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ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 7 March 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 7 mars 2023

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING MORE MINES

ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT L'AMÉNAGEMENT
DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Mr. Pirie moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to lead off the debate.

Hon. George Pirie: It is a privilege to rise for second reading of our government's proposed Building More Mines Act, 2023. I want to indicate that I'll be sharing the government's leadoff time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Mines. The PA will be touching on the importance of Indigenous partnerships to the future of Ontario's mining sector and the progress to date in developing the Ring of Fire.

Before I begin, I'd like to take a moment to thank the mining industry leaders and other partners who have provided my ministry and me with invaluable feedback on the opportunities and challenges they've encountered in the sector under the previous governments. The feedback has informed the Building More Mines Act, Mr. Speaker.

Through the minister's mining industry council—MMIC—meetings and other discussions, they provide us with actionable ideas on how to improve the Mining Act and move the industry forward. The main theme that continually came up in our discussions was improving inefficiencies in the processes. That is what this act is all about. It's about making the ministry more efficient. It cannot take 15 years to build a mine. It's simply unacceptable when we have the knowledge, the skilled labour force and the innovative solutions to address the issues.

In the early 1960s, the mineral deposits at Kidd Creek were found and three years later the mine was up and running and producing valuable minerals. The sudden influx of people and the economic activity allowed the surrounding communities to experience an economic boom in a very short period of time. Today, Mr. Speaker, it takes 15 years to do the very same thing. The mines get built slower, the economic benefits move slower and the

processes take longer now than they ever have. How is that possible, when today we know more and our technology is better? It has everything to do with our outdated and unnecessarily restrictive regulations.

Previous governments sat idly by and let this problem fester. We are here to fix the 15 years of Liberal negligence, and it starts with updating the Mining Act to match the reality of the current state of the mining industry. This is so that the exploration and mining sector can continue to do what it does best: making the mineral discoveries and building the mines of the future.

Our government remains focused on creating the conditions to help attract investment and optimize competitive advantages in the sector. This includes creating the most logical legislative and regulatory environment possible. We are doing all of this without compromising our world-class environmental standards or Indigenous duty to consult.

Mr. Speaker, an important distinction to make is that governments don't build mines—companies do.

As Ontario's Minister of Mines, I'm extremely passionate about the mining industry and the critical role mining plays in Ontario's economic prosperity. Mining has long been a driver of growth for Ontario. We remember the days when the ONR was being driven from North Bay to Cochrane to access the agriculture belts in there. They found silver and cobalt, and that kicked off the whole thing. That led to the gold discoveries in Porcupine and it led to the gold discoveries in Kirkland Lake and silver discoveries in Elk Lake. It also led to the base metal discoveries, as well, in the Horne mine in northern Quebec.

Mining remains a cornerstone for our economy today—and will for many years to come. I come from a mining town, and I've seen first-hand how the industry can build up communities. I was born and raised in South Porcupine, at the historic Dome-Ex property—actually, the mine site village of Dome and Dome-Ex on the Dome property. I was raised in a house in the shadow of a mine. I have mined all my life. My family has been in mining for over 100 years.

My father was born in 1920 in a house behind the mill, and obviously, my grandparents were there before my father was born. Seven kids were raised in that house, and my father was able to provide for us because of his career in mining. My father's work inspired my career, and I have worked in the mining industry for the bulk of my career.

My father was 16 years old—he was the eldest in his family—when he finished grade 13—at 16 years old. So, in 1936, he started to work at the Dome mine. Why?

Because there were no other jobs. It was in the middle of the Depression. And that's what he did for the rest of his career, absent the time he spent in the Second World War. And as I said, we raised seven kids because my father worked in mining.

That's what this act is all about: giving more people the opportunity to have a rewarding career in mining or the associated industries. The member from Sudbury knows all about this: He landed a career in a smelter that helped him buy a house and start a family, something all Ontarians have been asking for. Mining provided for that future.

As I've said before, I have worked in the mining industry for many years, my whole career, and I have witnessed a lot of changes and challenges first-hand. In my time in the industry, I met some of the best and brightest people the world of mining has to offer—people who never stopped innovating and coming up with solutions to challenges that they faced.

It's no coincidence that the technology that has been driving progress in the mining industry is because we have such a high percentage of highly paid professionals that are leading this industry. It's no accident that the intake water from Musselwhite mine is cleaner than the discharge water. It's no accident, with the Côté Lake mine, there is no discharge water. That mine took 17 years to permit, to get across the line so you could start building this mine, and there is absolutely no discharge water out of that facility. It's a remarkable achievement, and it's done through the technology and the skill and the ability of the mining people.

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Despite these challenges, Ontario remains a world-class mining jurisdiction and is always among the top 10 jurisdictions in the world for mineral exploration spending. But we can do better. We must do better.

The industry contributes nearly \$13 billion annually to Ontario's GDP and provides 75,000 jobs associated with mineral processing and mining supply and services. Ontario's mining sector has one of the highest proportions of Indigenous workers of all industries in the province. Indigenous employment accounts for 11% of direct mining jobs in Ontario.

One of the things I did in my career with Placer Dome was help develop the Musselwhite mine. With those agreements—and they were very progressive IBAs that were signed with five First Nations and they ended up being revenue-sharing agreements that I led that directly related to increased prosperity with the communities surrounding that mine because of the activity in that mine. That's what activity in that sector can do.

As you all know, I worked with Wahgoshig Resources Inc. That's the commercial entity for WFN. WFN is the Indigenous community on the south shore of Lake Abitibi. You start off with relatively passive economic involvement and by the time we had finished, the Wahgoshig First Nation was a participant in the real economy by building a 100%-owned diamond drilling company, owned by the Indigenous people, by capitalizing on the economic

opportunities in their traditional territory. That's what we did working together with First Nations.

About 25% of direct mining jobs in Canada are in Ontario and around two thirds of these direct mining jobs are in northern Ontario.

Ontario's statistics are equally impressive when it comes to mineral exploration. In 2021, Ontario was second in Canada for mineral exploration expenditures, totalling \$878 million, roughly 24% of all mineral exploration expenditures in Canada. As of March 1, 2023, there are approximately 366,000 active mining claims in good standing in Ontario. In 2021, Ontario was Canada's third-largest mineral producer, producing \$11.1 billion worth of minerals—20% of Canada's total mineral production.

Ontario is one of the leading world producers of gold, nickel and platinum group elements. In 2021, Ontario produced approximately \$3.1 billion worth of critical minerals with 10 of those 36 operating mines in Ontario producing critical minerals. That same year, platinum group elements and copper had the highest critical mineral production values, at least \$1.2 billion and \$1 billion respectively. That's what mining does to the economy and for the economy for Ontario.

Ontario produces approximately two fifths of Canada's gold production, one third of Canada's nickel production, one quarter of Canada's copper production and two thirds of Canada's platinum group metals production.

Some of the world's largest mining companies operate in Ontario, such as Glencore, Vale, Newmont and Barrick. These companies benefit from a range of provincial support programs, including programs to help manage the energy costs associated with mineral production.

Through tax incentives and targeted business supports, we help companies across all phases of the mining sequence leverage opportunities to invest in and promote their mineral and mining projects.

There are currently 36 active mining operations in Ontario, the majority of which are in northern Ontario, and there are more new mine construction projects and mine expansions under way as we speak. There are many fantastic projects in various stages of development. Under our government, we want to help pave the way so that more critical mineral mines get to production that much sooner—mines like Vale's Copper Cliff south mine project that I visited with the Premier this past October. Phase 1 of the Copper Cliff complex south mine project reunites the south side of Copper Cliff mine with the north side and creates a new supply hub for low-carbon critical minerals, helping anchor Sudbury as a homegrown and sustainable supply chain for electric vehicles and the batteries that power them.

Did I tell you, Speaker, that that project cost was brought in at almost \$1 billion—over \$900 million to do this right here in Sudbury and all the benefits that are accrued to Sudbury because of those mines? And they're doing it cleanly, all with EVs, no diesel. They're committed to the environment that their employees work in.

The re-opened mine will provide employment for more than 250 workers, boosting the local economy. These numbers are impressive, Mr. Speaker, but there is more that needs to be done. We need to continue to support the growth of the mining industry, because the future of our world depends on it. While the mining sector has weathered the recent unprecedented economic challenges better than most, it is not immune to external forces. Ontario must act now—and perhaps I should start saying “Madam Speaker,” not “Mr. Speaker”—

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes.

Hon. George Pirie: I apologize for that—because the demand for critical minerals needed in strategic sectors such as electric vehicles, telecommunications, national defence and battery storage is growing exponentially.

As I said last night, tonight is our time. We’ve got the minerals in northern Ontario that can be married to the manufacturing and production in southern Ontario. We’re in the heart of the EV revolution that is happening in Ontario right now. Our communities are poised in the north, associated with the mining projects to flourish.

Madam Speaker, when Minister Fedeli was here the other day, he talked about the hollowing-out of the manufacturing sector in southern Ontario. I’ll tell you, the forestry and mining sector was also hollowed out in those years as well. The forestry sector was decimated. I had four value-added projects in Timmins; they’re gone now. The member opposite knows, in fact, that two survived in his riding. The rest, including pulp-and-paper mills and chipboard facilities, are all gone. They lost the employees, and with that, our population in the north declined. Southern Ontario was expanding; northern Ontario’s population was declining in every single major sector. It’s time to change that, because now is our opportunity.

These minerals have specific industrial, technological and strategic applications. They do not have many viable alternatives, meaning if a critical mineral is not available, there aren’t many other minerals that can be used in its place. Where are we getting those critical minerals right now? Where are we getting the rare earths? They’re coming from Russia and they’re coming from China and they’re coming from the Congo. That’s what we can do; we can secure the supply chain right here in Ontario.

There are 33 minerals in Ontario’s critical minerals list, including nickel, cobalt and lithium. Foreign countries that do not share Ontario’s world-class labour, human rights, environmental and health and safety standards like Russia and China have a stranglehold on the markets for many of these minerals. Our allies are looking for stable suppliers of responsibly sourced critical minerals from jurisdictions with standards that mirror or exceed our own. It is up to us to do what Canadians and Ontarians have always done and rise to the occasion and show the world that those leaders come from here, and we can be that jurisdiction.

Ontario is blessed with some of the most mineral-rich deposits in the world, including critical minerals like nickel, cobalt and lithium used in manufacturing batteries for electric vehicles, smart phones, pharmaceuticals and advanced manufacturing technologies. Ontario’s vast

mineral wealth, along with its competitive business climate, highly skilled workforce and incentives for innovation position it to become the leading global supplier of responsibly sourced minerals. We know the world wants Ontario’s critical minerals and we are one of the first governments to pave the way for this exciting sector by investing in exploration and innovation through our Critical Minerals Strategy and cutting unnecessary red tape so companies can build more mines.

As part of our strategy, we have made significant strategic investments in our Ontario Junior Exploration Program to find the mines of the future. And we’ve also invested in our Critical Minerals Innovation Fund to identify and help fund innovation in the sector. Ontario has a responsibility to help build the critical minerals supply chain, and to do so, we need to create the conditions for companies to build mines more efficiently. We will do this while maintaining our world-class environmental protections and meeting duty-to-consult obligations to accomplish this goal.

0920

Here in this province, we have the mineral resources and the industry experience and skilled workforce to supply and manufacture the innovative technologies of tomorrow. We believe the mining industry’s best days are still ahead, and we’re creating the conditions for an unprecedented era of prosperity for the north, Indigenous communities and all of Ontario.

Through our government’s actions, outlined in strategies such as Driving Prosperity, the government’s 10-year plan to transform Ontario’s automotive supply chain to build the cars of the future, including fully electric battery vehicles, and Ontario’s Critical Minerals Strategy, our comprehensive five-year blueprint to strengthen Ontario’s position as a global leader in supplying critical minerals, we are working to build an integrated supply chain by connecting the critical minerals producers in the north, including the projects in the Ring of Fire, with the manufacturing might in the south.

Our first-ever Critical Minerals Strategy, which we released last year, is helping us create opportunities in Ontario’s mining sector, while supporting the transition to the green technologies of the future. The commitments in this strategy will see us boost the resiliency of our supply chains, expand innovation and increase our exploration capacity.

Ontario’s minerals are already part of the global integrated supply chain and are used in many, many projects worldwide. Our government has already taken several actions to help boost our supply chains for these critical minerals and implement the goals in the strategy since its release. We’ve invested in expanding geoscience information related to critical minerals through the Ontario geological survey. We’ve made strategic investments in critical minerals projects through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp.

I’ve already said we’ve supported early critical minerals exploration through the Ontario Junior Exploration Program. Last month, I joined Premier Ford in Sault

Ste. Marie to announce our government has invested \$5.8 million to help junior mining companies explore for critical minerals through the program. In total, we are investing \$12 million over four years for critical minerals exploration in the Ontario Junior Exploration Program. Since the launch of the program in 2021, 32 companies have received funding for exploration of minerals such as nickel, copper, cobalt and lithium. These companies have invested an additional \$12.8 million in these projects.

Last November, we launched the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund. The CMIF is a \$5-million fund that supports the critical minerals sector by funding research, development and commercialization of projects to stimulate investment in Ontario's critical minerals supply chain. Just yesterday, I was at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference and convention to announce the successful projects receiving funding. These innovative projects range from mining and mineral processing to the recovering and recycling of minerals, and they're happening right here in Ontario.

Even with these accomplishments, we are just getting started, Madam Speaker. In this ever-changing global landscape, we need more responsibly sourced critical minerals to fuel the innovations and technologies of tomorrow. However, there are barriers we need to address before we can truly accomplish our goals, because there can be no integrated supply chain without an updated act to make the mining sector more efficient.

That's what this is, Speaker. This is what we are accomplishing today. We are listening to the experts and delivering the efficiencies that will allow us to secure the supply chain for critical minerals, to help the entire mining sector there. We are providing flexibility and reducing costs for companies, so they can do what they do best: build mines. This is all part of our government's plan to build the integrated supply chain, connecting critical minerals producers in the north with the manufacturers in the south.

The Building More Mines Act, if passed, will help us accomplish these goals to help our entire provincial economy and enter into an unprecedented era of prosperity, making Ontario the place to invest and to do business. I want to assure all of you: Ontario stands ready to do its part. We are optimistic that all members of the House will support this bill, because the future of this province depends on a stronger mining sector.

With that, Madam Speaker, I want to include the parliamentary assistant, so I'll conclude my remarks and turn it over to PA Leardi.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the parliamentary assistant and member for Essex to continue.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The topic of this morning's debate is the Building More Mines Act, and, as part of this debate, we're going to be talking about, necessarily, the Ring of Fire and also about Ontario's Critical Minerals Strategy. As an introduction to my remarks, I'm going to be telling a little story, and, as always, my stories are directly related to the topic of debate, although, as

members of this assembly might have already observed, sometimes you have to wait until the relevance of the story is revealed, and that might not come until the end of the speech.

As most of my stories go, this one starts on the second concession of Anderdon township, where I grew up. When I grew up, my dad had an old beat-up pickup truck, like everybody else's dad in town. That old beat-up pickup truck, it had an old beat-up radio, and that old beat-up radio, it never got but one radio station, and it was a country music radio station at that. That was perfectly fine by my dad, because country music was the only music he ever listened to, but, for us young people growing up in Anderdon township, that wasn't quite right, because Anderdon township is located right next to the state of Michigan. You can walk out my back door even today and walk a kilometre down the middle sideroad and you will stand right at the edge of the Detroit River. Look across the Detroit River, and you can see the front doors of the houses of the people who live in Michigan. That's how close we live. That means we're only half an hour from downtown Detroit, and, of course, being that close to Detroit, we get the world's greatest radio stations, and that means we get the world's best music, which is, of course, as we all know, Motown.

So we grew up listening to Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson and Stevie Wonder. We didn't listen to country music all that much. When I got into my dad's old pickup truck and that old radio came on and the country music came out, normally I wasn't too happy, but—and this is where the story takes a dramatic turn—one day, the music came out, and it was great music. The song that was on the radio was a love song, and the singer sang about falling in love, and he was falling into a ring of fire, and he went down, down, down and the flames got higher. This was the intensity of the love he was experiencing. My dad told me that the singer of that song was the great Johnny Cash, and he said Johnny Cash was the greatest country music singer who had ever lived. I have no reason to doubt that.

I thought to myself, I wondered as a young person, would I ever fall into that ring of fire? As a matter of fact, I did. I met a girl from River Canard, and her name was Jacqueline, and we got married. Today is March 7, 2023, and Jacqueline and I are celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary. Of course, she's celebrating in Essex county and I'm celebrating here with you, and that's because I was elected to this august Legislature. I was elected last year, and, shortly after that, Her Excellency the Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario saw fit to appoint me as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Mines. I imagined that the Lieutenant Governor, in her wisdom, must have seen something in me that I didn't see in myself, because, after being appointed parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Mines, I immediately fell in love with mines and mining and everything associated with it.

0930

I had the opportunity to go to Sudbury, and I went into the Creighton mine. I went down, down, down into the Creighton mine, 8,400 feet below the surface of the earth.

That's very deep. If you took the CN Tower, and you put four CN Towers together and you fastened them together and drove them into the crust of the earth, the Creighton mine would be deeper still. Down at the bottom of the Creighton mine, it was hot. It was so hot that they have to pump the winter cold air from the surface down to the bottom just to make it passably tolerable for people to work down there.

While I was at the bottom of the Creighton mine, I had a little time to think, and I thought to myself, mining is not an activity for which humans are built. The human body is not naturally adapted to the activity of mining. That means that mining really, in truth, is an activity that is dependent upon the ingenuity of the human mind, because when you think about it, mining is all about ingenuity. For example, if you want to find minerals, they don't grow on trees. You have to go and look for them, and finding them, locating them, takes ingenuity.

That's why we have something called the Ontario geological survey. It was established in 1891. Back then, when you wanted to do a geological survey, you loaded up your mule or your donkey, you provided yourself with a tent and some food provisions, you made sure you brought a rifle and some ammunition, and then you went into the bush. You fought against the blackflies, you fought against the cold, you fought against the hunger and you surveyed.

The process is different today. We have a lot more technology, a lot more information. It's a lot easier to do that today. You can stake a claim electronically—you can do it online—but you still need to know how to spot the hallmarks of a good deposit, and that takes ingenuity. It's not easy to find what we're looking for.

Let me provide you with a quote from the Ontario Mining Association: "Although the addition of even one mine can bring substantial benefits to society, the wins do not come quickly or easily. It takes a great deal of will, effort and time to discover a viable ore deposit and bring it into production. There is no way of predicting where profitable ore deposits will be found. Each prospector and investor may fervently hope for the next 'big find,' but only one in 10 mineral exploration projects are taken to the drill stage, and one in 1,000 drill projects unearth viable mineral deposits; ultimately, less than one in 10,000 projects become mines."

That's pretty remarkable. When you're looking for minerals, you're looking for a needle in a haystack. And then, once you find it, you have to figure out a way to bring it to the surface, and that takes ingenuity. And then, when you bring it to the surface, you have to separate what you don't want from what you want, and that takes ingenuity. And then, once you have separated the minerals you want, you have to find a way of transforming those minerals into something that's useful or beautiful, and that takes ingenuity. And so, in the end, the mining process is a transformative process. It is a process of transforming that which is in the earth into something which is beautiful and useful.

So let's talk about the beautiful things that we make out of the minerals that we mine here in the province of

Ontario. Let's talk about the top 10. I'll start with what I call the king, which is gold. Of course, we all know gold is transformed into jewellery. But gold also makes microchips. Palladium makes dental fillings. Platinum goes into catalytic converters, which convert harmful emissions into less harmful waste products.

Copper: Copper is my favourite mineral. It's a great conductor. It's used in wiring. In fact, it's so valuable that sometimes thieves will break into a construction site just to steal the copper wiring and then sell it in the underground economy. Copper also has fascinating anti-microbial properties. Copper can kill 99% or more of micro-organisms within two hours of contact. That's why sometimes you will see some fancy old doorknobs in this Legislature and they're covered with copper.

Zinc is a metal protector.

Diamonds: Marilyn Monroe sang that diamonds were a girl's best friend, but diamonds are among the hardest minerals on earth. They are used in industrial saws that cut concrete.

Nickel goes into mobile phones.

Cobalt goes into rechargeable battery electrodes.

Silver goes into solar cells.

And uranium is used to produce nuclear power. In this province, we derive 60% of our electricity from nuclear power. As the Minister of Energy says often, it is clean, it is reliable, it is affordable, and it is green.

Madame la Présidente, j'ai mentionné Sudbury il y a quelques instants, alors parlons de Sudbury. Au moins 27 % de tous les employés miniers en Ontario résident dans la région de Sudbury. Dans la seule région de Sudbury, l'exploitation minière représentait 3,3 milliards de dollars de produits intérieurs bruts en 2019. Que serait Sudbury sans l'exploitation minière? Et que serait l'exploitation minière sans Sudbury?

Le secteur minier de l'Ontario produit plus de 10 milliards de dollars de minéraux à l'année. Est-ce qu'il y a un autre endroit où on pourrait produire un résultat semblable? Oui, il existe une telle place. Elle s'appelle le Cercle de feu.

Le Cercle de feu couvre environ 5 000 kilomètres de superficie. On y trouve des minéraux critiques, y inclus les minéraux suivants : la chromite, le cobalt, le nickel, le cuivre et le platine. La Chambre de commerce de l'Ontario estime que le Cercle de feu apportera environ 9,4 milliards de dollars au produit intérieur brut une fois que les mines seront mises en production.

Mais pour avoir accès au Cercle de feu, il faut des autoroutes toutes-saisons. C'est pour ça que nous proposons de créer un corridor nord-sud reliant le Cercle de feu au réseau provincial.

Présentement, la Première Nation de Marten Falls et la Première Nation de Webequie dirigent des évaluations environnementales. Ce sont des co-promoteurs du projet de planification et de développement du Cercle de feu.

Yes, mining is a transformative process. It transforms objects, but it also transforms lives. According to the Ontario Mining Association, mining directly employs 29,000 people in Ontario. These are people like heavy

equipment operators, mining engineers, drilling operators, electricians, geologists, chemists, millwrights. Mining pay exceeds the average pay of an industrial worker by about 70% a week. In an average year, people in mining in Ontario will get paid about \$3.7 billion in salaries and in various forms of compensation. It shouldn't escape anyone's attention that the mining industry employs a lot of skilled trades.

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In January 2023, the Ministry of Mines industry council noted that "The Ministry of Labour's Skills Development Fund is a crowning achievement of this government." As the Minister of Labour likes to say, "When you have a skilled trade, you have a job for life." Yes, mining transforms people's lives.

Indigenous employment accounts for approximately 11% of mineral exploration and mining jobs in Ontario. I know of no other industry which employs a participation rate among First Nations or Indigenous people of 11%. Mining transforms people's lives.

The province of Ontario maintains resource revenue-sharing agreements with 35 First Nations and organizations. Since 2018, Indigenous partners, including First Nations governments and organizations, have received over \$93 million in payments under the resource revenue-sharing agreements. These payments have had positive effects for education, for economic projects and the advancement of health.

Ontario maintains an Aboriginal Participation Fund. The fund allows First Nations people to have meaningful participation and consultations when it comes to mining. This is important because Ontario has a duty to consult when it comes to treaties governing the relationship between the government and First Nations—because mining transforms people's lives.

But Madam Speaker, mining will not transform people's lives if we don't actually do it. We have to actually mine, and that has become increasingly difficult over the years. As I mentioned before, when you're looking for a mineral strike, it's like trying to look for a needle in a haystack. And when you finally find that needle, then there comes years of planning. Again, according to the Ontario Mining Association, "It typically takes 10 to 15 years of consultation, exploration, data analysis, planning and financing to bring a mine in to production." Think about that: 15 years. I invite every member of this Legislature to think back: Where were you 15 years ago? I think some of you were still in grade school.

What goes on in 15 years? There's a lot of consulting. The mining company has to consult with First Nations. The mining company has to consult with other people involved. Then they have to develop a plan. We refer to this sometimes as a closure plan or a rehabilitation plan. What's that? It's a plan that sets out in detail what is going to happen after you shut down the mine. You have to pretty much restore the site to its original pristine condition, because mines don't last forever. They might last 20 years or 40 years—even 100 years—but they don't last forever.

