove to be very valuable and students will then be able to apply those learnings to real life situations.

Just last week, actually, when I was in a class for the entire day, a teacher shared with me, "Some courses are getting too soft. We have to get back to the basics." That's essentially what our leader, Patrick Brown, says as well. The member from York-Simcoe actually has much more information to share and I am fortunate to be able to share this time with her today.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute pleasure to rise in the House, as always, and to address this motion, which we're obviously going to support.

A couple of key points: One, I think we can all remember back to our high school days and our elementary school days and remember things that we don't remember, like everything I learned in physics and probably everything I learned in chemistry. But it's amazing that some of those things stick with you, even though we derided them at the time. I have to say that I was talking about home ec classes as I was preparing dinner on Sunday night and remembered some of those items.

We did not have financial literacy classes, and of course we need them; there's no question about it.

I want to say, though, that this is a world fraught with dangers that we, in our generation—most of us here—didn't even begin to approach back then. This is a world where we've got usurious interest rates—I'm just going to say it. Payday lenders are on almost every corner. They're charging over 800% interest. My own daughter got stung by the fast cash of walking in with a paycheque and then getting out and realizing what you pay for it. The absolutely usurious interest rates charged by credit card companies as well—I know that's federal, but it's something we really need to look at as a community. So yes, the responsibility is to train our children, and we should do a much better job. So we support the member's motion.

But we, as a government, also have to look as our responsibility, too, at the world out there and what kind of world our children are growing up into. Years ago, I brought forward a payday lending bill that was synonymous with the law in Quebec, which would limit interest rates to 35%. Think about that: Federally, 35% used to be considered usurious; it was illegal to charge over that. Now it's commonplace to charge over that. It's happening on every street corner in downtown Toronto. Of course, the government did respond, to be fair. We brought those interest rates down. Now they're only about 800%. They were about 1,000%, if we remember. This is outrageous. Nobody, no matter how much money you make, can afford to pay that kind of interest rate. So there's some legislative work to be done here.

Now, the Quebec law means that there are no payday lenders on the streets of Quebec. However, the industry has of course become more sophisticated. It has moved online. So now there's essentially online payday lending at high interest rates. Again, the technology exists to deal with that—other jurisdictions in the States are—so you can prevent rollover loans etc.

Again, not saying anything, yes—absolutely: Beyond balancing our chequebooks, we need to know about interest rates. We need to learn where to look for the pratfalls in life: how to borrow, how to save—all of that. So many people—Canadians now are in more debt than we've ever been in our history. That's a very dangerous situation, and that comes from financial illiteracy. But we also have to protect Canadians from those who, quite frankly, would rip them off and rip off Ontarians.

This is happening every day. I have people in my constituency talking all the time about how they borrowed something from a payday lender, and guess what? Years later they're still paying back that original loan.

This is our responsibility. We cannot let particularly the most vulnerable among us get stung. When I talk about that, I'm also talking about our children. I know that when I went to university, the first thing I didn't see when I walked onto campus was somebody trying to give me a credit card. That's one of the first things our children see when they walk onto campus: somebody to give them a credit card. And no one is telling them that if you don't pay off that amount in full every month, you're always going to be paying that amount off. That's financial literacy too; that's financial literacy 101. And that's government financial literacy as well, because federally we regulate that, and provincially we regulate payday lenders now; it was downloaded to us, so we also have a responsibility.

I would say—and I think I heard somebody in Her Majesty's loyal opposition say something to this effect—that financial literacy begins at home; it begins right here. So yes, we need it in our schools. Absolutely, we're going to pass the member's motion. We also need it in this House, and we need to protect people from those who would exploit them. Sadly, that's still going on.

Again, let's not forget about payday lending. It's still a scourge in our community. Federally—because there is an election coming up—let's not forget about the rates that credit cards charge. That's also our responsibility. Let's pass the member's bill, absolutely, so that kids can be prepared for the extremely dangerous world of finances into which they will walk.

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The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Mississauga—Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker.

How do we know not to run across the street without looking both ways? How do we learn what's right and what's wrong in a civilized society? How do we learn to drive a car safely and to obey the rules of the road? The answer is, we have to be taught.

In the absence of teaching, we couldn't organize a society that contains safe and productive cities. In the absence of being taught, people couldn't learn the skills they need to do the job they do or to work in the career that generates the income that people need to buy what they need to live on and what they choose to buy to express who and what they are.

Who teaches people how to manage their money—large amounts and small amounts—that their job, their profession or their career generates? That's a good question. There are lots of merchants who will use some serious advertising and promotion money to teach you how to spend all the money that you have, all the money that you can borrow and more money on top of that. Who will teach you how to live within your means? Who will teach you that using a credit card is exactly the same thing as spending the money?

You can learn those lessons in bankruptcy proceedings. Trustees in bankruptcy will teach you by hard experience. So will credit counsellors after your spending has gotten out of control. For example, do people really grasp how payday loan advertising pitches about \$20 in fees getting you \$200 really amount to an annual interest rate of around 540%, depending on the terms—540%? Do people really grasp that what you're paying is the same as borrowing \$100 and paying back \$600? It means that if people were truly financially literate, there would be no payday lending industry.

People would insist that their children open a savings account when they start school, as the member's children have. Kids could choose to learn how to save and see their savings grow. If you learn what credit is, how borrowing works, what compound interest is and how interest on debt works, then you're likely to make intelligent choices about how you save money, how you spend money and how you borrow money.

Learning to invest money is a bit more complex if only because, after you've learned the basics, your options then become very much larger, but that's not what the member is proposing. The member is proposing: How do we get Ontarians to learn the basics? The member's bill is not close to teaching anything like what's in the Canadian securities course, for example. It's about enabling Ontarians to control their lifelong money management, to stay out of bankruptcy, to understand how a household budget works, to systematically put away money on a lifelong basis for a secure retirement, and to use credit and borrowing intelligently.

To that end, just a few statistics: In 1980, Canadians spent about 82% of their disposable income. By 2005, Canadians were spending 96% of their disposable income. As spending has increased relative to income, personal savings have fallen from around 20% 30 years ago to a mere 1.2% today.

Markets, financial institutions, merchants, insurance companies and organizations that offer credit spend literally billions of dollars to shape consumer behaviour. The member's proposal very reasonably asks whether the prime motivator in how people save, spend and manage money is going to be how much advertising they're exposed to. In this, I agree with him.

What I like about his resolution is that it is not prescriptive. It doesn't say that schools have to have a set course on this. For example, as we revise our curriculum, why could we not say that in doing your mathematics problems throughout the time that you're in school, some of the questions in the exercises could lead you to discover how to manage your money, could lead you to practise good spending habits? As you're teaching various subjects, is there a way to spin financial literacy into some of those subjects? That's one possible outfall of this.

It does bring to mind, experientially, some of the things that I remember. I can remember being on a sports team back in the 1980s. At one point, we had to get some more equipment for the team. We delegated that to two

of the guys. They called me one Saturday morning and they said, "We need your help." I said, "Why? What's the problem?" It had to do with the fact that they didn't have the cash. I thought, "This is odd. Just put it on a credit card and the team will reimburse you." I was kind of curious, and I drove over to one of the guy's places where they were sitting. It turns out that this one gentleman—born in Canada of Canadian parents, raised and educated in this country—what he would do is he would keep a whole drawerful of his paycheques, and when he needed money he would go and cash a paycheque. When I saw that, I pretty much went ballistic on them. We postponed getting the equipment the team needed and I got him to gather up all of those cheques. We went into the closest bank and we opened a bank account for him. He was in his early twenties at the time. That was the first time he'd ever had a bank account.

I thought to myself, "How pervasive is this?" Well, it turns out that it is very pervasive. It turns out that this is not a problem that's confined to any one geographic area or social strata or whether you're born here or whether you've come here. It's something that's passed down. If you haven't learned good financial habits at home, you're unlikely to practise them as an adult.

I think the member has raised a good discussion point. For that reason alone, this resolution deserves to pass.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to not only join in today's debate, but I certainly will be supporting it. The first step, of course, is that we have to have students in the classroom.

What surprised me about our speakers this time is the fact that so many people have referred to the need, as the member himself says, that the ministry should "develop and implement." I went to the website of the Ministry of Education and found a document called Financial Literacy. It was published in 2011. It provides all kinds of demonstrations of the kinds of things that people have wished for in the debate that we have heard. For instance, things like making change obviously have a mathematical component to it, as well as understanding the value of money. I won't go through the ministry guideline but I just want to make sure everybody knows it's there.

The responsibility of the ministry extends beyond the elementary panel. It goes back further even than I as a classroom teacher. It is still available to high school-level students as an economics course.

I'm going to digress very quickly to the demonstration of how things come around again. My class was learning the difference between a monopoly and a free market. At that time the Liberals were engaged in a navel-gazing exercise on the role of Brewers' Retail, as it was known at that point. Of course, it was an absolutely wonderful opportunity to engage my 17- and 18-year-old students to go out and study the Brewers' Retail, which they did with great enthusiasm. The Liberal Party of Ontario at the time had provided a great deal of resources and study and

economics and so on and so forth on the benefits of breaking up that monopoly—or maintaining it. Nothing changes.

What does change is the manner in which the private sector has undertaken on the important role of financial literacy. To suggest that there is a vested interest, I think, is a little disingenuous here. You have groups like the Investor Education Fund providing documents, exercises, activities and online learning and things like that. The Toronto Star has worked for many years with the private sector on things like the Toronto Star Classroom Connection program, which engages kids. Money: It's Up to You free instructional kits: Thousands were distributed to Ontario teachers. So the private sector has recognized—and I'll tell one more anecdote—how important this is.

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I had a constituent come to me a few years ago. She was the person who wrote up the contracts for the sales of cars. She could not believe the number of 20- or 30-somethings who came, did all the negotiations for the purchase of a car, ready to sit in the back office and sign the paperwork, but didn't have a credit rating, had already been deemed bankrupt—had already declared bankruptcy—with no idea of what that meant in terms of implications for credit and understanding being responsible about money.

It's too bad we only have 10 seconds more, because this is something which I feel has a great deal of importance. We owe it to the next generation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Brampton West. You have two minutes for your reply.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I'd like to start off first by thanking the members from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Windsor West, Brampton–Springdale, Huron–Bruce, Parkdale–High Park, Mississauga–Streetsville and York–Simcoe.

One of the questions we often ask ourselves in life is, “What if I could do it all over again?”—in many respects. I think one of the things we often think about is our finances. “If I could have changed something 20 years ago, what would I have done, and I would have been better off?” I think it's about making choices, and it wouldn't be a hardship if we were taught early in school about the various choices we could make in terms of having a healthy financial situation. I think we would not ask our question on the financial front if we had those tools at an early age.

Also a lot of people think, “Well, I'm not rich; I don't make a ton of money. Why would I want to invest?” This is a thought that a lot of people have, and because of this, they neglect to make a financial plan. Even starting off with a little bit of money—financial management, people who are in this field will tell you that even putting away a little bit at an early age can lead to large dividends later on down the road.

We think about our physical health and our mental health, but I think our society has not given much emphasis to teaching people about their financial health. If we did, I think we would all be better for it.

I thank everyone for their support, and I look forward to passage of this motion this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' business.

EMPOWERING HOME
CARE PATIENTS ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 DONNANT PLUS
DE POUVOIR AUX PERSONNES
RECEVANT DES SOINS À DOMICILE

Mrs. Gretzky moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994 with respect to complaints and appeals / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur les services de soins à domicile et les services communautaires en ce qui concerne les plaintes et les appels.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today to debate my private member's bill, the Empowering Home Care Patients Act, 2015. This is my first private member's bill as the MPP for Windsor West, and it's truly my pleasure to speak on their behalf to this very important legislation.

As a rookie member of provincial Parliament last fall, I couldn't believe what was happening when my office was inundated with phone calls from home care recipients and their loved ones in my riding and across southwestern Ontario. The Erie St. Clair Community Care Access Centre had just announced a 33% reduction of daily nursing visits and was reassessing many home care recipients across the province and deeming them to be in the category of low-to-mild needs, resulting in a decrease in their service.

To make up for the service reductions, the CCAC suggested family caregivers take all the responsibility for providing care, in one case even suggesting that a patient's wife change his intravenous medications, which includes actions like flushing out the vein. In another instance, an elderly woman who suffered from a significant abscess was told that wound care was something that her husband should be doing. To her dismay, the service agency tried to force her husband to clean, repack and re-dress her wound. The agency also referred home care recipients to other community agencies, many of which could not handle an increase in capacity on such short notice—all this in order to make up a deficit of over \$5 million at the agency. Patients were given little or no notice about the reassessment.

In Ontario, you are allowed to appeal a reduction or termination of your home care service, first internally to the service agency and then to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board. It can take up to 60 days for a ruling on the internal appeal, and neither tier guarantees

that your services are sustained throughout the process. Anyone with a loved one who received home care knows that 60 days for a ruling is too long. While some agencies restore services once an appeal is filed, this is not guaranteed, and the appeal system is inconsistent across the province. All too often, recipients in one area of Ontario continue to receive home care services while people with similar needs in other areas of the province lose their care.

In the fall, like the hundreds of home care recipients across Ontario who were also having their home care slashed, my constituents had nowhere to turn.

Speaker, I will forever be thankful for the support of my community, as well as my colleagues from Essex and Windsor–Tecumseh, as we spoke out against these cuts together. Many home care recipients and their family caregivers did not want to become spokespeople for this cause but felt they had no choice. They distributed petitions that were signed by hundreds if not thousands of their friends and neighbours in Windsor and Essex county and across southwestern Ontario.

Every day, support poured in on the phone and in emails. Eventually, after months of uproar across Ontario, 80% of the Erie St. Clair CCAC deficit was wiped clean and the urgency to reduce services was calmed. It was a major victory for my constituents and all those who had ever had their home care reduced or terminated and felt they deserved better.

The issue of sudden reductions or terminations in home care is not limited to the Windsor area. For instance, from September to December 2014, over 1,200 home care patients in the Champlain CCAC catchment area were reassessed, and more than 500 were discharged as a result.

Speaker, my strife is no longer just about these cuts. It's about the way home care recipients are treated across this province and the fight to create a better system for appeals to service reductions. I want to be certain that home care recipients and their families will never be so undervalued in our health care system again. At the very least, they must have access to a robust appeal process that guarantees their service while they are going through a lengthy appeal. Bill 92, the Empowering Home Care Patients Act, 2015, seeks to do just that. If passed, the act will:

- shorten the time period, from 60 days to 30 days, during which an agency is required to respond to complaints respecting decisions about the particular community services a person is entitled to receive;

- require the agency's response to include information about the process for appealing the decision to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board; and

- stay the decision of the agency if it would result in the termination or reduction of the community services provided to a person, if an appeal of the decision is made to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board.

