

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 52B

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 52B

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Thursday  
9 March 2023

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature

Jeudi  
9 mars 2023

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Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 9 March 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 9 mars 2023

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

QUEEN'S PARK RESTORATION  
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR LA RESTAURATION  
DE QUEEN'S PARK

Mr. Calandra moved second 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):** I look to the minister to lead off the debate.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the opportunity to lead off the debate on this bill. This is something that I think all members on all sides of the House are excited to see come before the House.

Having said that, Speaker, I would be remiss if I didn't thank you and the people who have sat in the chair before you, and of course the table and the officers of the Legislature who, for many, many years, have been guardians and continue to be guardians of this place and have helped ensure that we have been able to continue doing the public's business in this place for many, many years. I wanted to do that.

At the same time, if I can, I just wanted to point in the gallery, joining us today—when we decided that we were going to go down this road or starting to move in the direction of bringing this place—I hesitate to say “back to life,” because there's a lot of life that happens here, but putting it back into a condition where we want it to be. After over 130 years, we knew we had to bring together, really, an elite team of public servants to assist us in that endeavour. I know that we have done that.

Joining us in the gallery today are Carlene Alexander, the Deputy Minister of Legislative Affairs; Tehani Mott, the director at the Ministry of Legislative Affairs; and Stephen Duffy, the counsel at the deputy minister's office, at public and business services delivery, who has helped

us in drafting the bill that is in front of us today. And not here today are Milijana Uljarevic, Scott Strickland, and Graham Smith, a former director at the Ministry of Legislative Affairs.

I should say that I will be splitting my time with the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

I want to take a moment to really thank the public service for the work that they have done in helping us get to this point. It is a really challenging bill to put together, colleagues, for a number of reasons. Those colleagues who are serving on the procedure and House affairs committee will know that when you bring together government as well as parliamentarians in trying to renovate, to fix a project, it is hard for government to release in some instances its responsibilities completely over to parliamentarians. You have to somehow mesh that together. They have done a remarkable job in helping move us here today, and I thank them for that.

This is something that has been contemplated for a number of years. I know that throughout the years there have been many opportunities to fix and renovate this place. I know when I first started here as a staff member back in 1995, the chamber looked significantly different than it does today. It was red carpets everywhere. There were red carpets all out there. There were benches. It was—I don't want to say ugly, but it was not as attractive as it is today and it did not match the historical nature of this place. Parliamentarians agreed back then that we had to start making some changes, and they started to restore this place, the tentative steps to restoring this place. Gone are the carpets. The floors were done. But those were the very initial steps.

A lot of people might say, “Why now? Why are you going to do this?” The importance of us starting to do this was highlighted for me a number of months ago, frankly, when I was in the hallway, walking to a meeting, and there was a senior with a cane on her way to meet a colleague in the north tower. For that person to get to that colleague's office from the second floor meant that she had to take an elevator down to the basement, a second elevator up to a different floor, go down a flight of stairs and up to the colleague's office. I was there, so I was helping her along her way.

Ironically enough, she had some advice for the Minister of Long-Term Care and she wished that she could have an opportunity to speak to the long-term-care minister while she was actually in the building. I didn't tell her that I was the Minister of Long-Term Care, because I wanted to hear what she had to say. Eventually, I did let her know, and she was very grateful.

But more importantly than that, Speaker, this building was off limits to her for many reasons. If somebody had not been there—and security helps all the time, as well; I don't want the illusion that it's just parliamentarians. Security is always there to help. But the building should not be off limits to a vast majority of the people of the province of Ontario, and that is where we have come to in the place.

When you think of the debates that have happened here, colleagues, over the years and you think of how Ontario has transitioned in that time, from 1867 all the way through to today, who would have ever thought—I know you might say, “What does that have to do with anything?” But who would have ever thought that the deputy leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition would be a woman who wears a hijab or that the Deputy Premier would be a woman? That's where we have come in this place.

When you think of the decisions that we have made together as a province—I've said this a million times: We don't necessarily always agree. Obviously, we don't agree; that's why we have elections. But think of where Ontario has come since this beautiful place was established. We have gone through two world wars and conflicts. We have gone through recession, depressions. We have seen the transition of Ontario from a small agricultural economy to an economy that on its own would be a G20 nation, with over \$1 trillion worth of economic might. We have all done that together. Regardless of what side of the House we serve on, we have been able to accomplish all of that together.

It is time for this place to reflect the demands that we, as parliamentarians, and the people of Ontario want to see accomplished over the next hundred years.

As we started to contemplate it, as well, it was the Clerk—and I hope he won't mind me saying this—who said, “When people look back at this place a hundred years from now, they might not see the rest of the towers, but this building will still be here.” I think that is a very important testament to how important this place is for the people of the province of Ontario.

Even when you come into this room—I spend a lot of time when I'm here looking around the chamber. It is an absolutely beautiful chamber; I think that goes without saying. I've had the opportunity to visit a lot of different places, both as a member of provincial Parliament and a parliamentarian, and I would say that this is one of the most beautiful chambers that I have seen anywhere.

But when you look around it and you think of how this place has changed, it's not only just the red carpets, but we all hear the stories about how there used to be cow hair—I think it was cow hair—on the ceiling, because the members couldn't hear themselves debating. They tried to transition to making a horseshoe in this place. They tried all kinds of things to make the place better for members of provincial Parliament to actually debate. And then, as they started tearing down some of the horsehair, they came across and they found all of this beautiful work which had been covered up for decades. You can still see, as they're starting to take some of the white off—I don't know what that is, but as it starts to come off, you can see what is

behind there. I know a lot of members will—I know I'm not the only one. Once in a while, a little piece of the covering will fall down during debate and expose another little piece of the beautiful work that is underneath it.

We all have, and I know others will probably talk about, the absolute catastrophic wiring that is all over the place in offices in this place. The heating is more effective in the summertime than it is in the wintertime. Those are all things which make it both a beautiful place to work in, but one of those most aggravating places to work in at the same time. A grown-up Parliament—I shouldn't say that, but a Parliament that has now changed and has become so much more important than it was when it started. We have committee rooms that are too small. We can't bring in the amount of people that we need in our committee rooms in this place, so we need to do better on that.