Under the existing legislation, a company must file a closure plan upfront even before it starts to mine. Now, that's a trick. Imagine trying to put together a closure plan for something that's going to happen 60 or 70 or a 100 years into the future. Technology will change, and let me give you an example. Yesterday, I had the good fortune of attending the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference. I was shown a special mineral—maybe it's not special to others, but special to me. This mineral can capture carbon out of the air and then solidify it and store it in a solid form. This opens up huge possibilities for mining.

But how do you predict what the mine is going to look like in 100 years, or even in the next 10 years? It's very hard to predict the future. That's why it's very hard to develop a closure plan right off the hop and file it before you even start mining. Some people would say a phased-in approach makes a lot more sense.

Before you open a mine you have to file something called a financial security. That means you have to put up money. Now, imagine that: You have to put up money to provide for something that is closing the mine 100 years in advance and put that upfront before you start mining, before you start making a profit, before you even risk losing everything you've invested. That's what a financial security is.

That brings me to the idea of financing a mine. You have to go to the market to raise money to finance your mining activity. Where do you go? Well, what's the number one place in the world to go for mining financing? It's not London, England. It's not New York, New York. It's not Tokyo, Japan. It's Toronto, Ontario. It's the home of the Raptors, home of the Blue Jays and home of Ford Fest.

It's also the home of the Toronto Stock Exchange, and that's where billions of dollars is invested in mining. Dean McPherson, the head of business development for Global Mining at the Toronto Stock Exchange and TSX Venture Exchange, comments that mining is back. Toronto is the mining capital of the world. More mining listings are listed in Toronto than anywhere else in the world—more than London, more than New York, more than everywhere else. In the last five years, 40% of the capital raised by mining companies was done on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Indeed, mining is back.

Mining is back in Ontario for a lot of good reasons. Nature and this world's Creator blessed this beautiful province with some of the most wonderful minerals that the world wants: copper, zinc, lithium and countless other minerals that I can't even pronounce but that the Minister of Mines can roll off his tongue the way somebody might recite a simple nursery rhyme.

Mining is back in Ontario because we have a great Minister of Mines, who just told us about his own history. Mining is in his blood. His father was a miner, born in the shadow of a mine. This is another reason why mining is back in Ontario.

Mining is back in Ontario because we have clean, reliable, affordable energy. It's green energy. If you're

looking for green minerals to produce a green economy, you can't mine for those minerals using dirty fuel. You have to use clean fuel. It's been said over and over and over again by miners and mining investors.

Mining is back because we have an awesome Minister of Economic Development, who is landing billions and billions of dollars in investment for Ontario's manufacturing economy. I can't tell you how excited people in Essex county are about the electric vehicles that we are going to be producing in our area. I can't tell you, Madam Speaker, how excited other members of this assembly are—especially the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, who has an EV battery plant being constructed as we speak in his riding—because we know what's going to happen. It's going to mean jobs, good jobs, interesting jobs, jobs that pay well, jobs that will provide a pension, jobs that will provide benefits, jobs you can buy a house with, jobs you can raise a family on.

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But that can be in jeopardy. That will be in jeopardy if we have to wait 15 years to open a mine. That means 15 years of people waiting to get a good job, 15 years of First Nations communities waiting to participate in a resource revenue-sharing agreement, 15 years of lost economic advancement, 15 years of waiting. Well, 15 years of waiting is much too long.

Even the federal government has to concede that 15 years of waiting is much too long. The federal government has proposed environmental regulations towards zero-emission vehicles: “The regulations will require that at least 20% of new vehicles sold in Canada will be zero emission by 2026, at least 60% by 2030, and 100% by 2035.”

If we need critical minerals to make electric vehicles, we can't wait 15 years. We can't wait 15 years, because we'll miss all those federal targets. We must do better. As the Minister of Mines often says, “You must mine to be green.” That's why this proposed legislation is so important. This legislation will allow us to move faster when building a mine, while at the same time preserving Ontario's excellent environmental record.

Madame la Présidente, ce projet de loi va conférer certains pouvoirs et fonctions au ministère. Cela donnera au ministère le pouvoir de faire ouvrir les mines plus vite. Parce que tout le monde le sait : cela ne devrait pas prendre 15 ans pour faire ouvrir une mine.

Nous allons moderniser les plans de fermetures. Actuellement, les plans de fermetures ne permettent pas les modifications qui peuvent servir comme améliorations positives à la terre. Nous allons permettre que les modifications à la terre peuvent, en réalité, devenir des modifications positives, et devraient être préservées au lieu d'être rasées. Je parle, par exemple, au sujet des autoroutes. L'état du terrain doit être comparable ou supérieur à son état avant la récupération, selon la décision du ministère.

Nous allons moderniser les plans de fermetures en ce qui concerne les « personnes compétentes ». Actuellement, tous les plans de fermetures doivent être

approuvés par le ministère. Par contre, nous proposons que les plans de fermetures ou les modifications à un plan de fermeture peuvent être approuvés par une personne compétente.

Parce que tout le monde le sait : cela ne devrait pas prendre 15 ans pour faire ouvrir une mine. Everyone knows instinctively that it should not take 15 years to open a mine.

And that brings me back to the second concession of Anderdon township. You see, my dad didn't just own the old, beat-up pickup truck. No, he didn't. He also owned a Pontiac Buick, and that Pontiac Buick was a sweet car. It had a long wheelbase; it had a really smooth drive. And we knew—because we had purchased it from a dealership in Toronto—that this particular Pontiac Buick had participated in the motorcade when Pope John Paul II had made his historic visit to Canada. The Pope didn't ride in this car, but it did go in his motorcade. So we called it the popemobile anyway. My dad left the old, beat-up pickup truck outside, and it suffered the wind and the rain and the snow and all of the elements, even sun. But we kept the Pontiac Buick parked inside the garage because we didn't want to get it damaged by the snow and the elements. We used that Pontiac Buick when we went out as a family. So when we went to, for example, visit friends or relatives or go to a wedding, we took the Pontiac Buick, the popemobile. That was the family car.

My dad had a third car—not just one, not just two, but three—and the third car was a Ford Mustang. That Mustang was for us teenagers, the kids. We used that Mustang when we had to do errands for our parents or when we had to go to work, or sometimes we would take it when we went out.

So the truth of the matter is that my dad owned and maintained three cars and paid the insurance on them because he could do that. He could do that because he had a good job. He had a job that was interesting. It paid well. It gave him a pension, and it gave him benefits.

That's what this legislation today is really about—it's about providing good jobs, mining jobs, which are interesting, which take skills, which pay well and provide a pension and benefits.

When we create mining jobs, you know what that means: It means people are going to buy cars like—well, they won't buy cars like my dad's, because my dad's cars were carbon-fuelled cars. They're going to buy electric vehicles. That's something new.

That's what this legislation is all about—it's providing critical minerals to build electric vehicles. It's about getting the critical minerals that we need to build the electric vehicles to make a greener economy. We're going to get those minerals out of northern Ontario, and we're not going to do it the old-fashioned way. We're not just going to dig it and ship it. That's the old-fashioned way. We're not going to do that anymore.

What we're going to do now is, we're going to mine the critical minerals right here in Ontario, in places like Sudbury, in places like Timmins. We're going to mine them, and then we're going to process them right here in

Ontario. We're not going to ship them out to be processed. We're going to do it right here. Once they're processed here in Ontario, we're going to put those minerals into batteries here in Ontario. Then we're going to take those batteries and we're going to put them into electric vehicles. Minerals to processing to batteries to vehicles—a perfect domestic supply chain right here in Ontario, from start to finish.

That's going to mean jobs for people in Essex county. It's going to mean jobs for people in Windsor and Tecumseh. It's going to mean jobs, because we have an EV plant going up right next door to us, in the county of Essex. As I said before, the construction of that plant is continuing as we speak, thanks in great part to the wonderful work of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, who has brought literally billions in automotive investment to this province.

It's also going to mean jobs in Brampton. Magna International—again, thanks to the hard work of the Minister of Economic Development and Trade—is putting over \$471 million of automotive investment into Brampton and the province of Ontario. That's going to mean jobs for the people of Brampton, and the people of Brampton are going to buy those beautiful new electric vehicles and drive them on an awesome new highway called Highway 413, and that's going to be something special.

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It's going to mean a lot of spinoff jobs. It's going to mean jobs for the people who maintain those cars. It's going to mean jobs for the people who design those cars, jobs for people who sell those cars, jobs for people who provide parts for those cars. It means jobs for people who build, supply and maintain vehicles.

Yes, manufacturing is coming back to Ontario, and it's because of the great advancements made not only by the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, but also the Minister of Mines, who has poured his heart and soul into the development of the mining industry in the province of Ontario. Mining is in his blood, and we want mining to be something that everyone feels is special and powerful and good for all of Ontario, north and south.

Yes, manufacturing and mining, they go hand in hand; north and south, they go hand in hand—a perfect domestic supply chain. Madame la Présidente, manufacturing is back. Mining is back.

But you know what? You don't have to own three cars to be satisfied. You don't even have to even own two cars. You could own a popemobile or you could choose not to own a popemobile. You might only want to have one car, because when you have a good job, and it's stable, and it gives you interesting work and good pay and a pension and benefits, that makes you feel comfortable and secure in life. And when you're comfortable and when you're secure and you know your family is comfortable and secure, sometimes all you want to do is get into your old, beat-up pickup truck, drive down a lonely concession road, turn on your old, beat-up radio—

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: And listen to some Johnny Cash?

Mr. Anthony Leardi:—and listen to some Johnny Cash.

And that is why, madame la Présidente, je voterai pour ce projet de loi. That is why I will be voting for this bill.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We'll now move to questions.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'd like to thank the Minister of Mines and the member from Essex for their presentation.

The minister discussed diamond drilling and working with Indigenous peoples and working together, whereas the member from Essex talked about consultations. I hope that the minister or the parliamentary assistant will assure the House that when building more mines, such as this bill is titled, that there will be free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous partners on each new site.

My question for the member from Essex is, could you please define free, prior and informed consent for the House?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member from London North Centre for that question, and I will assist the member by indicating that section 2 of the Mining Act does not in any way, shape or form get changed by the proposed legislation. Section 2 of the Mining Act states, "The purpose of this act is to encourage prospecting, registration of mining claims and exploration for the development of mineral resources, in a manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including the duty to consult, and to minimize the impact of these activities on public health and safety and the environment." That completely preserves section 2 of the Mining Act, which, as I said, is not altered in any way, shape or form by this proposed legislation.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Markham-Unionville.

Mr. Billy Pang: We don't have too many 15 years in our whole lives. It's just not acceptable to take 15 years to build a mine. Why is it so important that qualified professionals certify all aspects of a closure plan, through you, Speaker, to the member?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member from Markham-Unionville for that question. He asked me a question about competent professionals or qualified professionals. Indeed, in the province of Ontario, we rely on qualified professionals to do practically everything. It doesn't matter what endeavour of economic pursuit you're engaged in, qualified professionals are constantly, constantly, constantly certifying and approving and reviewing.

So as the member for Markham-Unionville said, we can't wait 15 years to open a mine. We can't lose 15 years of economic development. We can't lose 15 years of resource revenue-sharing with our First Nations. We can't lose 15 years' worth of jobs, and that's why we have to have this provision to have competent professionals move these things forward so that we can get ourselves moving towards economic advancement.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the member from Essex. We all know that mines require infrastructure and roads, the Ring of Fire requires a road. The member from Essex talked about willing partners, yet the Neskantaga First Nation Chief Wayne Moonias has said, “We intend to defend our rights, our homeland, our river system even if it costs our lives.” The chief also went on to say that his community will prevent the building of a road to the Ring of Fire even if it means a direct confrontation with authorities. Indigenous opposition now includes talks of lawsuits and possible resistance.

So things are not going well on that part of the mining agenda. Can the member from Essex tell the Legislature how dangerous it is to engage in selective consultation with First Nations across this province?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Well, first of all, I want to give credit to the First Nations of Marten Falls and First Nations of Webequie, who are partnering with the provincial government and leading, actually, the environmental assessment for the access roads that those two First Nations communities are engaged in. Yesterday, the Minister of Mines announced that the environmental assessment terms have been approved, and so those are moving forward.

Again, I want to remind all members of this Legislature, all 124 members, that the Mining Act specifically refers to duty to consult and affirms and recognizes existing Aboriginal treaty rights, and those are utterly 100% unaltered by this proposed legislation.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate the opportunity to engage with my friend from Essex. It’s so exciting to see this development happen. I was just at an announcement a few weeks ago in my riding, where Six Nations of the Grand River will be heading up an incredible battery project in order to store electricity and put it back on the grid in order to save money and where it can pay itself out. It’s an incredible partnership between Indigenous people and other companies in order to make this.

So we’re seeing the ability for resource extraction in the north in order to have a positive benefit. We need more of that. But I was curious if the member could speak directly to—because it seems to be a lot of the questions today are on exactly what this act will be able to accomplish for our northern and Indigenous communities.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member from Brantford–Brant for that question. I want to highlight a few remarkable things that mining does: The first thing that we should all know about mining is that mining is good for First Nations people and Indigenous people, that it is a routine observation that among mining activity, Indigenous people have a participation rate in the employment of approximately 11%, which probably exceeds any other industry or activity in the province of Ontario, and that’s awesome, and that First Nations governments and organizations have received over \$93 million in payments under resource revenue-sharing agreements just in the last five years alone.

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So, imagine, if they get that in five years, what could be paid out and received over 15 years, but also imagine if we don’t get the mines up and running, imagine how much will be lost—millions and millions of dollars of resource revenue-sharing lost.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We’ll move to the next question.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you, my colleagues—a wonderful, wonderful presentation.

Speaker, we know that the world wants Ontario’s critical minerals, and we are the first government to pave the way for this exciting sector by investing in exploration and innovation through our Critical Minerals Strategy and cutting unnecessary red tape so companies can build more mines.

Speaker, my question to my colleague is, why is it so important that qualified professionals certify all aspects of a closure plan?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member from Don Valley North for that question.

First of all, a competent professional such as my good friend from Windsor–Tecumseh, who is a qualified engineer—he might not be interested in this type of work, but a competent professional such as that member would be required to certify a closure plan, because we want the plans certified; we want them reviewed by competent professionals, and we want them to be, essentially, validated. This has to be done.

I thank again the member for that question because he highlights an important thing. Nothing in the environmental legislation of the province of Ontario is changed by this proposed legislation. In fact, it requires competent professionals, qualified professionals to certify that a closure plan is, in fact, in accord and compliant with Ontario’s environmental—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you.

Last question?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you to the member from Essex for his remarks. In his remarks, he talked about financial security and closure plans. Timiskaming–Cochrane has got a long history of mining, a long history—before financial security and closure plans—of unclosed mines, of holes in the ground, of places where the government had to step in—mines that have never been claimed. And since financial security and closure plans, people have gained confidence in the mining companies that are in Timiskaming–Cochrane now, like Alamos Gold and Agnico Eagle. People have confidence.

Is the member seeming to say that financial security for closure of mines isn’t a good thing?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I say financial security for the closure of mines is a great thing and that’s why it’s still required under the proposed legislation.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There’s no more time for questions. We’ll move to members’ statements.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MUSLIM WELFARE CANADA

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: I want to dedicate my member's statement today to the leaders and volunteers at Muslim Welfare Canada. A few weeks ago, I joined the volunteers at Muslim Welfare Canada and Essentials First Canada to prepare hygiene kits for earthquake victims in Türkiye and Syria. It was truly a humbling experience to join the volunteers who took off time from their weekend to assemble these kits.

Madam Speaker, this was one of the many examples of Muslim Welfare Canada's great work they have been doing for the last 30 years. Muslim Welfare Canada was established in 1993 by Major Abbas and Sarwar Jahan Begum. This organization began as a small halal food bank in Scarborough, Ontario, under the banner of the Muslim Welfare Centre of Toronto. Today, Muslim Welfare Canada is involved in the fight against poverty and homelessness. It focuses on providing food, health care services, culturally sensitive shelter for women and their children, and healthy nutrition to school-aged children and seniors.

Madam Speaker, one of their most notable projects—it's one of my favourite projects by Muslim Welfare Canada—is their annual fill-a-backpack event.

Muslim Welfare Canada not only supports the communities locally but also focuses on projects internationally by promoting literacy through free schools, access to clean water and providing relief assistance. Muslim Welfare Canada's dedication to supporting Canadians and beyond is a true example that we can make a difference when we come together.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, as you know, there are many parts to the housing crisis that people face in this province. I want to talk this morning about the soaring rents that people are facing and the crushing burdens that it places on them. Landlords right now can reset the rents at whatever the market will bear when a person leaves a unit, and that means that they do set those rents as high as they possibly can. What's the impact? It means that young people can't move out of their parents' homes when they want to. It means that parents who have a new baby can't afford to rent a new unit, because the new units will be far more expensive than the one they're in. It means that there is a huge incentive for landlords to push out tenants so they can put in place huge rent increases.

Speaker, I call on the government to bring in real rent control, to bring in a system so that rent levels are retained at the point they were set for when a tenant was there and are not increased when someone moves out. The province needs this. People need this. The government needs to act.

DEPUTY CHIEF JULIE CRADDOCK

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's an honour to rise today to share with this Ontario Legislature some exciting news from

Sarnia–Lambton. Yesterday, the Sarnia Police Service held a special swearing-in ceremony to welcome their new deputy chief of police, Julie Craddock. Deputy Chief Craddock joins the Sarnia police after establishing an impressive record with the Halton Regional Police Service. She began her career in 1994 with the OPP and joined the Halton police in 1995, where she worked in criminal investigations, traffic, recruiting, community mobilization and front-line operations, rising from the rank of constable to inspector. She is also the very first female and Indigenous deputy chief in the Sarnia police force's history.

I am extremely confident that Deputy Chief Craddock's strong leadership skills and fresh outlook will help to build on the ongoing work of the entire Sarnia Police Service to protect and serve this community. While my legislative responsibilities prevented me from attending yesterday's swearing-in ceremony, I wanted to take this opportunity to officially welcome Deputy Chief Craddock to the Sarnia Police Service and the wonderful Sarnia–Lambton community. Best wishes for a great future in your new role.

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: As we all know, a shortage of doctors and shortage of access to primary care is a problem throughout the province, and nowhere more so than in northeastern Ontario. But there are solutions, and solutions that I wish the government would look at a bit more closely and that we're dealing with right now.

In the town of Cochrane, there's a family health team that has the funding for, I believe, five doctors, but they can't find five doctors. They have one. They would love to be able to switch that to some nurse practitioner funding, while just a few miles away in the town of Iroquois Falls, a nurse practitioner couldn't get funding or approval through OHIP, so she's actually operating a private, nurse practitioner practise mostly for the Mennonite community. She really wants to be part of the system. There is funding not very far away. And yet, we're failing on both sides.

We're training more doctors. Great, but that's going to take a while. We're looking at doctors from other areas. That's also going to take a while to bring them to the north. Let's look at what we have, what we can work with and look for solutions.

COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

Mr. Will Bouma: Two Saturdays ago, on the 25th of February, I was able to participate in Brantford's Coldest Night of the Year walk fundraiser. The Coldest Night of the Year is a family-friendly walk to raise money for local charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness. In my riding of Brantford–Brant, 181 walkers on 31 teams got together and walked for either two or five kilometres.

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The Coldest Night of the Year was in support of Why Not Youth Centre in Brantford. At Why Not Youth Centre, they believe that every young person is important and

deserves all the help they can get to overcome their challenges and to meet their goals. Nearly every teen who comes through their door is struggling in some way, be it with homelessness, mobility, bullying or unsafe living conditions. Their team of youth workers are dedicated to working with our local vulnerable youth to make sure that no one goes unseen or unheard or falls through the cracks in the system. This is why Why Not matters so much—because the only thing that can help change the lives of young people heading towards poverty, homelessness and total defeat is real, positive, supportive relationships. And that's exactly what they do at Why Not. Some people see things and say, "Why?" They dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?"

MISSING PERSONS

Miss Monique Taylor: I want to take this opportunity to tell you more about the private member's bill that I introduced yesterday, because I think it's really important.

After the tragic death of Draven Graham last year, I knew something needed to be done. Draven was an 11-year-old boy with autism who passed away in Lindsay, Ontario, after leaving his home.

My sincerest condolences are with the Graham family during this difficult time. The memory of Draven will live on through his loved ones and all who knew him.

Something needed to be done. It was clear that there was a gap that needed to be addressed.

This new bill, if passed, would open up the Missing Persons Act, 2018, and amend it to include a vulnerable persons alert.

It is a scary experience when a loved one goes missing, especially someone who is vulnerable, because they may not realize the entirety of the situation they are in and could end up in a dangerous position.

I work really closely with families who have children with autism, and they told me what this bill would mean to them.

This morning, I was joined by the vice-president of the Ontario Autism Coalition, Tony Stravato, and several other families who are supporting this bill, because they know how important it is to have additional protections in place.

This alert would not just extend to children, it would extend to adults, as well. Shirley Love, a senior with dementia, passed away in Hamilton in December after she left her home, not dressed for the weather. Someone in her circumstances would be covered under the new alert.

The vulnerable persons alert would, if passed, provide police forces with an additional tool to help find people.

This bill is one more way that we can protect the ones we love and we know are in a dangerous situation. I hope that every member of this House will support this legislation.

TRILLIUM HEALTH PARTNERS FOUNDATION

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: Last week, I had the privilege to join the Premier and the Minister of Health at Credit

Valley Hospital in Mississauga to celebrate a record-breaking, historic donation of \$75 million to the Trillium Health Partners Foundation from Mississauga's Orlando Corp., Canada's largest privately owned real estate developer and landowner. I want to thank my friend Chairman Carlo Fidani, a great Italian Canadian community leader, for making the single-largest corporate donation to a hospital in Canadian history. The \$75 million will support the complete reconstruction and expansion of the Mississauga Hospital in Mississauga-Lakeshore, which will become the largest and most advanced hospital in Canada. It includes \$10 million to help build a new, urgently needed, two-floor mental health in-patient unit and \$15 million for Trillium's Institute for Better Health, to drive health research and innovation, to create a better and stronger health care system for everyone.

I want to thank my friend Raman Dua, the founder of Save Max Real Estate, for providing a patient's view of what this donation will mean.

As the Premier said, our friend Hazel McCallion, Trillium's honorary guardian, was smiling down on us.

Speaker, Orlando Corp. will match every dollar donated to the foundation at trilliumgiving.ca over the next 10 years. This will double the impact of their contribution, up to \$150 million.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing Orlando Corp. and their incredible support for the Trillium Health Partners and the Mississauga Hospital.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II'S PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDAL

Ms. Stephanie Bowman: On the eve of International Women's Day, I would like to highlight just a few of the amazing women from my riding of Don Valley West who play a vital role in our community and serve as an inspiration to those around them, including myself. These are just some of the recent winners of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee award.

Shakhlo Sharipova is the founder of the autism support network in Thorncliffe Park and recently also won the Agnes Macphail Award. Shakhlo is an important advocate for children and their families seeking support.

Lisa Grogan-Green is the co-chair of the Go Green Youth Centre, an innovative, sustainable, biodiverse recreational space for the Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park communities.

Susan Scandiffio, a long-time community volunteer, recognized that about half of the households in the Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park neighbourhoods sat at or below the poverty line, even before COVID hit. So, during COVID, Susan helped found a food bank with the Neighbourhood Organization, which helps address food insecurity for some of these families and now serves over 2,200 households.

I want to thank all the incredible women in Don Valley West who work tirelessly to improve our community every day and I want to recognize and thank all the

Queen's Jubilee award recipients for their dedication to serving the community.

BRUCE POWER

Mr. Rick Byers: Ontario is fortunate to have one of the cleanest electricity grids in the world, over 90% emissions-free, and there's one reason why: Our nuclear sector provided the emissions-free electricity to phase out coal-fired generation in Ontario, one of the largest greenhouse gas reductions ever. In fact, Bruce Power provided 70% of that electricity.

Last week, Bruce Power began their second refurbishment on unit 3, which is part of the Life-Extension Program that will allow the Bruce site to continue providing clean, reliable, affordable energy through 2064, over 40 years from today.