These changes need to be passed today. If anyone in this chamber has a loved one who relies on home care, they will understand that a reduction or termination of

these services is life-altering. It's unfortunate that the appeal process in our home care system does not reflect this.

Home care recipients need to be informed that there are options when their home care service is cut. They need to have time to adjust to their new service level and/or access to a consistent, cohesive outlet to appeal any reductions to their home care.

Our home care system is broken, and structural changes must take place. Bill 92 focuses on just one aspect of a complex system, but we cannot undervalue the importance of empowering home care recipients with access to a robust, consistent appeal process.

If Bill 92 were to become law today, the benefits would be clear to recipients and their family caregivers by tomorrow.

This bill is not limited to the community care access centres, but applies to all approved service agencies under the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994. The bill is a concise, effective way to ensure home care recipients get the home care they deserve that is based on medical fact and patient input.

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The bill has received widespread support from across Ontario. The Ontario Health Coalition states: "It is important that home care patients not be cut off of vital home care services while they make appeals. Bill 92 will make the home care appeals system fairer and more just for patients."

The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly indicates that the eligibility criteria for home care services have become fraught with seniors having services cut back. Due to unclear eligibility criteria, seniors must turn to complaint and appeal provisions under the act to enforce their rights. The Advocacy Centre for the Elderly supports Bill 92, on behalf of seniors.

The Ontario Society of Senior Citizens' Organizations wrote a letter of support for this bill and encouraged its members to review this legislation.

Speaker, joining me in the gallery today is a representative from the Alzheimer Society of Ontario. This organization recognizes the value of the bill and states: "Patients and caregivers have enough to worry about when appealing a decision to reduce their home care services. It is important to recognize that the current process of appeal adds undue stress to an already stressful situation by removing services during an appeal. The only option is to hire privately to make up for lost services. And that's really only an option for the few who have enough income to do this."

Also joining me in the gallery are representatives from Care Watch, which also supports this bill on behalf of seniors in Ontario. The organization states that "seniors in Ontario need to have access to a high-quality and comprehensive home and community care system. Having a fair and understandable appeals process that does not interrupt the delivery of care is an important component of that system."

It's clear that stakeholders in home and community care want this bill to pass. They know that Bill 92 is a simple and concise way that we can help home care recipients and their family caregivers right now. I know that my constituents are not alone in being impacted by these service reductions. Home care recipients across southwestern Ontario had their services reassessed just like so many others across the province.

I'm sure that all members of this chamber receive calls from their constituents with similar home care horror stories. I'm asking that all members of this Legislature support home care recipients and their families today. I'm asking that we recognize that our current system is not working. It's failing home care recipients. Families know that our home care system is not meeting patients' needs.

In March, the Donner report was released, and although there is a lot that I don't agree with, it did acknowledge the shortfalls in our home care system and actually called for a timely and transparent appeals process to be included in a home and community care charter.

I'm calling on this government to now recognize the value of a transparent appeal process and vote in favour of the bill that is right in front of them. Speaker, we need the Empowering Home Care Patients Act to pass today—right here, right now. I ask that all members of this chamber join me in supporting this important legislation.

Speaker, I notice that I still have a little bit of time left on the clock, and I just want to mention another story, that wasn't in my notes, of an elderly lady in her mid-90s. She had suffered a very severe stroke. She was unable to walk and unable to talk; she couldn't feed herself, she couldn't bathe herself, and she was incontinent. Through the reassessment process, they decided that she was suddenly, now, low to mild needs and did not require service anymore. I'm not certain how someone who cannot do anything for themselves can be considered low to mild needs.

In fact, her daughter and her son-in-law, who are seniors themselves, were then put into the role of her primary caregivers. So we're talking about seniors who are lifting someone in her 90s, who is frail, out of a wheelchair to put her into bed at night or to bathe her, administer medication to her and feed her. During this process, not only were they in charge of having to care for her on a regular basis; they had no respite. Somebody had to be in the house with the mother 24/7. They couldn't even go out to get groceries, because this woman required both of them to be in the home in order to move her from wheelchair to bed and so on.

When something like this happens, I'm not sure how families are expected to be able to go out and buy the groceries they need, go to work and earn the money they need in order to get private services to take care of someone. It's quite shameful that somebody who is 92 and unable to take care of herself, in one of the most extreme cases, would be considered low to mild needs and arbitrarily cut off from services.

I'm happy to report that after standing in this chamber and asking the minister directly why these cuts are happening—and being able to name people. It wasn't until I stood up and actually started giving names and cases of those impacted that everybody who had come forward and allowed me to share their names, whether it was in the media or in here, had their services restored. But those services could still be cut tomorrow. They're not guaranteed. We need to make sure that these people understand that they do have an appeal process. They can go to the service agency—not just the CCAC; any service agency that provides home care—file an appeal, and be told that there is an additional appeal process—because right now that's not required—and that if they decide to go to the Health Services Appeal and Review Board, those services will be reinstated during that time.

These are critical services that these people need, and they need to know that they have an opportunity to appeal these cuts and these decisions.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm proud to rise today to talk about Bill 92, the Empowering Home Care Patients Act.

As some of you know, I'm extremely passionate about this issue. It's also an issue that is quite familiar to me, given my previous role as a social worker working as a discharge planner in the Ottawa Hospital and also as the co-owner of a retirement residence, Portobello Manor, in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans. So it is with great pleasure that I will support the member's bill.

I just want to first highlight the important steps that our government—and I'm very proud of those steps—is taking on the issue of home care. Our government received expert recommendations through Gail Donner, in a report titled *Bringing Care Home*. This report has been instrumental in guiding the creation of our plan, the Patients First road map. The road map, which we will implement over the next three years, has 10 points. These 10 points will make sure we enhance home and community care in order that patients receive the best services possible and have little need to complain.

Through this plan, we will be providing funding for an additional 80,000 hours of nursing care, at-home and community care. That represents a \$750-million investment over the next three years, Mr. Speaker. These hours will be realized through an increased number of visits and hours that health care providers can spend with patients who have complex care needs. From 15 years in the health care sector, this is huge. I'm excited about this plan because I'm pleased to say that this government will be giving greater choice to individuals in choosing their home care provider. This is very, very important.

Our government will also pilot different approaches to give eligible Ontarians more choices over who provides their services in-home and where these services are delivered.

We know that patients—and I have to say that I certainly know too—want to be at home instead of in

hospital. By continuing to increase the quality of care at home, we are addressing the concerns of the member opposite.

I also understand that we need to address the capacity for home care in the future. The Patients First road map will plan for the future. Just as we are building Ontario up and planning for the future of our infrastructure, we are creating a long-term plan for our aging population.

I am pleased that we are moving to create a patient ombudsman who will comprehensively address issues. Anyone in Ontario who has an unresolved complaint about their care at a hospital, long-term-care home or community care access centre will have a transparent health care investigator in the ombudsman. The patient ombudsman will focus on health care issues and enhance the complaints process by adding a patient-centred lens to this process.

Mr. Speaker, it is unquestionably necessary that we seriously consider each and every one's complaints and properly address them. That being said, I support the member opposite's bill and understand her concerns. We, as a government, want to continue to ensure that patients receive the best home care and, if they are not, that the government is responding to their complaints in a speedy manner.

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I think the government is showing leadership in how we're going to address those concerns that have been experienced by our patients and our seniors all across the province.

I'm happy, like I said, to support the member, but I'm even more excited to see the next step on our plan.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm happy to rise today to speak to the Empowering Home Care Patients Act, 2015, brought forward by the member from Windsor—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): West.

Ms. Laurie Scott: West. Thank you very much, Speaker. I wanted to say her name, but that's not allowed, apparently, so I was trying to be good.

Basically, it's going to affect the Home Care and Community Services Act, so that when complaints are received they're dealt with in a more timely manner—say, in reducing the time an agency has to respond to a complaint from 60 to 30 days—and requires that an agency provide information about the appeals process along with their complaint response.

I think those are all very good ideas. I think that we have to acknowledge that we have a lot of issues in, I'm sure, all of our ridings with home care accessibility and delivery.

The member from Ottawa-Orléans has extensive experience in this field and spoke about the patient ombudsman.

I'm hoping all these things collectively will help access to our home care.

My mom, when I was able to keep her home, went through the process of going through the CCAC to

qualify for home care. It's a complicated system, and it shouldn't be so complicated. I know the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care are trying to make some changes that hopefully will make it better.

It is difficult fielding phone calls from CCACs if something happens in their time schedule—so you can only imagine if an elderly person either is on their own or their spouse is elderly, probably in their 80s. I have lots of stories about how they've been discharged from hospital, and they've given the instructions to the spouse, yet the spouse is, like, 87 years old. They can't be expected to fill in those care gaps. I know that this does happen, especially in the eastern part of Haliburton county. I've had to pick up the phone and ask, "Did you think this through? The person is 87" or high up in age. "How can they actually physically help as much as you think they can help?" So access to the services—and what the services are required needs to be done.

When the CCACs—in my area, anyway—were on strike earlier, the nurses there told me stories that they actually added layers of bureaucracy so that the nurses themselves, who were very highly trained, weren't able to make those decisions. They'd go to a level of bureaucracy that had nowhere near the experiences the nurses had. They'd sometimes wait eight hours before a decision was made to provide the home care. Meanwhile, that patient had been discharged from the hospital and was waiting for home care at home.

It's pretty nerve-wracking if you don't have anybody in your family who has had experience in health care. I can tell you, I still get calls from all my family members on health care—because you're never not a nurse, as I say.

There's too much bureaucracy.

I heard the member mention the great care providers in her area. Some are in the gallery, so I welcome you all.

Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, we'll give them a hand again. We welcome you.

I have great care providers in my riding, too, who try to fill the gaps. The Alzheimer Society has been mentioned. Community Care City of Kawartha Lakes does a huge amount of work to try to fill in the gaps. We all try, with our families, to fill in the gaps, and sometimes we have to buy extra care.

I have a great story. Haliburton Highlands Health Services got recognized by the LHIN and got awarded some money, a million dollars, which I'm very thankful for. I complain a lot about how the government does spend money. In this situation, I said they spent it wisely.

Interjections.

Ms. Laurie Scott: But it's the model that you want across Ontario.

I want to say that I commend the Central East LHIN for working on the Haliburton Highlands Health Services, as it's called. They put forward a plan to co-ordinate their providers, and the hospital is the hub in this situation.

There are about 15,000 people in Haliburton county. We have a great community group called SIRCH. They

involved them. They actually put the community care in—they just took the people and rolled them over into the hospital—and coordinated these services, because, just like the story I shared with you about the east part of Haliburton county, that's what they look after. They knew that they were not able to deliver the home care services out to these regions. It was too hard; it was uncoordinated.

The hospital itself had a smaller program but could only go—I think it was five kilometres outside the village that they actually provided home support services to. It didn't actually have to be health care. It was like home support: Get the meal; help them have the bath. They were doing that.

That's a model that works. It's very efficient. The local people talk to each other, which I like to hear and see, because that's where you get the genuine realization of the needs, the geography and what we can do better.

Part of this announcement was a GAIN clinic, which is Geriatric Assessment Intervention Network. Again, I have experienced that with my mom. There are more of those rolling out. They coordinate with them—it's basically multi-professional care teams that go and see what they need, whether it's adjustment in the drugs, physio, OT—anyway, it's a great service. They've incorporated that.

They actually have assisted-living services for high-risk seniors, where they're eligible for 24/7 scheduled and unscheduled visits for personal support services: homemaking services, security checks and care coordination—a brilliant idea—

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: No, it's not quite Home First, but it's similar, yes—establishing the new palliative care community team to provide clinical and non-clinical community-based care for patients at end of life.

They put a physiotherapy office in Minden, where we didn't have one before, where they had to travel out—so I praise them for that.

That's the model that I want to bring up. They actually listened and responded to our community. We're working with the government and got rewarded for doing the plan, which will save lots of dollars on the other end, which is the fact that these people have to access the hospital, and that's not where they want to be.

I commend the member for bringing this bill forward. We certainly support anything that helps to get more care to our seniors at home and to people who are at home, but doing it with the patients in mind, and it has to be done properly. So thank you very much for bringing that bill forward.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: First, I want to congratulate the member from Windsor West for bringing forward this important bill, the Empowering Home Care Patients Act.

I've been a nurse for many years—more years than I actually care to tell you about—and health care should not be operating in silos, which is part of the problem.

We need a system of health care that is coordinated, not fragmented; that is totally public, not privatized; where each and every dollar is invested in the patients and the front-line staff that we have here today and across this province. It needs to be a system that looks after the vulnerable, the infirm, seniors and those in need of short-term and long-term health care.

There is no place in our health care system for the existing privatization, let alone more privatization, as set out in the latest announcement from the Ministry of Health, where they're going to invest another \$750 million, and you can pick your own providers—what is that about? That opens the doors for hundreds more private operators in the system, and will put shareholders and their pockets before health care, which will put profit before quality care, before continuity of care and before seamless care.

The acuity levels of patients in this province who are leaving hospitals and needing home care is growing. The population of people who require home care is aging. Seniors are living longer. The problem with that is they have multiple, complex health needs, so three hours a day, one hour a day, 20 hours a month does not cut it, unfortunately.

Patients are being discharged from hospital much sooner. Some of them are being discharged after hip replacement within 24 to 36 hours; with that, they need more care in their homes.

1510

We have got the RNAO calling for the disbandment of the CCAC. I don't know what that's about, Speaker, because just two weeks ago the member from London—Fanshawe put forward a proposal to create an umbrella organization for mental health in this province that got all-party support, because mental health is in crisis. Some 500 agencies are operating—some for-profit, some not-for-profit—without any oversight, without anybody to assist in coordinating those services, and now we've got the RNAO calling to disband a similar organization across the province.

In Niagara, we've had a strike going on for eight weeks. CarePartners is a for-profit agency where the CEO, Linda Knight, made almost \$700,000 last year with her wages and perks, while 1,600 patients in the Niagara region are on wait-lists and not getting the care that they actually need. Dedicated professionals—RNs, RPNs—are on the picket line instead of giving patients the care they need, because their CEO is making hundreds of thousands and they're getting \$18 a visit in a for-profit system, like they were working piecemeal at the canning factory.

Just yesterday, I heard from the CCAC, through the Globe and Mail, that the LHIN in my area is actually moving \$4 million or \$5 million from the CCAC to the community partners to do home care. Were MPPs notified about this? No. I had to hear about it from the Globe and Mail. It is unbelievable what is happening out there.