We do everything we can. I know that the staff here at the Legislature do just about everything they possibly can to make this work with the demands that we are placing on them, and they just need more of an ability to handle that. When you go into the library, it is a beautiful part of the building, but most of that collection has been digitized. What more can we do with that library? This is a chance for parliamentarians to look at the building, to see how it can affect and how it can play the important role that it is meant to play in the lives of Ontarians for the next 100 to 150 years. Not only should we be excited by that opportunity, but the reality is that most of us will probably never get to enjoy the work that we all are going to do together to make this place a better place for the next number of years. We will never probably enjoy that. Maybe the member for Niagara—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Niagara West.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:**—Niagara West will, but I think it's pretty clear that—the opposition likes to say that my constituents don't necessarily love me as much as the others, so I probably won't be here for 35 years; I hope to be, but you never know.

But we have this opportunity. As you go through the building, it's not just about the wires and the inefficient heating and all of that; it is about, “What do we want this place to be? What can it be?” It has to be the centre for life in the province of Ontario, and because of the limitations we've had, we have had to give that up in a lot of instances.

The world is also changing when it comes to security and some of the evolving challenges that we have faced. We have asked our legislative protective services to go above and beyond the call of duty, because the building just is not in a position that it can be protected in probably the way they would like it to be protected. So we can imagine that.

What would we do with a library? Do we need to have three floors, or can it be something else? Can there be larger committee rooms? But it's also not just that, Speaker; think of what we have in our art galleries, in our collections across the province of Ontario—things that cannot be displayed anywhere else, but perhaps we can do that here. Is there an opportunity for us to look at our archives and bring some of the treasures we have back into this place?

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We talk about First Nations and the importance they have in our daily lives, how we want to ensure that we respect and honour them and continue to go down the path of reconciliation. They should also have an important role in what this reimagined building is like. There should be galleries, I would suggest, but members might have other ideas. There should be galleries; there should be museums; there should be the opportunity for First Nations elders to be in this place and talk to the school groups who come and visit us, so they can tell their stories of what Ontario is.

We have a lot of this stuff, but there's nowhere for us to put it. That's what this allows us to do. This reimagining of this place allows us to not only bring it back up—and the fire marshal, I'm sure, would be more than happy to see the place back up to what it needs to be.

So when we go out there and talk about this, as I said, it's not just about the heating that's bad and the wiring. We will get to that, because that is the important part.

I look at my own team in the government House leader's office who, on a daily basis, are terrorized by a mouse or two that walk through.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Truthfully, it is me. But what do you do? You have windows open. Because it's so hot in the place, you have to leave the windows open. You never know what's going to happen.

I'm actually very, very excited by the opportunity that we have, as parliamentarians, to leave the next generation of parliamentarians a building that will work for them over the next number of years.

When you go in the place and look at the elevators, the first elevators in the province of Ontario are here. If you go in and look at the plates inside those elevators, you'll see elevator number 2, number 7—those are the first ones that were anywhere. They are right here in this building, and over 130 years later some of them are still going.

Electricity was probably an afterthought when they were doing the building, put in very much at the last minute. Again, this was the building that had it first, and we can be that place again for people.

We should be able to welcome people from across Ontario and across the world into what is one of the most important seats of governments in North America, and the limitations we've had have stopped us from doing that. But in order to get there, we have to understand—and I know we do—that we are going to have to work together. This isn't something that one party or one person has carriage over more so than another. It has to be done in such a fashion that we respect the important role of parliamentarians who, through the Speaker, are the guardians of this place, at the same time respecting the fact that it is government and the accountability that comes through government and the finances authorized by the Parliament that we'll see, and the professionalism, frankly, and skill set that comes from our public service that will get us to where we want to be in this place. I have a lot of things that I would love to see here.

The fact that this place, after 130 years, is still functioning as well as it is, I think, is a testament to all of those people who work every day to keep this place going. It

truly is remarkable. Anybody who has an older home will understand how challenging that is.

As I said, colleagues, now is our time. We can set some of our other differences aside and work together to really give the people of Ontario something very, very special in this place, and I'm very, very excited.

I challenge all colleagues: Think big. You'll always be constrained by what we have on the monetary side of things, of course, but we shouldn't let that stand in the way of giving the next generation of parliamentarians a beautiful place to work, yes, and a place that meets the needs of all parliamentarians, offices that work, committee rooms that work, places for people to meet other people, places where we can tell the history of the province of Ontario in so much more—a better place where, when school groups come here, they're excited to be here not just for the couple of minutes they get to be up there but for all of the things that this building has to offer. The people who come into this building to meet with us and talk with us and to lobby for the things that they want to see happen should be able to be do that.

It really struck me—and colleagues will remember—that during COVID, for the daily press conferences, we had to have wires strewn all over the place because we just weren't in a position to give ourselves the ability to do things. Thankfully, because of the hard work of the staff here, we were able to do that, but we shouldn't be in that position.

The Internet challenges that members have, staff moving from one office to another—we can solve all of those problems.

The Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the entire team of the procedure and House affairs committee have been doing a lot of the initial hard work of understanding what's happening in other jurisdictions. So we're very, very fortunate in that we have other examples from across Canada and other parts of the world with respect to how to go about renovating and fixing an old building like this. They have done a tremendous amount of work. I know they visited Ottawa to get the experiences that Ottawa has seen as they've undertaken the renovations of Centre, East and West Blocks. We are taking examples from the United Kingdom, from Manitoba, to look at how we can both balance the needs of parliamentarians and what is obviously the government's ability to finance something like this. I think they have done a really good job. They tabled a report the other day that I think really gets us down this path of starting to understand how it is that we're going to do this.

The next number of months after, hopefully, the passage of this bill become very challenging ones for us, because it's then our job to find another place for us to do our business, and that will be challenging in itself, but I think that we will work together to undertake that.

I know my parliamentary assistant and some of the other members will go more in depth on some of the bill itself, so I don't want to get too far into that other than to just, again, thank all of the members, thank the opposition and the independent members for really working together

to get us to this place. And again, I thank the public service who are participating in this. This isn't easy.

Drafting the bill—as you will know, Stephen, Owen from my office and a few others. Trying to draft a bill that meets all of the goals of parliamentarians on both—it's a lot easier writing a bill when you only have to meet the demands of one side of the House as opposed to the other side of the House. Drafting a bill that gets everybody somewhat, I think, on the same page is very, very challenging. I think that we're there, but in the next number of months, we will get to a better spot. We will work on making sure—if this isn't exactly perfect, we will make it perfect.