Bruce Power supports good jobs—22,000 indirect and direct jobs—employing some of the best-paying and highest-skilled workers in Ontario. Bruce Power's head office is in my colleague Lisa Thompson's riding of Huron–Bruce, but the refurbishment program has meant suppliers like BWXT and Makwa-Cahill are setting up shop in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, greatly supporting the local economy.

In addition, Bruce Power and its partners, including the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, are commercially producing life-saving medical isotopes like lutetium-177 on a scale never seen before thanks to their innovative new isotope delivery system.

Clean energy to help reach our climate goals, good jobs that support Ontario and innovations to help advance global health care. Thank you, Bruce Power and all your workers, for the great job.

ENGINEERS

Mr. Vincent Ke: We know that it has been difficult for internationally trained professionals, such as professional engineers, to become licensed in Ontario. Ontario is committed to reducing red tape to increase the province's competitiveness, strengthen supply chains and make it easier to interact with services.

The licensing and regulating body for professional engineering is introducing changes to its licence application process that will make applying for an engineering licence more efficient, transparent and fair. Speaker, starting May 15, 2023, PEO's application process will ensure new applicants receive a registration decision within six months. It will also launch an improved online application system on July 1, 2023. The new application rules for obtaining a PEO licence comply with new requirements set by the provincial government under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act.

This change is welcome news for those seeking a licence through the PEO. It is also great news for our province as we seek to attract and retain skilled talent that we count on to help build and grow Ontario.

Speaker, by removing unnecessary burdens and barriers, Ontario leads the way to innovation, flexibility and progress.

1030

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 9(g), the Clerk has received written notice from the government House leader indicating that a temporary change in the weekly meeting schedule of the House is required, and therefore, the afternoon routine on Wednesday, March 8, 2023, shall commence at 1 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today the consul general of the Republic of Bulgaria in Toronto, Ms. Velislava Panova. Please join me in warmly welcoming her to the Legislature.

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I would like to welcome the family of one of our great pages, Adam Penner from my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. Adam is serving as a page captain today, and today Adam is joined by his dad Garth; his mom Bridget; his sister Sarah; and his grandmother Liz. Welcome to Queen's Park, Penner family, and thank you for being here to support Adam as he supports us in the Legislature.

Hon. Doug Downey: It is my pleasure to welcome to the Legislature members of AAAA Sanitation in the members' gallery: Brent Bunker, co-owner and operator; and Kimberly Dakin. Welcome to Queen's Park. We're thrilled to have you here.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm very pleased to welcome to the members' gallery today my in-laws, Dr. Antony Berger and Dr. Carol Harris. Thank you so much for joining us here.

Mr. Ric Bresee: I'm very happy today to introduce members of the Greater Napanee Pride committee. We have in the House Chris Beauchesne, Nina Irvine, Jeff Irvine, Austin Lloyd and Tiffany Lloyd. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Joel Harden: On my way up here, I ran into the autism advocates again. I want to welcome to the building, especially Michau, right over here. You're without tire, my friend. Good to see you.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome John Taylor and his team from the Ontario Mutuals to Queen's Park today. They will be hosting a reception for everyone. You're all welcome in room 228 and 230 over the noon hour.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: It is my privilege to introduce members of Innovative Medicines Canada—Susan Baker, Berkeley Vincent, Nadia Yee, Kiersten Combs, Frank Stramaglia—who are visiting Queen's Park today. Innovative medicine companies employ thousands of Ontarians, many of whom work in all of our ridings and

develop life-saving medicines and treatments that patients rely on. IMC will be meeting with MPPs over the course of the day and they are hosting a reception in 230 this evening from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laura Smith: I want to welcome our newest Thornhill OLIP intern, Ms. Sharon Lee.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to introduce my friend Amanda Meek who's here today with Eli Lilly Canada. Welcome.

Hon. David Piccini: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature a friend of mine, Tina Beaudry-Mellor. She was the Minister of Advanced Education with the government of Saskatchewan and now is a pioneer for women in cyber security working at Deloitte. Welcome to Queen's Park, Tina.

Ms. Patrice Barnes: I am pleased to welcome Women's Brain Health Initiative president, Lynn Posluns, and the executive director, Joanne Korten, to the Legislature today. Today, they are having their advocacy day at Queen's Park, so MPPs, please look out and meet with them. They will also be having a reception tonight at 5 p.m. in room 228.

QUESTION PERIOD

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning. This question is for the Premier. Journalists at the Toronto Star are investigating a controversial government program that caused many Ontarians to unnecessarily lose their driver's licences and their livelihoods. Public servants prepared detailed answers to reporters' questions, but according to records uncovered by freedom of information, the Offices of the Premier and of the Minister of Transportation blocked them from going out. Those 35 questions should have had 35 answers, but your government muzzled staff on every answer.

So my question to the Premier: Why did the Premier and the transportation minister try to keep this information from the public?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank for Leader of the Opposition for her question. Ontario's roads are among the safest anywhere in North America, and mandatory reporting for physicians and optometrists has been in place in this province since 1968. The Ministry of Transportation oversees a rigorous process that adheres to national medical standards, and Ontario's program is closely aligned with that of other provinces.

Multiple statements were provided to the reporter, including an in-depth briefing with subject matter experts from the Ministry of Transportation on the driver medical reporting program. The goal of the program is to protect the public from individuals who have a medical condition that makes it unsafe for them to drive. We are continuing

to review all programs within the Ministry of Transportation to make sure that our roads remain the safest in North America.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Again, it was 35 questions—not one answer, and every indication that this government muzzled civil servants.

This is not the first time this government has interfered in the work of the independent public service. In fact, just last month, the Premier and this same minister were caught withholding important information about public transportation projects from the public.

Speaker, I agree with Democracy Watch. This is the kind of dangerous, undemocratic secrecy that covers up wrongdoing and abuse and prevents problems from being solved.

So again, back to the Premier: What exactly was his office trying to hide?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm happy to repeat the response that I gave previously. Multiple statements were given to the reporter in question, including an in-depth briefing by Ministry of Transportation officials on the program itself to answer their questions directly.

With respect to the building of the largest public transit infrastructure program anywhere in North America, Metrolinx has been working closely with community groups and with affected stakeholders. Over 100 meetings were held with city of Toronto officials since the beginning of the program, since city council itself voted in favour of our subway program. Over 30 meetings were held with the specific member of the opposition to discuss their concerns about issues that are affecting their community members. We're going to continue to work closely with the city and with members—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

The final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Nothing to see here, eh? Nothing to see.

More than 280,000 Ontarians had their licences revoked for apparently medical reasons over 10 years. Ontarians deserve a government that they can trust. They deserve a government that's straight-up with them, but instead, they are getting this pattern of secretive behaviour: questionable deals with insider developers on the greenbelt, secret mandate letters, mysterious contingency funds, sneaky ministerial zoning orders, and now, they're squashing information and the facts about this licensing program.

If the Premier had nothing to hide, why won't he be transparent with the people of this province?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I hate to disappoint the Leader of the Opposition, who clearly wants to construct a narrative that has nothing to do with the facts themselves.

In 2020, our government conducted a study in conjunction with the University of South Wales and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. That study looked at the medical reporting program in Ontario over a 10-year period and

found that our program was effective and it saved lives across the province, Mr. Speaker. That is the purpose of the program.

1040

As I have said, we have met, we have provided multiple statements to the reporter in question, including an in-depth briefing that that reporter participated in to pose his questions directly to subject matter experts. We're going to continue to evaluate the program to make sure that it meets the needs of Ontarians and keeps our roads as safe as they've been—among the safest anywhere in North America.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: There have been no answers from the government—no transparency. Thank goodness we have some accountability, because this morning, the Patient Ombudsman released their annual report. They received more than 3,000 complaints last year with one common theme: a lack of staffing and a lack of access to care.

Hospitals are struggling under this government's staffing crisis, and, worse, the ombudsman is warning that this government's expensive, ideological push toward two-tier health care is only going to prolong the issue.

My question is to the Premier. Will you stop taking nurses to court, get the lights back on in public operating rooms and get Ontarians the health care they need?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'll remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health to reply.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: First of all, I'd like to thank the Patient Ombudsman. Since the Office of the Patient Ombudsman has been in existence, they've been a valuable tool to assess where we need to make improvements.

There is no doubt that the investments that we have made in terms of the Learn and Stay program at colleges and universities to allow nurses, lab technicians and paramedics in northern Ontario to be able to have their tuition and books covered are making a difference in terms of ensuring that we have sufficient health human resources.

I have to point out a very successful partnership that we have with the College of Nurses of Ontario, where in the summer we directed them to ensure that individuals who are internationally educated had their applications assessed and ultimately approved and licensed in the province of Ontario. Historic—7,000 new nurses in the province of Ontario are practising today that wouldn't have been there without that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: But more are leaving every day, right? More are leaving every day, so you can't keep up. Anybody who has had any experiences in the health care system over the last few years knows this.

Speaker, it gets worse. Yesterday, we heard from experts in the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health at public accounts committee. They acknowledged that the lights are off in public hospital operating rooms while this

government hands million-dollar contracts to for-profit clinics.

As our health critic asked multiple times yesterday, I want to also ask the Premier: Why are you denying public hospitals the opportunity you're giving to for-profit companies for additional surgeries and diagnostic imaging?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the Premier to reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, I will give the sheer facts: since 2018, over 60,000—60,000—nurses and 8,000 new doctors registered here in Ontario, more than ever in the history of our province—and I want to thank the college of nurses for bringing on 12,000 new nurses last year. As they said—not us—that was a record. But even better, Mr. Speaker, we have 30,000 nurses in our colleges and universities being trained to get into the field. That's what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Again, it feels like the Twilight Zone in here. I don't know where this Premier is and who he's talking to, but he isn't talking to Ontarians. He's not talking to Ontarians. This is not the reality of what's happening out there.

The thing is, Speaker, this government's plan, this two-tier plan, is unnecessary, it's time-consuming and it's totally wasteful. We already have the infrastructure we need to shorten the wait times. But because of this government's staffing crisis, one third of Ontario's operating rooms aren't running at full capacity.

Speaker, to the Premier again: Will this government fund public hospitals to properly use existing OR space instead of giving those funds to for-profit clinics?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, with the greatest of respect, we have and we are. Since the pandemic, \$8 million has been available to hospitals across Ontario to ensure that they can ramp up ORs when they have capacity—\$8 million. And last year alone, we offered hospitals the opportunity to expand their ORs by over \$300 million. We've made those expansions, and our hospital partners have truly stepped up.

But we are not stopping there because this is not an either-or, this is an and. We can also expand our community surgical, and we've done that in Windsor, in Kitchener-Waterloo and in Ottawa through the expansion of existing infrastructure in community care that is now allowing more people access to cataract surgery. We're getting the work done.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Chandra Pasma: While our kids are struggling without adequate supports, teachers and education workers are burning out from working short-staffed and our school boards are so underfunded that they're talking about closing schools, this government is not even spending the funds they promised to. The Financial Accountability Office reported last week that the government has underspent on schools by \$432 million so far this year.

Just think how many schools \$432 million could keep open, or how many EAs that could pay for.

Why is this government failing to invest in our kids?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Education.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We are investing an additional \$680 million this school year alone because we are committed to helping kids catch up after a global pandemic that has set so many children back in this province and around the world.

When it comes to mental health, we've increased funding by 400%—\$90 million; for special education, that funding is up to the highest levels in the history of Ontario at \$3.2 billion—\$90 million more. When it comes to building schools, we have a \$14-billion capital commitment over the next decade to build, modernize and renew our publicly funded schools after a decade of darkness under the former Liberal government.

We are going to continue to invest in each and every budget to get these kids back on track.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Chandra Pasma: You're not actually investing if the money doesn't actually get out the door.

Let's put this underfunding in concrete terms, Speaker. The Toronto District School Board is in a precarious financial situation because, like many school boards, they were forced to pay \$70 million out of their own reserves for the government's COVID measures. You heard that right—despite the government having billions in unspent COVID relief funds, they made underfunded local school boards foot the bill.

Now, with their reserves depleted and not enough funding from this government, the TDSB is looking at cutting 485.5 staff positions in order to balance their budget—485 teachers, EAs, child and youth workers, ECEs and custodians gone when kids are already not getting the help they need.

Will the Minister of Education commit today to repaying school boards for their COVID expenditures and giving them the resources they need to provide kids with more supports, not less?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Mr. Speaker, if the members of the opposition were so committed to increased staffing in schools, they would not have opposed 7,000 additional staff hired in the province by this Progressive Conservative government—that is your record. Systematically opposing investments in publicly funded schools to hire more psychologists, more psychotherapists, more educators, EAs and ECEs—that is the record of the NDP and the Liberal Party.

Under this party, under our Premier, we are investing in more staffing, in more resources, in a tutoring program that never existed in this country, the largest ever—\$175 million to allow hundreds of thousands of kids get small group tutoring. We expanded investments because we know we need to lift the standards when it comes to reading, writing and math, getting back to the basics, helping these kids succeed.

We will continue in every single year to increase the investments in our children.

LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Ontario is home to the largest life sciences sector in Canada, which employs thousands of workers in high-skilled jobs. But with competition growing south of the border and in other parts of the world, we need to remain competitive if we're going to continue attracting these important and critical investments.

Speaker, will the minister please tell us how the government plans to promote the province as a place where global companies and entrepreneurs choose to invest, and ensure that services offered and products made here in Ontario benefit Ontario?

1050

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Last week, we were thrilled to welcome Novartis as they opened a brand new office in downtown Toronto. There are now more than 150 Ontario employees working for Novartis, including 50 in that brand new state-of-the-art office in the MaRS building. This investment from Novartis is creating more well-paying, high-skill jobs while strengthening Ontario's world-class life sciences sector.

This comes on the heels of last week's announcement from AstraZeneca, who are creating 500 well-paying jobs at their Canadian R&D hub in Mississauga. These back-to-back investments in Ontario are a vote of confidence for our thriving life sciences sector, and it is a strong signal to the rest of the world that Ontario is the best place to invest and grow.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary question?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the minister for his answer. There is no doubt that Ontario's booming life sciences sector has contributed to the province's economic prosperity, but in order to continue attracting game-changing investments, Ontario needs to demonstrate that it is able to compete with other jurisdictions and show that we are open for business.

Speaker, will the minister please share how this government is ensuring that Ontario is a top-tier global jurisdiction for life sciences innovation?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Under the previous government, Ontario was unable to compete for investments in the life sciences sector, leaving our hands tied and us reliant on other jurisdictions for critical medicine. That is why we released the province's first life sciences strategy in more than a decade, and it includes a \$15-million Life Sciences Innovation Fund, with other important commitments to the industry.

Speaker, we have attracted nearly \$3 billion in life sciences investments in just the last 24 months. That put 70,000 skilled employees working in more than 1,900 life sciences firms, because Ontario has the formula for

success and everything global companies need to survive and to thrive.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre.

Speaker, since the government took power, they have talked a whole lot about the overcrowding problem in our hospitals. Unfortunately, last week in Collingwood, a 32-year-old father was seriously injured at work. It took almost eight long hours until they were able to find a hospital with a vacant ICU bed to meet his needs.

What does the government have to say to families who are victims of the overcrowding problem they promised to fix five years ago?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: You know, when I heard about that story—devastating news for the family and the friends of that individual. But I want to be clear: That was not as a result of hospital capacity issues. That was a result of someone who was going to a hospital that needed a much higher level of care.

Now, if we look at the investments that our government is making: over 50 new capital projects in our hospital systems; new hospitals in Brampton; new hospitals in Windsor, in Ottawa, in Niagara—we are investing to ensure that hospitals have the expansion plans. We have done that through, again, 50 different capital builds that are now approved in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, the health care crisis in our hospitals is real. The overcrowding crisis in our hospitals is real. It has a direct impact on the quality and the timeliness of care that is available to people. This time, the consequences are a dead worker, a young widow and a fatherless two-year-old son.

How many more families will be broken before the government addresses the health care worker crisis in our overcrowded hospitals?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, Speaker, I reinforce how devastating that news is to that family, those friends, that community, but I also want to offer some hope to the people of Ontario, that we have 50 new hospital builds that are happening in the province of Ontario. Whether those are brand new facilities, expansions or additions, it speaks to the fact that we, as a government, are making that commitment and ensuring that when people need care, it is available in their own community.

For that individual and that family—absolutely devastating, without a doubt, but the care that was needed and necessary for that individual was in another hospital and they were being taken there, of course, by Ornge, when, unfortunately, he succumbed to his injuries.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Ontario's agri-

food sector is vital to the economic success of our province, yet high cost of inputs, supply chain challenges, inflation, geopolitics and volatility in the markets continue to impact Ontario farmers and the important work they do. For our farmers to succeed, they need to know that the government will supply them with the investments they need to improve their productivity, competitiveness and resilience.

Our farmers and agri-food partners expect governments of all stripes and all levels to work together to ensure that Ontario remains a leader in food production and food security. Speaker, could the minister please explain what measures this government is taking to support this crucial sector?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you to the member from Niagara West for his question. I want to assure everyone listening today that the Ontario agri-food sector continues to be a number one priority for our government.

I'm very pleased to share that we created, through a federal-provincial-territorial initiative in the fall of 2021 in Guelph, a Guelph statement that provided the framework for a negotiation to realize greater investments through a federal-provincial partnership. And the member from Niagara West just witnessed, last week, a historic signing whereby Minister Bibeau, federal Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and myself, signed a \$1.77-billion agreement to deliver for Ontario's agri-food sector—programs like the suite of business risk management, stewardship initiatives and investment in strategic priorities, will be realized because of this historic agreement. The future is bright for Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the minister. I was very thankful to be able to be a signatory witness to this historic agreement, and it's significant that this agreement was signed in Niagara, one of the most productive and diverse growing regions in the entire country.

I'm proud of the contributions that farmers in Niagara and across the rest of this province make to our great province. I know that we all see and value their hard work and sacrifice.

I know this agreement represents a positive measure to support growers and farm families in my riding and in so many ridings across this great province, but our farmers know, and our government knows, that more can always be done.

Ontario has many different agri-food partners and many different producers. Each of these various agricultural groups has unique needs, concerns and face different challenges. Speaker, how will this new agreement benefit and support our various sector partners—could the minister tell this House?

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: This agreement that we signed last week represents a 25% increase over and above the last partnership that we had with the federal government. It will continue to see farmers and our agri-food sector grow forward. It complements the strategy that we introduced last fall and, more importantly, it complements

initiatives already in place. For instance, we have a ministry advisory committee known as the soil action group that informs how we move forward to ensure that farmers have the tools and best practices available to them to see yield increases year over year. Moreover, we're introducing initiatives to support innovation and research so our processors, in tandem with the good work of our Ontario farmers, are processing more food, not only to satisfy Ontario demand but demand across Canada and around the world.

The future is bright. I am so very proud of how our commodity organizations are working with our government here in Ontario to make sure—

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

The next question.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Minister of Health: Last week, I talked to Ms. Gulnar Visanji, who is constituent of mine. She called me because she suffers debilitating spinal pain and her pain specialist said, "You need surgery." She tells me she has not been able to even get on a waiting list with an orthopedic surgeon. Surgeons tell her they have waiting lists two years long and there's no point in taking her name.

1100

Why won't the minister help her and others to avoid this kind of unnecessary suffering?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I'm happy to work with the member opposite on the specific case file that he's referencing, but it's passing strange that, as we are talking about Bill 60 and the expansion of community surgical and diagnostic in community, you are asking a question that would actually assist—by allowing us to expand community and surgical units in community, it will ensure that there is more space and more capacity for the very challenging surgeries that the member opposite speaks of.

I am happy to help the individual he has referenced, but I would also like you to seriously take a look at Bill 60 and explain to that constituent why you are opposing it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister knows that if she actually put the money into the hospitals as they are now and opened up OR times, people would be getting the surgery they need now.

Ms. Visanji takes powerful painkillers to deal with her pain. She's frightened she might become addicted to them. She can't get the surgery she needs right now, and what the minister says is she's going to have to wait for this bill to pass. That doesn't help her today.

I'll give you her phone number. Will you commit to talking to her personally, helping to address her problem or explaining why she has to suffer needlessly?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Again, I will ask the member opposite why they are concerned about Bill 60 when we

are, in fact, allowing that expansion to happen. Respectfully, we have already done that expansion in our publicly funded hospitals by ensuring, in the last number of years, over \$800 million available to hospitals to make sure that they can expand their OR capacity.

But you know what, Speaker? It's not really about the money. It's ensuring that those individuals who are on those wait-lists get access to surgery quickly so that they can go back to their families, back to the community, back to their jobs. We are improving the patient experience by expanding clinical and surgical diagnostic in community. I would hope that the member opposite would support those initiatives.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Mike Schreiner: My question is to the Premier. Over \$9.6 billion: That is the direct economic benefit of Ontario's greenbelt. Farming, recreation and tourism create over 177,700 jobs in Ontario's greenbelt, generating rural economic activity and community prosperity. Greenbelt lands contribute \$3.2 billion of ecosystem services such as flood protection. Those jobs, that GDP and those benefits are at risk because of the Premier's scheme to open the greenbelt for development. All of that harm makes absolutely no sense, because the government's own housing task force has clearly stated that greenbelt farmlands and green space aren't needed to build housing.

Why is the Premier risking jobs and prosperity by breaking his promise not to open the greenbelt for development?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: In 2005, a typical Ontario home sold for \$263,000; last year, the average Ontario home sold for \$932,000, more than a threefold increase in 17 years. A young family, even those making a decent income, simply can't afford to buy a home that meets their needs and their budget. Our government is committed to fixing that. The Housing Affordability Task Force laid out a road map. The government has made some changes that incents getting affordable housing, non-profit housing and attainable housing in the ground. We're going to continue to build off that.

But if the member opposite thinks \$932,000 is an acceptable status quo to support, he's living in a dream world.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question?

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Speaker, with all due respect to the minister, the housing affordability crisis has gotten worse in the last five years under this government's watch. I want to build more homes and affordable communities. That's why I've introduced Bill 44 and Bill 45 to get rid of exclusionary zoning and to build homes that people can actually afford in communities they can actually afford to live in.

The Housing Affordability Task Force has put forward 55 recommendations. The government has failed to follow

many of them. As a matter of fact, they are absolutely contradicting one of the most explicit ones, which was to not open the greenbelt for development.

Experienced planners have shown that we already have enough land approved for development to build two million homes—two million homes—in communities where people can afford to live.

Sprawl is hugely expensive, so can this Premier explain why the government is creating so much risk and harm, opening the greenbelt for development, making life less affordable for people?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Again, I just want to set the facts—the member from Guelph has the least amount of housing starts in the entire province. He's not for affordable housing. He is not for affordable housing, or he'd be pushing it. As a matter of fact, who was against housing at the University of Guelph? He shot it down. The council shot it down—right on the property of the University of Guelph.

Guess what, Mr. Speaker? I spoke to a parent, and their kids have to pay \$2,500 outside the University of Guelph because there's not enough rental, not enough housing. We have a housing crisis.

I'd like to ask the member from Guelph, where are you going to house the 300,000 people who are showing up every single year? He doesn't have a solution. He wants to complain, but I never heard him say a word when the Liberals changed the greenbelt 17 times—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. I remind the members to make their comments through the Chair.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Start the clock. The next question.

RED TAPE REDUCTION

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of Red Tape Reduction. Our government is taking the lead on making Ontario better for people and businesses by removing unnecessary, redundant and outdated regulations. Recently, we debated the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act. It's an important package that proposes 28 changes to improve Ontario's competitiveness, build stronger supply chains and develop a more resilient agricultural sector. One of the proposed changes in the act is to allow Ontario to begin the process of permitting carbon capture and storage activities in a phased and responsible manner. This is an important step in helping critical industries transition to a low-carbon economy, creating, supporting and sustaining jobs across Ontario.

Speaker, can the Minister of Red Tape Reduction share some of the economic benefits of moving forward with this important initiative?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for that important question. As part of the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, our government is proposing amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to end the provision of carbon capture and storage activities here in the province of Ontario. We know there is massive economic potential in adopting carbon capture and storage and other low-carbon technologies. We also know that some of the other provinces are already taking advantage of the carbon capture and storage technology, which has helped create thousands of new jobs. This technology is good for the economy. It is good for the environment. We need to make sure we are not leaving Ontario businesses behind and that we're doing everything we can to support them and make sure that they are competitive on the world stage.