In addition, they told me that the CCAC in Niagara is ending their wait-lists. I heard about that in the Globe and

Mail as well. There was no notification to any of our offices that seniors who may have had care providers for years are suddenly going to have a new care provider. Nobody has notified anybody of that change—not the LHIN, not the CCAC and not the Ministry of Health. It is atrocious that something like this could happen with no notification, and it's very dangerous for our senior population to not be on a wait-list, particularly those people who don't have families.

I've just got about a minute left, because I know the member from Nickel Belt wants to weigh in here, but I want to give you two recent examples in my community. The mother of a good friend of mine was 86 years old. She went into the hospital. Her name was Barbara Dmytrow. She had a heart attack. She came home from the CCAC. She lived on the second floor of the house, but her daughter was still working and the rest of her family lived in Ottawa and all over the place.

She had a CCAC assessment. She was on oxygen. She was told she didn't qualify for one hour of care—that if she could walk herself to the sink and do a sponge bath at 86 with oxygen, wheeling it along, she wasn't getting any CCAC care. Well, her daughter found her a week later on the floor, where she died alone at 10 o'clock in the morning, because she was getting no care in our community.

Just yesterday, I heard from a woman—her name is Christine—who has an 11-year-old disabled son; he's been disabled since about three months old. He had major surgery at SickKids hospital. She took him home on May 11. She could have sent him over to a rehab hospital for a couple of weeks after the surgery, but she took him home, saving the health system thousands and thousands of dollars. It's now May 28. She is still waiting for services and equipment for that child, which he could have had had he stayed in the hospital and cost the system probably \$100,000.

These are the kinds of things that are happening in our community; they need to stop. That is why this bill is so important, so that we have an appeals system in place for people who need care.

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

I would ask everyone to join me in welcoming a former member for Ottawa Centre, Mr. Richard Patten, who is in the east members' gallery, a member of the 34th, 36th, 37th and 38th Parliaments. Welcome.

Further debate?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to enter into the discussion about this very important subject which, to those of us who have watched the evolution of health care over the years, is exceedingly important.

There was a time when people stayed in the hospital for a lengthy period of time, convalescing very often, and often objected to doing so, particularly older people who did not want to be in a hospital setting. I think the movement we are seeing—across the world, but certainly here in Ontario—to home care is a very positive move, because most people, given the choice and with adequate and good health care available to them in the home

setting, would choose that. Whenever we're striving to improve the circumstances related to those receiving home care, that is good. That's why a discussion this afternoon on this subject is valuable.

I am pleased that our government is investing \$4.3 billion in the community care sector across the province of Ontario. We increased funding by \$270 million this year, and we have provided the LHINs with \$2.4 billion in funding for CCACs, representing close to a 100% increase since 1999. But those are all statistics, and they are important statistics because sometimes you'd get the impression that there's never been an increase in the amount of money going into home care, when in fact there have been huge amounts of money dedicated to home care—at, I must say, the suggestion of those in the health care field, who have said it would be better to have care delivered in the home in many cases, rather than having people convalescing in a hospital setting, though they do have to do that sometimes.

Some of the real heroes we know out there are caregivers from the family. Some of the members have discussed what they go through very often. Often the caregivers are quite elderly or may have health issues themselves. They have been real troopers in terms of providing that kind of support in many extenuating circumstances, but you really do need professional help through personal support workers, nurses and others who can be of assistance to people in this field.

One of the things I've noted when I meet with people is something that's not popular to say. Unfortunately, in the 1990s, the battle over taxes was lost. The right wing said that taxes were bad in the United States, Canada and around the world; therefore, if you mentioned increasing taxes, you'd never be elected. And yet, everyone who comes forward with new programs and suggestions for improvement in health care or other fields knows in their heart of hearts that to deliver the kind of service we would like to deliver, you really have to increase taxes.

So when I meet with people, I ask them that question. I asked them the question at the time: "Are you prepared to increase taxes? Because what you're proposing is very good." Invariably, they'll either say "No," or they'll say, "Yes. Tax somebody else, but don't tax me."

I think as a society, we have to start understanding that if we want improved public services, it'll take more dollars to do so. I wish that message would get out there, but to pretend it wouldn't—I don't think anybody this afternoon has said that, but I encounter many people, because we all meet with people in our constituency offices, and invariably they want government to invest more if they're from the field of public services. I am sympathetic to that, but I ask every time: "Are you prepared to go out and campaign for higher taxes?" "Oh, no. Take it from education. Take it from here. Take it from there. Governments waste money." They have a myriad of excuses for it. I think someday we have to confront that fact, because we have to continue to make improvements.

The member has brought forward some interesting suggestions in her initiative this afternoon to improve. If

we're going to make those improvements, if we see the tsunami coming for health care—for seniors particularly, with the number of people suffering from dementia, and that number is going to increase in the future—it's going to require financial resources to meet those obligations. Unless we as a society—and, I guess, we as politicians—are prepared to put that message out there to people, then we're not honest with them if we don't tell them that that kind of investment is necessary.

I commend the member for bringing forward her initiative this afternoon for consideration of the House. I think it benefits us all when we're able to discuss these in a rather detailed manner, as some members have been able to do.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 92, the Empowering Home Care Patients Act, which was put forward by the member from the third party from Windsor West.

1520

I was listening very intently, and I was surprised that nobody jumped up and suggested that maybe we were going a little bit off topic in terms of all this talk about how the only way that we can fund any programs whatsoever is by raising taxes. Mr. Speaker, how much is too much? People are paying income tax, municipality tax, a gas tax, a sales tax. How about if we prioritize? How about if we're careful with the money we do collect? How about if we don't waste money on scandal after scandal—even the OPP investigations—

Hon. James J. Bradley: If you want to get into that, you've ruined the whole afternoon.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Nobody interrupted when you were completely off-topic.

Four OPP investigations and possibly a fifth under way—who is paying for those OPP investigations? The taxpayers of this province of Ontario—taxpayer dollars for OPP investigations when that money could have been going to home care.

The people of the province of Ontario understand very well what's going on. They understand that 1% of their tax is going to provide health care; it's not sufficient. They're willing to pay a significant amount of taxes, but guess what? They're already paying a lot in taxes. We cannot expect people to provide shelter for their families and food for their kids and have a healthy lifestyle and go on camping trips, which I enjoyed with my family when I was younger—they want to see the government prioritize their valuable tax dollars.

I was visited by Loren Freid from the Alzheimer Society of York Region. My riding of Thornhill, of course, is in York region. It was quite heartbreaking to see two gentlemen who came with him. One is a caregiver for his mother, and the other is a caregiver for his wife. Thank goodness that there are programs in York region in our community where patients with Alzheimer's can go during the day, and thank goodness that we do have health care workers who are providing home care.

But I think that we're all told to look carefully at charities before we give them our valuable after-tax dollars, and many people feel that 80% of the money should go directly to services for most charities. If they see it go further askew from 80% and 20%, they say that charity is not getting my money. Some people even say it should be 90% and 10%, or 100% of the money. Well, maybe we have to have that discussion and say that CCACs should be a significant amount of the money—perhaps 80% has to go to front-line health care—and insist on that. If the administrators can't do it, then maybe those administrators have to provide the front-line health care that they're tasked to do.

So we were just hearing today from the member from the third party that the Welland hospital will be closing. How are we here talking about prioritizing tax dollars when we're talking about shutting down health care in a community? Families drive their parents and their children and themselves to appointments. If they have to go farther, that's more time off work and more time away from their family and their tasks. If people have to drive farther for health care, we all know what happens. Oftentimes they don't make it to the hospital in enough time to receive the care that they need in a timely fashion.

We can definitely do better, and in my opinion it's about prioritizing the money that we're already collecting. I don't think that it's fair to constantly go with our hands out to the public when the public is struggling. We could definitely do better.

I appreciate the suggestions in this bill that we have to respond to complaints within 30 days instead of 60 days. In my riding of Vaughan, four complaints, I'm told, were made against a home daycare; this government didn't act upon them, and a little girl unfortunately died under terrible circumstances. It's not enough, unfortunately, to just say, "We'll investigate." We heard the member from Ottawa-Orléans say that it's a priority for her and her government to investigate any complaints. It's not enough to say that we're going to investigate; we have to investigate. It's what we're—

Interjection.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's not enough to just have ombudsmen. It's important that we manage the complaints immediately through the Ombudsman, but also the complaints that come to the ministry themselves. They shouldn't have to all go through an ombudsman.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am pleased to speak in favour of this important legislation, and I applaud my NDP colleague from Windsor West for introducing it.

Although the provincial government has made home and community care the cornerstone of their health care reforms, funding for home care is not keeping pace with the increasing demand for services. Last year, the South West Community Care Access Centre experienced a 33% increase in referrals for services, yet the government funding model doesn't take those increased demands for services into account at all.

Much like my colleague, my offices have received phone calls from constituents who are rightly frustrated by the lack of services and the cuts they are facing. What is most disappointing is that those seniors and their families have to turn to the media to have received responses.

I had constituents contact my office, and we went to the CCAC, and we tried to negotiate with them and reinstate their coverage. Only with the threat of the media is when we got action, which is, again, very disappointing.

Denying home care to seniors leaves seniors with few options but to leave their own homes and to be separated from their family. Further, this approach costs the province much more than it would to keep seniors, like the constituents who call my office, in their own homes with their family or their husband.

As the NDP seniors' critic, I have been so very disappointed by the number of seniors who are being failed by our health care system. From wait-lists for long-term-care beds to denials for home care services, like we are experiencing in southwestern Ontario, I'm convinced we can and must do better by Ontario's seniors. Our seniors deserve to live with dignity, and this bill attempts to achieve just that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to the member from Windsor West's first private member's bill, and I will be supporting it. As a private member's bill, it talks to things that are important to people and important to families. We all share that. We have differences of opinion, sometimes, of how to do that, but we all know that. We all experience it in our communities.

I'm not going to repeat some of the things we've said about Gail Donner's report and our Patients First plan. But I do want to say that one of the pillars in that is making sure that there is an expectation—say, if your mother has a stroke—of what you will get as a level of service, and that would be even across the province. I think that's really important and what the member's bill is speaking to.

I think what's equally as important is that people get access to appeal, as you say, in a timely fashion. I've personally experienced that, through family, and we've all seen it in our communities.

The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—we should get an abbreviation for that—mentioned that there are many good things happening in her community with the CCAC, and we all know of that.

The reality is that things do fall between the cracks. CCACs deliver care to thousands of people in thousands of places every day. There's a level of complexity to that, and things do happen, and people have to be guaranteed a right to a relatively speedy appeal. I just wanted to assure the member from Thornhill that there will be a patient ombudsman.

I do want to say that, here, it's really a question of choices and priorities. Often people say, "You know

what? You can't raise taxes"—or "You're spending too much money"—"but I've got this hospital in my riding"—or "I've got this facility in my riding"—"that needs help."

It's tough choices. There are tough choices that are out there, so it's not easy. It's a question of balance.

I wanted to also suggest to the member that she may want to check with the Alzheimer Society. They may very well be getting support, as many charitable organizations do, from CCACs. I know that in my riding of Ottawa South, they do.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm happy to add a few minutes to this debate. Let's be clear: Our home care system is broken. It doesn't work. It fails more people than it actually helps.

I will be very clear: I'm old. I remember when we had a robust home care system that was run by not-for-profit agencies. I remember when, in Sudbury, we had the VON, that had career home care workers. Those people knew home care inside and out; that's what they did. We paid them fairly; they had a pension plan; they were paid for travel; and they offered top-quality care.

Then the Mike Harris revolution came in, and they decided that if we were to have competitive bidding and let the private sector in, we were going to do things better, cheaper, faster. When the first round of bidding came in, it was as if they had found a way to clone Mother Teresa. The service was going to be incredible.

1530

This is an experiment that failed. Fifteen years later, we are in front of a home care system that doesn't work. To make matters worse, there is no way for people, when the system fails them, to put in a complaint.

Every single day in my constituency office, we start the day the same way. We play the messages from the night before and listen to half an hour of people who are complaining about the home care system: "The worker didn't show." "She woke up in the middle of the night and she's still in her wheelchair. Nobody came to transfer her." "She was supposed to go to the baptism of her grandson, but nobody came to transfer her into her wheelchair, so she missed it all." And the list goes on and on.

I have Mr. and Mrs. Jenkinson, who came to see me last week during constituency week. He was severely sick. Think liver abscess, PICC line, liver drain, got discharged home, "You're going to receive your antibiotics at home." Great. Then they're told, "Oh, no, home care is not going to be in your home. Home care is going to be in one of those clinics. You know, you live in Nickel Belt, an easy 35-minute drive."

He was so, so sick and in so much pain that it was impossible to do, but who do you complain to? When you call your case manager at the CCAC, she tells you, "Oh, no. Yes, you were referred for home care, but the home care you get is to actually come to a clinic." That makes no sense whatsoever.

We have Maurice Lalonde, who lives in a seniors complex in Lively. He and 11 other people receive care each and every single day. Most of them are in wheelchairs and most of them are heavy care. He counts the number of providers he had in a span of five days: nine different people.

How would you like to strip naked in front of nine different strangers to have a bath, Mr. Speaker? This is so degrading. This is such a lack of respect, but where do those people complain? There is nowhere. They come to us and they leave messages on our machine, and we try to do the best we can to help them. I could go on and on.

Darlene Leclerc, for her mum and dad—she has a mess. She's severely disabled, and her dad looks after her mum; both of them are quite elderly. The home care system failed more visits. When they try to complain, they get the runaround.

We need Bill 92—the sooner, the better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Windsor West. You have two minutes for your response.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the comments from—I believe there were eight members who rose to speak to my bill.

I would like to point out that home care doesn't just affect seniors. That's a large portion of the population that receives health care, but in my riding of Windsor West, we have this wonderful facility called the John McGivney Children's Centre. They have a preschool program that services children with very high, very complex needs—developmental and medical needs. Many of those children receive home care and many families of those children were told that their services were going to be reduced. We're talking about children who will never walk, never talk, cannot feed themselves, are in special wheelchairs that are made just for them. They receive intense therapy. Many of them have trachs that have to be suctioned. They have very complex needs. These families were being told that their children weren't going to receive home care services. They were just arbitrarily cut, and they didn't know where to turn. So they come to my office and ask for help.

We need to understand that it affects people from the youngest to the oldest. They need to have something in place, a mechanism in place to know that they're supported, that they have an opportunity to say, "I don't like what's happening. I don't agree with the fact that you think my loved one doesn't need these services anymore." They need to know that it's going to be dealt with in a timely manner and that there is another mechanism for appealing, and during that time, those services will be restored because they're valuable services.