Again, in conclusion, I'll just say this to colleagues: Spend the next number of months, as you walk around this building—enjoy every second of this building, because for many of you, this will be the last Parliament that sits in this place. The next Parliament that comes into this place won't have the benefit that you will have had: the absolute privilege of working in a building like this. They will be somewhere else. And don't take that for granted, because this is a pretty special place to work. When you walk up the driveway, you still—I'm still in awe of the place every time I come into it, because it is very, very impressive. But it is your job to figure out, along with us, how we can make it better for everybody else. As you walk around, as you're in your offices, as you're doing your work, as you're meeting people, write down the things that you see that you want to make better in this place. Participate in this as much as you possibly can, because the people who will be here after us will not have had the benefit that you will have had in order to make this place a better place.

So again, thank you, colleagues. I thank you for your indulgence of me. I thank you for your support of this.

With that, I will yield the floor to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Before we get into the formalities of things, I want to thank my staff, who I think are watching as we speak. They have put in a lot of work trying to figure out how we can make this building function a little better. Of course, the folks from the government House leader's office and our officials who are in the gallery—it's good to see you all. It's a lot of hard work already that has gotten us to where we are.

I'm standing here with you today, colleagues, in a building that we are very fortunate to have. We are able to provide and deliver the services needed to build a stronger, more prosperous province for the people of Ontario.

On April 4, 1893—colleagues, let that sink in for a minute—the Ontario Legislative Building opened its doors and became the official home of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It has become a symbol of democracy in Ontario, where more than 40 different governments have gathered since its opening to debate, vote and pass laws that govern the province.

The Legislative Building holds great architectural and cultural significance in Ontario's heritage, as the minister stated earlier. The building is a masterpiece in and of itself, renowned for its ornate features, design and grandeur, making it a historic landmark at the heart of the city of Toronto. It houses a myriad of murals that you can see around us this afternoon, paintings and sculptures depicting significant historical figures and events that shaped the province we live in today.

This building is also a gateway to knowledge and is open to the public to discover and learn about the history, traditions and operations of our Parliament. There is truly something here for everyone, whether you're a teacher looking for educational resources for your classroom, a curious student who wants to explore a career in government—we've actually seen some of our pages go on to become MPPs, and I've been lucky to have two of my children here as pages—parents who want to take their family on an educational day out, a citizen who wants to learn about civic engagement to make a true difference in their community, or a visitor who has travelled near or far to relish this beautiful landmark.

However, the Legislative Building that we have all grown to know and love needs our help now, more than ever. It has been almost 130 years since this building opened its doors, and it has not undergone a major renovation in over a century. I'll say that again: This building has not undergone a major renovation, colleagues, in over 100 years.

A lot has changed since the early 20th century. It wouldn't be a Mike Harris debate if I didn't bring a little bit of levity to the afternoon's proceedings, so here are some of the inventions and changes that have come along since the last major renovation of Queen's Park:

The television, invented in the 1920s, would become more popular in Canada when the CBC introduced its first TV service in 1952.

This one isn't necessarily an invention, but in the 1920s, health risks associated with asbestos, which we'll talk a little bit about as we move forward here in debate this afternoon, were, of course, being studied.

The first edition of the Canadian Electrical Code was published in 1927, and you can certainly tell that this place predates that.

Believe it or not, colleagues—this is an interesting one—sliced bread. We always like to say “the greatest thing since sliced bread.” The first machine that would slice and wrap bread was invented in 1928.

Hockey Night in Canada: I know there are a lot of hockey fans here in the room, including the minister, a big Islanders fan. I don't know about his choice, but it's his prerogative. Hockey Night in Canada's first radio broadcast was in 1936.

The first commercial passenger flight to Billy Bishop airport took place in 1939, when—some of you may remember some of these names. It was a charter flight carrying trumpet player and conductor Tommy Dorsey. I know the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is a big fan of Tommy Dorsey. He, along with his swing band,



landed in Toronto for a two-day engagement at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Madam Speaker, just yesterday, we celebrated International Women's Day, and I'm proud to see so many strong women on both sides of the House. But it wasn't always like that here. There were no female MPPs elected in this House until several decades after the last major renovation. Agnes Macphail and Margaret Rae Luckock were elected to the House in 1943—the first female members of the Ontario Legislature, in 1943.

The first electronic digital computer in Canada, which filled an entire room, was installed across the street at the University of Toronto in 1952.

The first Ontario building code was filed in 1975. Until then, each Ontario municipality had the authority to enforce its own building rules.

In the 1980s, Canadian universities began using the Internet. The first World Wide Web browser was used in Canada in 1990.

In 2001, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which is the basis for the current Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, better known as AODA for most of us, was passed—again, in 2001.

And I can go on.

The main point is that Ontario, Canada and, indeed, the world have dramatically changed since the last major renovation to the Ontario Legislature was done. This building, as beautiful on the outside as it is, was built for a world that no longer exists. It's a beautiful building, but, unfortunately, it's a bit past its prime in a lot of aspects. Technology that we rely on day to day was still decades away at the time of the last major renovation. Building code standards at the time were haphazard, if they even existed. Accessibility standards were several decades away, leaving barriers that prevent, as the minister mentioned, many Ontarians from feeling at home here in what truly is their House. The building's design presents numerous challenges in meeting the level of accessibility required for compliance with the AODA.

As we all know, major components of the Legislative Building have greatly exceeded their lifespan, and those of us who have had a chance to tour the building with our precinct property services have truly got to experience that first-hand. Really, up to this point, only minor little piecemeal repairs have been made. Quite frankly, those are no longer viable. Major infrastructure components of the building, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing, IT systems and physical security, are significantly interconnected and are, as we speak, at the end of their service lifespan. A full restoration of the building and these fundamental infrastructure systems is needed to bring it up to modern safety, environmental and accessibility standards in order to meet the needs of elected representatives and to serve the people of Ontario for years to come. This work is long overdue.