On this side of the House, we will always say yes to good Ontario jobs.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the minister for that excellent answer. I'm excited about the potential of carbon capture and storage right here in Ontario. We know that reducing red tape is an important step in unlocking Ontario's economic potential.

Last month, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business released its annual Provincial Red Tape Report Card, where they grade each province on their efforts to reduce red tape and regulatory burdens over the last year. Ontario was recognized as a leader in our country in prioritizing red tape reduction, with special recognition in the creation of a stand-alone ministry.

While this is encouraging news, we all know that more needs to be done to ensure that we are lifting burdens and removing barriers when it comes to red tape. Speaker, can the minister please share how government is saving people and businesses time and money by reducing red tape?

Hon. Parm Gill: I want to thank my colleague for that excellent question once again.

This year, Mr. Speaker, Ontario received the highest ever placement in the 13-year history of the CFIB Red Tape Report Card, being recognized with the Golden Scissors Award “one to watch” for regulatory modernization, permitting and licensing. It's fair to say that our work to reduce red tape is being noticed across the country. Thanks to our ongoing efforts to reduce red tape, it is saving businesses and consumers time and millions of dollars in savings—altogether over half a billion dollars in compliance costs.

Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, under this government, under the leadership of our Premier, Ontario will always show strong leadership when it comes to reducing red tape and continue to make Ontario more competitive.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is to the Premier. Shudeshna and her neighbours have problems with their

condo. They called because their units have not had heat for weeks this winter, and they're unsafe, because the building is being broken into and their property manager refuses to improve security. They're also concerned because there is no effective regulator, agency or tribunal that can step in and help them. I believe this has got to change.

Premier, this is my question: Can you strengthen and improve the condo tribunal, so Ontario condo residents have a place to go when they face issues like these?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery.

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Our government takes matters of consumer protection in the condo sector very seriously, and I will never stop taking necessary action to protect Ontarians across the province.

My ministry actually did welcome the Auditor General's feedback on Ontario's condo sector, and has already begun consulting on ways to actively improve and expand the condo authority tribunal and its powers. I had a very fruitful conversation with the member opposite in regard to the tribunal.

We are never stopping our efforts to improve protections for all Ontarians and ensure they have a safe and secure place they all call home.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question: the member for London North Centre.

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: Speaker, back to the Premier: The condo tribunal is not doing nearly enough to protect residents. The Minister of Government Services and Consumer Protection already has the fixes in front of him—they need to be implemented. The condo tribunal is not doing nearly enough to protect residents.

My constituent Charlene told me that the board president where she lives unilaterally fired the construction company mid-project and hired his own cousin. Now, residents have to pay enormous payments for the lawsuit, the lien and pay again for construction. They're worried that they're going to be paying more in condo fees than their mortgage. Some are moving out or relying on friends to help with groceries.

Premier, will you listen to condo residents like Charlene and strengthen the condo tribunal so that Ontarians have protections?

Hon. Kaleed Rasheed: Mr. Speaker, actually we are listening to the residents and we are listening to stakeholders across the province when it comes to the Condominium Tribunal Authority.

It is this government, actually, that is making condo boards fairer and more transparent and improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of Ontarians who call a condo a home. We will continue to work with the condo sector, implement the changes suggested by the Auditor General and ensure that condo owners across the province are provided with the treatment they expect and deserve, and we will continue to work with our stakeholders and work with the recommendations that were provided to us by the Auditor General to make sure that Ontarians deserve and

feel good when they are making the biggest purchase of their lives.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Adil Shamji: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. One of the most important jobs of government is to preserve and protect the well-being of its citizens, particularly its most vulnerable. On this fundamental task, there's near-universal agreement that this government has failed over and over and over again.

My perspective on our health care system is of course well known. But I'm equally stunned at the manner in which the Ontario Autism Program has essentially collapsed. Consider this: There are well over 60,000 children waiting for services on the OAP. The OAP wait-list has more than doubled since 2018, and the government has fallen so far behind on its commitments that it has thrown up its hands and stopped reporting on statistics anymore. Families are spending tens of thousands of dollars to access services, selling their assets and putting their lives on hold.

Without bringing up hollow promises, can the minister explain to the autism community and Ontarians how the Ontario Autism Program has become such a failure under this government's leadership?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member opposite for the opportunity to clarify the facts. When we formed government, it was very clear that the previous Liberal government had failed to deliver the program needed to support thousands of children and had the fraction of the children that were ever going to receive any support under that previous program. It's why our government immediately doubled the funding to the Ontario Autism Program. It's why our government has five times as many children enrolled and receiving supports than the previous Liberal government. And that's why we have created AccessOAP, with care coordinators who help people navigate through the system, a comprehensive system that we heard from people—they wanted occupational therapy, speech therapy, mental health supports, and we added those in. We've been listening to the autism community. That's why we created a program designed by the autism community—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

The supplementary?

Mr. Adil Shamji: Mr. Speaker, this government has a very consistent pattern: Promise lots of money only for it to never materialize.

The minister can try to revise history as she wants, but the reality is that MCCSS is failing to meet its own required operating standard—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'm going to caution the member on his use of language. He can continue his question and conclude it.

Mr. Adil Shamji: MCCSS is failing to meet its own required operating standard, and as per the last FAO report, has underspent by nearly half a billion dollars. In

August, only 888 children with autism were registered in core therapies. Many more children can't even get a diagnosis, meaning they can't even join a waiting list. And my LA just texted me a few minutes ago saying we got another message from a constituent about how OAP is harming children.

My question: How will the minister resurrect the Ontario Autism Program that has withered on the vine under this government?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: That's pretty stunning. That is a stunning commentary from the member opposite, who obviously is lacking information or facts of exactly what we're doing. We have expanded the diagnostic hubs. We have created capacity at children's treatment centres that the previous Liberal government never bothered to do because it never provided the funding or the capacity to deliver the services that we are now catching up on because the previous Liberal government never did it, and they were supported by the NDP. They said no, budget after budget, to the largest expenditure in Ontario history for children with autism. They said no to the children's treatment centres across Ontario. They said no to the Ontario process for AccessOAP to provide care navigation to children's families who were vulnerable and needed support. You said no, no, no. We said yes, yes, yes.

1120

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is to the Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Every year, more than one million Ontarians experience a mental health or addiction issue. This can have a serious impact on their quality of life and that of everyone around them.

Last year, one person died every week from an opioid poisoning in the city of Peterborough. Unfortunately, services have been unequal and inconsistent, with too many gaps in the system. As a result, those who need help are too often unable to find it.

Other provinces such as Alberta are seeing success by investing in a recovery-oriented system of care. Can the associate minister please explain how our Ontario government is approaching treatment and recovery programs for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to thank the member for that question. I know he's been a tireless advocate for the people of Peterborough-Kawartha on this issue, and I want to thank him as well for his work.

Alberta is certainly seeing success with their program, and I applaud them for it. We will always look for successful models wherever they can be found and make sure we incorporate what we know will work here in the province of Ontario.

The goal of our government is to provide people with substance use issues treatment and recovery so that they can live a drug-free life. To meet these unique needs, our approach is to make unprecedented investments in building a continuum of care that provides low-barrier

access to critical treatment and recovery facilities. We are also ensuring that naloxone, drug testing facilities, harm reduction and consumption and treatment sites are available across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we have a model where we have supports for individuals, and it's being funded—

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

The supplementary question?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the minister for the response. The sad reality is that Ontarians are struggling to find the help they need when experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge. Our government made a commitment to do something about it. I know the minister recognizes that there is no linear path for anyone who needs supports, and he's spoken repeatedly about the continuum of care.

In Peterborough, we're listening and collaborating with various partners to build a system that meets the needs of the people where they need it and when they need it. Can the associate minister please elaborate on how our government is providing services to support my community?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: As I was saying, our investments through the Roadmap to Wellness, the Addictions Recovery Fund, youth wellness hubs, mobile crisis intervention teams—we're building a continuum of care. Particularly in Peterborough-Kawartha, we've established the Opioid Response Hub in downtown. We're piloting an innovative non-residential recovery program, Right to Heal, significantly expanding withdrawal management services and just recently drove two new mobile mental health clinics off the parking lot. Perhaps most importantly, we're working with community health providers to add 12 new addiction treatment beds in Peterborough through the Addictions Recovery Fund.

But let's be clear: This isn't the end of our work. It's just the beginning, not only in Peterborough but across the province of Ontario. This government is going to continue working for the people of the province of Ontario by expanding and improving our continuum of care.

ELDER ABUSE

MPP Lise Vaugeois: Some 60,000 older Canadians are the victims of neglect, financial, psychological, physical and institutional abuse. Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario works very hard to help older Canadians escape abuse. However, they have not received a funding increase in the 20 years of their existence, so they're working on a shoestring. They've got a lot of volunteers. They are so burnt out.

Will the Premier ensure that the Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario organization receives an increase in their annual grant to at least match the rate of inflation?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'd like to thank the member opposite for such an important question. Social isolation is enemy number one for our seniors. That is why

our government has invested in programs to make sure seniors stay fit, healthy and connected in their communities. To combat social isolation and to fight against ageism, we have invested over \$22 million into more than 1,500 seniors community grants.

Seniors are the backbone of this province, and we will continue to make Ontario a place where seniors thrive.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary question?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: During COVID, when so many seniors experienced extreme isolation, rates of abuse increased by 250%, yet the government chose this time to actually cut Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario's funding. They went from a budget of \$900,000—which is not a lot, considering that they're supposed to cover the entire province—down to \$800,000. That's a very significant cut, and that was during COVID, when seniors were isolated and really needed the help.

Will the government live up to its obligations to older Ontarians and increase funding for the important work of preventing elder abuse?

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you again for the question. The pandemic has put significant strain on the lives of seniors in Ontario. That is why we have invested \$59 million since 2018 to fund nearly 300 seniors active living centres across the province. They deliver activities, programs that keep seniors active and socially connected. Through our senior fairs, we are helping seniors connect to local organizations and each other, all across Ontario. These are a few of the ways we are fighting social isolation and helping seniors stay healthy, active and socially connected.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: My question is for the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. Sadly, gender-based violence and domestic violence continue to endanger the safety of many women in our province. No woman should be subjected to violence in any form. Everyone deserves the right to be supported and feel safe in their homes and in their communities. It is crucial that those affected by violence and exploitation receive the supports they need while offenders are held accountable through the justice system.

I know that our government is breaking down barriers so women who have experienced violence can receive the help they need, no matter where they are in the province. Responding to this issue must remain a priority. Speaker, can the minister describe our government's ongoing commitment to end violence against women?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you to the member from Oakville North–Burlington for that important question.

Everyone has the right to live in safety and with dignity, free from intimidation and the threat of violence. It's that simple. We're building on that ongoing work to support women and survivors of gender-based violence and connect them to needed services and supports, with \$8

million in additional funding over the next four years for dedicated provincial crisis lines to help more women get the help they need when and where they need it most.

This investment is in co-operation with the federal government as part of the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence. We are grateful for the federal government's partnership as we build capacity to support survivors, and we look forward to continuing to work together to eliminate violence against women.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): And the supplementary question?

1130

Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos: Thank you to the minister for her response. I know that all members of this Legislature agree that every woman has the right to live in safety and with dignity, free from intimidation, coercion and the threat of violence.

What is needed now is timely intervention and access to a variety of supports to help women who are at risk where and when they need it. The government must ensure we are supporting survivors who are escaping violent situations and providing them with the supports they need to enable them to start new lives, with futures free from abuse and free from fear.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how investments made by our government will lead to tangible outcomes for women across our province who are experiencing violence?

Hon. Merrilee Fullerton: Thank you again. These crisis lines are free, confidential and available 24/7 to help ensure those affected by violence or sexual exploitation can access supports they need anywhere, any time.

In addition to 24-hour crisis counselling, the lines offer triage support, such as referrals to women's shelters and specialized programming to help survivors rebuild their lives and heal from trauma. This investment supports multiple organizations, including:

- the Assaulted Women's Helpline, which provides services in over 200 languages;

- Fem'aide, which offers crisis counselling and referral services for francophone and French-speaking women; and

- Talk4Healing, which provides culturally responsive services for Indigenous women and their families in urban, rural, remote and First Nations communities.

Working together, we can end violence against women and we're going to continue towards this important goal.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. More than 65,000 people in the London area do not have a family doctor, including almost one quarter of the patients who go to St. Joseph's Hospital urgent care, a significant increase since just last year.

Ruqqaiya lives in London West and she has been listed with Health Care Connect for almost two years. She was diagnosed with cancer after an ER visit last year and was treated with surgery. Without a family doctor, she has no

choice but to keep going to the ER for all monitoring and follow-up care.

Speaker, whatever this government is doing is not working. How much longer do Londoners have to wait before they will be able to find a family doctor?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I hope the member opposite has received a copy of the Your Health document that has been circulated to all MPPs because it actually highlights in that document exactly the expansion that we have in the works to expand the number of family health practitioners and primary care practitioners practising in the province of Ontario.

In fact, since our government formed government, we have had over 1,800 new family docs practise in the province of Ontario. Of course, we also have two—not one—new medical schools that are being built. In fact, in Brampton alone, we are going to have new family docs who are registered and starting to practise their studies in September 2024 because we were able to work with a partnership with the city of Brampton to find an existing building, renovate it and get those students in training as quickly as possible.

I'm proud of the work that we're doing—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Again to the Premier: Katerina Alexander-Wills also lives in London West. She's been looking for a family doctor for four years—so long that her Health Care Connect listing expired and had to be resubmitted. She hasn't had a physical in almost 10 years despite her family history of medical concerns.

Mo Olajide is a nurse and has been looking for a doctor for her family since she moved to London in September 2021. Another constituent emailed me on Friday; she's pregnant and needs regular care.

Speaker, does this Premier understand that forcing people to go to urgent care or the ER after a serious problem develops is not only costly to the system, but bad for patient health?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: The member opposite is highlighting exactly why we, as a government, have made these investments since 2018. And, in fact, if you would review the Your Health document I hope you shared with those constituents, you will see that our expansion for a primary care model has already happened. In fact, in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, as well as in Minister Todd Smith's riding, we have expanded primary care and nurse practitioner-led clinics because we understand that they are a model that is working very effectively and ensuring that the people of Ontario have access to a primary care physician when they need it. We are continuing to do that work. We are continuing with those expansions of primary care, nurse practitioner-led clinics and working with our partners to make sure that we have—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock for a second.

The member for Brampton North and the member for Waterloo, if they wish to have a conversation—we're in the midst of question period, and we still have a few seconds.

We'll start the clock again. The next question.

WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. Dave Smith: My question is for the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity. Our government is building a province where all women and girls are empowered to succeed. That starts with getting more women into jobs than ever before. Women entrepreneurs are essential to our province's economic success, accounting for nearly 20% of all small and medium-sized businesses in Ontario.

I was proud to join the associate minister at a round table hosted by the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce. We had the opportunity to hear from many women leaders in my community. From our discussions, many women identified that they continue to experience challenges, barriers and red tape in starting and scaling up their businesses.

Speaker, what actions is our government taking to support the advancement of economic opportunity for women in our province?

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: Mr. Speaker, I was thrilled to be in Peterborough recently with the member. We had a great opportunity to engage with local businesses and join a round table with the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce. We heard first-hand accounts of some of the many unique and disproportionate economic barriers women face when starting or scaling up their businesses. That's why our government is taking a multi-pronged approach to unlock more opportunities for women in the modern post-pandemic economy. We are supporting women as they enter and re-enter the workforce, with programs like the Investing in Women's Futures Program and the Women's Economic Security Program. And we are opening opportunities for women to pursue entrepreneurship as a flexible career path with the regional innovation centre and small business enterprise networks.

We are breaking barriers, helping businesses grow and getting it done, because we believe that when women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

CANADA WINTER GAMES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport has informed me he has a point of order.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: The 2023 Canada Winter Games wrapped up in PEI this past Sunday. I just wanted us to show our appreciation to the leadership group, the coaches and especially the athletes, for accumulating a total of 108 medals. Thank you all for your competition.

Applause.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood, I believe, has a point of order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I do have a student here from Toronto Metropolitan University, Ileri Oluwa Promise. Promise is interning as a co-op student in my constituency office in Scarborough–Guildwood. Please welcome her, as she is in the east gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business this morning, this House stands in recess until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: Je voudrais souhaiter la bienvenue à des élèves de ma circonscription, Hamilton-Ouest–Ancaster–Dundas. Bienvenue aux élèves de l'école élémentaire Monseigneur-de-Laval. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF GOVERNMENT BILLS

QUEEN'S PARK RESTORATION ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA RESTAURATION DE QUEEN'S PARK

Mr. Calandra moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to enact the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023, and to make certain amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act / Projet de loi 75, Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur le Secrétariat de la restauration de Queen's Park et apportant certaines modifications à la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative et à la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the minister care to briefly explain his bill?

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Speaker. The legislation proposes a foundation on which the comprehensive and long-overdue restoration of this building can be carried out. It proposes a project framework which includes government responsibility, transparency and accountability, balanced with parliamentary oversight and substantive opportunities for input and decision-making for elected members from all parties through both a standing committee of this House and the Board of Internal Economy.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESPECTING WORKERS IN HEALTH CARE AND IN RELATED FIELDS ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LE RESPECT D'UN AUX TRAVAILLEURS DU DOMAINE DE LA SANTÉ ET DE DOMAINES CONNEXES

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to require the minister to take certain steps to improve the working conditions of health care workers and workers in related fields / Projet de loi 76, Loi obligeant le ministre à prendre certaines mesures pour améliorer les conditions de travail des travailleurs du domaine de la santé et de domaines connexes.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Would the member like to briefly explain her bill?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. This bill is co-sponsored with the MPP from Sudbury, Mr. Jamie West, and the MPP from Niagara Falls, Mr. Wayne Gates.

The bill enacts the Respecting Workers in Health Care and in Related Fields Act, which requires the minister to take all necessary steps to ensure three things: first, no less than 70% of individuals employed at a hospital, long-term-care home or home care agency or with a health care provider be employed on a permanent and full-time basis; second, personal support workers receive at least \$8 an hour more than the minimum wage for each hour worked in addition to getting benefits, pension plans and paid sick leave; and third, that homemakers who work within the home care system receive at least the minimum wage for each hour worked, in addition to having the provisions of the Employment Standards Act. We're bringing homemakers under the labour act.

PETITIONS

ÉDUCATION EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Sandy Shaw: J'ai une pétition intitulée « Soutenez le système d'éducation francophone en Ontario.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Alors que les enfants francophones ont un droit constitutionnel à une éducation de haute qualité, financée par les fonds publics, dans leur propre langue;

« Alors que l'augmentation des inscriptions dans le système d'éducation en langue française signifie que plus de 1 000 nouveaux enseignants et enseignantes de langue française sont nécessaires chaque année pour les cinq prochaines années;

« Alors que les changements apportés au modèle de financement du gouvernement provincial pour la formation des enseignantes et enseignants de langue française signifient que l'Ontario n'en forme que 500 par an;

« Alors que le nombre de personnes qui enseignent sans certification complète dans le système d'éducation en langue française a augmenté de plus de 450 % au cours de la dernière décennie;

« Par conséquent, nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario de fournir immédiatement le financement demandé par le rapport du groupe de travail sur la pénurie des enseignantes et des enseignants dans le système d'éducation en langue française de l'Ontario et de travailler avec des partenaires pour mettre pleinement en oeuvre les recommandations. »

Je suis complètement d'accord, monsieur le Président. Je vais la signer et la donner à Wyatt pour mettre sur la table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jill Andrew: This petition is titled, "To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

"Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

"Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a 'basic income' of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP."

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I've affixed my signature, and I'm handing it to Riya for the Clerks.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I've received petitions from Extend Access to Post Adoption Birth Information, signed by Paul Dillon of Minden.

"Extend Access to Post-Adoption Birth Information.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas current legislation does not provide access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased;

"Whereas this barrier to accessing post-adoption birth information separates immediate family members and prohibits the children of deceased adopted people from gaining knowledge of their identity and possible Indigenous heritage;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to extend access to post-adoption birth information ... to next of kin, and/or extended next of kin, if an adult adopted person or a natural/birth parent is deceased."

I fully support this petition. I'll sign it and give it to page Yonglin to deliver to the table.

1510

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Laura Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this government has committed to building, expanding and repairing Ontario's highways and bridges, creating jobs and spurring economic growth;

"Whereas construction is well under way on the expansion of Highway 3;

"Whereas investment in key infrastructure greatly enhances the safety and economic output of our province;

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

"—continue to build Ontario, and focus on enhancing critical infrastructure;

"—work with local municipalities to effectively execute major infrastructure projects across the province."

I fully support this petition, I affix my name hereto and I will give it to legislative page Rohan.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank Sally Palmer for collecting these petitions. This petition is entitled a petition "To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

"Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live" during a period "of alarming inflation;

"Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a 'basic income' of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I support this petition, I'll affix my signature and provide it to page Mary so she can give it to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING MORE MINES

ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT L'AMÉNAGEMENT DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

MPP Jamie West: I'm proud to stand today to talk about Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. This bill is flawed—it's not terrible, but there are some flaws. I think there are things we can fix. I'm hopeful that, past second reading, it gets out to committee and gets out to the community and we can address those flaws to make this a stronger and better bill, which I think is the intent of what we do here.

I think all of us are aligned that mining is important. My background and my career is in mining, so I know I'm on board; I know my colleagues are, for sure, and I know the government side is, as well.

Mining includes three things: product, people, and the environment. You can break it down further than that, but at its core mining is a product—the metal and the minerals, for example.

Right now, the government is very excited about e-vehicles—critical minerals and electric vehicles. This is going to be a boom. This is going to be very, very important. It would have been more fortunate, I think, if they were excited in 2018, when they were ripping up charging stations. If they were excited in 2018, they wouldn't have been cancelling the incentive to buy EVs and hybrid vehicles. If they were excited for this in 2018, the Premier probably wouldn't have said, “That ship has sailed,” when GM workers were going to lose their jobs. But they're excited now, and better late than never. I'm glad that they were able to come around to this.

Just for the record, because I hear a lot about e-vehicles and mining and the excitement around it—it's going to be a boom, absolutely, but I just want to point out that mining and vehicles have always been important. If you were to strip everything not mining-related from a vehicle, you would have a couple of hoses, some plastic and a few seat covers, and the tires—and not even the whole tires, because tires are steel-belted. I say that just to refresh people that it's around us everywhere, in everything that we do. Sometimes people talk about EV vehicles and mining as if all our cars were Fred Flintstone vehicles that

were stone tires and wood on the sides. But mining has always been important.

Another product that mines have—and it's a bit of an ugly product—is tailing ponds. In the bill, it talks about advancing critical mineral projects by making it easier for companies to get a permit to recover minerals from mine tailings and waste. Those are the materials left behind after the target minerals are extracted. This is really important to the future of mining, especially in Ontario, if we want to position ourselves as global leaders.

Tailings are like a sludge that's left behind after you mill the muck that comes to the surface. You make a lot of this in a mine. Depending how rich your ore is, for every tonne of metal—the actual mineral you get out of it—you're going to leave about 20 to 200 tonnes of waste. So what happens is, they'll blast muck—people think it's gravel, but muck is big chunks of rock. They'll grind that down into a powder and a slurry paste. They use water, and they float it. Not to get too far into the weeds, but whatever isn't valuable, they pump out to tailings ponds. They pump this all day.

The history of tailing ponds is, they just keep building them bigger and bigger. There's some that, they get out of it—but it really is a liability for a lot of organizations. They take up a ton of space. In communities like mine, they threaten the nearby communities. I come from Sudbury, which is a mining town. We have a tailings pond and a children's pool right beside each other—a small lake, but it's a family lake that people go to.

There have been tailing dam failures in the past. A lot of people in mining really woke up to the fact—there have been a lot of major failures, but in 2019, Brazil had one that buried an entire town, and 267 people were killed when this happened, not to mention all the infrastructure that was destroyed. Since 2019, there have been 18 major tailing dam failures—six last year alone.