Just to finish the note: We somehow got off track a bit and started talking about taxes and money and that kind of thing. It's kind of disturbing that the debate became more about dollar signs, the value of a dollar, rather than the value of a human life. I think that it's unfortunate it went in that direction. I just want to put that out there.

I would like to say thank you because it sounds like everybody in the House is in support, so hopefully this will get through quickly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I will take the vote on that item at the end of private members' public business.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr. Han Dong: I move that, in the opinion of this House, in order to continue to celebrate our diversity and our commitment to democracy, equality and mutual respect and to appreciate the contributions of the various multicultural groups and communities to Canadian society, Ontario should recognize June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dong has moved private members' notice of motion number 49. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you to all the respected guests who are joining us in the gallery today: Mr. Ganesan Sugumar, Mr. Robert Fan, Mr. Lenny Lombardi, Ms. Theresa Lombardi, Ms. Norma Carpio, Mr. Phuoc Tran I see there, and Mr. Farooq Khan. Mr. Wei Chenyi will be joining us shortly.

I would like to thank you all for being here today with us and to thank you for your support over the years. I'm extremely honoured to have this opportunity to represent constituents of the great riding of Trinity-Spadina, a riding which, I believe, most members would agree is one of the most culturally diverse ridings in Canada, citing great attractions such as Little Italy, Little Portugal, Chinatown, Kensington Market and Koreatown, just to name a few. I'm humbled to present this important private members' motion to this House and in the presence of my dear friends from diverse communities.

This motion is for Ontario to officially recognize June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day. I'm enormously proud to stand here today to present this motion and pay tribute to those who worked so hard before me.

I would like to begin with a quote from former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau: a man who ushered in a new era of Canadian history; a man who led this country on a new, exciting path; a man who changed the course of this nation forever.

"A policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework commends itself to the government as the most suitable means of assuring the cultural freedom of Canadians. Such a policy should help break down discriminatory attitudes and cultural jealousies. National unity, if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.

“The government will support and encourage the various cultures and ethnic groups that give structure and vitality to our society. They will be encouraged to share their cultural expression and values with other Canadians and so contribute to a richer life for us all.” Pierre Elliott Trudeau, October 8, 1971.

This passage, to me, illustrates who we are as a nation, as a province and as Canadians. The continued support and encouragement of all cultural and ethnic groups in Ontario is important to build Ontario up. Through this motion, we as a province set an example and demonstrate that we embrace our cultural diversity, that we hold multiculturalism at the very base of our ideology as a province and that we will continue to recognize and respect the countless contributions that our multicultural communities have brought to Ontario.

1540

For example, in this very gallery today is a man who started his successful business enterprise as a newcomer to this province, Mr. Ganesan Sugumar, a long-time and respected friend of mine. He came here from Sri Lanka and started a business. Now it is an enterprise that employs hundreds in Ontario, provides immensely to our economy and is a large contributor to local communities through charity and community events.

Interjection.

Mr. Han Dong: That’s right.

Mr. Sugumar was recently awarded with the distinction of Entrepreneur of the Year on behalf of the Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council. In the same year, he also received Her Majesty’s Diamond Jubilee Medal from His Excellency the Governor General of Canada for his outstanding and significant contributions to Canada.

Mr. Sugumar’s commitment and dedication to volunteerism has helped thousands of Ontarians. He volunteered to raise funds for the Hospital for Sick Children and Stouffville hospital; fundraising for a birthing centre at Centenary hospital; and fundraising for an MRI machine for Scarborough Hospital. Mr. Sugumar, thank you for your hard work. This province is a better place because of it.

Another person I would like to recognize is the late Johnny Lombardi, a pioneer of multicultural media in Ontario. The son of Italian immigrants, Mr. Lombardi was born in Little Italy of Toronto. Mr. Lombardi was a promoter of concerts and sporting events, a champion of multiculturalism before it was ever implemented as a government policy.

He founded the multicultural radio station CHIN in 1966 and CHIN-FM in 1967, which now serves over 30 ethnic communities. By 1968, CHIN was broadcasting in 32 languages, 60 hours per week.

His son Lenny and daughter Theresa remain dedicated to continuing this legacy of their father’s. Lenny is the president and CEO of CHIN Radio/TV International, and Theresa is the vice-president and general manager. Mr. Lombardi is an exceptional man who supported his community and helped take multiculturalism to where it is today.

The Premier often reminds us that our competitive advantage is our people. Multiculturalism has attracted the best and brightest minds to our province. This has provided us great economic potential. The recent trade mission led by Minister Chan is a good testimony of that. He is joining us here in this House this afternoon.

The reality is that we as a province welcome roughly 50% of all newcomers to Canada, which is approximately 100,000 a year. These newcomers come to Ontario year after year because we’re an exceptional, diverse part of the country. We’re culturally tolerant, religiously tolerant and do not discriminate based on who they are and where they’re from. The tolerance and naturally accepting nature of Ontarians is a large part of why I’m so proud to be a member of this Legislature and to stand here in this House today presenting this motion.

By officially recognizing Canadian Multiculturalism Day, we are recognizing and celebrating the achievements and the contributions of every ethnic community in this province.

Just this morning, I was at an announcement for the launch of the 2015 Toronto dragon boat race, an event that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors and tourists to the greater Toronto area. This fantastic event celebrates ancient Chinese culture and educates visitors about Chinese heritage and history.

There are many more events that are happening in Trinity–Spadina: Caribana, the Korean Dano Festival, Pride Parade, Chinatown Festival, Taste of Little Italy and the Portugal Day Parade, just to name a few. These are just samples of the amazing community events held every year across Ontario by cultural associations and ethnic communities.

A former member of this House, the honorable Gerry Phillips, has an analogy he uses quite often. I had the pleasure of working with him, and if my memory serves me well, I would like to share that analogy with this House. Gerry sees Canada as a large flower garden. In the beginning, there were only wildflowers; that is, our aboriginal community. As time goes by, we have more flowers in this garden. Now the garden is beautiful and full of colour. Sometimes there will be weeds, such as racism and prejudice, and every one of us has the responsibility of taking those out.

When I first came to Ontario, I noticed that the Chinese community here embraces many cultural traditions that have been long lost in a model urban centre like Shanghai. That speaks to the respect and degree of acceptance that are embedded in our social norms. Multiculturalism is the foundation of that social norm.

I look forward to the support of all members of this House in the passage of this motion.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I’m so pleased to rise today to speak on this motion. In a letter I received from the member for Trinity–Spadina, he mentioned Prime Minister Jean Chrétien designating, by royal proclamation, June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day, and

that if this motion passes, it will show that Ontario remains committed to recognizing the valuable contributions that multicultural groups and communities bring to Ontario's social, cultural and economic fabric.

I just want to talk a little about a few events I have been to in the last week and that I will be going to. As people know, I represent the riding of Thornhill, which is one of the most multicultural ridings in Ontario.

Monday night this week was the Buddhist Association of Canada hosting the 7th Annual Wesak Vegetarian Banquet, and I got to bathe the baby Buddha. It's a really fun ceremony. It was something new for me to experience. I was there with my friend Diane Chen, who is a really fantastic volunteer and advocate for the Cham Shan Temple, which is on Bayview in my riding of Thornhill. I'm looking forward to celebrating next year's Chinese New Year and other events as well. Right now they are fundraising, and this was a fundraiser that I was at. Basically, they're going to build an extension of the Cham Shan Temple in the riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brockville—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Brock.

Mrs. Gila Martow: —Brock. The largest Buddhist retreat temple, it's called the Four Sacred Mountains of Buddhism. It's going to be, sort of, a replica of visiting all four sites. It's a sacred pilgrimage for the world's 350 million Buddhists. I sincerely hope that all 350 million of them don't decide to visit Peterborough at the same time, but we certainly look forward to seeing many of them there. My dad is up north of Peterborough right now, and I'm looking forward to visiting the new temple with him.

Coming up on June 7, in Vaughan, is a celebration of Philippine Independence Day. Erlinda Insigne is president of the Filipino-Canadian Association of Vaughan.

We have, as well, the Shabbat Project of Toronto on June 9. I have a flyer for it here. I'm actually going to be introducing the speaker for the evening, Dennis Prager. It's called *Maintaining Hope in a Dangerous World*. They're focusing on a discussion of Jewish life in troubled times.

What I can say positively about the Jewish community, as a member of the Jewish community, is that we have a way of having serious discussions and still somehow making it entertaining. I think that maybe it's our calling in the world to find some humour in difficult times. Last year, the Shabbat Project of Toronto had one of the largest challah ceremonial bread-bakings. I think there were 2,000 women at the convention centre in Brampton.

Everybody is welcome. You don't have to be Jewish to like Jewish food; we all know that, Mr. Speaker.

Tonight is the Spirit of Hope gala, hosted by the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal. We know that Simon Wiesenthal was world-famous Nazi hunter. This is going to be at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. I'm looking forward to it. Tony Blair, former Prime Minister from the United Kingdom, is going to be the keynote speaker. Again, it will be a serious discussion with entertainment. That's the excitement that we're looking forward to—and of course, lots of good food.

1550

This Sunday, unfortunately—the member for Richmond Hill is going to be attending, as well as the member for Oak Ridges and me—it's basically a mosque in the riding of Oak Ridges, and they're having a pro-Khomeini rally, and there's going to be a counter-rally by people who don't want to see radicalism spread to Canada. I think that's all of our concern.

This past May 18, there was the Walk with Israel. I did the entire walk, which circled from Coronation Park to Ontario Place, a big circle of downtown, with the new leader of the PC Party, Patrick Brown, as well as my federal counterpart, Peter Kent, from Thornhill. It was fantastic weather. I think we walked with approximately 10,000 people, and they raised well over a million dollars to support projects in Israel.

On July 18, I'm looking forward to going with another constituent of mine, Laj Prasher, to the Festival of India. It's the 43rd annual festival. It's going to be a huge parade. I'm really looking forward to it. I invite everybody who is listening or here today to meet us at Yonge and Bloor. They're walking all the way to Queens Quay—I hope the weather is going to be co-operative for that—and then taking the ferry across to Centre Island.

Their headline is "Bringing a Splash of Spiritual Culture to Toronto!" I think that's really what this initiative is all about: that the member from Trinity-Spadina wants to bring more than a splash of spiritual culture to Ontario; that he wants to bring a lot of recognition for all the cultural and diverse communities we have in Ontario.

I myself represent the francophone community. Let's not forget that the francophone community is one of the cultural communities in Ontario. Even though it's one of the founding communities, even though Ontario has recognition for bilingual services, a bilingual university, francophone colleges, a francophone separate school system as well as a French Catholic separate school system—in recognition of that, this year we're going to be celebrating the 400th—le 400^e en français—peut-être je peux le dire un petit peu en français : c'est le 400^e anniversaire pour la communauté franco-ontarienne. Je pense que Champlain est venu—le prochain mois de septembre, ce sera le 400^e anniversaire.

To celebrate the 400th anniversary of Franco-Ontarian culture—really, it is a culture, not just the language of French—there are going to be many events, many exciting opportunities to celebrate. I am looking forward to co-hosting, with the Canadian National Exhibition—the CNE was here yesterday for their reception, and I was happy to speak to the board members about my suggestion, which they seemed to be more than interested in fulfilling, which is to have a Franco-Ontarian day or half-day at the CNE, and invite all the different associations—les assemblées francophones—to come to Toronto, to celebrate at the CNE their culture with maybe some singing, some—I wouldn't say, necessarily, something Québécois in terms of food choices. But I'm sure we could come up with something, maybe sirop d'érable—maple syrup—or something equally fun and equally

delicious. I am going to suggest BeaverTails, even though that's probably not exactly what they have in mind.

Interjection: Poutine.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You love poutine?

I love BeaverTails with just a bit of sugar on them.

When we think of the cultures in Ontario, we really like to focus on the positive aspects of all the different cultures. It really makes Toronto a wonderful place to visit. One of the reasons we have such a vibrant tourist economy is that we have places like Chinatown, as the member for Trinity–Spadina mentioned, like Kensington Market. Many in the Jewish community—their grandparents were in the same shops as what is now Chinatown. It was sort of a Jewish immigrant place to come, and the Jewish community, like many communities, starts to move towards the suburbs and then starts to move back. That's what we're seeing, certainly, right now, Mr. Speaker.

So what's the negative? We're talking about all the positive multicultural things going on in Ontario. What are the negatives? Well, I'm going to read from this letter that I sent to the honourable Sergeant-at-Arms, about the Al-Quds rally, which unfortunately takes place in many parts of the world. It really ties in with the pro-Khomeini—I guess we can almost call it—terror recruitment that can be going on in our own province, right under our very noses. The letter reads:

“With great urgency I write to call public attention to the repeated demand of a group of public citizens to stage a demonstration of a deeply offensive, racist and deplorable nature on the grounds of Queen's Park.

“The Al-Quds Day tradition was initiated in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini to endorse and promote a fundamentalist strain of Islam as well as the hatred and destruction of both the Israeli state and the Jewish people.”

Rallies take place, Mr. Speaker, all across North America, with slogans chanted and obscene sentiments suggested, with placards and, yes, even flags of known terrorist organizations which are now outlawed.

We have to focus and we have to bring the stage and the focus to the positive aspects of multiculturalism and ensure that hate is not brought to our wonderful country and our wonderful province and all the wonderful communities.

We all enjoy the diversity, I think, and we enjoy meeting people from other cultures and learning about other cultures; we enjoy, certainly, as I've said, the food from other cultures. It's boring if we're all cut from the same cloth and eating the same food week after week and day after day.

But we also have to recognize that too often people see multiculturalism as an opportunity to propagate hate. So let's focus on the positive. I'm really happy that the member from Trinity–Spadina brought forward this proclamation. On behalf of the PC Party, I'm certainly happy to say that we support and we look forward to celebrating all these wonderful events. I only touched on a tiny bit that takes place over maybe a two-week period.

We look forward to celebrating with all of the members of the House. We enjoy seeing each other outside of the Legislature at these kinds of events; we all know that we do. We look forward to meeting many of our constituents and each other's constituents at the events as well. Thank you.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents that I represent in London West to speak to the motion today that was put forward by the member for Trinity–Spadina. This motion calls on the province of Ontario to officially recognize Canadian Multiculturalism Day every year on June 7. I understand that the purpose of the motion is to demonstrate Ontario's commitment to the official policy of multiculturalism that has been set by the government of Canada. This was adopted, as the member indicated, back in 1971. It's been in place for decades in this country. June 27 has been recognized as Multiculturalism Day since 2003.