We have an obligation to restore the Legislative Building, and we cannot delay this any further. That is why our government has introduced legislation here that we're debating today, the Queen's Park Restoration Act, 2023,

that, if passed, would create a stable foundation for a complex multi-year restoration project of the Ontario Legislative Building. This project would be led by government, in collaboration with the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and overseen by parliamentarians from all parties. I think that's a very important part that we really need to highlight, and we'll go into that a little bit more in detail when we highlight some of the committee business that has gone forward.

With this act, we are setting in place a governance structure for the restoration project in legislation. This means that regardless of which government is in power, the project will continue to go forward, and it will get done in an effective and efficient way that is responsive to the unique needs of Ontarians, who, as parliamentarians, we serve. To make this happen, our government is proposing a suite of actions as part of the act that would also establish accountability, collaboration and reporting across different stakeholders within the government, the assembly and the Office of the Legislative Assembly, of course, and, as a separate, independent body of the government.

First, this act would establish a ministry called the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat, which would, of course, be responsible for the restoration project. The secretariat would have the same structure and authorities as other government ministries.

Second, to ensure that the needs of the assembly are respected and taken into consideration, the act would define the oversight role of parliamentarians and set up clear reporting and consultation requirements between the secretariat; a standing committee of the assembly, which, right now, is the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs; and the Board of Internal Economy.

#### **1350**

Third, the secretariat would maintain strong relationships with key internal and external stakeholders, partner ministries and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. The act would enable the secretariat to incorporate representatives from these stakeholders into advisory committees or an executive project working group.

To enable and support the work that the secretariat will be leading, our government is also proposing amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or FIPPA. The legislation would also amend the Legislative Assembly Act to provide the appropriate oversight for the project by mirroring roles and responsibilities assigned in the Queen's Park Restoration Act.

Amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act would ensure continued operation of the Board of Internal Economy by allowing the board to appoint alternative commissioners if a member is absent or unable to fulfill their duties, or upon dissolution of Parliament. It's very important that we keep that continuity moving even if we aren't necessarily sitting at that moment in time. This, of course, would mean that the Board of Internal Economy would remain fully constituted to ensure continuity of board operations and the ability to provide direction to the secretariat for the restoration project.

The amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act would tie the role of the government House leader, regardless of who is in power, as the minister responsible for the secretariat. This ensures that the minister responsible for execution of the project is linked to the Office of the Assembly's stakeholders and the oversight bodies, such as the Board of Internal Economy and the standing committee of the assembly, again, that we had mentioned.

Additionally, the amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act would allow the responsibility for the legislative precinct to be temporarily assigned to the secretariat to facilitate the relocation of the assembly during construction work on the main building that we have here.

To protect the autonomy of the Legislative Assembly and allow for a free flow of information between the assembly and government throughout the project, our government is proposing an amendment to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, as I said, better known as FIPPA. This amendment would create a time-limited exemption for records prepared by the assembly and disclosed to a FIPPA institution—we're getting a little bit into the weeds here—such as the secretariat, which would be subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, whereas the Legislative Assembly itself is not. What that would do is align that framework for up to 20 years after the repeal of the Queen's Park Restoration Act, at which time documents passed between the Legislative Assembly itself and the secretariat would then be able to become public—and let's make it very clear, colleagues: We're not talking about 20 years of the project. I think we can all agree that that might be a little bit too long. But it's just as far as the regulation goes in relation to FIPPA. As I alluded to, this ensures that the assembly records and advice can be freely shared with the secretariat without the need for redaction or concern over disclosure. Obviously, there are some security concerns that come along with these types of things, which we don't necessarily want to have out in the open while we're building and designing. Again, those restrictions would fall off after that 20-year period.

How much time do we have left here? Who wants to hear me go on for another 25 minutes?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Yes? All right. The vice-chair of the standing committee wants to hear me go on for another 25. I appreciate your respect, sir. Thank you.

As I mentioned, the Legislative Building has only undergone piecemeal repairs since its construction. We need to act now to bring it up to safety and modern standards to meet the needs of parliamentarians and, of course, serve the people of Ontario for years to come. This place was built before many modern standards that keep us safe, as we know it now, were developed.

Speaker, I was proud to participate in the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs with MPPs from the government and opposition as we conducted a study on the lifespan and deficiencies with building systems here in the legislative precinct and really saw a need for their true restoration and rehabilitation. As we did that tour, members were shocked, quick frankly, to see

how bad some of these things really were. We learned that systems such as sanitary and storm drainage do not meet the current building code. We were shown, as the minister mentioned earlier, mazes of cables that run through the building, that are piled on top of each other—year over year of redundant technologies that we don't use anymore, with other layers of Cat 5 cable and electrical stuff running behind our steam-powered radiators, which I'm pretty sure isn't up to building code anymore. The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane is enjoying himself right now because he probably has some of those running through his office.

Many, if not most, of the spaces in this building do not meet current building code requirements. I think we can all say, from a safety perspective—not just for parliamentarians, but also for the staff in this building. I think sometimes it gets a little bit lost as to how many people actually truly work in this building on a daily basis and make the world go around. We want to make sure that we're also respecting the needs of the staff who work here. I think the safety of not just the parliamentarians but also the staff in the building is also very important.

We also heard that the building has a considerable quantity of designated substances. I talked about asbestos earlier on in some of my remarks. These are designated substances which are harmful chemicals defined in regulation that will require abatement. This is what we've seen over in Hepburn Block and Macdonald Block, where they have all the wrap up around everything right now and they're working on some of the abatement programs. Just to put that into perspective, colleagues, those buildings were built—correct me if I'm wrong, Minister—I think in the 1970s and they're being redone, but not Queen's Park, which is over 130 years old.

The committee also reported that the presence of these harmful chemicals has hindered even basic renovations or repairs over the years. This is because these substances need to be abated prior to other work being completed. This might be something as simple as repairing carpets in your office, or painting, or even moving pictures or some of the beautiful artwork that we have here in the Legislative Assembly. That can become a two- to three-week project because of some of the abatement issues that need to be done—something as simple as just painting the walls. As our committee also reported, the difficulty and cost of their removal was one of the reasons cited for a full decommissioning of the building rather than just incremental rehabilitation. Taking a piecemeal approach would make it costly, and the difficulty of doing that on a wing-by-wing or office-by-office basis would increase costs dramatically. This is one of the things that we heard.