Canada's largest tailing spill was at Mount Polley mine, in 2014. They lost about 17 million cubic metres of water, eight million cubic metres of tailing and materials—so it's water and materials, and as they pump it into the tailings pond, the materials will sink to the bottom. With this spill, there were no penalties. There was a massive cleanup. There was environmental damage, obviously. It got into the water system—not to mention everything that it trampled in its wake. But there are no penalties currently in place for this.

I don't want to speak badly of the mining industry, because I know after these incidents, a lot of mining industries—including the one I worked at—invested very heavily in ensuring that their tailings ponds were fortified, had spillways and accommodations for it. But I don't know how well you can guarantee that every mining industry had done this. And I don't know how you can guarantee old tailing ponds are secured like this.

Tailings recovery is a green solution. It's win-win; it's money in the pockets for the mining companies, which is good for the communities and the workers who have the extra work. It cleans up the environment, which is good as well, and it's a real investment. When you see how much

ore and rock and muck is brought to the surface, compared to how much comes out of it, going to a place where you've paid for that already, you've paid to blast and drill and hoist—and going and being able to get it out of, basically, a pool is very, very fortunate.

A lot of these tailing ponds are decades old. The member from Essex, this morning, was talking about how mining is back, and when he was saying it, I was thinking to myself that I got hired at a mining company that was 100 years old. That's not traditional. But mining has been around for a very long time. So if you have 100 years of mining, you traditionally will have 100 years of tailings ponds and infrastructure in place. In the old days, just separation wasn't as good as it is now—there's still a little bit that gets away all the time. But as it settles, you're basically—if you think of the old Yukon rush days, when they panned for gold, there's minerals; there's gold in them there hills.

Removing the minerals from the tailings ponds will make the ponds smaller. It will reduce pollutants. It's also really profitable for mines because, like I said earlier, they've already paid to bring the stuff to the surface.

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Last night I was at the PDAC conference, and so were a lot of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle. I ran into Dr. Nadia Mykytczuk from MIRARCO, and I want to brag about her because she's from Sudbury. She was originally at Laurentian University, through the CCAA process—she wasn't there, but got picked up at MIRARCO, which has a great history for mining innovation. I'm not a doctor. I know, basically, what she's trying to do, because I toured tailing ponds and I worked in health and safety at our mine. I'm just going to quote from a Sudbury.com article where she explains the process. I'll start midway through:

“That's what we call biomining: using bacteria instead of a smelter as a catalyst to break down these materials and extract some of the metals that are left over.” The smelter is where you melt everything.

“If you take the biomining approach you can accelerate the process that causes acid mine drainage, but at the same time, by accelerating the process, you're releasing a lot of the iron, a lot of the sulphur, and any metals that remain. You can actually separate those out and you can deal with the iron and sulphur precipitated into a solid form and prevent it from causing acid mine drainage in the long term, and then also extract the metals that can help pay for that cleanup.”

Basically, what she's saying is that with this process—and it's used around the world, but I think she has a great idea locally for how we can do it more effectively—you can not only extract the valuable metals that you want, but you can also capture some of the waste product and make tailings a little safer. It's not 100% safer, but it's a really golden opportunity. So this part of the bill absolutely is a great idea and supportable.

We're going to be debating the budget very soon, so I want to make sure that I get on the record MIRARCO's budget submission, because I think this is important as

well. Their submission was called “Transforming mine waste into economic opportunity”—if the government is looking to look it up:

“The Centre for Mine Waste Biotechnology ... will be the first of its kind in Canada: a pilot-scale facility equipped with tools and expertise to move biotechnology-based bioremediation and bioleaching technologies more quickly to real-world mine settings. With support from the Ontario government, the centre can begin to achieve its vision to be a catalyst for transforming bench mine waste biotechnologies into commercial applications....

“Mine waste contains billions of dollars of untapped mineral content that is beyond the reach of traditional extraction methods. Processes such as bio-oxidation and bioleaching offer an environmentally sustainable way to extract this material from low-grade ores and mine wastes.”

The fact that stood out to me was that in Sudbury alone, you're looking at \$8 billion to \$10 billion. MIRARCO is looking to raise \$21 million, and that's combined investment from municipal, provincial and federal governments, private partners and industry partners, to establish a centre to deal with tailings and waste. Our portion, provincially, would be a portion of the \$21 million, but the recovery in Sudbury would be \$8 billion to \$10 billion.

So I just want to push it again—I was there when Nadia presented this to the finance committee, and I want to push again for it because I think this is a smart idea. I believe the minister is on board, as well; I don't want to speak for him, but I think he's in favour of this.

The next part I want to talk about is people. I'll speak about people and get back to the environment, because they're tied together.

There's a very famous statement that mining is more than the product. So what you'll hear a lot and what you'll see on posters on lunchroom walls or in the dry, where miners get changed in the morning, is, “The most important thing to come out of the mine is the worker.” I think we're all aligned on that. This bill doesn't really affect workers directly, but it could and probably would affect the community.

There are a few points from the press release on the bill—I'm just going to summarize and speak in bulk. These are the ones I have problems with. One of them is that Bill 71 replaces “director of mine rehabilitation” anywhere this occurs in the Mining Act with “minister,” so the function of the director more or less all becomes the sole discretion of the minister.

The second one is to “improve closure planning” by having more qualified professionals available to certify plans and allowing companies to conditionally file a closure plan while deferring certain elements to a later date. I think allowing more qualified professionals to be involved is a great idea; I'm not so much in favour of deferring—“The cheque is in the mail. Trust us. It will work”—and I'll get into that as we go on.

The other part I'm a little worried about is allowing more flexibility in the techniques used to rehabilitate mines once they're closed. Maybe it's one of those things

where the devil is in the detail on this, but sometimes allowing more flexibility gets caught up in cutting red tape—“Don’t worry. It’s going to be okay.”

I come from a background of health and safety. We refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Act as the green book, and there’s an expression that this book is written in blood. Those regulations are important because things went wrong, and when you don’t follow through on why they went wrong, things go really, really wrong.

The final part that I’m a little bit concerned about is about creating more options for companies to pay financial assurance. Instead of paying financial assurance up front, it could be paid in phases, tied to the project’s construction schedule. Maybe that makes more sense as we drill into it. But I am always cautious of large industries in mining who post profits in the billions and are very successful in important communities—but if you go bankrupt and the cheque is in the mail, the cheque is never coming. So this is my concern that I have.

Again, I think the core essence of the bill is great. I think there are some flaws that we need to work on.

Mining company values: If you go to any mining company in Canada, they will probably talk about the value system. It will be on posters. It will be on their letterhead. It will be in the entranceway, at the door, as you walk in. It’s a value system they work very hard to live up to. It will talk about a commitment to valuing the people—and the people will be the workers, their community, their partners—and valuing the environment. This is typically in their mission statement that you see everywhere, and they really have worked hard to move past the old days and be aligned with these values.

For example, there’s a mining company that, years ago, had developed sort of south of Japan. They needed some company land on an Indigenous burial ground in this country. They didn’t need it because there were ore deposits or because they needed a processing plant. They needed it because they had workers going over there to work and they needed a golf course. This is sort of our ugly history. It’s not anything a mining company would do today, but that was the mentality back then: “We bought this land. We own this land. We can do whatever we want. We don’t have to work with our partners. We don’t have to work with the communities nearby. We have the title, and we’re allowed to do this.” I think it’s something that mining companies would be embarrassed about today. I’m not saying it to embarrass them. I’m just saying that this was a practice that happened in the past. They really have worked very hard to move past those days. I would say the old days—my manager, our president or someone saying, “We’re going to get that mine open if I have to drive the bulldozer up there myself” —that doesn’t exist anymore. None of the mining companies I know and work with and speak with and help put food on the table for my family—they just don’t. They’re over it. Mining companies worth investing in, the ones that we should be proud of, as a province, investing in, are really working on building true nation-to-nation partnerships with Indigenous communities.

There was a time when we were struggling to have a good conversation back and forth, when it felt like a check box exercise that we had a consultation. They would have a town hall nearby, and they would send out some mail saying, “Come to the town hall”—or maybe have that town hall in the Indigenous community. But it was a formality—“You have a duty to consult. Did you consult?” “Oh, yes. We went out and told them what we’re doing.” I can’t remember if they had any complaints, but we did that check and we moved on. But that was decades ago. There has been a real, concerted effort in these mining companies to build nation-to-nation agreement. Other industries, if they’re struggling—and I’m sure there are some who are—to deal with this, could take a page from the mining industry, because they do it so well. It isn’t transactional—“We need to develop on your land. We’re happy to see you again.” It’s an ongoing thing, where they’re part of the community, investing in the community and working with the community, so that, when there are economic opportunities, they have the relationship, they have the trust, they have an understanding of very distinct cultures in Indigenous communities and the participation and the acknowledgement of them.

1530

I want to underscore that Indigenous relationships are important. I said earlier that doing things like saying “I’ll drive the bulldozer there myself” is not really helpful. Doing things like having the same minister for northern development and Indigenous affairs is not helpful. I don’t know if it’s intentional or not, but it can send the wrong message. It can send a message to people in our community—the first people in our country—that your value is tied to your economic value. If there’s resource extraction that we need where they live, that’s their value. We wouldn’t have a francophone affairs in northern development—we wouldn’t tie in the other one, together. It sends a bad message, even if it’s unintentional—I like to be optimistic. It does send a bad message to people, especially in light of what we’ve been going through with the Indigenous children’s bodies that were found. There’s more and more awareness and there’s more and more people my age recognizing that our education wasn’t fulsome, our understanding wasn’t fulsome, and wanting to learn more, wanting to do better—I believe, as well, across the aisle. I’m not throwing stones and saying our team is better than theirs. I think all of us want to get better at this. But it does send a bad message to people when you say, “We’ve merged your file.” I know they’re two different ministries and they’re not merged, but it feels like it’s not as important as a separate ministry.

I think doing things like ignoring the right for First Nations to have free, prior and informed consent is not helpful. If you are trying to—I know there’s a line in here where it talks about the important of Indigenous communities, First Nation communities, but if you want to really emphasize that you have a strong partnership and a strong relationship, it’s not a tag at the end, it’s not a throwaway line; it’s a priority statement that you make. If we had a relationship—we know that Ontario’s biggest

trading partner is the States, and, if we had a bill talking about trade with the States, it would be first and foremost. We would talk about how important that relationship is. We need to do this, as well.

I want to talk about the importance of free, prior and informed consent. The member for Kiiwetinoong has talked about this many times. And many of us have talked about the need to address the boil-water advisory. I'll go on a bit of a tangent and come back.

It is frustrating to find out that there are places that have gone generations without clean drinking water. It's frustrating, because I know we wouldn't accept that anywhere else—I know that in Sudbury, where we have infrastructure issues and we're farther remote than, say, the GTHA but still on a good transportation area, the crossroads of 400 to the north and 17 east and west. We have thaw-and-freeze cycles where, as they're doing the repairs, you've got to run your water and it's brown for a couple of—you can't use the water during the day; you've got to run your water half an hour to an hour to flush out the minerals. That's frustrating. I cannot imagine growing up in a place where you cannot drink water out of the tap, where you cannot bathe, where you cannot wash your children. There is a frustration in a place like this, where we feel like we can get things done and the political football gets tossed to the feds. I share that blame—and also to the feds who kick it back. I'm proud of our former leader for taking the stance, when I was elected in 2018, saying that the province should pay for it—should fix it and figure out afterwards who will pay for it. I think that's the approach that we should be taking—whoever is in government. Let's just fix this. It has been much too long.

Neskantaga First Nation is not a stranger to broken promises. They have gone 28 years without clean water—28 years. Think of any time that you slept in and didn't have time for a shower, or any time they were doing repairs and you couldn't turn the water on, or that time you went camping. For 28 years, there have been people who haven't been able to get a drink of water unless it came in a bottle. You can't bathe yourself.

Nicole and Jenny from my office are both on maternity leave right now, but I think of them and their babies—Jenny with her twins—how often, as babies, they're using up diapers and being cleaned, how often you're bathing and cleaning and how much water that would be, and to not have the ability to just turn on the water.

In the middle of this—for 28 years—the Premier, the minister, the Conservative government is tabling a bill that says, "Trust us. Trust us on cleaning up. Trust us on being accountable." And it was tabled without providing free, prior and informed consent to this community; Neskantaga didn't get that ahead of the bill. The Premier didn't provide free, prior, informed consent to Neskantaga First Nation before announcing that a road was going to go through their community or beside their community, and that feels like something that—if I had trust issues already because of the drinking water and then I had trust issues about a road that was going to come through that I didn't feel like I had valid participation in, and they were telling me,

"Trust me on cleanup and accountability," in an area which is described as the lungs of that area, I don't know how much trust I would have.

I don't want to go too political on this, but I want to recognize the environment we're in. We're finding bodies of children. The government had said, "Trust us." It's a shared shame. I'm not pointing fingers; none of us were here when that happened, but this is our history. We need some ownership, and we need to understand the generational trauma that came out of this and the accountability we have, as settlers, to address that and rebuild and earn that trust.

The Conservative government doesn't have a great record when it comes to the environment. I was at Fridays for Future—I've talked about Sophia several times. Fridays for Future is a regular event, and Sophia was the first child outside of Europe to have one. She lives in Sudbury, Ontario. She had an event last Friday, and she was asking about what we need to do to move forward. I had a really nice speech about our party policy and stuff, but I abandoned that. I said that what we really need is a province that believes in climate change. I'm happy to be corrected if I'm wrong, but in the last four years, I think the only thing that happened was, we tabled the litter cleanup day. I was a Cub Scout a very, very long time ago and we had a litter cleanup day, so I don't feel like that's a new idea or going to help with anything.

Anyway, I think that if you don't have a great record when it comes to the environment and you're saying, "Trust us on environmental issues," people might have trust issues. I want to give an example about this. Right now, in Alberta, they're dealing with pollution from industry. Conservatives in Alberta, for years and years, said, "Trust us; industry will do the right thing. Trust us that polluters will pay to clean up their mess." It was a "cheque is in the mail" sort of thing—"Not to worry, it's going to work out." The theory is, basically, the company—this is capitalism—that made the mess and profited from it is going to clean it up.

Right now, Alberta has 170,000 abandoned oil and gas wells, so 37% of all of their oil and gas wells are abandoned.

There's an article in Policy Magazine I'm just going to read from: "It is doubly ironic that"—this is the Premier's name—"made his announcement as Alberta Premier Danielle Smith"—Conservative, as well—"was laying out her controversial plan to clean up abandoned oil/gas wells in Alberta. At a time when the oil industry is racking up record profits, the UCP"—the United Conservative Party—"has promised to shift \$100 million in royalty credits to entice the industry to clean up its own mess. The Globe and Mail has rightly called this scheme 'corporate welfare.' Such largesse comes on the heels of a \$1-billion payout by the federal government to deal with the damage of abandoned oil wells in Alberta."

1540

As people like to remind us all the time, there's only one taxpayer—so \$100 billion came out of the federal to pay for these abandoned oil wells that were profitable for

those organizations, and now \$100 million in credits of taxpayers' money is going to go to these industries that were supposed to pay for the cleanup. And if they do the cleanup now, we're going to pay them to clean up their mess out of taxpayers' dollars.

The article goes on to say, "No doubt, the Ontario Conservatives will tell you that they aren't letting mining companies off the hook. They will claim that this is just about giving them a leg up in order to get vital projects off the ground. Once these companies start making money, they will put the money aside to protect future generations. Pinky swear."

That's the comment in the article; that's not me, but I kind of agree with that.

There's a cost of doing business, and part of the cost is protecting the environment, ensuring that environment. Just like at home we pay taxes to have our garbage taken away, we pay for certain services—this is one of the services that's important.

The article, or the part I took out of it, concludes by saying, "This is what happens when you don't have a strong regulatory program in place, including closure plans that compel resource extraction operators to put money aside to pay for their damages."

You can make the argument, Speaker, that those are gas wells and oil wells—and what could go wrong in mining? That's Alberta—although we do have a similar situation here in Ontario. So what could go wrong with mining? It's a really good question, and I have a really good answer.

I'm going to tell you about the Kam Kotia mine disaster—and I think this should be familiar. I wasn't aware of this. My colleague Charlie Angus was talking yesterday about it, and he said—actually, the mines minister should be aware of this because this happened in Timmins, and it's the riding he represents.

This article is from MiningWatch in 2006: "The Kam Kotia Mine Disaster, Ontario's Most Notorious Mine Waste Problem."

"It has been labelled the 'worst environmental disaster' in Ontario. It has been criticized by mining opponents as 'corporate greed' running wild. Some taxpayers are unhappy that \$14 million of their money has been spent—and \$14 million more is needed—to restore 500 hectares of land left devastated after the mine closed, the miners moved on to other sites and the shareholders spent their dividends."

Some of the points for the description of what happened here: This mine was a wartime mine, and there were some federal tax incentives to open up, and when those tax incentives dried up, basically—the mine owners were American, and they invested back into the States, where it was more profitable and easier to access. This mine only operated from September 1943 until December 1944, so just a little more than one year. They described the area as, "Dead trees sticking out of the swamp and rotting vegetation create a scene from a Hollywood horror movie. Oxidation of sulphide in the mine tailings"—I talked about tailings before, which are the treated remains of ore—"and waste rock causes an acidic runoff affecting creeks and

rivers close to the mine." There are about 200,000 tonnes of waste rock and 600 million tonnes of mine tailings on the site.

So when the Conservative government says, "Trust us," I think of these Alberta gas wells and oil wells, and I think of the \$28 million that taxpayers had to pay to clean up the Kam Kotia mine disaster outside of Timmins. So I'm a little hesitant to say, "What a good idea. We should trust," because the history has been that things have gone wrong, and maybe that's why these regulations are in place. I expect that this is why those regulations are in place.

Earlier, as well, Speaker, I mentioned that I was wary of giving the minister powers—and just as a refresher, Bill 71 replaces "director of mine rehabilitation" anywhere this occurs in the Mining Act with "minister." It eliminates the functions of the director and places these at the sole discretion of the minister.

Before I go on to this, I want to say, I have a lot of respect for the minister. Since the election, I haven't had a lot of opportunities to speak with him because our ridings aren't—if you look at the northern ridings, we're fairly close, but we're not super close. So we have a limited opportunity while we're here—depending on our schedules—to speak, but I have had the opportunity to talk to him a couple of times. For example, when we were talking about the aluminum powder apology, the McIntyre apology—just to refresh everybody: Miners, who worked in uranium and gold mines primarily, for years, were forced to breathe aluminum powder. The theory was that the aluminum would stick to your lungs and protect you from harm. It didn't do that. There's a pretty good theory that it protected you from your X-rays showing that any harm had happened, because all of your lungs would glow. What had happened was wrong. I had been working for a long time, just prior to the last election, with the minister on having an apology for these miners, who were having neurological disorders as a result of this and whose lives were ending prematurely and whose quality of life was really deteriorating—and I was very proud, in November, that we were able to do that; all parties came together to do this. The Minister of Mines was new in his role, and I wanted to make sure he was up to date. I went to talk to him and give him a quick rundown of what we were trying to do and what it was, and he stopped me midway through and said, "I know all about this. My dad had to breathe this." And we had a couple of conversations in Sudbury when Vale reopened South Mine. The Premier was there, and the mining minister obviously was there.

I know that he understands mining. He comes from mining. He has worked in the industry, his dad has, and I wouldn't be surprised if his grandfather had, as well, because in the north, that's very, very common—where it's generational mining.

I thought I was only a second-generation miner, but the more I thought about it while putting together my notes—I'm third, and probably more than that. My grandfather's family comes from hard rock miners in Scotland. They came to Canada for a better way of life. My grandfather joined the air force and had a great career with my

grandmother there. Then, my mom and dad met at an air force base in Nova Scotia and, I guess because you can't get away from mining, moved to Sudbury so he could start a life as a miner. My dad was a hard rock miner in Sudbury, at Froot-Stobie mine.

Often, in the chamber, when I talk about my dad, I'm actually talking about my stepdad. My parents were divorced when I was pretty young. My mom met my stepdad when I was—probably a couple of years before I met him. When I was 16 years old, my mom and my stepdad began dating and then moved in together and lived in sin until she was in her 70s.

Not to go too far on a tangent, but I learned on Facebook that my mom and dad had gotten married, and I called her and said—it was her sister, my aunt, who was celebrating about it. I phoned my mom to say, “I wish I knew. I would have come with you”—because they had eloped. My mom said, “Jamie, I'm 70 years old. How many romantic things do you think I get to do?” Both of them had come from marriages that ended in divorce. After many years of promising each other that they would not get married, my stepdad popped the question to my mom, a lot because—I'm building back to the connection of intergenerational mining. My stepfather also worked in mining. He has been retired for 25 or 30 years now. He was a millwright at the Falconbridge smelter. One of his concerns was that because they were common-law, maybe his benefits wouldn't cover her later on. So he was preparing for the future of his family and wanted to ensure that she would be protected and comfortable if anything were to happen to him, so I'm very thankful to Bill for that.

I've lost my spot. Oh, I was talking about the minister—the generational part of mining in northern Ontario. If I had more opportunity, I'm sure I would learn about it.

I worked in mining, as well, for 17 years before I was elected, and I represented my workers for a long time. So I have a great passion for mining, not just because I live in Sudbury, but because mining is what paid for my house—well, it paid for part of my house. I'm still paying off the mortgage, but it allowed me to qualify for the loan. Mining is what allowed me to put food on the table for my kids.

I don't want to run out of time, but there's a funny story about me getting involved with mining that I want to get to, if there is time.

1550

I absolutely have a lot of respect for the minister when it comes to mining. There is a language that people who work in mining speak—just like I'm sure my colleague does when he speaks to dairy farmers. I was speaking to trades workers, and I was talking about the need for tradespeople to come in and the average age. At one part of the speech, I said, “If the average age is 50 and you started in the trades when you were 18 or 19 years old, you're ready to pull the pin.” That's a normal expression, but someone afterwards said, “That's a guy who worked in the trades.” There's language we use—it's English, and it makes sense in other industries as well, and you can follow it and stuff. But there are things he said that I recognize.

In the press release, there was a quote from the minister that didn't ring 100% true with me. It's not essential to this bill or anything, but I just find it interesting, because it said, “It shouldn't take 15 years to open a mine.” My gut says that someone from the communications department wrote that, because it's a lot like saying it shouldn't take eight years to become a doctor. Building a mine takes time. If there's a way we can make it be more effective, if things are sitting around and not moving, absolutely—but building a mine is a lot different than building a Starbucks. It's probably a good sound bite. It's probably good at the door, especially if you don't live in a mining town or work in a mining town.

Think about the Ring of Fire or any mining project: First, someone stakes a claim. That's easy. You just go out and you're basically staking, and there's some paperwork. But then geologists will go out and look for samples. There are going to be some minerals to go for. All through this process, they're constantly raising money and capital for it. Then, if they think that it's viable, they've got to get core samples—it's just a drill, and it brings out a big sleeve of rock, basically. This equipment is very heavy, so you've got to build the infrastructure to get that equipment in there. That takes time, because you very rarely will find a mine site across the street from the Walmart; it's typically deep in the bush and far away. The Ring of Fire, for example—I don't think most people in Ontario had any idea where that was until it made the news; it's far. So you've got to drill your core sample to pull it out, and then you need time to analyze it—because Bre-X had salted their samples, and investors were wary because Bre-X was going to make everyone a millionaire, and then it was worthless.

Interjection: The helicopter ride.

MPP Jamie West: Yes, that's right—the helicopter ride.

They analyze those core samples, then they go out for funding to find people who are willing to invest, and it's a long-term investment. Then they have to start building the infrastructure, actually start constructing a mine, because you're going to need water and power and roads, and heavy equipment is going to come in. That takes time, and especially in the north, where you have to deal with a thaw-freeze cycle. It's not like you can just run all the time. It's similar here, obviously, but the farther north you go, the colder it is for a longer amount of time. If you build when things are freezing and thawing, engineering—they probably have a way of describing it, but it's not going to go well. Then you sink a main shaft. If you ever drive past a mining town, you will see a big—I want to say “shaft station,” but that's one part of it. You will see the shaft coming out of the ground, and that's basically in an elevator that they bring men down in and they will bring ore back up in. But all that is essentially a spike. If you think of our building and the elevators across from the chamber, for example, that's your main shaft. You still have to build the hallways—they aren't called hallways, obviously. You have to build all of the rest of that infrastructure that heads off to the ore, wherever the ore is.