I want to say at the outset that New Democrats are certainly proud to stand in support of the motion, and I congratulate the member for Trinity–Spadina for bringing this forward.

This motion, this recognition of June 27 as Canadian Multiculturalism Day, really goes a long way to recognize the vital contributions that people of different ethnic and racial and cultural backgrounds bring to our societies here in Ontario. It celebrates our shared diversity. It acknowledges our collective commitment to democracy, equality and human rights, all those principles that we value dearly as Ontarians.

1600

It also sends an important message to newcomers that becoming Canadian does not mean giving up their cultural identity, that in Canada citizenship is not synonymous with culture. So there are opportunities for people to share their cultural identity and to celebrate their cultural identity.

I looked at some of the literature around the concept of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism really has three main goals. The first goal is to recognize and celebrate diversity, which is what we're talking about. We know that both the federal and provincial governments are very active in supporting and encouraging ethnocultural groups to have festivals and community events, to showcase their food, their traditional dress and their cultural traditions.

The second goal is to foster the integration of newcomers into Canadian society. This means ensuring that immigrants are able to find jobs, that they are able to make connections, that they are able to join community groups and that they are able to find their place within society.

The third goal is to create and maintain equality between citizens. This involves enabling newcomers to become full and equal members of our society who have a say, just like the rest of us, and whose views and contributions matter, just like those of us who were born here.

We want to ensure that the skills, the experiences, the insights and the ideas that newcomers bring to Canada are valued, because we know that they enrich our society and benefit us all.

Speaker, we do pretty well on the first goal. Certainly I've found that one of the best parts of being an MPP is being able to participate in those many cultural events and celebrations that take place in my community of London and across the province. I have really enjoyed and been enriched from learning about the different ethnocultural communities I represent in London.

But unfortunately, we don't do nearly as well on the second and third goals, those goals of integration and equality. For example, I've spoken before in this Legislature about the labour market needs of the African Canadian community in London, and the challenges they face integrating into the labour market. There was a needs assessment done earlier this year that found unemployment among African Canadians in London is about 35%, which is five times higher than the overall unemployment rate. Of course, this represents an incredible loss of talent, skills and credentials that these newcomers could bring into our community.

Just this week, there was an article in the London Free Press about a heart surgeon who had arrived in London from Iraq 15 months ago but has been unable to find work that allows him to practise his skills as a physician. This is not just a London issue. This is across the province, and across the country, really.

In Ontario, the Fairness Commissioner issued a report in January of this year that talked about the barriers that internationally educated professionals face in entering the labour market in Ontario. She recommended that some changes be made to the Canadian experience requirements that are put in place by many regulatory bodies, because this requirement for Canadian experience creates a huge barrier for immigrants to be able to enter the workforce. This barrier has also been recognized by the Ontario Human Rights Commissioner. Both bodies have called for these Canadian experience requirements to be removed.

The Fairness Commissioner's report also highlighted the need for better access to bridge training programs for professionals, as well as sustainable funding for these programs, because research shows that they start up, they close down—there's no continuity for immigrants in knowing when they will be offered and where they will be offered. They're also very, very expensive, costing up to \$12,000 for tuition. This creates huge barriers for immigrants to enter these programs, but these programs are necessary for them to enter into the labour market. So bridge training is something that would really help with the integration of newcomers.

Finally, I think we all know that people come to Canada because they want a better life for themselves and their children. They want new opportunities. They want to practise their skills in the occupations they were trained to do. They want to send their kids to post-secondary education so their kids can do better than

themselves, which is what all of us hope for future generations, and can have brighter futures.

If we are not able to do this for the newcomers who come to our society, if we fail to live up to the promise we present, what we risk doing is creating alienation and despair, and we risk losing out on all of those incredible contributions that newcomers can make.

In closing, I would say that we absolutely welcome observing June 27 as multicultural day in Ontario, but we will also continue to push for much, much more.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and speak in support of private member's motion number 49, brought forward by the member from Trinity-Spadina.

I also want to thank our special guests who are here in the members' gallery this afternoon for coming out and joining us here at Queen's Park. It's a real honour and a privilege to see so many familiar faces, and I want to welcome you all to Queen's Park.

We're fortunate to live in a province as diverse as Ontario. We are the most multicultural province in Canada, where half of all new immigrants to the country make their home. We're a land of opportunity, with a strong, prosperous and democratic society that has been shaped by the hard work of generations of immigrants.

Ontario has over 12 million people. Our population consists of people from 200 countries, speaking as many as 130 languages. Think about it: Close to 200,000 immigrants a year from all across the world continue to choose Canada as the destination for a new home. That's what my parents did decades ago.

Of the more than 1.5 million people who immigrated to Canada and became permanent residents during the last six years, over a third of them immigrated to Ontario. Ontario is the clear, number one destination for immigrants coming to Canada. People are drawn here by an exceptional high quality of life, and by our global reputation as an open, peaceful and caring society that welcomes newcomers and cherishes diversity.

Recognizing June 27 as Canadian Multiculturalism Day in Ontario will give us the opportunity to celebrate our diversity and acknowledge our commitment to democracy, equality, justice and mutual respect. It will give Ontarians a chance to better understand and appreciate the contributions of the various multicultural communities throughout our province and country.

Our multiculturalism is important. It's important because it helps to combat ignorance. It's important because it encourages an open dialogue between different cultures. And it's important because it helps to bridge the gap between different ideas, different values and different beliefs.

Ontario consists of various cultural, racial and ethnic groups. Our multiculturalism helps to foster the idea that every person can make significant contributions to our society because of, rather than in spite of, their differences. We can learn from one another, but first we must

have a level of understanding about each other to facilitate collaboration and co-operation. Celebrating our differences and promoting learning about other cultures helps us all to understand other perspectives within the world in which we live. It makes our province and our country a better place, a more interesting place to live in, because when we have people from diverse cultures contributing language skills, new ways of thinking, new knowledge and different experiences, we are all made stronger.

1610

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to speak in support of this proposed motion officially recognizing June 27 as Canadian Multiculturalism Day. I want to congratulate the member from Trinity–Spadina for moving forward such a thoughtful motion.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. Point of order, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I know it's not the norm, but I have to introduce today, in the public gallery, from Cobden public school, students, teachers and parents visiting Toronto and all that it has to offer on a beautiful day. Thank you for joining us at the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I welcome our guests, but I remind the member that that's not a point of order.

Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to stand up in this House this afternoon and speak on this motion. I want to sincerely thank the member—the fabulous, great member—from Trinity–Spadina for putting forward this important initiative.

Multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and of our society here in Ontario. People of all backgrounds have made and continue to make valuable contributions to Ontario. I think it is absolutely appropriate and necessary to dedicate a day to celebrate and recognize the social and economic contributions that immigrants have made and continue to make to our province on a daily basis. It's important that we have a day in which we can celebrate and recognize our diversity. What better day than June 27, as being proposed by the member from Trinity–Spadina?

As an immigrant myself, I understand personally the importance of Ontario's diversity. Speaker, looking around this House here today, I see many members who, like myself, are children of immigrants or immigrants themselves. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge the deep and enduring contributions newcomers have made to the quality of life we enjoy today.

My family arrived in Toronto from Portugal in 1970 and settled in the riding of Davenport. I quickly started kindergarten and began the process of adaptation. Most newcomers will tell you that it's easier for children to adapt. My father attended English-as-a-second-language classes at George Brown College, and thank goodness

they were available—and, 45 years later, we're still providing ESL classes to newcomers in this province. But I'm grateful to my parents for giving me the opportunity to grow up in Canada and to be here today in this House. I'm so proud to represent Davenport, the community that embraced and welcomed my family when we first came to Canada and one of the most diverse ridings in the entire country.

So many fantastic communities call Davenport home and truly make it one of the most vibrant areas in the city of Toronto. Little Portugal comes to mind, and I share that with the member from Trinity–Spadina, as does Corso Italia on St. Clair. As well, the Vietnamese community is very active in Davenport around College Street, and they are represented by the fantastic Vietnamese Association of Toronto, which I've had the pleasure of working with. Of course, there's the Hispanic–Canadian community quite prominent across Davenport, specifically along St. Clair. As many of you know, I had the honour of passing my first bill, Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month.

Thanks to the support from all parties in the Legislature, our province will now recognize the important social, political, economic and multicultural contributions that Hispanic Canadians have made to Ontario. I encourage all members of this House to reach out to the Spanish-speaking communities in each of your ridings for the month of October.

The importance of Hispanic Heritage Month clearly demonstrates the importance of passing this motion and celebrating Canada's multiculturalism. I'd like to thank the member once again for putting forward this motion, and I encourage all members to support this important private member's bill that is being put forward today to celebrate the first Multiculturalism Day in Ontario.

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

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: With your permission and indulgence, Speaker, and with pre-consultation with Hansard, I'd like to offer you a multicultural greeting to not only the citizens and residents of Etobicoke North but broadly to the province of Ontario.

Remarks in foreign languages.

Those, Speaker, just for your information—technically, I'm not in fact done, but I will leave it at that. But having said that, I accept the hard-won praise from my colleagues who are sitting next to me.

For your information, those were in the languages of Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil, French or français, Italiano, Portuguese, Spanish, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Filipino or Telugu and Mandarin, as well as Tibetan.

I offer those greetings from the floor of this Legislature in the spirit not only of my honourable colleague from Trinity–Spadina and the bill that he's proposed, but to celebrate, to recognize, to reaffirm, to promulgate, proselytize—if we have to—the issue of multiculturalism, of pluralism, of celebration—not merely toleration—of diversity.

I would also, Speaker, with your permission, like to commend the Prime Minister of Canada, the Honourable Stephen Harper, for also recognizing the value of multiculturalism, at least when it is time for elections. Having said that, his heart, or at least his electoral sense, is in the right place. I would encourage him and his colleagues and followers to perhaps think of individuals from the diverse cultures that we have in between the election cycles and not merely at the election cycles.

I can tell you, for example—and I stay this with some form, I guess, of regret—that what is being practised at the federal level is akin to what's called “dog whistle politics,” which, of course, have been perfected and made into a fine dark art in the United States of America. There are coded signals given, which perhaps try to foster, inculcate and invigorate the darker side of our natures. For example, we don't have to go too far out of the province of Ontario; we can go to the province of Quebec. Thankfully, the government that was voted out—booted out, I should say—with their, as I believe it was called, Quebec charter of rights or whatever the actual terminology was.

They were at the stage where they specified, in kind of cartoon, diagrammatic form, the types of dress—and therefore implying the types of people who are not welcome in the country of Canada and in the public institutions of Quebec. That's called dog whistle politics. Actually, “dog whistle politics” is a little subtle; that was probably overt. I'm very happy to report that we live in a country where, essentially, that was not only rejected out of hand, but that government was booted out.

We need, whether it's simple humanity, simply realizing that it's the year 2015, or whether it's on the economic arguments that my colleagues have said, or whether it's a historical commemoration of the act of multiculturalism which was brought in by Trudeau I, once upon a time, in 1971, as I understand it—all of these reasons, because we are a pluralist, global society.

I would commend, for example, the pluralist achievements and aspirations of His Highness the Aga Khan, whose centre we, along with the Premier and many of my colleagues, just inaugurated a part of; or, for example, Ratna Omidvar of Ryerson and the Global Diversity Exchange and the extraordinary work she's doing to help bring these types of issues, as I say, as a celebration of humankind, and not merely as an electoral wedge strategy.

Merci beaucoup pour votre attention, monsieur le Président.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Not to be outdone by my colleague, the member for Etobicoke North, I think it's also very fitting to greet the various communities that make up the wonderful fabric of our Ontario society.

I would like to begin with:

Remarks in foreign languages.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And what my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane said.

I have to say—I want to make sure it's very clear—that I support the initiative and the private member's bill from the member for Trinity–Spadina. I want to salute you and thank you for bringing it forward.

1620

I think it's absolutely important that we celebrate diversity. It's an important concept, because nature created differences; humans added value to that. It's very important that we say that every unique element that we all exhibit is beautiful and wonderful. All of our diversity makes our society more rich, and it is something that we need to celebrate. In fact, celebrating our uniqueness when it comes to our culture, our language and our spiritual beliefs gives individuals more self-worth and self-confidence. It's something that we need to celebrate; it's very important.

As a society, though, I ask us to start thinking about the way we view multiculturalism. We often think about Canada as a place that is welcoming of other cultures, but instead of thinking of Canada as a place that welcomes other cultures, let's turn that definition somewhat and think of Canada, by definition, as a place that is diverse. It is a place that should be inclusive and accepting of diversity—not that it welcomes other cultures but that it is, in fact, a place that is made up of different cultures. That is its inherent fabric.

In that light, we would move from an initial position where we were talking about the idea of tolerance and tolerating different religions and different cultures and values. “Tolerance” was a term that was used at one point when speaking of different cultures and ethnicities, but we need to move beyond that and into the language of acceptance and inclusivity. That's where we need to move, as a society, and I hope that we will use this as a platform to build on that concept of inclusion.

It's so important that we recognize the importance of inclusion and accepting our diversity and celebrating that diversity, because we all know far too well that racism is alive and well in Canada and, in fact, in Ontario and across the world. To counter some of the negativity that we see that actually seeks to divide us, based on our unique differences and our diversity, we need to send a clear message that we do not accept that approach.

In fact, the fact that we have practices like carding and racial profiling, where people are meant to feel—or made to feel—unwelcome, unwanted, in their own communities and this society—we need to counter that message by putting forward a message of inclusion and acceptance, and I hope that this bill will do exactly that. By celebrating our multiculturalism, we will send a message that as much as we hear and see these signs of divisiveness and these messages that seek to make people feel excluded, unwelcome and not wanted, we actually denounce that and instead want to accept people for their uniqueness.

I want to also acknowledge the fact that all of us in Canada are immigrants. Everyone in Canada, except for those who call this land their traditional land—and I have to acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the

Mississaugas of New Credit. Besides the aboriginals, the First Nations, everyone came to Canada. It's just a matter of when we came.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask everyone in the chamber to join me in welcoming a former member of this Legislature in Ontario's 30th Parliament, Ms. Judy Marsales from Hamilton West.

I now return to the member for Trinity–Spadina. You have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to thank the members from Thornhill, London West, Halton, Davenport, Etobicoke North and Bramalea–Gore–Malton for their wonderful comments on this motion, especially the member from London West. I was listening carefully to her comments—her support for the bridge training program and her concerns about internationally trained professionals. These are key issues that must be addressed. I know the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has worked long and hard to protect and enhance these programs because they're cost-effective for the government. We need the federal government to come to the table and give us more funding—not cut it—to support these wonderful programs.