As you know, I'm not just a member of the committee for procedures and House affairs that is responsible for these reports; I'm also the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Legislative Affairs. As such, I have had the duty and privilege of assisting the minister and his team in researching projects, across the Commonwealth and beyond, that are similar in scope to what we are looking to accomplish here at Queen's Park.

I was very lucky to be in Ottawa last August with some of our officials from MOLA, as we like to call it—the

Ministry of Legislative Affairs—to take an extensive tour of the renovations that have been done in Centre Block and also some other government buildings in and around the House of Commons, that same tour that members of our Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs took just a little bit earlier this year.

Speaker, I don't know if you recall your high school—maybe you will; I'm sure you do—and subsequent trips that you maybe took to Ottawa to tour the Parliament Buildings, but things have changed up there on the Hill. In Centre Block, I saw the building that houses our federal government's House of Commons and Senate chambers, and the iconic Peace Tower, with our nation's flag flying proudly over top of our federal capital. We have all seen it on postcards and in person, and while it looks the same on the outside, I can tell you that it is unrecognizable once you get inside. An astonishing amount of specialized work has gone into refurbishing our nation's capital building. The entire thing has been stripped from the inside out, with meticulous thought and attention to detail.

A new catalogue system had to be created to identify and manage all the heritage items in the building—those that could be removed and safely stored and stowed away, and those that could not and had to be encased in order to protect those pieces during the renovation. It was very interesting. We saw priceless plaster and stone facades encased in Plexiglas and wood frames positioned around the hallways.

Sections of empty halls throughout the building are now used to house crates upon crates of carefully packed artifacts. It reminded me a little bit of a scene—I'm sure we can all remember—from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when they get into the tomb and they've got all the different boxes that are all over the place with the priceless artifacts. There are so many national treasures, all with their own value and history and meaning.

**1400**

Another really interesting thing—colleagues, some of you were on that tour with us—is the floors, with marble tiles. Every single tile was marked with a bar code, and those tiles will eventually be removed. The flooring beneath them will be cleaned, repaired and possibly reinforced, depending on what part of the building it is, and then those tiles will be painstakingly put back into the exact same position that they were removed from.

All of this has required tremendous work and effort on behalf of a team of specialists and planners. All of it is meant to renovate, rehabilitate and preserve our national capital. It will modernize systems so that the building is safe, secure and functional for staff, parliamentarians and visitors. It will ensure that one of the symbols of our nation will remain a place of gathering and leadership for many generations to come, while maintaining the space's original look and feel, with some much-needed modern and contemporary upgrades, such as air conditioning—colleagues, I know we're all very excited to see what that could look like here.

I was tremendously impressed with the work in Ottawa, and I'm excited to see that project completed, so that I can

take my kids—and, hopefully, my grandkids—up there someday to see it. It is this preservation of history and heritage, while harmonizing with modern technologies, that I want to highlight, because this, I think, is what we all want to see here at Queen's Park.

I've already mentioned that this building has had a special meaning to me since my childhood. I grew up in these halls. I just turned 38 a few weeks ago; not much has changed around here in those 38 years. It still looks very similar—minus, like you said, the red carpets; I do remember them, and they were, dare I say, hideous, but here we are today.

But this place has not only a special meaning to me, but of course to Ontarians across the province. It's a place of coming together, where Ontario's residents can see democracy in action and meet with and speak with their elected representatives; where groups of like-minded individuals can come together to advocate for a common cause, like the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Innovative Medicines Canada, the Ontario Dairy Council—these are folks who were all just here over the last few days—and many more who have come to share information with members and staff about their services and the challenges that they face in their industries.

Speaker, this freedom to communicate happens thanks to the facilities in this building, and that needs to continue to be an option for the future, as it is a valued and integral part of our democratic process. There is so much merit in preserving the history of this space, and so much to lose if we don't act quickly and decisively now, before it's too late and certain critical features of this building result in catastrophic failure.

I sincerely hope to see in my life a revitalized Queen's Park. Many Ontarians have called it the pink castle, and I know that many staff and colleagues throughout this chamber will agree that it's one of the coolest places you could ever imagine to work inside. The Queen's Park Restoration Act will ensure that all the charm and magic of this space is preserved with as much respect to the original intent and design as possible, while providing critical and systemic upgrades to outdated and failing systems that desperately and immediately require attention.

As I've said, I've seen similar work in progress in Ottawa, and I'm confident that this bill provides the groundwork for a successful restoration project that, once completed, will provide Ontarians with a beautiful, historical, and at the same time modern and functional, Legislature for years to come. Of course, there will be a cost to renovating this place, but there is also a tremendous cost to leaving it over a hundred years out of date.

Another example of the cost of leaving ancient infrastructure in place is the heating system, as I highlighted a little bit earlier, which uses a steam-supplied radiator system. I believe there are only a handful of companies—actually, perhaps only one—that still make parts for this system. When we were touring the building, the committee was told that because of this, it is increasingly difficult and costly to obtain replacement parts, and that many new parts that they have to actually build into the

system have to be custom-fabricated, because it's so old and out of date.

It would almost be like driving a Model T and trying to take it to a mechanic these days. Good luck with that—except the Model T, colleagues, was introduced in 1927, several years after the last renovation of Ontario's Legislature. So if you happen to see one driving down the street with the big crank start and the “ahooga” horn, Madam Speaker, it's actually more modern than most of the systems that you see in this place today.

Public consultation will be a critical element of the project planning. The important public role of the Legislative Building means it will be important for Ontarians to have the opportunity to provide input on its future state. The restoration project also creates a unique opportunity to consult with specific populations to ensure that the reconstructed Legislative Building reflects the diversity and the needs of Ontarians.

Again, with the last major renovation done to this place, the House did not enjoy the diverse representatives that it does here today, and the minister highlighted some of that earlier.

If the proposed act is approved, the secretariat would work collaboratively with partners from the Ministry of Infrastructure, Infrastructure Ontario, the city of Toronto, the Office of the Legislative Assembly, and other stakeholders to commence formal project preplanning activities.

Ontario's Legislative Building sits, of course, on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The area where Queen's Park is was an important gathering place for First Nations communities, the area that we are here on today. This land, of course, as we all know, was once home to other Indigenous groups, including the Huron and the Haudenosaunee.