It's typically in deposits in different locations, and you've got to go out there. You are hard rock miners; you are going through hard rock, and so you're blasting, depending on—I'm out of touch when it comes to mining; I was a surface guy. You're blasting eight to 10 feet at a time. It's going to take a while to blast that and get to the surface—and so, 10 years or 15 years? Yes, it kind of makes sense. There are long-range plans.

Also, it's worth the investment when it is successful, so I think allowing the investment to happen is important. Anything that is unnecessarily slowing it down—I think we're on board with helping it be more effective, but I don't think we're on board with eliminating controls that would protect communities or eliminating the duty to consult with Indigenous communities or consult with nearby communities. I don't think we're on board with that, and I don't think that mining companies are.

So, even though I have a great deal of respect for the mining minister, I am wary of giving the minister powers for a couple of reasons. I think that it's better to have an arm's-length distance. As well, what if there's a shuffle? What if the mining minister is no longer someone with a background in mining? What if it's someone with a background in selling cars, or someone whose background is in dairy farming—

Mr. Will Bouma: What's wrong with dairy farmers?

MPP Jamie West: There's nothing wrong—or an opponentist, that sort of expertise.

During the debate earlier today, I heard that Toronto is the centre of mining, and in northern Ontario, that makes you wince a little bit. It might be the centre of mining commerce, but no one is investing in the TSX until they get to a mine. If you go to Coleman mine and you can pull a chunk of ore off the wall that is valuable—just that one chunk—absolutely, you're going to invest in the TSX. But you're not going to invest just because the TSX happens to be in Toronto.

We had done a lot of work to improve mining safety in Sudbury. We had a bunch of fatalities, and we got a lot of amendments made to the mining regulations act and the regulation O. Reg. 854. They wanted us to have our meetings in Toronto—these working groups that were happening in northern Ontario—and Mike Bond, a former mentor of mine, when speaking to the former Minister of Labour, said, “We're not going to Toronto. How many mines do you have?” And that sums it up—not that Toronto is not important, but there is a perception, I'll tell you, of Toronto that it's the centre of the universe and that there is a lot of value in the north, and that if you're doing resource extraction that is producing literally billions of dollars, maybe you could come to where we work and see how it's done there.

So my concern, again, about giving the ministry these powers is, what if there's a shuffle or a change in government? This is not a “today's Conservative government” plan. This is a “forever” plan. Governments rise and governments fall, and that's just how it happens. Sometimes it happens for good reasons, and sometimes there's a bit of a wave that surprises people. But that's the reality of the

workplace we're in. We're renting these chairs; they're not guaranteed to us. So when you say, “Now the minister is going to make these really great decisions”—well, who knows who the minister is going to be in the future?

I think I know mining fairly well. There are experts out there; I'm not an expert, but I have been in and around the industry for a long time. I have worked with the industry on the labour side, on the management side, and I'm well-connected with people in management. I don't think they were asking for this specific—I think they wanted to ensure mining could move forward, but I don't think they were looking for eliminating environmental concerns or not having a decent relationship and having an impression that Indigenous communities aren't as important. I don't think this is what they're looking for, and I don't think they were asking for the minister to now be able to make those decisions arbitrarily on his own. Maybe they did, but if I was the sort of person to gamble, I think I'd bet against it.

I talked earlier about the bill being flawed.

1600

Before I get to that, because I have time—I talked about generational mining and how my dad was a hard rock miner. My stepfather was a millwright at the smelter. When I was 16, he brought my best friend and I on a tour of the Falconbridge smelter. You had to be 16; I don't know if it was for legal reasons, liability or whatever. When we were 16, we went for a tour. It's a little overwhelming if you've never been in a smelter, because it's a massive place. They're moving a lot of material around, and it's hard to understand what moves around. We went on this tour in a place where you smell a lot of sulphur. I wandered around on the tour and—not to bury the lead, but I worked at another smelter—I had no real understanding of the work he did, but I understood the gas, the dust and the sacrifice of physical labour that he was making to pay for food and to put a roof over my head. At the end of the day he asked me what I thought, and my first response was, “You could not pay me enough to work here.” It's physically demanding, and the environment is tough. There are sparks, and there are explosions, and there is melted rock, molten material and lava. That was my first thought: “You will never pay me enough to do this.” But when I was 25 and I had two kids—my two sons were born—and I was working contract to contract, because Mike Harris had created this sort of gig economy that we all understand now, and Inco was hiring, I applied and I became a smelter worker. Strangely, when I applied, my priority was paying bills, ensuring a good life for my family—and I would sacrifice my health and well-being in order to do that. That's what miners do for their families. They take that risk—but not to be thrown away. We joked, often, about how they could pay me enough—and I'm happy that I did it because I really fell in love with this industry.

I was reluctantly a candidate. I was a candidate mainly because I was mad at my MPP.

But I liked my job. I had a good job that I enjoyed. I was a union rep in health and safety. I worked with a company that valued health and safety, even though we

had fatalities where we worked—but a good working relationship with management. I was able to work on things that were of value. I was able to help develop the mental health program that we had there. So I'm proud of the history I had, and I'm proud that it led me to health and safety, which I absolutely love doing.

There are a lot of people working in a field where they're doing it to pay the bills. When I got involved with health and safety, I understood what they meant by "if you enjoy what you do for a living, you never work a day in your life." I feel similarly about my role here, as an MPP. I really, really value what I do here—and I think my colleagues would all share this.

Before I was elected, when I would see an MPP at the end of their career, if they had chosen not to run or to retire, or if they lost the election—and somewhere in that speech they would say, "It has been my honour and privilege to represent the people of my riding," or "my ward," or whatever elected position they were in. I thought someone wrote that once and everyone else copied it because it sounds so good. But once you're elected, you really understand what an honour and privilege it is to represent the people of your riding.

I work late, and when I'm leaving, a lot of my colleagues are still in their offices working, and if they're not in the offices, they're in the communities or they're at events. It's a hard-working group. As politicians, we get labelled as lazy, overpaid and all this other stuff. But honestly, once you're doing this job, you understand how much work goes into it. This isn't something that you do unless you really care about what you're doing.

I'm very happy to have been involved with mining. I'm very happy that it led me to health and safety, which became my passion. And I'm very happy that my involvement in my union led me to my involvement in politics and to running and becoming an MPP.

One other story just popped in my head. I was working for Bell before being hired at Inco. My wife and I were hoping to buy a house, and we were living in Copper Cliff, where it's a little more affordable, and saving money. I had worked for Bell, but I was a low man on the totem pole. What happens, less now because of cellphones—in the old days they called it POTS, a plain old telephone system, where it's wires going out to your house phone. Every time it's wet outside, you get static on the line, and you're more busy. In the winter, all the moisture freezes, and you're less busy, so I would be laid off for between three and four months every year. They would start with the person with the lowest seniority.

I was really interested in computers and wanted to get into computers. It's hard to believe, but this is when high-speed was still coming out, when we were still doing dial-up. I was doing a network design course. I hesitate, with people who are real engineers in the room, to say I'm a network engineer, because it was a year-long course; it wasn't the extensive process that real engineers go through. But I am a network engineer. Part of that program is learning how to set up a worldwide network; you would never do this on your own, but that's what you do for

studying. It is probably very exciting for some people, but for me, it's mind-numbingly dull. So I would study and I would make these virtual large networks in my basement. I would study all morning, and then around lunchtime I would walk my son down to the mailbox. They just had a central post office. Copper Cliff is beautiful. It's a really cute small town. I would walk to the post office, pick up the mail, and then I would stop at the Inco hiring office on the way by because I wanted to get into their IT section over there. It got to the point where Jen Genkins, who handled that office, would hear the door open and she would say, "Nothing today, Jamie." It was a regular routine for me to go back and forth.

Then I went through the hiring process and got hired and was very thankful, as well. When I was telling my kids that I wasn't going to be fixing phones anymore and that I was going to be working at the smelter, my son Sam got really excited, because Sudbury is known for the Superstack. Sam said, "Dad, you're going to make clouds." I just loved the expression. It reminded me of when I was 16, not fully understanding what the smelter was—and my son seeing, literally, pollution by that time coming out of the Superstack and thinking that plant is where clouds came from.

There is a point to me telling that story, Speaker. We were talking about regulations, and the parts of the bill I disagree with are about changing the regulations, loosening them up a little bit.

The history of Sudbury is that Sudbury looked like the moon, and in fact, NASA trained scientists there—not specifically because it looked like the moon; it was because they thought they'd have similar minerals. But it really could have substituted for the moon.

I grew up thinking that rock, if it was exposed to air, would turn black, the same way that a pop can would rust. I had no idea that this wasn't normal. I knew rocks were different colours, because if you broke one open, it had different colours inside. But all rock in Sudbury that you could see outdoors was black.

The greening of Sudbury happened throughout my lifetime. But growing up, as a child, I joked very often that it was really easy to go sliding because you could just pick a hill and go in any direction; there aren't any trees in the way to block you.

We really did not have a good history with the environment in Sudbury.

Over the years, there were more and more pollution controls limiting how many tonnes of pollution could come out of the Superstack. Back then, the theory for the environment was that the solution to pollution is dilution—"Just build the stack; it will spread out. There's lots of room up there." Actually, they could follow our pollution to Alaska; they could trace it and say, "This is yours." The government got involved. Elie Martel, who sort of held a combination of my seat and the member from Nickel Belt's seat, but ahead of mine, really worked hard on this. The members of my union, Local 6500, used to sneak into the plant and measure how much sulphur there was in the plant, and CKSO radio used to announce it to the community.

I grew up at a time, as well, when I would be out with my grandmother and the sulphur would gum up your mouth. My grandmother and my mom—everybody—would spit, because you couldn't get it out of your mouth. You couldn't swallow it. You'd spit it out. This was a normal thing.

If you fast-forward to today, the mining companies in town will shorten that story to, "One day, we decided to clean up the environment"—and they did decide, but they decided when the government said, "You have to."

Even the year I was elected, we were working on a clean air project. I'm very proud of the success we had, and I'm proud to have been involved in it. It was basically the government saying, "You cannot have any more pollution coming out of the stack," and the company saying, "We're inventing the technology as we're building it. I don't know what we'll do if it doesn't work." It did work. But it is very difficult, when you are raising a lot of capital to do stuff, if the government doesn't say, "Here's the metric you have to hit." Even if you want to hit the metric, it's hard. If you're competing around the world for capital and you can't say, "It's a requirement for me to do this," sometimes you won't be able to do it, even if you want to.

That's why regulations are important—especially regulations that taxpayers ultimately will pay for the cleanup of, or that will affect the water, the environment and the communities that live nearby.

1610

I want to close out on this as a summary because people in my community—I hope they can watch the whole thing, but sometimes they're busy and it's good to do a bit of a summary.

I started off by talking about the bill. At its core, it's good. I think all of us understand the importance of mining. I think, as well, it's important to understand how much mining and minerals are all around us. But it's just a slightly flawed bill. The story I've heard very often is about the eagle and the owl—you try to make your good decisions, and as the eagle, you look for ways to improve this. I think that if this passes through second reading—and I think it will—we can really work to fix this bill and make it even better. But we need to address those flaws. They're really important. These flaws that we need to address—they're flaws, I believe, that mining companies have as value statements, that mining companies would like to see as well. I could be wrong, but that opportunity to get it right is by shopping this out, having real consultation with mining companies, with communities, with miners—and "miner" is the person who's actually doing the physical mining.

I was talking to Gord Gilpin, who was the mine manager when I got elected and is now—I forget his title—Ontario division. Congratulations, Gord. Gord, as well, is a miner. In the whole industry, everyone is called a miner.

All of us in here have to make sure that we're matching the values of our communities, matching the values of the mining industry that is out there, making sure that we're

listening to those experts who are in the field. I talked about a long history of mining in my family and stuff, but I'm not an expert. I know about people who have been doing this work for the last five years while I was working here. We have to hear from them.

We need to travel the bill, and if we're not willing to travel the bill—I encourage us to, because northern Ontario has a new perspective. But if the Conservative government is not willing to travel this bill, they have to have real deputations; not the deputations where you decide that we're going to minimize it and it's only going to be five hours and three people at a time are going to talk, and you can only ask them three questions because the time is limited—real consultation. We're all aligned on this being important and being successful. Let's really connect to people. I hear very often about the motto here, about hearing the other side—I forget what it is in Latin; I'm looking on the walls for it—and not just hear the other side across the aisle, but let's hear from the other side in northern Ontario, the mining companies. Let's hear the other side everywhere.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We are going to go to questions, and I'll recognize the member for Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Thank you, Speaker. I want to ask the member opposite, through the Chair—I listened very carefully to his remarks. Clearly, he and many other members of His Majesty's loyal opposition are supportive of the mining industry and see the benefits for the north, for the Indigenous communities in our province, and the ripple effect across the entire province.

Are the member and his colleagues going to support this bill or not—and if not, why not?

MPP Jamie West: I appreciate the brevity of the question.

The short version is, yes, I think we're going to support this on second reading because the core is good, but it's flawed, like I said several times, and I think over the last hour I spelled out why it's flawed.

There have been disasters when it comes to the mining industry and other industries, and the outcome, when you don't have good regulations in place, is that the taxpayers have to pay for it. It's not a small fix and a small cleanup; it's millions of dollars—federally, billions of dollars. So we have to ensure that if you're going to be profitable—this is what it means to be in the free market. If you're going to invest and you're going to make a profit—and mining companies who are successful make a lot of money—you have to be liable, as well, when things go wrong.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I want to pick up on the thing that we talked about—when companies that we say are "too big to fail" actually do fail, and who pays the price.

Before I was elected, I did work at Bell Telephone; I was a telephone operator. I also worked in corporate social responsibility, at a financial institution. The idea was that corporate social responsibility means you do the right

thing, because it fits your value statement, but it also has significant impact on the bottom line.

When things go wrong in companies, they often have to pay the price. But in this instance, the flaw that you're pointing out is that when things go wrong, the people who pay the price when companies go bankrupt—and we know that with small mining companies, there are lots of insolvencies. When things go wrong—they either go bankrupt or there is an environmental disaster—we pick up the tab as taxpayers and also investors, who have limited protection here as well.

Did you want to say a little bit more about who pays the cost when things go wrong?

MPP Jamie West: The Premier's brother, when he was the mayor, very often talked about how there is only one taxpayer—so at the end of the day, for this industry, it's going to be the province, and that's it. It doesn't matter if you download it to municipalities, it doesn't matter that it's coming out of the federal government; it is always us as taxpayers, us and our communities, the people we represent—us as people who pay taxes, as well, here—who pay for this. That's the thing we're trying to avoid.

There's a reason these regulations were put in place. If there are reasons why we need to adjust them or look at them differently—but I think saying, “Not to worry, it will never happen”—it has happened many times in the past. We have to ensure that mining can be successful, but also that the communities and the environment where they operate can be successful as well.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Donna Skelly: I was listening intently to the member from Sudbury.

As I've mentioned many times in the House, I grew up in northern Ontario, in a little mining town called Capreol, actually, in the Greater Sudbury area. I was in Sudbury when they built the smokestack, and I recall the black rock. There were no trees whatsoever. When I did go back years later and saw the trees, I was truly amazed. I also know that mining is the lifeblood of so many small communities; it certainly was for Capreol.

This is a good bill. There's nothing in this bill that takes away any of the environmental protections that are currently in place. It doesn't impact the regulations.

My concern—to the member opposite—is that this is fearmongering and that we are going to send a negative message to companies that would be interested in exploring and investing in northern Ontario.

Does the member recognize how important investment in the future of green technology is to the northern Ontario mining community and economy?

And will you refrain from sending a negative message to potential investors in the north?

MPP Jamie West: The member and I have lots of conversations about Capreol and being in the north.

I wouldn't call this fearmongering. It's a defence the Conservative government loves to have any time there's a criticism to a bill—when you say, “Here's a flaw in the bill. Here's something I think we could work on to

address,” it is always addressed as fearmongering. It doesn't matter if we're pointing out facts. It doesn't matter if we have validators saying, “Here's what happened specifically to me and why this doesn't work out.” It is always painted as fearmongering.

We aren't trying to cause fear. We're trying to make a bill that will be even better than this bill. We're aligned on the importance of mining, but if we want this to be successful and we want communities and First Nations communities to be involved and accepting; if we want people to invest here—she talks about investment. There's not a mining company in the world that is going to invest in a province that doesn't have strong environmental controls and a good relationship with First Nations communities.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question/

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member from Sudbury for an excellent presentation on the government's bill, An Act to amend the Mining Act. And thank you for highlighting the environmental considerations and concerns that we have, considering this government's track record on the environment.

1620

We're talking about a government that slashed funding from the Indigenous conservation efforts; that has refused to follow the Environmental Bill of Rights; and that even formed a youth environmental council, which apparently has members—but there has never been a meeting. There are so many other things that I could flag.

What I'd like to ask you is, for any work around mining, why is it important for us to have environmental assessments? Why is it important for community leaders to be at the table to have that conversation with the government?

MPP Jamie West: That is a really good question.

Mines are so large, and for a lot of places—I can argue, most places—it's the centre of commerce.

Sudbury has diversified, but mining is really a cornerstone of it even today, as much as they've diversified, and so they're tied to that community.

When I talked about the most valuable thing coming out of the mine being the worker—it's the workers who are related, too. It's between seven or eight spinoff jobs for every mining job that happens there—so it's all the local economy that happens around it. So it isn't just the shareholders; it's the stakeholders, it's the people who live there, it's the people who were there before the mine was founded and who will be there after the mine was founded. That's why you want to talk to them—because they all have a goal of this shared prosperity.

Also, at the end of the day, mining companies are just names; they're not people. When they go away, the people are there afterwards—and so they have a lot of value in what happens to the areas where they live.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I enjoyed the discourse offered by the member from Sudbury, and I particularly appreciated his personal reflections on his career in mining

and the importance it had for him and his family. He also made some comment with regard to how important mining was to Sudbury, his riding. As a factual matter—Sudbury produces \$3.3 billion of gross domestic product out of the mining industry, which I'm sure is enormously important to Sudbury and to the people in and around Sudbury. The member also said that mining was the cornerstone of Sudbury, and I agree with him.

So my question to the good member is this: In light of the fact that Sudbury is probably going to be one of the main beneficiaries of this legislation, does he support it and will he vote for it?

MPP Jamie West: I think, in the question, you provided the answer.

Mining is incredibly important to me. It's important to my riding. It's important to the union I belonged to and the workers who are there. It's important to the people who manage it, the non-unionized workers who are there. It's important to our community. I am invested in this bill being successful, because I know how important it will be to other mining communities in the north—primarily in the north, but all over, where they find deposits. So I'll be voting in favour of this, because I think the core of it is really important. But because I think mining is so important, because it's so important to me and my family and my community, I want to make sure we get this right. I want to fix the flaws that it has to make a really great bill we can all be proud of.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We don't have more time for questions, so we'll move to further debate.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I would like to share my time this afternoon with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Speaker, it is my pleasure to address this House this afternoon to speak about the importance of moving forward with Bill 71, the proposed legislation, the Building More Mines Act, 2023. This bill confirms our government's commitment made to all Ontarians to attract more investment and secure the critical minerals that support Ontario's auto sector and our supply chain for new technologies like batteries and electric vehicles.

This legislation in particular proposes steps to modernize the Mining Act by creating the conditions for Ontario companies to build more mines safely and efficiently. We will be leading the way by investing in exploration and innovation through our new Critical Minerals Strategy and by reducing burdensome and unnecessary red tape so that companies can build more mines and we can further grow this sector for the benefit of the entire province.

This bill, Speaker, proposes key amendments to certain Mining Act regulations that would improve the province's mining industry, making Ontario the leading jurisdiction in the world for mineral investment and development. Amendments to the Mining Act are long overdue. Years of neglect and lack of action from the previous Liberal government have set Ontario back at least two decades in

this industry. Unnecessary red tape and bureaucracy were hindering the growth of the mining industry.

It should not take 15 years for the ministry to issue a mining permit. The current process to open and close a mine is too time-consuming and far too costly. It leads to project delays, cost overruns and lost opportunities for Ontario's mineral exploration and mining sector. Now, more than ever, at this time, when Ontario is securing game-changing investments in its growing automotive sector and supporting our made-in-Ontario supply chain for new technologies like batteries and electric vehicles, we need these amendments and this legislation.

I want to emphasize again that the proposed changes would benefit the entire mineral sector and advance Ontario's plan by connecting mineral producers in the north, including those in the Ring of Fire—we would connect them with the manufacturing sector in the south. We are the first government to lead the way for this essential sector by investing in exploration and innovation through our Critical Minerals Strategy and cutting unnecessary red tape so that companies can build more mines, creating the environment.

As the minister stated in this House earlier today, the reality is that governments lead the way and create the environment so that mines can be built. Governments do not build the mines directly. In doing so, we are expanding growth and prosperity for all Ontarians, and especially for the northern and Indigenous communities. Prosperity for the northern and Indigenous communities is a welcome change after years of neglect by the Liberal government. And that will result in prosperity, prosperity that will result in well-paying jobs and economic growth that First Nations and northern communities will benefit from. The primary driver for this growth and prosperity will come from this legislation, and it would allow these communities to take control of their own destiny and create the prosperous future they deserve.

A prosperous future for all, Speaker, is what has been the hope for all of us, so that our children and grandchildren can look forward to an even better life than what we've experienced in the present tense. It all starts with getting more mines in the ground faster, and that is what we intend to do. Contrast this with the sorry Liberal record of ignoring the mining sector and refusing to ensure that Ontario could become a supplier of critical minerals and a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles.

Now, His Majesty's loyal opposition claimed to be the champions of the environment. The members opposite supported the previous Liberal government's sole-source contracts for expensive wind turbines and undermined the oil and gas sector at every opportunity as they preached about the immediate need for electric vehicles.

Well, given that the opposition seems to be having trouble understanding why these amendments in this proposed legislation are so important and not at all flawed, I'll give them a simple equation: No mines would mean no supply chain for electric vehicles. Put another way, we will not be able to produce the electric vehicles that all parties, including the NDP, say they want. We will not be able to

produce those electric vehicles if we don't build more critical mineral mines in the province of Ontario.

Now, if the opposition won't listen to us—because I still believe that persuasion is possible in this House. We've seen the NDP put partisan concerns aside and actually support our legislation. They're saying it's flawed, and I'm saying—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order, please.

1630

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I have listened carefully and I ask the members opposite to listen to me, and to listen to these quotes in the House from their own members: “Mining represents billions of dollars for Ontario...” and “the mining industry is an important economic driver for all of Ontario...” That's what the member for Nickel Belt said in this House, a member of His Majesty's loyal opposition.

The member for Algoma–Manitoulin stood in this House and proclaimed, “We all know that there is huge potential in this province for mining, which will benefit Ontario's and Canada's economy.” We agree. Please support this bill and stop saying it's flawed.

This bill will unleash great potential for all of the province of Ontario for generations to come. We hope that those sound bites were not just rhetoric—

Interjection.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: We hope what the member for His Majesty's loyal opposition just said now is not just rhetoric. We hope that they see the wisdom of the bill. If they say it's flawed, point out to us where it is. I can't find any flaws in it. I encourage you to read it more than once, if you've read it at all.

In the spirit of co-operation and good governance—which is possible in this House; we've seen it a few times—and doing what is best for Ontarians, for Indigenous communities, for northern communities, I urge that partisan language cease, that partisan catcalling cease, and that we put this to a vote as soon as possible and get this done as soon as possible.

I worry, despite the catcalling and the suggested support for this bill, that what may happen is short-term thinking and partisan games, because we know the opposition parties have changed course. They voted against the Ontario Junior Exploration Program, and therefore they voted against exploration in this province. They voted against the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund, and therefore voted against investments in innovation. They voted against the Critical Minerals Strategy and the development in the Ring of Fire, and therefore voted against seizing the opportunity that would provide an era of unprecedented wealth for all Ontarians. Don't make the same mistake.