To the member from Etobicoke North: always colourful comments. I couldn't agree more about not just to be friendly or to be supportive to multiculturalism during election times, but to make sure in between that all policy has that embedded. Also, I completely agree with the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton: The notion of acceptance should be the social norm of this country, as we are all immigrants—we came here from somewhere—except the aboriginal community.

I always believe that to embrace multiculturalism is like paddling upstream: We cannot allow any slack. We have to paddle hard and move forward and make sure that multiculturalism is the new norm of this country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 55, standing in the name of Mr. Dhillon.

Mr. Dhillon has moved private members' notice of motion number 50.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

EMPOWERING HOME CARE PATIENTS ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 DONNANT PLUS DE POUVOIR AUX PERSONNES RECEVANT DES SOINS À DOMICILE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mrs. Gretzky has moved second reading of Bill 92, An Act to

amend the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994 with respect to complaints and appeals.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Social policy, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member requests that the bill be referred to the social policy committee. Agreed? Agreed.

MULTICULTURALISM

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Dong has moved private members' notice of motion number 49.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, you'll see in the Speaker's gallery that we have a visit from Ron Hansen, who was a member here from 1990 to 1995. He's accompanied by his nurse, Jasmin Khan, who is here volunteering in order to assist him as he is here today sharing in the Association of Former Parliamentarians meeting. Let's welcome our friend Ron Hansen and Jasmin.

Applause.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, he was here so long ago that Todd used to be clerking in his committee when he was a committee Chair.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you, and welcome.

Orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING THE SCHOOL YEAR ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ANNÉE SCOLAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 26, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre les conseils scolaires de district Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board et Peel District

School Board et la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 27, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

On May 26, 2015, Mr. Flynn moved second reading of Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1629 to 1634.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would all members please take their seats?

Mr. Flynn has moved second reading of Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Kwintar, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Martow, Gila	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	McGarry, Kathryn	Wilson, Jim
Dong, Han	McMahon, Eleanor	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McMeekin, Ted	Yakabuski, John
Fedeli, Victor	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yurek, Jeff
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Zimmer, David

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Forster, Cindy	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
French, Jennifer K.	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 63; the nays are 18.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

PROTECTING THE SCHOOL YEAR ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L'ANNÉE SCOLAIRE

Mr. Flynn moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre les conseils scolaires de district Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board et Peel District School Board et la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 27, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Flynn has moved third reading of Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1639 to 1640.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Flynn has moved third reading of Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Anderson, Granville	Harris, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Pettapiece, Randy
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Kwintar, Monte	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Damerla, Dipika	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo

Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John

McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia

Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bisson, Gilles
DiNovo, Cheri
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Mantha, Michael
Miller, Paul

Natyshak, Taras
Sattler, Peggy
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 64; the nays are 18.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried. Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT (MAKING
ONTARIO'S ROADS SAFER), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LE TRANSPORT (ACCROÎTRE LA
SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN ONTARIO)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 20, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2012 sur l'autoroute 407 Est et le Code de la route en ce qui concerne diverses questions et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi sur les infractions provinciales.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The last time this bill was debated, the member for Oshawa had the floor. No?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oshawa?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Windsor West. Sorry. My apologies. The member for Windsor West had the floor.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. There's some confusion over here. Speaker, I had the opportunity—

Mr. Michael Harris: That's two days in a row.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Well, there's confusion over there every day; I'm just saying.

I had the opportunity to speak to the bill before us on April 20, 2015; unfortunately, I ran out of time before I could finish my remarks. I am pleased to have the opportunity to once again rise in the chamber on behalf

of the people in my riding of Windsor West and finish my remarks from April 20.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): There are many members carrying on conversations all over, and I can't hear the debate. Would you take the conversations outside?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I still have two ministers talking in the middle of the room.

To the member for Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you again, Speaker. Today I'm here again to speak to Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. I had the opportunity to speak to this bill at second reading and my understanding is the bill hasn't changed much since then. Despite several excellent amendments put forward by New Democrats that would have helped strengthen this bill, the bill hasn't changed. Sadly, the Liberals voted against every single amendment put forward by the NDP at committee—every single one.

One of our main concerns is that this bill empowers the government to outsource motor vehicle inspection centres to an unspecified third party that would be exempt from the oversight of the Auditor General and the Ombudsman. A number of my colleagues compared this to the creation of Drive Clean on steroids. It appears to be a fairly accurate depiction. This delegated authority is unaccountable and could have the capacity to dictate to drivers how often they must bring their vehicles in for inspection and what they need to do to pass inspection. I don't think it's unreasonable to ask that this government clarify the vague provisions that allow for this outsourcing.

That is precisely why New Democrats tabled amendments at committee that would improve transparency around this issue. We asked for some accountability mechanisms, be it the Auditor General or the Ombudsman. The Liberals voted this down, although, given the Liberal track record on accountability, I can't say that this was surprising.

We believe that the Director of Vehicle Inspection Standards must be an officer of the ministry, a public servant. For instance, we suggested an amendment that would ensure this. Once again, the Liberals voted this down. Currently, under this legislation, the director could be anyone, including someone chosen by special interests such as insurance companies. In fact, it could even be another Liberal patronage appointment, which so many Ontarians are growing tired of.

An additional amendment that the New Democrats tabled would require motorists to stop at an unsignalled crosswalk if there was a pedestrian waiting to cross. Many in Ontario would be shocked to learn that this isn't already a law. As I understand it, once you step off the sidewalk and onto a crosswalk, motorists have to stop for you and allow you to cross. This is obvious, but not always the practice, unfortunately. What we would like is for this level of protection to be extended to pedestrians waiting at crosswalks.

You will soon see a theme has formed in my speech today, Speaker. The NDP proposed an amendment that would match the law with people's expectations or perceptions of the law. How could you possibly know when it is appropriate to step off the sidewalk and onto a crosswalk if there is nothing prompting you? Are children able to measure traffic effectively and know when it's safe to enter a crosswalk? Wouldn't a requirement that all motorists stop at a crosswalk where a pedestrian is waiting greatly improve public safety?

New Democrats also sought to increase the maximum fine for hitting a pedestrian when they are in a crosswalk. Currently, the fine is \$500, even for—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. If I could ask everybody in the back gallery to take your conversations outside.

Continue.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: New Democrats also sought to increase the maximum fine for hitting a pedestrian when they are in a crosswalk. Currently, the fine is \$500, even in instances where the pedestrian is killed. We proposed that the maximum fine be increased to \$1,000, just as the maximum fine for distracted driving is being increased. The Liberals voted against this.

As I'm speaking on a bill entitled the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, I'm reminded that my colleague the member from Essex put forward a motion calling for the widening of Highway 3. He tabled this motion to call on the government to honour a commitment it made in 2006 to widen this highway, running from Windsor to Leamington. Right now, this highway is about two thirds complete. The rest of Highway 3, many people in our area know, is the Bruce Crozier Way. It's a single lane in each direction. If we are talking about safety today, how is this safe? The widening of this highway was something residents of the area have pushed for since 1993, much of the advocacy being done by Bruce Crozier himself. Along with the safety implications, moving forward with this project has many economic benefits. The Leamington-Kingsville area is known for its agriculture, and widening this highway is essential to allow these businesses to grow and access the American market. However, the Liberals failed to support the important motion tabled by my colleague from Essex.

1650

Speaker, I'd like to turn to some of the bicycle safety provisions of this bill. I think it's timely to have a discussion on bicycle safety as so many of us have already started cycling this year. In fact, this month, Windsor residents took part in yet another Tweed Ride. For those of you who are not familiar with this event, it's one part a cycling event and one part a fashion statement, as cyclists ride wearing—you guessed it—their finest tweed fashions. It's something to see. If you've never done something like this before, I invite you to join us next year. This year's event had almost 350 participants, setting a new record. I spoke about the Tweed Ride when this bill was being debated at second reading, and I think

it's very fitting that I had a chance to mention it today, after the event took place.

I talked at length, at second reading, about crosswalks. I think it's very important that we look at the safety of crosswalks. We're encouraging young children to participate in physical activity, and they use crosswalks to get over to the school, to play in the playground, or to one of our parks. They often don't know how to gauge how fast a car is going, how far away it is and how safe it's going to be, how much time they have to make it across the road. I believe that including the amendment that we wanted, which was to make it so that drivers have to stop at a crosswalk, regardless of whether there's a light flashing—if there's someone standing on the sidewalk waiting to cross, the drivers should have to stop and let the person cross. We're putting children at risk, especially young children. They don't have the ability—sometimes, I'll admit, especially in this big city, I have a hard time gauging how much time I still have left to get across the street.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Say it isn't so.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is. This is a big city. I come from a little city, your city.

Sometimes it's difficult to gauge the distance across the road and how quickly the light is going to change before you can get across safely. So we need to make sure that children have a mechanism where they know, when they're at a crosswalk, that any car coming is going to stop and wait and let them cross.

I also spoke to the outsourcing. As you know, New Democrats are never in favour of P3s. We're never in favour of removing accountability. We believe that there should be mechanisms in place to make sure that those who are providing services are not only providing the services that we have asked them to provide but that they're doing it in a safe manner; that there are checks and balances in place to make sure that they're doing it in a safe manner; that our safety is not at risk; that they're doing the job well; that they're not just doing the job.

I don't have a lot of time left, so I'm going to go back to talking about the Tweed Ride. As the member from Windsor–Tecumseh can attest to, the majority of it takes place in his riding, and they move into my riding, because our ridings are so closely joined. It's quite the spectacle to see how seriously people take cycling in our city. We have a beautiful waterfront with lots of trails. In the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's riding, they have the Ganatchio Trail, which is a beautiful trail. You can bike, you can rollerblade, you can walk the trail and the waterfront, which extends right from the Windsor–Tecumseh riding right into Windsor West. They're beautiful biking trails, and we need to make sure that people using these trails or cycling on our roadways are safe.

At second reading, I had spoken at length about penalties for cyclists and had spoken about the increase in penalties for cyclists that they were looking at implementing, that they are often harsher than what someone driving a car would be exposed to. We need to make sure that those who choose to ride bikes—I mean, we would rather people on bikes than in cars. So if we're going to

encourage people to ride bikes, we need to make sure that there are safe places for them to ride and that the fines aren't prohibitive, that the rules aren't too prohibitive.

We'd love to have something in Windsor like you have here in Toronto, where there's designated bike lanes with a curb, but we don't have them. We don't have the infrastructure—the roads—to allow that, so we need to make sure that the people who have to ride bikes on the road are safe when they do so, and that every tool is in place to make sure that nobody gets hurt.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It is, as I'm fond of saying, a great honour for me to have the chance to stand in my place here this afternoon in this chamber to speak to Bill 31. Of course, this is the first piece of legislation that I've had the opportunity to introduce as a minister.

Applause.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much to the member from Windsor, who is providing applause at this particular moment, as is the current Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. And as great as the member from Windsor who was clapping a second ago is, I mention the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change specifically because part of Bill 31 was, of course, originally introduced in this Legislature during our last session, before the last provincial election. Especially listening to the other member from the Windsor area who just spoke a moment ago, listening to her talk about the importance, for example, of enhancing safety for those who choose to use additional forms of active transportation, like cycling, it was, in fact, the current Minister of the Environment and Climate Change who showed the leadership and who had that ambitious and energetic sense that it was important to move forward with a previous bill. He deserves applause and he deserves the congrats and the kudos for showing that leadership at that point in time and introducing that previous bill.

Of course, he has been a very strong supporter of seeing us reintroduce Bill 31, which included components of his previous legislation and previous legislation that another former Minister of Transportation, who is currently serving as our Minister of Energy, had introduced around the collection of outstanding Provincial Offences Act fines.

We're winding down the last number of days that we have before we're scheduled to recess for the summer. I would say to all of those who have spoken eloquently from all three caucuses in this Legislature on this bill since it was first introduced that it is extremely important for us to work together to pass this legislation before we recess for the summer, for all of the reasons that you—all of us—have articulated with respect to this legislation since the day it was introduced. So let's work together, let's make it happen and then we can all celebrate.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, a couple of things that I want to say in regards to this bill, two things: Side-

by-sides is the first one. There's a section in this bill that deals with side-by-sides. I don't think, unfortunately, it deals with it in the way that we would like. I know that my good friends Mr. Vanthof and Mr. Miller have both introduced bills in order to be able to deal with this issue of side-by-sides. I'm looking forward to—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's not a legislative change.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No. Let me finish my speech and you'll understand what I'm saying, Speaker. I'm actually trying to be nice to you, Minister of Transportation, because Ernesaks used to work in my office and she told me I had to be nice to you. So just listen up here a second.

I was just saying that the minister has indicated that he's prepared to do that by regulation; that's why it's not in the bill. I look forward to this particular issue actually being resolved by way of regulation, because this particular issue is big—not only in northern Ontario but in different parts of the province.

The other thing I want to just say very quickly is the whole issue around the Connecting Links program. The government has announced that there is \$15 million in order to assist with Connecting Links. I would say that is really a drop in the bucket to what we need. The two worst roads in Ontario have been voted in the city of Timmins alone and are both the same road. One is Algonquin Boulevard, which is a part of Highway 101 that runs through Timmins itself, and the other part is Riverside Drive, which is the other part of Highway 101, which runs in what we used to call Mountjoy, which is also part of Timmins but the old Mountjoy township. So we now have the two worst roads in Ontario, a four-lane highway that's probably in about as good a situation as a road to Kakatash. And if you've not been on the road to Kakatash, it's a gravel road that is from somewhere else; it's from Plan 9 from Outer Space.

I'm just saying to the minister across the way, we need to do something better when it comes to Connecting Links, because municipalities can't afford to pay the kind of money that they've got to pay when it comes to maintaining what is essentially a provincial highway.

1700

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It gives me great pleasure this afternoon yet again to add my voice in support of Bill 31. The safety aspects of this particular bill have been supported on all sides of this House, and I've been delighted to be part of the discussion on numerous occasions and through committee as well.

I need to applaud all those who have spoken in favour of Bill 31, including those who came forward and wrote in submissions for our public consultation part of the bill.

Interestingly, the thing I've heard most about has been distracted driving, looking at the danger that's posing on our roads, looking at strengthening that portion of the bill to ensure that people really do get the message that you need to be fully on when you're in a vehicle. Once this bill is passed, we are going to be looking at three demerit points to really discourage people from distracted driving.