The Legislative Building is an iconic symbol of Ontario's democratic system, and it is time to make it safe and accessible for all citizens. Whether visiting on a school trip, coming to meet with government officials, or even protesting outside, each and every citizen who wishes to see how their government works, no matter which party is in power, should be able to access a safe and accessible assembly grounds. It's time to prepare for the future instead of living in the past.

Thank you very much to everyone for indulging me here today.

Again, thank you to all the staff of the Ontario Legislature who work so hard to keep this place running. Maybe we'll get a round of applause for them as we finish things out.

*Applause.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions and answers?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Minister of Legislative Affairs.

Thank you for your presentation. I agree in terms of the reasons why we need to move forward on this, and why now. It's obviously a project of very big size, so oversight is going to be critically important when it comes to expenditure of public funds.

So I would like to ask the minister if he could expand on the oversight provisions of this bill.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the question from the member.

There are a lot of oversight mechanisms. First and foremost, obviously, for a project of this nature, funding is authorized by parliamentarians through the government, and the secretariat that is created specifically for this project will have all of the other oversight mechanisms that any government expenditure has. At the same time, we have ensured that the secretariat is responsible to the Legislative Assembly both through the procedure and House affairs committee as well as through the Board of Internal Economy so that the wishes of the members of Parliament can be reviewed while ensuring the financial accountability that comes through a department of the government, which will oversee the funding of the project.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** Thank you to the Minister for Long-Term Care and the House leader and my colleague from Kitchener—Conestoga for the wonderful presentation.

I know when I come to this building, I really enjoy the facelift outside, the historic nature of the building. When I came as a refugee, I walked into the building—I was living not too far away from here, at Wellesley and Parliament, and I couldn't get into the building. I never thought one day I would be an MPP in this building.

What I'm hearing from the minister and my colleague is that this building has a lot of challenges—retrofitting this building. In a hundred years, we haven't touched in this building—drinking water, for example. Sometimes I wanted to wash my face, Madam Speaker, because of the long hours we're sitting here. Sometimes it's hard to test the water.

**1410**

I want to ask the ministers to explain more, what are the deficits we have? What is the pace? We have to go pace by pace. This is a long project. It's a big project. What are the steps we are going to take in the process?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's a great question, member from Markham—Thornhill.

There are a lot of critical systems that are impacted here, and we really can't look at repairing and replacing them without a full decant of the Legislature, which we discussed in our remarks. Obviously, we're looking at having to do upgrades to the electrical system and to the HVAC system, asbestos abatement—and other designated substances.

Really, when we're looking at what the next steps—I think is kind of your question—as we move along, is evaluating a temporary legislative site which will house the Legislative Assembly for probably somewhere in the neighbourhood of eight to 10 years while a full restoration of Queen's Park is done. Then, once this place is finished, it will be the pleasure of parliamentarians and staff to come back here and get to experience the building in its true splendour and true grandeur once it's safe to do so.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** This is probably something that's very necessary for reasons the government members have pointed out. It's good to see that we're collaborating together, because this is a place where people work—members from all sides of the House, as well as the staff.

Over the years, I've talked to members and staff, and one of the things that was brought up was the air conditioning and the heat. That can be pretty challenging, when the season is winter and you have cold air, and when the season is summer and you have hot air.

I just wondered how the government sees building in energy-efficient and other green technologies, incorporating them into the restoration and rehabilitation of the building. I also want to point out, the costs of the heating and the cooling is expensive. So how is that built into the plan overall, going forward?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It's a great question.

If we're just talking from a pure environmental and cost perspective of how this building operates now, it's probably in the worst shape that it could be in. We're using century-old technologies, quite frankly. We still have single-pane glass in the building.

I remember, in Whitney Block, before they had actually done renovations across the street, snow would actually blow in through the windows in the winter if you got the wind blowing just right on blustery days. The Premier actually has a functional office in that building, and to have, in my estimation, the fifth most powerful seat in government in North America having snow blow in through the windows probably really isn't indicative of being the fifth most powerful seat of government.

When we look at other jurisdictions—this is why it has been important to travel around a little bit, learn some best practices. What they're doing in Ottawa is using a lot of great green technologies, LEED-certified type initiatives. Of course, those are the things that we'll be looking at to bring into this building, as well, as we move—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** That was exactly going to be a part of my question to the Minister of Legislative Affairs. I'm just following up on that.

But before that, I would like to give a huge compliment to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. Honestly, your next career is in storytelling. That was just fabulous, the way you had us all captivated. We just needed some popcorn. It was factual and practical and great historical lore.

Just going on the angle of sustainability, we all want to—we're talking about doing deep green retrofits in many buildings in Ontario, because we know that the more money we invest in doing that, we end up having great savings, especially with energy efficiency. I'm just wondering if that's part of your foray forward—if you have some sustainability experts involved for things like energy efficiency, grey water harvesting, low-flush toilets, solar panels, bike storage, or, heaven forbid, allotment gardens out front to grow some veggies for the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Back to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** As we, again, look at best practices that other jurisdictions, such as the UK—Manitoba has just undergone a fairly significant restoration and renovation project; of course, what we see in Ottawa—we're looking at how to take best practices from all of those types of things and incorporate them here.

We've got some of our officials here today who have already started some of this planning process and are already looking into how we can bring a more sustainable type of infrastructure into this building. And I think, when we look at cost, the sooner that we can do this, the less of a cost there is. We all know, especially with the challenges that we're seeing in global supply chains right now, that the longer you leave something, the longer you let it linger, the more it's going to cost in the long run.

Absolutely, we've got working groups; we've got industry experts; we've got folks from within many different sectors that we're consulting with from a ministry perspective, but also that the parliamentary committee will have an opportunity to consult with as well, and I think—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I appreciate the impassioned speech, and I thank both of the members and the minister for providing that information.

I love history. I simply love this building. I was brought to this building when I was a child, and I was aware of the fact that Lennox actually built the west area. Although I'm a firm believer in being stewards of an old building and that you should be a responsible steward, I don't think Mr. Lennox took into thoughts of accessibility. Could the minister or the member please talk about that in the plans?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you very much to the member from Thornhill.

Absolutely—and you can just look around and see the hodgepodge of things that have been added or removed. A great example is the handrails and steps, and there's a ramp that can be put in at that doors to the chamber over here to make things more accessible for folks.