Don't make any effort to gut this bill or amend this bill. It is wisely drafted. It protects and balances all environmental concerns. Let's remember that this bill supports an industry that consists of 75,000 jobs, contributing \$13 billion to Ontario's GDP every year. It is beyond crystal

clear: Any suggestion that this bill is flawed, any suggestion that this bill makes any changes to our world-class environmental protections is a flawed view of this bill.

I now turn it over to my colleague who will be sharing my time.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We need to be able to hear the speakers, so, please, I will ask for order in the House.

Now I will recognize the member for Halliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you to the member from Durham for an excellent presentation in his time. We are all so excited about this bill on this side of the House. It's Building More Mines Act, 2023, and as my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton said, it's one of the most exciting pieces of legislation that has come before the House because we're building Ontario in many ways it hasn't been built before.

I want to thank the mining sector for the consultations, the opportunities, the feedback in building this bill with us, and the Minister of Mines—who's a new member, but all his career, he has spent in mining—for the stories he told this morning and for such knowledge and depth, we're really happy to have him in our caucus, our government.

And the PA to the Minister of Mines, the member from Essex—happy anniversary, by the way—but his love of mining, he said in his speech, how excited he is to be part of this legislation and part of the great things that we are doing for the province of Ontario. And I know that PDAC is in, which is the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, which is the largest convention held in the city of Toronto. Not many people know that. I know my northern friends over there are nodding their head. They know. But it's the world's premier mineral exploration and mining convention: 30,000 attendees, 130 countries. I think we should all be pretty darn proud of that in the province of Ontario. It shows that we are a mining powerhouse: 40%—I think my friend from Essex said—of the mining financing is done in Toronto. So we're here, and we need to move ahead for many reasons which everyone has discussed here. But to move ahead for the province of Ontario, economically, environmentally—this is a resource that we need to capitalize on so that we can address climate change and we can be green.

The statistics for the mining industry in Ontario are quite shocking. A lot of people don't know—I know it has been mentioned: \$13 billion annually to Ontario's GDP, 28,000 direct and 47,000 indirect jobs are associated with mining. It has got the highest proportion of Indigenous workers of all industries in the province at 11% of direct mining jobs in Ontario, and 25% of direct mining jobs in Canada are in Ontario. So two thirds of these direct mining jobs are in northern Ontario, and that's why my colleague from Durham was really trying to get a fulsome answer about the support that maybe members of the opposition have or should have, definitely, for this bill. But those statistics are impressive.

It was mentioned sometime this morning that Ontario is the leading world producer of gold, nickel and platinum

group elements, and Ontario produced approximately \$3.1 billion worth of critical minerals, with 10 of the 36 operating mines in Ontario producing critical minerals. I know the members opposite and hopefully many other people who are watching today have heard about our Critical Minerals Strategy. Because we have such high productions of gold, nickel, copper and platinum metals, the world's largest mining companies operate in Ontario and recognize our great potential.

I know my predecessor Chris Hodgson—I say predecessor as MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, before I had the great honour to represent the constituents there—he went from here to be president of the Ontario Mining Association. So he's held that for over 20 years. His quote is, "As the world shifts to a greener, more connected and more tech-driven economy, the demand for Ontario's responsibly mined minerals will continue to grow. This represents a generational opportunity—to create rewarding jobs, build a strong domestic mining-to-manufacturing supply chain, and be a key player in the global energy transition. Given that we are competing with jurisdictions across the world to feed the decarbonization-driven commodity super cycle, the government must take bold action to help Ontario succeed. This includes addressing current challenges in the Mining Act and providing a regulatory pathway forward for our industry leadership in the global marketplace."

I say to Chris, "Well said," because if we fail to meet the necessary demand of our weakened supply chain—we've seen the world go upside down, as I say—it could cause cascading effects here in Ontario, throughout the country but throughout the world. I don't think we can ignore that. We have to move. We can't wait 15 years for a mine to be sited. We all need to work together, and this piece of legislation is a step towards that.

Our labour, human rights, environmental and health and safety standards have dominated markets around the world. Our economic partners want a stable supplier of responsibly sourced critical minerals, and Ontario has the resources to make the best use of its mineral-rich deposits to be a global supplier of minerals like nickel, cobalt and lithium, used in manufacturing batteries for electric vehicles, smart phones and more. Our incredible ground-work for the production of electric batteries, thus producing electric cars—which I believe we have pretty common consensus in the Legislature among all parties that that is our goal of what we want to do. So we're paving the way for this exciting sector, and we're going to continue, and must continue, to invest in exploration and innovation through programs like the Critical Minerals Strategy and cut this unnecessary red tape that makes us uncompetitive.

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So we are positioned to reinforce our critical minerals supply chain and create the conditions for companies to build mines more efficiently while maintaining our proud environmental standards and upholding the duty to consult. We have the mineral resources and the expertise to supply and manufacture the innovation that we need.

We've got untapped potential in the mining sector. I've heard it for many years, and I'm so glad that we're a part of the government. The Premier and the many ministers associated with this file have driven this forward so that we can continue to drive the prosperity that is so essential for not only our province but—like I said, the whole world is going to be able to connect with us on this matter.

The commitments made by this government will boost the supply chain. The critical minerals are already integrated into the global supply chain. We have taken many actions and investments by the government. Premier Ford announced the \$5.8 million to help junior mining companies to explore for critical minerals in the province. I was kind of surprised to hear—the member from Durham actually said, "You voted against that strategy." That is so important. I can tell you, I've listened to Chris Hodgson for many years on the advice and especially the mining—which he has been part of for many, many years, even when he was on the government's side before he went to work for the Ontario Mining Association—and been at many of the events that celebrate the junior mining program. They're essential to get a leg up, to search for what can be done in the future and how we can make it come to fruition faster.

I want to say that when I heard the member from Essex speak today about the perfect domestic supply chain—it's very important, and I don't think we understand that enough. We want domestic supply change. We've just been through the pandemic. And listening to the processing part—so not only mining but processing here in Ontario. The northern members know the cities that are involved: Timmins, Soo, Sudbury. All these opportunities exist—and new communities, First Nations communities, to come on board and to be trained and to work hopefully at even higher numbers than we spoke about today. For them to invest—because you know when we speak of economic prosperity, we want everyone to succeed. We want northern Ontario to be part of the auto manufacturing sector, and they are for the very first time. We're giving opportunities to the people in northern Ontario that they've never had before.

When we say we're excited on this side of the House with this legislation, we are, because the Building More Mines Act will create this modern framework in which we can make these developments come faster. We can make people's lives better. And we are putting out that shingle: Consistently, Ontario is the best place to do business in the world. I am so happy that we're speaking about this legislation, as PDAC has been going on since Sunday and all the many people that are there, and that we can showcase we're open for business in many, many ways.

Madam Speaker, I know that other members of the Legislature want to speak to this piece of legislation. I think we should all be positive. We should all be in support. We're going to go to committee. We're going to hear concerns that maybe the opposition has. As we do, we will listen, but we have an opportunity that is just so exciting for the province of Ontario with this piece of legislation. I was pleased to be able to speak to it and to support it.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We will move to questions.

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I'm very much in support of mining when done with all the necessary checks and balances. But the Ford government, including the member from Durham, talks about the Ring of Fire as if it were a done deal. But every time the Conservative government makes one of these announcements, we hear from First Nations that they have not been consulted and that the province has not obtained their free, prior and informed consent. Premier Ford has talked about bulldozing his way into the Ring of Fire, and I worry that that also includes bulldozing over the legal and moral responsibilities that we have as Canadians to respect Indigenous rights.

Given that this bill skips over sureties for land remediation and gives the impression that haste is more important than careful negotiations, can you tell me how free, prior and informed consent is protected in this bill?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: We are engaging with industry and Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations on all of the proposed changes to the Mining Act, and we're consulting on future regulatory changes.

Now, at a time when Ontario is securing game-changing investments in its growing automotive sector, these changes will benefit, if they're approved and passed by this House, the entire mineral sector and advance Ontario's plan to build an integrated supply chain by connecting mineral producers in the north, including those in the Ring of Fire, with the manufacturing sector in the south.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've enjoyed the debate here on all sides today. It has been quite interesting, and I listened to the debate earlier this morning as well.

My question to the member from Haliburton-Frontenac—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Kawartha Lakes.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Kawartha Lakes—anyway, Victoria county: Securing the supply chain requires Ontario to be able to be competitive with other jurisdictions around the world, especially in North America. What could the member say this act would do to give us that jurisdiction for mining globally?

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Frontenac—I can't service that large an area.

But he's right in what he said: We are creating economic incentives, adding options for companies to provide additional financial assurance as construction milestones are reached rather than providing a lump sum up front to help reduce costs. That's one of the other things—you can only talk so much in the time you're allotted, but I wanted to put those points in.

Reducing regulatory burden: We heard you can't wait 15 years to site. We've got to help these companies that are helping us and helping the world, really, to open up more quickly and efficiently, not compromising our world-class environmental standards. And all of that makes us competitive. We have to be competitive by

adapting and modernizing, and that's what we are doing with this act. It's going to be more on par with the best jurisdictions in the world and in Canada, and that's what we need to do to move forward.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the member from Durham. I am glad that he quoted some of the people on our side regarding the importance of mining. We've been focused on mining for a long time; it's very important in our part of the world.

I listened intently to his speech, and I also listened intently to the minister's speech. And we're going to vote for the bill on second reading, which we made pretty clear.

But there's been, even with the two speeches, a difference. The minister said, several times, that 15 years to build a mine was unacceptable; the member from Durham said 15 years to issue a permit. Those are two entirely different things, so I'd like you to clarify: What are we talking about here, 15 years to issue a permit or 15 years to build a mine? Those are two different things, and words matter. That's why this bill needs to be reviewed.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Fifteen years? Fifteen years matches the Liberals in office, aided and abetted by the NDP.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Order, please.

Next question.

Ms. Donna Skelly: Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, I grew up in a town that had a mine called Moose Mountain Mine. My mother was actually one of only four women who worked at the mine.

During the 1970s, as the member from Sudbury may recall, the mine was shuttered, and it devastated Capreol, as it devastates communities in the north. That's why I am so touched, so proud to be part of a government that recognizes the value of the minerals in northern Ontario. The member from Sudbury spoke about how often people in northern Ontario feel that they are being neglected by governments in southern Ontario, but this is a government that recognizes all of the opportunities.

Could either of my colleagues please speak to why we as a government are not only bringing forward a bill, Bill 71, to expedite mining, but investing in all of the minerals in northern Ontario and the economic opportunities it will bring to the north and spinoffs to the south?

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The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: It's an excellent question, Speaker. This is about an overall Critical Minerals Strategy that benefits Ontario north and south, east and west. Our government has put a great deal of thought into the proposed legislation and how, through that legislation, we can address the supply chain issues that the world is experiencing.

That's why we launched the Critical Minerals Strategy, with targeted investments like the Ontario Junior Exploration Program. That's all part of our plan, along with the

Critical Minerals Innovation Fund, for building this province and securing the supply chain. It is about integrating the province and putting it all together.

Again, government leads, government creates a plan and then we unleash the potential through legislation like this.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to congratulate the member for Sudbury, first of all, in the work that he did in the mines. Second of all—

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, it's a very risky job, right? It's a very risky job in health and safety, and so he has a lot of experience that he brings to the Legislature just by the nature of what he did.

So yes, we're going to agree to vote to pass this bill to committee because bills need to be discussed and in committee, we know that's where a lot of the input comes back and forth. And so, I just want to ask the Conservative government, when this is going to go to committee, will you listen to voices like workers who are experienced, like Indigenous communities, and if there are changes to be made, will you accept those amendments during committee process?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: The government is listening. The government listened, and that's why this bill was drafted the way it is. And we'll continue to listen.

What I'm hearing, though, from the members opposite: They say it's flawed but they won't point out details. They say they want to make changes but they won't tell us what they are. We believe that this is a sound, thoughtful piece of proposed legislation and it builds on the original intent of the original act that is being amended. Let's remember this: What goes unchanged is that, "The purpose of this act is to encourage prospecting, registration of mining claims"—and I hope the members opposite don't mind if I read from the actual act, which is going to continue—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): You need to give an answer now.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: And it's "in a manner consistent with"—and I hope the members opposite support this—"consistent with ... recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982...."

I hope they support that concept, which is fundamental to this bill—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We will move to the next question.

Next question, the member for Sudbury.

MPP Jamie West: The member opposite was just talking about—

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: I think it's over there?

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: It is? Sorry.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): It's okay. I didn't see anyone standing up. I didn't recognize you, so—

Mr. Will Bouma: Rick is too little.

Mr. Rick Byers: I'm very thin, so you don't necessarily see me.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I apologize. I'm going to give the floor to the member for Bruce-Grey-Sound for the next question.

Mr. Rick Byers: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We know the world wants Ontario's critical minerals and we're the first government to pave the way for this exciting sector by investing in exploration and innovation through our Critical Minerals Strategy.

I just want to ask the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, if I got that right: Could you outline a little bit more how you see the benefits of this bill for northern and Indigenous communities, as noted in question 1?

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I'm sorry. That was probably a really great question, but we don't have time for the answer, so I apologize.

We'll have to move to further debate.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the people of Timiskaming-Cochrane and especially on Bill 71, Building More Mines Act. Timiskaming-Cochrane is fairly unique in Ontario because our economy relies on three main pillars: forestry, agriculture and mining. That is very unique. We have a perspective. The first thing I'd like to do is give a shout-out to PDAC and to the people from northern Ontario who hosted the Northern Ontario Night last night at the Steam Whistle brewery. A lot of us were there. I'd like to give a shout-out to our home garage band, the Kings of Nowhere, who played there last night. They're a great band, it was a great party and I'm finally—kind of—over the hangover, just to let you know.

Everyone knows in this House that I'm a farmer, but a lot of my friends work or worked in mines. My best friend, who has since passed away, offered once to take me to where he worked. I went to 6,600 feet in Macassa mine—it was owned by Lac Minerals then; they don't allow this anymore—it's now Agnico Eagle Mines. I will mention them again. I have a lot of respect for that company. We went to 6,600 feet. Then we went to 7,200 feet. And I couldn't believe the working conditions: the heat, the smell. Miners are a fraternity, because only they know—only they really know what it's like.

I've never had this opportunity, but I'd like to mention Randy Yantha, one of my best friends, who has since passed away, who took me down there. A few years later at that mine they had a bump. Randy wasn't down that shift, but I thought he was, and I went to his house because two people died in that bump. That's when I saw in his face what it's like to be a miner. I'd like to give a shout-out to anyone who has ever—mining is much safer than it used to be. Mining has come a long way, but it is still—miners are well paid, but they're not paid enough for what they do. We, on this side of the House, know that.

I'd also like to give a bit of a tour of the legislative buildings here. On the first floor, on the west side, there is

a big chunk of silver. It comes from the Keeley mine just outside of Cobalt in Timiskaming–Cochrane. I believe 257,000 ounces are in that chunk of silver.

Mining isn't just a new thing. Mining has always been boom and bust. Hopefully, with legislation, we're trying to take the busts out of it. The silver boom in Cobalt was the first boom in Ontario—the TSX was built from Cobalt. It was the first boom. Then it busted. Then we went to Kirkland Lake and Timmins for gold. We have to remember that.

There are always winners in the boom and losers in the bust. Throughout history, it's usually the people who are left there to deal with the environmental degradation. There is environmental degradation from mining. Whenever you do anything—there are environmental degradation problems from agriculture, there is from mining too. As we progress, the mining industry, along with government regulation, has found ways to improve that.

But if you go to Cobalt, you can see the degradation from the first mining boom. It's still there. There are tailings ponds that have never been reclaimed. There are still—not in Cobalt itself, because of Agnico Eagle, but in parts outside of Cobalt and Silver Centre—open mine shafts that no one has ever bothered to close. Even today, no one has ever bothered. That's something that we have to remember, and it's really important to remember that. When we hear, "We'll worry about the financial part of remediation later," well, you know what? We've gone through this a few times, that the company doesn't make it until later and we're left with the degradation. No one's going to tell me that hasn't happened, because I can take you to those places.

1700

But getting back, I'd like to focus on a company that I've had a lot to do with and a company that I respect: Agnico Eagle Mines. They actually got their start in Cobalt in 1955, the Cobalt Consolidated Mining Co. In Cobalt, second generation, after the bust, they had a bit of a boom. In 1957, Agnico became Agnico Eagle, and in 1989, Agnico Eagle stopped mining silver in Cobalt. Agnico Eagle has continued. It's a major, major mining company. It's the biggest mining company in my part of the world. It has lately gone together with Kirkland gold, and they control most of the gold mining assets in my part of the world.

To their credit, Agnico Eagle is responsible for the environmental protection of their claims in Cobalt, and they do a good job of it. They do their job. They respect what they took out of the ground and they know they're responsible. They're still there, and they take their job seriously. I respect them for that. I'm actually having a meeting with them tomorrow, and hopefully they're not going to yell at me for what I say.

The last time I met with Agnico Eagle, we talked about the approval process—what can we do better in Ontario for mining? Because Agnico Eagle has also got a big project they're just developing in my riding—a really big project—so they know how this process works. I'm not going to quote exactly what they said, but regulation isn't

the problem. Regulation protects not only the people, but also protects mining companies. Because now, when someone talks about a mining development, people in my part of the world don't get frightened because we know we've got really strong regs, and that the mining companies live up to those regs because they also have to be responsible to raise money to—we understand that. They understand that.

Talking about getting rid of red tape actually doesn't help mining companies. Talking about putting bulldozers to the Ring of Fire doesn't help mining companies. What helps mining companies—and this is what I got from Agnico Eagle, and again, when I meet with them tomorrow, they could correct me, and I hope they do if I'm wrong. What helps mining companies, and what we want to provide in this legislation, is certainty—certainty. That's what they need. So, "Here are the regs, and if we meet these regs, there is a process that we can understand, that we can go to our investors and say, 'Okay, we've done this and this.' Now, when we do this, then we'll have this long and we'll be able to do that and that and that." But there's a difference between talking about making less regulation or providing more certainty. There's a big difference there.

So in this legislation, we're talking about—so now we have a director of rehabilitation that goes to the minister. Well, ministers come and go. Governments come and go. Government attitude towards industry changes. So I'm not 100% convinced—and that's why we're supportive of mining, supportive of what I hope the government is trying to do with this bill. But I'm not sure that putting all the onus on the minister actually adds to certainty.

Does the minister—whoever is the minister of the day—and I have a lot of respect for the current minister. I don't agree with all his political views, but I know he's deeply steeped in the mining industry. I know that. I respect that; I do. But does this legislation ensure that future ministers, future governments, will treat all mining projects the same? I don't see that. I don't see that. That's something that the government is going to have to flesh out on how that is going to work for it to add certainty.

I personally—and we in northern Ontario very much so—and the NDP totally support mining for the jobs, for the economic development, for the cornerstone it provides to our province and our country, but we need certainty. When it talks about we're going to, through regulation, have a qualified person do the remediation plan—okay, but that again provides a window of uncertainty. Who makes the rules for the qualified person in regulation later?

Again, we're not trying to throw a wrench in this bill, we're not trying to throw a wrench in the mining industry at all—at all. We want the mining industry to be able to go and get financing and build projects that are environmentally sustainable, that support this country, support this province and that everyone benefits. When I've heard several members say, "Oh, yeah, and this is going to help Indigenous communities," I will challenge how many past mining developments have fully helped Indigenous communities because if that is the case, then they wouldn't be living in areas with some of the conditions we have now.

Again, we're not trying to throw a wrench in this, but if you say you're going to make things better, let's make them better. Let's add certainty not just for one minister, for one government—because you've created it. And I'm not trying to be partisan. It's a partisan job, but the current Conservative government has created some misgivings in the public about how you deal with the environment. Now you're saying the qualified person shall do the remediation plans. Very well, you might have this all figured out, but it sure isn't figured out in this bill. No one in the mining industry has ever asked that the one thing we need to get this going is to have the minister be responsible for the remediation plan.

I don't know. What they ask me is for clarity. When I talk to Agnico Eagle, they have mines in several constituencies in this country, and in some areas, they can build a mine faster than in Ontario. And in some of those, the environmental regulations are actually higher than ours. So that tells me we do have a problem in Ontario.

1710

I'm not saying that we can't do things better in Ontario, but I don't see that this bill is the answer, because the problems you're trying to solve or you're saying you're trying to solve—I don't see the answers to those problems.

I've heard a lot more rhetoric on your side regarding, "The Liberals have done this, supported by the NDP." I hear all that rhetoric. But are you hearing that from me? No. We want this to work. That's why we're going to be voting for it on second reading. That's why we hope there is a good committee process and that when amendments are put forward that aren't partisan in nature, that actually want to make confidence in the mining sector and confidence in the public—because that's one thing that's very important. And this isn't just for the mining sector; this is for agriculture, for forestry, for mining, anything. You need to have public confidence. If the public doesn't have confidence in what you're doing, you're not going to be able to raise the money to keep doing it—maybe in the short term. Maybe in the short term, but in the long term, you're not. You're not.

I've got a couple of minutes left, and I'm going to—my son works in the mining industry, indirectly. He's a commercial diver. When the tailings pond let go in 2019—I'm not even going to say the company, because I'm not trying to hurt anybody's reputation. When the tailings pond let go in Brazil, my son sent me that video before it ever hit the news, because my son dives for that same company in Canada, and they were looking at the dams in Canada to make sure that wasn't happening in Canada. He sent me a text. He says, "And that's why you need strong regulations." Same company, different regulations, different country.

So when you talk about getting rid of red tape, when you talk about that, "Well, we'll get a qualified person to look at the remediation plan"—they maybe had a qualified person in Brazil as well. But 267 people died when that tailings pond let go, and I believe the company was charged. But, same company—the same thing was happening. Liquefaction, it's called. A qualified person. But

here, we had regulations—good regulations—and we need to keep good regulations. We need to work together to make sure that we have a solid regulatory platform that promotes profitable mining, but also protects people.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We're going to move to the questions portion of the debate, and I recognize the member for Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Thank you, madame la Présidente. I appreciated the submissions made by the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane. I was listening carefully to his comments. He is obviously a very experienced and respected member of this assembly, and I recognize his experience and I respect him.

He made some comments with regard to communications that he had with various mining interests, and it's good that members of the House communicate with people in their ridings about their concerns. I was hoping that the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane might give us some feedback about what he hears in his riding about the length of the permitting process and how long it takes to get through the permitting process. We use the words "permitting process." There's not actually a permit, but we refer to the permitting process. What has he heard? What feedback has he gotten on that?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you to the member from Essex. That's a very good question. I think I touched on it in my remarks. There are parts of our country—and I don't know about internationally—where the permitting process is quicker. I'm not saying it shouldn't be quicker, but it shouldn't be quicker by lowering the standards. And I'm not saying that's in this bill, but it's not saying that it's not, because it says we're going to change who does the plans.

Can we make the process quicker? We're not opposed. We need to make sure that we don't do that by lowering the standards or lowering the financial package in case something goes wrong.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Tom Rakocevic: We have a government that takes a very clear line when it comes to regulations: They hate them. They hate regulations. They hate them so much that they've created a Ministry of Red Tape Reduction because there's red tape everywhere for them. Sometimes, if you misdiagnose something as red tape, you know what you end up with? Yellow tape. You end up with yellow tape sometimes. And so they don't have a good track record when it comes to this.

This government has the ability to move really quickly. When it comes to the north, not so much, but here we talk about haste when it comes to removing minerals out of the ground. But when it comes to road safety in the north, like we hear from our amazing member from Mushkegowuk-James Bay, they don't move too quick. And when it comes to clean drinking water in the north, they're dragging their feet. They blame the feds. They pass the buck.

I'd like to hear from our member, how does this government choose its priorities when it comes to the north?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you very much for that question. It had a lot of issues in it, but the one answer I will give quickly is—so the Trans-Canada Highway goes across Canada. I would say that the standards in the Trans-Canada Highway where it goes across northern Ontario aren't the same as southern Ontario.