But other parts of the bill: The sanctions that are strengthening our cycling safety are excellent, the one-metre passing rule, making sure that our cyclists are safe on the road. Also looking at pedestrians on our road—we know that one in five traffic fatalities are pedestrians. I really support the sanctions throughout this bill that are dealing with that.

I know the municipalities are looking forward to the passing of this bill to make sure that outstanding fines have to be paid so the municipalities have more money in their system to be able to add to the infrastructure that they need in their communities.

I'm hoping the rest of this afternoon is devoted to ensuring speedy passage of this bill. We have all been looking forward to making sure that the roads in Ontario remain at number one or number two in safety in North America.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention a few things about York region, which is where the riding of Thornhill is. People are very concerned, as the Minister of Transportation is well aware, about not just maintaining infrastructure but doing infrastructure that will make it easier for cars, make it easier for transit users and make it easier for bicycle riders as well as pedestrians.

People are very concerned about the hundreds of millions of dollars—the final price that I know of right now is \$640 million—to build bus lanes in York region. They're not seeing people taking the bus more because of the bus lanes. In fact, people are very frustrated: They see the traffic getting worse, and they feel that the government is too focused on making things more difficult for commuters to get around in York region. People are very concerned that the Spadina subway expansion to York region has been delayed again, and the price tag keeps climbing. They're worried about the valuable tax dollars going to the right projects. They want to have input, and they want to feel that somebody is listening to their concerns.

We're all very well aware that the Pan Am Games are coming this summer. I think that people in the GTA and Hamilton regions are very concerned about the traffic and the transit issues that are going to result during the Pan Am Games. Just this morning around Queen's Park, near the University of Toronto, there was quite a bit of congestion. I'm just thinking to myself, looking over at the University of Toronto, where part of the games will be taking place, and wondering how we're going to manage in terms of transit, traffic and even the cyclists. Are we going to have adequate places for all the bicycles to be locked up? I haven't seen that, but I really hope that's the case.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for Windsor West. You have two minutes for a reply.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: A topic that I recently read about in the Windsor media—just yesterday, it was reported that we actually had undercover police standing at the side of the road. They have safety vests on, so they just

look like your average person who is waiting for someone to pick them up to carpool to work, or they look like a city worker outside cutting the grass or whatever they might be doing. They were standing at the side of the road and they were targeting people who were on their phones while driving. Well, some may have an issue with it. I think, actually, the Windsor police are—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Good idea.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes, I thought it was a great idea. Apparently, they actually nabbed quite a few people doing it.

Often people don't realize how serious it is. That one split second when you take your eyes off the road to bring up someone on your contact list to hit "talk" and put it on speaker—they don't realize how dangerous that is, that you've taken your eyes off the road just for those couple of split seconds.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You should try that when you're flying a plane.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Oh, that wouldn't be very good if you were flying a plane, unless you have autopilot.

I think this is a really good initiative by the Windsor police, but I think it's unfortunate that it's come to that, that we have to take their valuable resources, the already-stretched resources of our police force, for them to have to stand at the side of the road and try to nab people at red lights or stop signs who were on their phone. I think people need to take that topic more seriously.

Another topic that wasn't directly in this bill but is related to crosswalks is crossing guards. When you have schools and there are crosswalks and busy streets—my children used to have to cross a busy street—people don't often value the crossing guard who's there. The crossing guard is in the middle of the street, trying to cross our children, and people are turning the corner and almost hitting the crossing guard. I think that's another great topic that ties into this road safety.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm pleased to be standing up and talking to this bill for an hour on a Thursday afternoon. Everybody's pretty excited to listen, and that's good on an important bill. I want to thank you for allowing me to rise in the House and speak on Bill 31, Making Ontario's Roads Safer.

As many of you know, over the last few weeks, I've been speaking time and time again on the importance of keeping our roads safe, so I'm happy to speak for an hour on this bill.

Myself and my fellow members in front of me—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: And beside you.

Mr. Wayne Gates: —and beside me have been working very hard on this bill to make meaningful changes to the safety procedures on our roads here in Ontario.

As many of you can see, this bill is quite large and it contains a number of changes to our road systems here in Ontario. So we need to make sure we discuss this properly and give it the time it deserves.

Over the next hour, I'm going to touch on various things changed by this bill, various amendments proposed to this bill and various comments made to this bill.

As we are now in third reading, this bill has passed through numerous debates in this House and committee. So, today, we're going to have some of those final comments on this piece of legislation before it becomes law.

Throughout the course of my entire speech, I'm going to focus on one thing, and that's road safety. When I say "road safety," I mean more than just a nice title that was given to Bill 31. I'm going to talk about policies and changes that actually make our roads safer, and policies that currently don't exist. I'm going to talk about what's in this bill that actually promotes road safety and what's seriously needed to be considered to make our roads safer. I'm also going to touch on numerous policies in this bill that have very little to do with road safety and a lot to do with trying to ram through laws.

1710

Mr. Speaker, as everyone in this House saw a few weeks ago, the Auditor General proved that the safety Ontarians had come to expect on their highways during the winter months has not been there the past five years. When we hear things like that coming from such respected sources, we need to stop and take a look at what's going on in this province, and not just in the winter months.

We need to work together. I'll repeat that again, because I know everybody on the other side is very interested in this: We need to work together and to legislate where we must to keep people safe. Let me say this one more time, and I'm sure I'll end up saying it again: Safety must be a priority. That's our responsibility as elected members of this Legislature. If there's one thing under our control that is unsafe, we have an obligation to fix it. I hope we can keep the Auditor General's report in mind when we're discussing Bill 31, because it proves that these words have real consequences.

When I look at this bill, as I mentioned when I spoke on it before, there's quite a lot in here that we can get behind and support, and we're happy to help move it forward. When it comes to laws that will actually protect the people of this province when they're driving to work or driving home, New Democrats will be supportive.

It's no surprise that this is a bill that combines a number of laws and amends a number of laws. It's going to get passed in one bill instead of several bills. I think this is important to hear: We're talking about changes to buses, trucks, bicycles, ATVs and the 407, among other things, all in one bill. So naturally, there are some things in here we're quite supportive of. Some things we disagree with, but overall, some language desperately needed changes—language that wasn't changed at all during the committee process.

Let me start with something I believe most people in this House agree on, which is our mission to eliminate distracted driving on our roads. I know a lot of us in here use our BlackBerrys quite often, but cellphone use while driving is something that has come up quite a bit lately

and tends to affect the younger generation. Frankly, 25 years ago, we had no idea this would be a concern. Had you come up to most of us in 1995 and said that people using their phones while driving is going to be one of the biggest safety concerns in the province, we would have looked at you like you had two heads. Today it's a concern, and it's a concern in a big way.

I know that in every round of debates on this bill, we've gone over the stats time and time again. I know you're all familiar with them. We all know that the OPP has said a number of times that distracted driving is the number one—think about this. I know you're all interested in this, but think about this. I think this is key. The OPP has said that distracted driving is the number one killer on our roads, but I think if you asked the people in the province of Ontario what it was, they would probably say drinking and driving, if I'm guessing.

These are the kind of stats that people of this province also need to be familiar with. It's terrifying to hear. It's hard to think that if you just quickly check a message while driving, you're one of the people creating a distracted driving situation, but that sort of casual use is where the danger comes from. When we hear things that state 30% to 50% of accidents on our roads come from distracted driving, we have to take note, especially when you think about who is most likely to be using the cellphone while they're driving: the young people of this province.

For some people, just telling them these stats unfortunately isn't enough. The urge to check a phone call or to check a text when you're on a straightaway is sometimes too great. When we have thousands of young people doing this, we know they're in danger. I can definitely support moving to eliminate this from our roads. In fact, as I understand it, Ontario is one of only three provinces in the country—one of three in the country—which doesn't have demerit points for distracted driving. It's clear that other districts have been more proactive when it comes to eliminating distracted driving. I don't believe Ontario should fall behind.

Mr. Speaker, I've said this before, as well: This needs to work in partnership with an education program. We can't just jack up fines and assume people will stop doing it. There are kids out there driving on back roads or in areas where police just can't patrol. Maybe they're not getting the fines, but they're still texting. If they know how dangerous it is, how much they're putting their own lives at risk, then maybe we can start to truly eliminate this from our roads.

I like these movements to eliminate distracted driving, but I hope this isn't where the buck ends. As quickly as cellphone technology began to be part of everybody's lives, we need to move twice as quick to keep people safe in this province. So let's do this, but keep in mind that the technology is still changing, still evolving, and that we need to keep pace with it.

I always like to bring up the case of seat belts. Mr. Speaker, you remember seat belts, right? I'm sure some of the people would remember. I know Mr. Bradley

would, for sure. When they were first introduced, no one ever wore them, probably including myself. It didn't feel like a responsibility. Now, if you watch any younger person getting into a car, the first thing they do is buckle up, including my three children. It's second nature. Of course, this has come with technology that allows your car to sense if you're not wearing your seat belt, where you get the little light that says, "Buckle up your seat belt." But I believe that is a product of great education campaigns that came with the seat belts. It was simple: "Seatbelts save lives." Three words, and we were able to educate a generation and actually save lives.

1720

The same sort of thing needs to occur when it comes to our cellphones. Right now, people know they shouldn't text while they drive, but they do it anyways. Our goal here should be to create an Ontario where people get into their cars and feel the same obligation to turn off their phone as they do to put on their seat belts. There are some people who say this may never happen, but really, this happened quite quickly with seat belts. It saved lives and, in my opinion, absolutely needs to be part of our campaign to end distracted driving.

Of course, I'm not opposed to these increased penalties. We need to make sure distracted driving is taken seriously. I'm just saying that we can't impose these fines and assume the problem will take care of itself or that we're done with it. As the technology continues to evolve, the laws of this province need to evolve with it to make sure they properly address the threat.

In this House, we've always encouraged each party to work together, to do what they can to make this province one of the safest places to live in the world. This is a government that has said it wants to work with the people of this province. When this bill was in committee, it was still being handled by my friend the member from Algoma-Manitoulin who I know is passionate about road safety, as well as the PC critic for transportation. Yet as they sat through the days of the clause-by-clause, they saw time and time again their amendments continually getting voted down. In fact, if you read the record, you can see that this government voted down amendments of substance that came from the members opposite. And they weren't political amendments, Mr. Speaker; most of the time, they were there to clear up language or to help actually improve road safety.

What's even worse is that this government used its majority to rule a number of amendments out of order. Again, I'd like to commend the PC critic, who even pointed this out during committee. Just because your government may not agree with amendments doesn't mean they're not at least worth talking about.

This legislation will affect people's lives. It will govern how safe our roads are. When it comes to something so important, there shouldn't be anything that is deemed not worthy to even talk about. I hope that in the future, this government takes this advice and lets these amendments at least be debated on the record so that the people of this province can know exactly where their elected representatives stand.

I'd like to just highlight a few of the amendments that were rejected by the government while this bill was in committee. Reading through them, you will see that they are common-sense amendments—common sense.

For example, in this province if a pedestrian is standing next to a crosswalk but hasn't entered the street yet, then the cars don't technically need to stop. So just to clarify: If a pedestrian walks into the road, then the car is legally obligated to stop; yet if a pedestrian is waiting patiently on the side of the crosswalk, then the vehicle technically does not need to stop. How can you not at least take a look at that? If you were to go around the province and ask people if they feel they need to stop for a pedestrian waiting to cross, they would all say yes. Well, unfortunately, that's not actually the case when it comes to the law.

So we offered an amendment to just clear up the law, just to make sure that people were abiding by the law and to make sure that it was clearly written. Well, of course, that amendment was voted down, and I'm still not entirely sure why.

Is there opposition to stopping at a crosswalks? I can't figure it out, but that amendment, like the rest, was voted down. Like I mentioned earlier, it was just common sense and what we were trying to do, quite frankly, was to make the bill stronger. I believe that's our role. I don't think anyone in this would have tried to slow the bill down because it includes a line that protects people waiting to cross the street.

This bill talks about road safety, which is just as important for people using motor vehicles as it is for people on bicycles. We wanted to tighten up the language around the one-metre passing rule for cyclists. Let me say that I'm happy that was included, but we wished that it was stronger so it could be even more effective. When we saw that included, we got together and figured out what the best language—now, think about this—would be to fully protect our cyclists on our roads. We have lots of cyclists right across the province of Ontario, but particularly in Toronto and particularly around Queen's Park. This isn't something that should come as a surprise to anyone.

All across the province, people are turning to bicycles. It's incredible. They're better for the environment, they're healthy and they're more cost-effective. Come down to my riding in the summer; I'm inviting all my fellow Liberals and PCs who are here. You can see people travelling up and down the Niagara Parkway. What happens is that folks use public transit because they can bring their bikes on the GO train, and they come down to the parkway.

You'll like this, Mr. Speaker. I know it's late in the day. It's been an interesting day, but you're going to like this. The parkway is a beautiful drive. On one end you have Fort George in Niagara-on-the-Lake and on the other you have historic Fort Erie in the town of Fort Erie. Both are open to the public and are incredible heritage sites that showcase the history of the region.

Think about this: In between that bike ride, there are dozens of attractions. You can park your bike and explore the gorge. It's absolutely incredible.

How many have been to the Floral Clock before? Anybody here?

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes, Mr. Bradley right here. It's absolutely gorgeous.

You can go to Queenston Heights. How many have been to Queenston Heights? That's what you can do. You can ride your bike. It's incredible.

On your way up the Niagara Parkway on your bike, you can even stop in Chippawa—I'm sure that a few people have been to Chippawa—and have a coffee with my great friend Don Ede. He's really the unofficial mayor of Chippawa, and I promise you that he's great company.

The parkway itself has been perfectly preserved. It's absolutely beautiful, and you can do the entire thing on your bike from one end to the other. It's a great option for recreational biking and a great way to stay healthy. We should be encouraging people like that, people who want to make healthy choices, environmentally conscious choices.

How do we encourage them? Well, we make 100% sure it's as safe as it can possibly be. That's what New Democrats wanted to do. We wanted to make sure that the one-metre rule had strict language. Again, I'm going to talk about language. Right now it just says that vehicles must use a one-metre passing rule—I'll quote what it says, and I know my good friend from St. Catharines will understand this—"as may be practicable." Those are soft words when it comes to contractual language. In bargaining, we call them weasel words. I don't know if I can say that here, but I'm going to say it anyway. They're soft words. What we're saying is, we should be putting in words that are going to make sure we protect the lives of those who choose to ride their bikes. I don't believe that should be an issue of convenience. So we tried to just tighten up the language and make sure cyclists were safe. I don't think anybody in here wouldn't want that. But we couldn't get the amendment done. That amendment was voted down by this government as well. Perhaps one day they will explain to cyclists why they felt that tougher language wasn't necessary.