Looking at accessibility is going to be a huge part of what we do. We'll certainly be engaging with accessibility advocates and industry experts to understand how we can better suit the needs of people with disabilities all across Ontario and the guests who come here. It's going to be a major undertaking but something that we're very cognizant of and are looking forward to, to make sure that we do have this building up to AODA standards once it reopens.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to stand in this place—and today especially so, to debate 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.

I guess my shortform of this bill is to bring this place into the modern world. Many have said that this is a building where, as it was built—it was built 130 years ago and renovated a couple of times since, but it’s obviously very antiquated and, in many ways, mechanically dangerous, mechanically insufficient. There are a lot of problems with this building. But its beauty and its history can’t be recreated, and that’s one of the reasons why we need to not only preserve and maintain but keep the beauty that it has. It’s really important to recognize the potential that exists but maintain the beauty that it has.

One thing that’s very important to, I believe, all members of the House—I like to tell personal stories, and I think sometimes my personal stories are many people’s personal stories. When I was elected and I walked into the Legislature for the first time, the wonder that this building is, particularly the chamber, elevated me to believe that I was actually worthy of representing the people of Timiskaming–Cochrane; that somehow this farm kid, who had never learned anything about public policy or anything like that, found himself in a building where they discuss things like that, where it’s possible to discuss that—if there’s one goal that we believe in, it’s that everyone in the province should have that. Looking back, I was privileged. I still am privileged, in a lot of ways, in our society. Everyone, regardless of your culture, your heritage, your economic background, your physical abilities or lack thereof, should feel the same welcome, and not just by the people, because the people are all very—but by the structure itself. And that is not the case now. This is not a welcoming structure for many.

**1420**

When the government House leader—I actually have the honour of sharing many, many conversations with the government House leader. I’m his critic on this issue, and we both sit on the Board of Internal Economy. The one part where we don’t get along very well sometimes is the House leader part, but actually, it’s not too bad. I think what we share on that is to keep the love of this building, of the precinct. But we need to make it more open and realize all of its possibilities.

The one thing that hasn’t been mentioned yet—and I’m going to take a few minutes. I really enjoyed Mr. Harris’s—I keep forgetting what—Kitchener–Conestoga? I really enjoyed his remarks.

A lot of things have come into being since this building was constructed. In many ways, it’s a building of promise: the promise of a better Ontario, the promise of better outcomes for people. But one of the reasons why we have to maintain the history of this building is to remind ourselves that it’s also a building of pain. Not all the decisions that have been made in this building over history have been good ones. I’m not trying to be partisan, because I don’t even know which parties made the—but you think of how sometimes Indigenous people have not felt part of this province, for very good reasons; how sometimes other groups have not felt part of this province; how sometimes decisions have been made for which people suffered. We shouldn’t ignore that. We should

remember it and learn from it so the same things don’t happen again. That’s the reason why we learn history, why we teach history and why, especially in the House of democracy, we need to preserve history. It’s really important.

This is an important project. It’s a necessary project, a project that we can all work together on, but it’s something that—we need to preserve the memory, both good and bad. I don’t know if I’m expressing that correctly, but I really want to leave that—that if you only remember the happy times, you don’t really remember what happened. This building helps us remember history. The Seven Grandfather Teachings haven’t been there since 1867—they were just there. We have to remember that. It’s really important. So in our drive to make sure that this building is as accessible as possible, to dream big, we have to also maintain our memories.

If you think about it, when this building was built—talk about dreaming big. When this building was built, the people who built and designed it didn’t dream big; they dreamed beyond belief. There used to be a small picture some place I really enjoy spending a lot of time in, the cafeteria, and it was a picture of this building and University Avenue. University Avenue was all trees, and this building stood alone. That picture has always stayed with me. When the parliamentarians got together and commissioned this building, they were dreaming big, way ahead of their time. Right now, we have the chance to do the same thing—not just to bring this building to now, but to bring this building looking forward to the future.

I take the government at their word. We need to work together on this. The bill talks about this—that we need to enable committees and people to actually have real input. We need to find the people who have never thought about providing input to this, because their input is valuable.

There are things that I see in this building, and one of the best parts of this building, for me—and maybe some of you are going to find this odd. The chamber is beautiful. My favourite part of the chamber is actually above—it’s the timbers in the roof that remind me of an old barn. I’m a farmer, and I thought, “Whoa, they build just like they built barns 130 years ago,” and that spoke to me. All the carvings are irreplaceable, but that old barn reminds me of the craftsmen who built this place, and we need to preserve that.

When this bill is passed, we’ll take the time to make sure everyone has the ability and has the confidence that their voices will be heard and that their voices will be reflected in this place.

Now I’d like to switch gears a little bit. I’ve had the unique opportunity to serve with Minister Calandra on the Board of Internal Economy. I’ve been on there for awhile. What happens at the Board of Internal Economy is kind of like Las Vegas: It stays there, and that’s the way it should be. But I’ve had the unique opportunity, because of being on the Board of Internal Economy, to meet and deal with some of the people who actually—and all the staff here are great—deal with the problems that happen in this building on a regular basis. I’d like to recognize the extraordinary

work they do to keep this building functioning. It has its problems, but for those of us who know what actually happens here, it's a major undertaking that this thing isn't closed on a regular basis. I'm not trying to be theatrical at all. If this was a barn, I would have built a new one a long time ago. This isn't a barn, but there are many parts of the mechanical part of this building that have gone way over their life, and the lifespan was never designed to do the things necessary in our current world.

I don't like to name individual people, but I'm going to name one, because those of us who know what this lady does—Jelena Bajcetic is the director of the precinct properties branch. She must have nerves of steel because of the things that she has to deal with. I had the honour of touring the Parliament Buildings in Toronto right after the plowing match. The Clerks' office had a tour, and I had the privilege of being on that tour with Jelena. They were talking about the things that didn't work at Parliament Hill; the elevators in the Peace Tower that have a really odd kink in them. And I looked—"Oh, well, our elevators are good." We almost need a permanent elevator repairman here. That's stuff we would never know.