With First Nations as well, this government has said several times that this Critical Minerals Strategy—which we're not opposed to, actually—will benefit First Nations. Well, the proof is going to be in how you deal with First Nations before you start, because if it's going to continue to be divide and conquer, First Nations know exactly what's going to happen: The project is going to be built and some of them won't benefit at all, because that's been proven through history over and over again.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Does the member opposite know—and I listened carefully to his remarks—that there are no proposed changes to our world-class environmental protections by virtue of this proposed bill? Does he know that this bill is in fact about improving how the Ministry of Mines operates and increasing efficiencies? Does he know that updating the Mining Act is crucial to support our transition to a green economy? Does he know that that is what this is about?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you to the member for Durham. My response to that is, is he so sure that's the case? Because when I read the act, it makes the decisions regarding the remediation plan—it moves it to the minister as opposed to the director of remediation. So the interpretation is up to the minister or up to a qualified person whose qualifications aren't mentioned in the act. They're in the regulations to be named later, so we don't actually know who is going to interpret those regulations. Is he so sure that this act won't change how those regulations are interpreted? That's what we're trying to find out here.

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The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

MPP Jill Andrew: We've seen this government appoint folks to tribunals, even, that have not had the experience or the qualifications for said position. So with this particular bill, when it permits the minister to exercise any power and perform any duty of a director of exploration under the act in place of the director, it does make me question whether or not we know if the minister—I mean, the minister right now might be wonderful. I don't know. But what about future ministers?

At the end of the day, isn't it important that the director—the person who is doing many of these processes—have the qualification, have the skills, and that they are connected mostly to community as well, too?

Mr. John Vanthof: That's a very good question as well. I hope that the good players in the mining sector won't let that happen, because they have worked very hard. The company I mentioned and other companies have worked very hard to gain that reputation. They've got a

much better reputation environmentally than the Ford government. And I hope that they won't allow that to happen, because not all players in the mining sector have that reputation.

And so it's incumbent on us all, but it's also incumbent on the government, to make sure that they have qualified people and that the political process doesn't get involved in the actual scientific permitting process. That is very cloudy in this bill, when you're moving it to the minister. It's very cloudy, and I don't think the mining sector needs cloudiness. They need certainty. That's what they all need.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I recognize the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr. Rick Byers: I thank the member for his comments—I really do—about the minister's experience, which we share—extensive experience in the industry. I appreciate his story about his long-time friend who passed away who took him down the mine and his son who works in the industry and meeting with Agnico Eagle. As a matter of fact, I'm meeting with them tomorrow too, so I look forward to hearing about their experience.

At the root of it, I think we share objectives here for the mining industry. I must confess, I've been an MPP for eight months now, and I think I heard the opposition will be supporting the bill. I think that may be the first time in the House I've seen that, but I think it's—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Byers: Okay, I retract that, Madam Speaker. I look forward to it.

But as I understand the member's comments, I think your concerns are more about the process with the bill than the outcomes. Is that fair, and could you elaborate on what you're looking for to see it pass into law?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you for that question. No, I would say that our concern is with the outcome of the bill. We have the same goal; we want the mining sector to flourish in this province. The latest boom with electric vehicles is a boom that we don't want to bust at the end. We have the same goals; we have the same goals. We want the same outcomes. But we want to be sure that those are the outcomes that this bill is moving forward, and the bill itself doesn't ensure that, in our opinion.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): There's no more time for another question. We're going to move to further debate.

Mr. Ted Hsu: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 71. My riding of Kingston and the Islands has a mine. But, more importantly, it also has the Queen's University mining engineering department, which is the largest in the world, and I just want to acknowledge the work that they do to support the mining industry.

We, the Liberal caucus, support the long-term success of the mining industry in Ontario and the well-paying jobs it brings—the economic development.

This bill, Bill 71, tries to allow mines to open faster, but, to me, the bill seems rushed. It falls short in several areas and may put at risk the reputation of Ontario's mining industry. We believe the areas where the bill falls short can be fixed at committee, so we'll be voting in

favour of the bill at second reading, but to have the Liberal caucus's support at third reading, several things need to be done at the committee stage, which I'd like to address now.

First of all, we need support from Indigenous communities if mining is to be successful. The Conservative government did not consult Indigenous communities before the bill was tabled. I believe that we must pause and do that at the committee stage. Let me elaborate a bit on that.

This came out during a ministerial briefing yesterday, and it is really important to make sure that Indigenous communities have buy-in. If we're sloppy about Indigenous consultation, we're really just hurting the mining industry. It really seems to me that there's some indication here that the bill was rushed. This bill was tabled on the very last day that it could be tabled before the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada meeting that's going on right now, and so the question arises in my mind: Is it a coincidence that they tabled it on the very last day and somehow they didn't have time to do the Indigenous consultation? I think it'd be really important for the committee to pause and to hear testimony. What I understand is that the ministry is explaining the bill to Indigenous groups right now, and it would be very important, I think, to hear what they have to say about this bill and to take any appropriate action at committee stage.

We need young people to consider mining as where their career might lie. There's a labour shortage in mining. One of the things we can do to help that along is to continue to improve the reputation in the mining industry in the eyes of young people entering the workforce. We should be able to say, and we often can say, that mining leaves things better than they were before.

There's a part of this bill, Bill 71, that deals with the recovery of minerals from tailings and other mine waste. In that part of the bill, we should be very careful not to allow loopholes. In fact, I believe there is a legal loophole where either public health and safety or the environment could be worse after recovery operations from tailings or waste, and there's a very simple change that can be made in section 18 of the bill. There's a phrase in section 18 of the bill which should be changed. Let me read what it says right now. It says "the condition of the land with respect to one or both of public health and safety or the environment following the remediation is comparable to or better than it was before the recovery...." What I believe it should say is—we should strike the words "one or," and if the condition of the land is going to be comparable to what it was before, then the condition of the land with respect to both public health and safety and the environment following the remediation should be comparable or better, because if you use "one or," it means the other one could be worse, and I believe that's a legal loophole that should be corrected in committee.

Furthermore, this bill uses the language "comparable to or better." In the current legislation, there's a different word that's used. It's the word "improved." Clearly, we're backing off. Instead of requiring these recovery operations

to improve the condition of the land or the water, we're settling for comparable. So there's a problem here, which is that mining companies and the mining industry want to say that we leave the land in a better condition than it was before, and if we're settling for comparable—well, it's not worse, but you're not encouraging young people to feel good about considering a career in mining.

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Let me also say that I believe that the word "comparable," which is not defined in the legislation—we were told in the ministerial briefing that this word, "comparable," would be articulated in the regulations, and I believe that that word should be defined in the regulations before third reading.

We need the public to be confident that after a mine closes, the land and water will be in an overall better state than before. In the long run, this confidence supports the mining industry and the prosperity it can bring. Currently, ministry officials conduct the technical review, the technical certification of mine closure plans. This bill moves that role from the ministry to so-called "qualified persons." The problem is that currently the term "qualified persons" refers to geologists and mining engineers who assess ore deposits in order to protect investors.

Now, for mine closures, we need completely different skills. We need completely different knowledge to certify mine closure plans. Maybe we'll need biologists, maybe we'll need environmental scientists or geochemists, and I believe that the regulations should specify this before third reading. One simple thing to do is just call them something else. Instead of the people who are used to writing reports to protect investors, call them something else. Call them "mine-closure-qualified persons," and then specify in the regulations exactly what qualifications they need to have. I know that this is not a hard thing to do, because there's a mining rehabilitation code, and you can just look in that to see what sort of things need to be considered when you close a mine and use that to explain what qualifications the qualified persons who certify mine closure plans need to have.

A final point is that the qualified persons who can certify mine closure plans—I would hope that they are in different firms. They're often in private firms; I would hope that they're in different firms from the qualified persons who write reports for mining companies to protect investors who write reports on how much ore there is, how much could be extracted. The reason is that there's a moral hazard if you are, on the one hand, somebody who's paid by a mining company to write a report for investors on how much ore there might be in a deposit and how much could be recovered. If you are in the same firm, in the same company, and you are a qualified person to certify mine closure plans, there's a conflict of interest that we have to avoid, so I would hope that the firms that are employed are separate.

I think there's no evidence that the government's plan is going to improve the quality of the technical review that is currently done by the ministry, but if they are going to move it over to qualified persons, I would want to make

sure that these qualified persons don't have a conflict of interest. Let me just say that these qualified persons for mine closure, if they're in a private firm, probably don't have the financial resources to stand behind all of the economic consequences of their certification should something go wrong, and that could be bad for the mining company itself.

A final point: Let me say that the minister taking over the responsibilities of the Director of Mine Rehabilitation has the risk that political pressure will come into play when the minister is deciding, instead of the Director of Mine Rehabilitation, whether or not to accept a mine closure plan or to accept a deferral of a mine closure plan, which is something else that this bill allows.

To summarize, let me say this: Le caucus libéral appuie la réussite à long terme de l'industrie minière en Ontario ainsi que les emplois bien rémunérés qu'elle offre. Ce projet de loi tente de permettre aux mines d'ouvrir plus rapidement, mais il semble précipité, il laisse beaucoup à désirer et il peut mettre en péril la réputation de l'industrie minière de l'Ontario.

I think it's okay to take the time to get this bill right so that mines can be built in a first-class way and without delay. There's no need to rush this bill. It's like taking your time and getting your stance right and taking your time on the backswing when you play golf so that your shot goes straight and stays out of trouble.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): We can now move to the period of questions.

Mr. Will Bouma: I appreciate interacting with my colleague from the independent Liberals. It did put a smile on my face when he said that we seem to be moving very quickly on this legislation with mines, because we've been only working on it for four years. Of course, the Ring of Fire was announced in 2007, and the previous Liberal government sat on it for 11 years. I can understand that he thinks we're moving a little bit too fast for this.

I did hear that he's ready for it to move forward into second reading, but I was wondering if he is supportive and specifically on—what I found so intriguing is that, having met with stakeholders, the waste of previous mining operations was almost impossible to mine out for critical minerals that are in there.

Is he very supportive personally of being able to mine out what was waste in a mine from before and to clean up that area?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Thank you for the question. In fact, yes, I did actually visit this laboratory called MIRARCO at Laurentian University. One of the areas of research they look into is how to efficiently extract the mineral value from mine tailings. I think it's a good thing that we're moving forward on this legislation. I know that there's a section of the mining bill that deals specifically with recovering minerals from tailings and waste. It has passed, but it hasn't been proclaimed. It calls on improvements in the state of the land or the site on which the tailings sit after the recovery operations compared to before.

This legislation tries to change it to "comparable," and it lets you choose which one is comparable. Either the

public health and safety or the environment, only one of them has to be comparable. As I read the bill, one of them could be worse. As long as one of those two, environment or public health and safety, is comparable, then it's okay, and I—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. We have to move to the next question.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for his contributions to the bill analysis. The member earlier spoke about—or one of the questions was that the government has been working on mines for four years. But what I found kind of interesting was that, according to the briefing that the ministry gave, they hadn't yet consulted with Indigenous communities.

Just wondering how the member feels or his thoughts on if they've been working on the mining file for four years, why not consult with Indigenous communities prior to bringing the bill forward and knowing where they stand?

Mr. Ted Hsu: That is an excellent question. In fact, I was surprised at the briefing from the ministry yesterday when they said that they had not consulted with Indigenous groups. It's not a hard thing to do. Let me say that if this government does a sloppy job of consulting Indigenous communities, they're hurting the mining industry.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: My question for the member who spoke just now is about roads. Roads have come up during the discussion and the debate on this bill. Just recently, the First Nation of Webequie and First Nation of Marten Falls, who are leading the environmental assessment for the roads that are being built or will be built eventually, received approval of the terms of reference for their environmental assessment. They are leading that environmental assessment.

My question to the member is as follows: Does he support Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation leading that environmental assessment regarding roads, or does he not?

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Mr. Ted Hsu: I thank my colleague for another excellent question. As I understand it from reading a recent news report, there's a third First Nation through which the road to the Ring of Fire has to run that wasn't consulted. They made a video at the conference downtown saying, "We weren't consulted." You're going to have a lot of trouble down the road, clearly. This was an example of the Conservative government doing a sloppy job of Indigenous consultation, and it's just going to hurt the mining industry.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Thank you. Next question?

MPP Lise Vaugeois: I did have a question written down here, but I think I'm going to change it, based on what the member opposite said.

Do you have a sense that there's a risk of a divide-and-conquer strategy taking place, where Indigenous communities are pitted against each other in order to get what

the government wants without actually genuinely consulting with all communities who are affected?

Mr. Ted Hsu: Well, Madam Speaker, I would hope that when it comes to a road—and each part of the road has to work for the road to work. Everybody on the road has to be connected. They're in series; they're not in parallel. If you have a bunch of Christmas lights in series and one of them goes out, the whole chain of lights goes out. That's the case for roads, and I think this government is wrong to kind of—if they have this strategy, and I'm not saying that they do, but if they have this strategy, it's not a good strategy when you have Christmas lights in series and any one of them going out puts the whole chain of lights out.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I had the opportunity in my research with regard to this particular legislation to study the bill that was introduced in 2009 by the previous Liberal government, which bill was quite lengthy, dealing with the Mining Act and added several layers, layer after layer of new provisions and regulations etc., to the Mining Act. I'm wondering if the member has had an opportunity to review that history. I don't presuppose that he has, but I would like to ask him, has he had an opportunity to review the several layers of additions made to the Mining Act by the 2009 Liberal proposal, and what were his views on that when he saw it?

Mr. Ted Hsu: No, I have not read all of the previous legislation, but I will address a similar comment made by another honourable colleague on the Conservative side about the Ring of Fire and how previous governments sat on the Ring of Fire.

I do remember when the Ring of Fire was an issue when I was a federal MP. There was a private company that at that time was looking into exploiting the mineral resources in the Ring of Fire. They gave up because it didn't look like it was going to be economic. Here we are, we're looking back and we're throwing blame all around when, in fact, sometimes mining projects are not economic because the value of the mineral you would like to extract is just too low, and that's why it gets delayed.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Next question?

MPP Jill Andrew: Thank you to the member across the way for your presentation. My question goes back to the concept of UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and I'm wondering if you can express in this House the ways in which this government has failed Indigenous communities.

We know that many Indigenous communities are without clean drinking water and this has been the case for years. Under this government, it's been almost five years and there have been no improvements. We know that many Indigenous communities have to leave their homes due to flooding. For five years, this government could have been solving that problem, and they haven't. So I'm just wondering if you can elaborate on what level of trust

you feel Indigenous communities may have with regard to this government. Thank you.

Mr. Ted Hsu: Trust is very important. If people don't trust their government, if people don't trust the institutions in society, they're not willing to co-operate and work together to tackle the important problems that we're facing today.

With regard to this mining bill, there is the potential for prosperity in the north from mining, but we have to work together with Indigenous communities. Everybody has to share the wealth. A project can't benefit some and then hurt others. That's not the way to move forward in a democracy. This government has, I think, made a mistake by not consulting Indigenous groups before tabling this bill, and I don't trust this government to do a careful job of consulting Indigenous communities. I think they've done a sloppy job recently, and they're going to hurt the mining industry.

La Présidente suppléante (M^{me} Lucille Collard): Alors, c'est tout pour le temps des questions.

We're going to move to further debate.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: It's an honour to rise in the House this afternoon to speak in support of Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. I will be sharing my time today with my friend from Sarnia-Lambton.

I want to congratulate the Minister of Mines, both on his historic win last June and on the first piece of legislation to modernize the Mining Act. I also want to thank his team for all their work on this, including Caroline Eisen, who was an intern in my office.

I also want to recognize the great work of the Minister of Northern Development on the Critical Minerals Strategy, which was published last year.

Speaker, this is an exciting time for the mining industry. As the minister said, critical minerals are essential for the transition to a green economy, and Ontario is the best place in the world to mine. Our mines have incredible potential to benefit Ontario, Canada and the entire world.

This is also exciting for my own family, including my son Joey, who is a student in the department of mining at Queen's University. His class is here in Toronto this week attending the PDAC conference, and they had a chance to visit Queen's Park yesterday and meet the Minister of Mines. I want to thank the minister again for making time in his busy schedule to meet with the students who will be our next generation of leaders in the mining industry.

Speaker, the minister put it well earlier: The demand for critical minerals in key strategic sectors is growing exponentially both in Canada and around the world. The International Energy Agency predicts that demand for lithium could grow by over 50 times by 2040, and the demand for cobalt, graphite and nickel could be 30 times higher than today, with other critical minerals not far behind. We simply don't have the supply we need to meet this skyrocketing demand. These minerals are critical for the production of electric vehicles, green energy and batteries, but also for telecommunications, drugs, national defence, and much more. And in most cases, there are no substitutes for these critical minerals. We're often forced

to depend on foreign countries that don't share our world-class standards on the environment, labour and human rights.

For example, over 70% of the world's cobalt comes from the Congo, which relies on child labour, often in horrific conditions. I'm reading a book called *Cobalt Red*, by Harvard professor Siddharth Kara, that documents some of this, that was just published in January. Cobalt is toxic and is often found near radioactive uranium, and yet children in the Congo often dig for it with their bare hands, without any protective equipment. Many are victims of physical and sexual abuse, or even worse, they're buried alive—their bodies never found. When the previous Liberal government created their electric vehicle incentive of up to \$14,000 per vehicle, most of the vehicles that were eligible contained cobalt from the Congo—up to 15 kilograms per vehicle. That's an inconvenient truth, as Al Gore might say.

I'll give one more example. Ukraine has Europe's largest deposits of critical minerals, worth trillions of dollars, including 500,000 tonnes of lithium in eastern Ukraine, one of the largest lithium deposits in the world. It is no coincidence that eastern Ukraine has been the focus of Russia's genocidal and colonial invasion. Just before the last invasion began, Ukraine began to auction off exploration permits to develop its resources in lithium, cobalt, nickel and other critical minerals that could have made it a leader in the green energy economy of the future.

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As the minister said, Canada and its allies urgently need stable and responsible sources of key strategic critical minerals. Fortunately, Ontario is home to tremendous mineral wealth, with a trillion dollars worth of mineral deposits in the Ring of Fire alone. We also have the highest environmental health and safety standards. But, as the minister said, the process of opening and closing a mine takes far too long and costs far too much. It shouldn't take 15 years to get a mining permit. We need to do better.

Bill 71 would modernize the Mining Act, eliminating unnecessary red tape while maintaining Ontario's world-class environmental protections. As I said, we need to take these steps to support the transition to a green economy. Many of the changes are based on the advice from mining industry experts and leaders, including many who are here in Toronto at the PDAC convention this week.

I'd like to give just one example, Speaker. Over the last two months, I had the opportunity to travel across the province for pre-budget consultations with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We visited Kenora, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Ottawa, Kingston, Windsor and Essex, and the minister's own city of Timmins. In Sudbury, we had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Nadia Mykytczuk, the president and CEO of MIRARCO Mining Innovation. She reports that Canada's mines generate 650 million tonnes of mine waste every year, and there are billions of tonnes more at abandoned mines across the province. These are sites that are expensive for the government to manage and to ensure that dangerous elements like lead, mercury and arsenic don't

poison our lakes and rivers. But there are hundreds of billions of dollars of cobalt, nickel and other critical materials in this mine waste across the province. Modern biotechnology and biomining can help recover these critical minerals, including cobalt, using micro-organisms like bacteria.

That's why it's so exciting to see that, if passed, Bill 71 would make it easier for companies to get permits to recover minerals from mine waste sites, including abandoned mines.

Speaker, yesterday afternoon I had the opportunity to host the Treasury Board round table with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and 15 leaders from local chambers around the province, including Timmins Chamber of Commerce in the minister's own riding and the Greater Sudbury chamber. I want to take the opportunity to thank everybody who joined us and, especially, our moderator, Daniel, and Andrea Carmona from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. I'm proud to say there was great excitement and support for Bill 71, and especially for the work we're doing to build new, vertical, made-in-Ontario supply chains that would connect critical minerals from the north, including the Ring of Fire, to manufacturing in the south of Ontario.

Ford Motor Co. assembly in Oakville, where I worked for 31 years, is being transformed into a global hub for manufacturing electric vehicles.

In the parliamentary assistant's community of Windsor-Essex, Stellantis and LG Energy Solution are investing over \$5 billion in the first large-scale electric vehicle battery manufacturing plant in Canada.

And just last month, we were able to source a \$471-million investment from Magna International, including a new electric vehicle battery enclosure facility in Peel region, with at least 560 new jobs.

Over the past two years alone, we attracted almost \$17 billion in investment from global auto manufacturers to build electric vehicles and batteries right across Ontario, thanks to our Premier and his vision to make Ontario a leader in both responsible and sustainable mining, and manufacturing the cars and the batteries of the future.

Speaker, although the minister is right—some of the changes he's making may seem minor to the people outside the mining industry—Bill 71 is a very important part of the Premier's vision. It will help to unlock the full potential of Ontario's critical minerals and provide real benefits to all Ontarians, especially in the north and Indigenous communities.

As the minister said, we will continue to consult with our stakeholders about Bill 71 as we move forward. But I want to join the minister in urging all members of this House to support this bill. We can't get to the green, zero-carbon future that we all want without building more mines, and we need to build them now for the future of this province.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): The member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today and make a few comments on Bill 71.

I listened to the debate all afternoon, and it has been very interesting and very revealing. I hear about blood diamonds all the time in the media, and I just learned today that there are blood EVs. Some of the people should be ashamed—who took advantage of those \$14,000 subsidies and are driving around with one of these EVs, as the member for Mississauga–Lakeshore explained. I'd be getting rid of it tomorrow. We should be shaming those people. Anyway, I didn't come here to speak about that.

The changes we're proposing in the Building More Mines Act support game-changing growth in other sectors, like electric vehicle production. It will also help build an integrated supply chain for manufacturers by connecting mineral producers in the north with manufacturers in the south—no more looking around the globe for resources; we would supply those critical minerals from within our own provincial border. What an opportunity. I always say, I wish I was 30 years younger.

What I appreciate most about the Building More Mines Act that the Minister of Mines has tabled is that there are no proposed changes to our world-class environmental regulations.

As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, my riding of Sarnia–Lambton is the hub of energy and chemical production in Ontario. Our local industry and the people who support the companies in the Chemical Valley spend a lot of time and resources making sure they are continuously improving their environmental performance and meeting all of the rigorously demanding standards of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. I'm sure that the mining industry will do the same. I heard different people say, "Oh, it's not going to work, and they'll go bankrupt." No investor is going to lend money to someone who doesn't have strong environmental and safety regulations—not in this day and age. Our local industry and people who support the companies in my Chemical Valley spend a lot of time and resources making sure that they are always continually living up to those standards. It's something that they believe in very strongly, and they are very proud, as they should be, of the success they have had to date in reducing emissions and developing renewables and the green fuels of the future.

I'm extremely pleased with the Building More Mines Act. The changes that we are proposing are about improving how the Ministry of Mines operates and finding those

efficiencies. Modernizing the Mining Act is crucial to supporting our transition to the green economy. The need to modernize the act, in fact, reminds me of the changes we are making to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to support opportunities in carbon capture and sequestration—something I'm very interested in, from my area of Sarnia–Lambton, because of the geology there, with the former salt caverns and the geology. I'm very much looking forward to that.

The previous government prohibited carbon sequestration based on fears that it would be used at the time to extend coal-based energy production in Ontario—and that probably would have been a good idea.

Anyway, now that coal is a distant memory in Ontario, we as a government need to take another look at the rules around carbon capture and sequestration in our province.

Numerous stakeholders in Sarnia–Lambton have contacted me about the advances in technology and the opportunity they present to help our provincial manufacturing sector decarbonize.

Carbon capture and sequestration also unlocks new opportunities in clean energy, like blue hydrogen production or low-carbon petrochemical development—all things we need in the future. But we had outdated legislation in the province, which has been eliminated because of the red tape reduction acts, that prevented us from seizing the tremendous opportunities that lay before us.

So I was extremely pleased when our government recently introduced the Less Red Tape, Stronger Ontario Act, which included amendments to the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act that address the outdated prohibitions on carbon capture and sequestration. I look forward to that bill also coming before this House for third reading. I'm looking forward to speaking on it and a final vote on its future—and I see that the Speaker is looking at the clock, but I'll keep going until she gives me the sign. Again, it was an important—

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): I have to apologize to the member for Sarnia–Lambton.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (M^{me} Lucille Collard): It is now 6 o'clock, and we need to move to private members' public business.

Report continues in volume B.

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Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	