1730

Mr. Speaker, let me talk about yet another amendment. The Ontario coroner said time and time again that mandatory side guards for trucks would save the lives of cyclists and pedestrians and ensure their safety. These reports were in 2010, 2012 and 2013, calling for side guards. This is an office that can offer some expertise to help strengthen the bill, to really make sure it does everything it can to make Ontario roads safer. The government can say, "Hey, look, we consulted with the office. They added this rule in there because they can prove it increases safety." This isn't something revolutionary here in Ontario. These mandatory truck side

guards are already in place in Europe, where they do a lot of cycling, and in Japan. Along the lines of the reports and the examples set elsewhere in the world, we introduced what I thought was fair and reasonable, that would be easy for all parties to agree to: an amendment for mandatory guards. What happened? Once again, it was defeated by the government. It didn't make a lot of sense.

Mr. Speaker, we also proposed some common sense amendments when it came to motorists who hit pedestrians at crosswalks. Listen to this. This is interesting. I actually met with some people on this. I was absolutely surprised at this one. Right now, when a pedestrian is hit at a crosswalk, the motorist faces a general fine of \$500. That's the fine for failing to yield to a pedestrian at a crosswalk. If you don't stop for somebody, and they get seriously injured or die—this is the part I never knew—that's a \$500 fine. Think about that. I was absolutely shocked. It was actually a group of motorcyclists, in the hundreds, who told me about this. I couldn't believe it. We tried to put language in this bill that would address this issue with a stiffer punishment. I think that's reasonable to expect. Why would anybody not do that? Again, the theme of this is, we were trying to work with the government and say, "Listen, let's make the bill stronger. Let's make sure it's safer for everybody. It doesn't matter if you're a cyclist or you're in a car or a pedestrian. It doesn't matter." Guess what happened on that amendment? Does anybody know? Go ahead.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: They voted against it.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It was voted down.

When you think about it, what would make more sense than an amendment like that? On one hand, this government moves to eliminate distracted driving from our roads, yet they vote against amendments that could change the punishment for the outcome of distracted driving.

The stats prove this. When you're on your phone and driving, you're basically impaired. There's no way you can fully take in what is happening around you. I think we all agree with that.

When you look at how someone might get hit at a crosswalk, and you do the math, you can see that distracted driving may be a big part of it. We want to make sure that the fines for distracted driving are appropriate, but also the fines for the outcome. In my mind, this amendment goes hand in hand with what this government was trying to do. Instead of considering it, the amendment was, of course, voted down. So it seems they're serious about taking on distracted driving but unwilling to follow up.

Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm making a point here. The point that I'd like to make is, these amendments that were proposed weren't designed—by the way, you should listen to this, Minister—to destroy the bill or reverse the hard work that was done by the ministry staff to put it together. We saw some areas where this bill was lacking or perhaps just wasn't strong enough. Instead of showing any interest in working with us, this government voted down every amendment that they themselves didn't pro-

pose. So if people fall victim to some of the missing regulations, that will be on this government. They showed no willingness—and I'm surprised at that, quite frankly—to work with the other members in this House and amend the bill.

Obviously, we support making our roads safer. A number of things in the bill make sense, and we can agree with them. But there's a ton of stuff in here. Some of that content is good, some of that content is not so good, and some of the content is missing entirely.

As I continue to talk about this bill and explain some of the major shortcomings, I hope the members in this House will keep this in mind.

Mr. Speaker, take a look at the issue around roundabouts. Again, I believe the transportation critic has done quite a job proving that there is a lack of clear legislation when it comes to roundabouts in this province. This has left cities and regions putting up their own rules for roundabouts which contradict one another.

When I spoke about this issue before, I mentioned that I have a number of roundabouts in my riding, Niagara Falls, including one of the first in the province of Ontario: in Queenston, right along the parkway I just talked about where you can go to cycle. When it comes to making sure we have clear and uniform rules about roundabouts, it really does affect people in my riding.

The Premier talks about being non-partisan, working with everyone in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that making clear regulations about roundabouts in this province is a political issue. I do believe that making sure the people of this province have a clear understanding of what is and is not allowed at a roundabout is a clear safety issue.

Yet this government seems to put politics ahead of safety. In this bill, they had a chance to make sure the roundabouts in this province were safe and properly regulated, yet once again, this bill will pass without any of that. As this House discusses other ways to make sure roundabouts are safe, these laws will quickly come into effect.

1740

Once again, I don't believe this change was going to be anything big or stop this bill. Really, it was quite simple. All it was going to do was make a few tweaks to the Highway Traffic Act and it was solved. Once again, this bill does nothing for that.

I haven't even touched on the regulations that were completely left out of the bill. Just take a look at the associations that were calling for pre-warning yellow lights on school buses. For those of you who don't know, when a bus is slowing down, right now it has to turn on red flashing lights. Cars near buses are not legally required to stop until the bus itself has come to a complete stop. The bus drivers have to use these lights to signal to other drivers that they're about to stop. So what ends up happening here is that the bus turns on those red flashing lights but keeps driving. I think most people would think it would stop, but no, it keeps driving. Cars see these red lights and they stop, only to look at the bus driver in confusion as the bus continues right by them.

It may seem like a small change, but we're the only district, other than Saskatchewan, that does not make regulations which require pre-stop warning lights, which flash yellow, then red lights to go on, to be used when a bus comes to a complete stop. A small change but a safety change, one that's important.

When you really think about this, you can see how important this is. What cargo—I'd like people to listen to this—in this province is more important than what our school buses are carrying? Our kids, our grandkids, our future. They should all be safe on the roadways in this province as they travel to and from school. So if we have confusion over when to stop when a bus is near, you should know who's in most danger. That's right. It's our kids and our grandkids.

It's not like I'm pulling this topic out of thin air. This is an issue that associations have been raising for a long time. I know my colleague has spoken about this in the House. It's a simple fix. No one can keep our children that much safer. Honestly, it's hard to know why it wasn't included in this bill but, in the end, it's not there.

This bill does change some of the language around utility task vehicles or UTVs, as they're called, but not quite as much as we'd like. I know that a number of the members who have constituents in their ridings who frequently use UTVs have been calling for the same rights of passage as ATVs in Ontario. What more input could this government be looking for? UTV and ATV groups have been calling for this, and constituents. The changes are a good admission that there need to be some updates.

The consultation says more needs to be done, and it isn't being done. This wouldn't cost this government a penny. Think about this: not a penny, and yet it would make sure that people who go to change the oil in their UTVs aren't committing a crime. It's a simple fix that could be included in this bill, and I have no idea why it wasn't.

This bill does touch on medical suspensions when it comes to licence renewal—this is an important issue—but I'm not sure if it does exactly what is necessary in this province. I'm happy to see that this has been cleared up a little bit, but let me tell you, this needs to be a lot clearer.

The bill clears up what is and what is not mandatory for a doctor to send to the MTO when it comes to medical review. It also allows the patients to keep their old licence to be used as ID if their licence is suspended. Let me just say that I do applaud the government on that. With all the changes made to ServiceOntario—what does and doesn't qualify for ID these days—seniors in my riding are having a tough time keeping up. We need to make sure that we're not stripping people of ID and leaving them with no reasonable way to prove who they are so they can get health care.

The problem is there's no recognition here with some of the major problems around medical review. I've heard it in my constituency office. A driver has his licence suspended for medical reasons. Okay, that's fair. He has

a heart attack, he's fainting, he has all those types of things that may happen. They go to their doctor and the doctor now says that they're medically cleared to go back to work or to drive. So he's driving a cab, he's driving a transport truck or he has to drive to get to work. For most people, this is good news when their doctor who treats them in their daily lives says that they're healthy and they can expect to go back to work. In this case, they've done their work: They had to prove that they were medically able to drive again. They didn't ask the government to prove it. They went out of their way and they did the work themselves. The problem is that you need to send that to the MTO for the MTO to approve it. The labour minister should listen to this. I know he's here and I appreciate that he's here. So I'm going to read this again and hopefully he can hear it: The problem is that you need to go to the MTO for the MTO to approve it.

So now I'm ready to go back to work, I've been cleared to go back to work, and I've got to get the authorization from the MTO. Of course, this makes a little sense, but it's the time they have to wait that is a major problem, because now I'm cleared to go back to work—if you're on benefits and you're cleared to go back to work, you can no longer collect benefits. If you're in a union shop and you have a union rep, then maybe he can go to the company and talk to them; if you're in a non-union shop, they may end up getting rid of you.

So in Niagara Falls one of my constituent assistants was dealing with these cases over and over again, Minister. The problem was that these people were professional truck drivers, or needed their cars to go to work, and their bosses were doing everything they could—

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: No, this is important to listen to—their bosses were doing everything they could to hold onto their jobs for them, but how long can they hold on for? If they need a product shipped, they need someone to fill the job. It isn't fair for a person to lose their job if they've done everything right. If people have to wait—to the labour minister, because I think they think it's funny over there, but it's not—up to three months from start to finish, that's a severe impact on their ability to hold onto their job and their employment. This province should never get in the way of someone who wants to work, yet that's exactly what is happening. We were doing everything we could, but there is simply no way to speed up the process.

We could end up with people who are medically fit to drive, employers who want to give them shifts, and yet they're still waiting to go back to work. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. These wait times are putting people's employment at risk. So in this bill there were some changes to that process, but they weren't good enough. They need to address the concerns at the ministry level, either through regulations or addressing it in this bill. Until it's addressed, we're going to keep having people being put in stressful situations and losing their jobs.

I'm certainly not trying to pick on the labour minister, but if he'd like to talk to me after this, I'd like to talk to him. We're having lots and lots of issues with this in Niagara with the MTO, and I can relate. I've been off work a few times and have wanted to go back. It's an issue, and I'd appreciate talking to him.

We want to talk about making our roads safer. What would be better than removing cars from the highway? By offering proper public transit, people stop taking their cars places. Look at Niagara. If we had a GO train that we've been calling for, that the community has been calling for, that we're providing a business case for, more people would take the train. They would get out of the gridlock, take public transit and be able to use their phones on the trains all they want. It's a lot safer than driving. It can happen tomorrow. The people have been calling for it. That's one way to make roads safer: Take some of the cars off the roads. It makes a little bit of sense.

1750

I'd like to touch on one aspect of this bill which really highlights the concern we have with all of our amendments being voted down by the Liberal government, and that is the privatization of the vehicle inspection centres. It's another issue. I don't understand why this government believes this would make Ontario roads safer. Look no further than the Auditor General's report which showed that privatizing the winter highway maintenance put people's lives at risk. With that report coming out, we can draw quite a few things between that and this plan.

When the government started to privatize the winter road maintenance, they were telling the people of this province that it would be cheaper, that they'd be able to clear our roads quicker, and it would keep it safe. The Auditor General proved that under their privatized plan, our roads became more dangerous. There was a major problem with oversight and accountability. In the Auditor General's report, we found out that these companies that were given these contracts through RFPs were supposed to report on their own work—now think about this—essentially, telling the government whether they thought they were doing a good job. I wish I could have done that when I worked at General Motors, but I wasn't allowed to do that. You'll never guess what happened, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It turns out they weren't doing a good job. I don't believe it's anything to make fun of, by the way. There was very little oversight. So instead of the problem being fixed right away, the people of this province had to wait five years to get proof of what they had been saying all along: that the privatization failed, that our roads were unsafe and people were at risk.

We as New Democrats take a look at Bill 31 and notice provisions which outsource the vehicle inspection centres. We know what happens when these things get outsourced with absolutely no oversight. There are a number of problems with this plan outlined in the

legislation. In fact, I think one of my colleagues put it well when he basically called it “Drive Clean on steroids.”

For those of you who may not know, the vehicle inspection centres are currently overseen by the province, and should stay that way, by the way. They certify regular passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles. That means the buses and the trucks that fill our highways and our roads all need to be certified by a vehicle inspection centre. We've all seen them along the highway; we've seen the trucks going in.

Consider how many of our constituents either use a passenger vehicle or drive near a truck. This should be extremely important. If you want to ensure our roads are safe for the province of Ontario, then we need to ensure that the certifications are done properly and with accountability. We need to make sure that the procedures and regulations are being followed and that there are stiff fines when centres do not properly inspect the vehicles.

Frankly, this is people's lives we're talking about here. This shouldn't be a debate. When it comes to people's lives, their safety needs to be number one, job one. In order to ensure that safety is number one, this government needs to be able to see how those centres are operating and what's going on inside. You shouldn't be giving them to a third party.

It's so easy for outsourced companies to skip a regulation here and there, or ignore something they don't feel is necessary. When the public doesn't know about it, then even more regulations start getting skipped. It's something we've seen happen time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, I know an hour is a long time to listen to me, and I can appreciate that, but I'm going to continue going.

I'm sure you agree with this and I'm sure that the members opposite agree with this, so what is the concern? We're reading in this bill that the administrator of the new vehicle inspection centre system is not an agent of the crown. What are the implications of that? Essentially, that means that the oversight that government agencies are subject to, like the Ombudsman or the Auditor General, will have no power over these service providers, again.

Let's look at the state of transportation in the province here. Just a few weeks ago, the Auditor General did some digging and was able to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the highways of this province were not as safe as we had been used to and that snow was not being removed from them properly. We know that. The report showed that.

So the Auditor General writes this report and proves that the current system isn't working. Once it brought it to light, we hoped changes will come. Considering how badly monitoring was from these contractors, we would sincerely hope that change is coming.

The Minister of Transportation has said that after 60 days he would like the Auditor General to come back and re-evaluate, so we will be watching closely that process. The problem I have with the 60-day time limit: I don't think there's going to be any snow on our roads. I may be

wrong; we've had some weird weather, but I don't think we're going to have any snow in July and August. I might be wrong. My point is, these are concerns we would never had known about had it not been for the Auditor General's oversight. I think we can all be thankful that that report did shed some light on the issue.

While under Bill 31 the administrator of these outsourced vehicle inspection centres—

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

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur l'assurance-récolte (Ontario) et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2014 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Loi portant sur l'immigration en Ontario et apportant une modification connexe à la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Loi créant un cadre pour les régimes de pension agréés collectifs et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animals for Research Act with respect to the possession and breeding of orcas and administrative requirements for animal care / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario et la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche en ce qui concerne la possession et l'élevage d'épaulards ainsi que les exigences administratives relatives aux soins dispensés aux animaux.

An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation / Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre les conseils scolaires de

district Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board et Peel District School Board et la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Randy Hillier
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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