1430

We knew that once in a while, there's a flood, and once in a while, the wiring is—we knew all those things. And once in a while, our offices need to be moved. That's why we have to have a swing office, because the rad breaks in your own office and there's water on the floor, so they move you. It's a pain, but the next day, we still have an office, and that's due to the precinct properties branch and Jelena. I'm sure that she would be wishing I could mention all the other people in precinct properties, but she doesn't get mentioned very often. I work with her a lot, and I really appreciate her. The precinct properties branch—I don't ask for applause very often, but they deserve a hand.

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** And I trust that they will also be—and are—part of this consultation process, because no one knows more about what needs to be done than the people who do the repairs, and that's something else that's the same as farming. No one knows more than the mechanic what actually is going to be the problem.

In the tour of Parliament Hill—and hopefully I've got these figures right. They took 20 tonnes of asbestos out of the Centre Block. So when you're going to do a full rejuvenation, we have to deal with those things too. Over the years, in buildings like this, you fix and patch and upgrade, you reno a little bit—reno on top of reno on top of reno.

When we did the tour of offices recently, one thing that struck me is that some of the office partitions look like a 1970s trailer. And you can see why that happened. All that stuff has got to go, but none of us in this room know what's actually behind all that stuff, so things might not get better the deeper we go in.

The one thing that I do know: There is a lot of work being done on the outside of the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, and they're replacing a lot of the sandstone. I'm no expert, but I do know that they've done a pretty good

job on the outside of this building to maintain the outside. They're going to find stuff. When you do a full reno, you are going to find stuff. In this building, where it was possible to see, they've done a good job. But some of the mechanical stuff, anyone who has ever been in this building—you go down those stairs where all the heat concentrates, and the boiler, where they shut it off once a year and turn it back on once a year. It's that old. There has got to be a lot of work done there, and it's going to take a lot of work.

It's going to take a leap of faith, in many ways. We have to make sure that the oversight is as strong as possible. We have to make sure that people get good value for their money, but it's going to take a leap of faith to preserve the hall of democracy in this province.

As frustrated as I get some days with the debate in this building, this building has a unique—as all Parliaments do, but this is the only Parliament I've ever served in and ever will serve in. The two-sword-length thing has a purpose, where we can disagree, and disagree very vehemently—there are times I want to reach out and poke the House leader, but at the end of the day, we can walk out and be civil to each other. We have had this discussion before: In another life we might even have been friends. But this structure very important. I can't picture doing it anywhere else, in any other type of format.

That leads us to—and the government House leader mentioned it—how there is a chance that this might be the last Parliament in this building for many years. There are two main issues with that. The decision that we make, when or if this bill passes, isn't just a decision for the current government or the next government. As with all legislation, but particularly with this one, it needs to stand the test of time and also the test of the electorate, because once this leap is taken, it will be up to—it's not up to partisan politics; it's up to parliamentarians, and there is a difference. I think the level of the debate today is kind of showing that. So we have to make sure that this legislation stands up to the test of our system, that this legislation stands up to the confidence of the public. We're all going to have to work together to make sure that the public understands why this is important.

We're also going to have to acknowledge those who might not think it is important and explain why, because part of democracy—one of the biggest parts of democracy—is acknowledging those who may not agree. We listen to the majority of people, but we work for all, and it's going to be important that people who do not agree with our decisions still feel part of the process. That's not going to be easy, but it's very important.

A big part of this undertaking is going to be moving and where we move to—it might not even be me moving, and that's interesting. There's no guarantee we're still all going to be sitting here after the next election. I'm hoping that the people who voted for me last time will vote for me next time, but there's no guarantee of that. We all work hard to make sure that's going to happen, regardless of political affiliation, but there's no guarantee of that.

We're making a decision so the next Parliament—whatever; this new ministry, the committees, the Board of Internal Economy, together, and the people of Ontario—

are going to have to buy into and decide where we're going to move to in that time, because that's also going to be a considerable undertaking. It's going to be a big deal to maintain the ability for the democratic process to function, for it to be accessible, because when this project goes ahead in the new facility—or the new-to-us facility—that is going to be used while this one is redone, it's also going to have to be as accessible as possible, as usable as possible, if you think about it. We certainly can't move someplace where we're going to turn people away. It is temporary—but temporary might be a decade or 15 years. For many, that's not temporary, because for many of the problems that we deal with that people face, 10 to 15 years is more than a lifetime. It's really important. That's something that, again, is going to be a big undertaking, and not everyone is going to agree.

**1440**

Of all the bills that I have dealt with in my relatively short parliamentary career, this one is less political than many. It has pitfalls, but they're pitfalls that we're all going to have to work together to overcome. I'm not saying the bill itself has pitfalls, but just the process itself, because not everyone in this province is going to believe that this is worth the expense—I believe it, because I believe in the democratic process; we all believe it, and it's going to be up to us to make sure that people don't feel shortchanged because this is happening. That's going to be difficult for some, and if we acknowledge it right now, that's the best way to do it.

I'm going slowly because I'm trying to pick my words carefully, because this is going to be a—and I'm struggling to find words too.

This is a lot more than just a building. There's no political win in this for anybody. And for anyone who tries to make a political win out of it, it's going to be a short-term gain for a long-term loss.

Having said that, people have to have confidence in the accountability of the process. That is going to be crucial. The committee is a good start. We have to listen to people on the processes already started. There have been some recommendations from the Board of Internal Economy already. I think that process has started.

If I could switch—I'm talking about the Board of Internal Economy. I can't talk about what happens in the Board of Internal Economy, for good reason. But the changes to the Board of Internal Economy—as a member of the Board of Internal Economy, I'm supportive. For there to be an alternate, especially in a project that has to continue while the government may not be in session—quite frankly, I think even without this project, an alternate is not a bad idea. If lightning strikes me tomorrow, I don't know who Paul is going to want to deal with. Realistically, there should be a formal process. There is an informal process that—the members of the Board of Internal Economy, the ones representing the government and the opposition, serve at the will of the leader, so there is a process. But if something else is going on, it would help if the process was more seamless, so if a decision has to be made, it can be made very quickly or very thoughtfully,

and hopefully both equally. I think that's important. So the changes to the Board of Internal Economy are a good one, in my opinion.

Where I think we're going to have to do the best job or concentrate on is the changes to the freedom of information, because that is going to put some people's hackles up; not with this bill, but with good reason, because we have all—especially on the opposition side, but I'm sure when some of you were on the opposition as well—used freedom of information. So we are going to have to make sure that everyone understands why that's important and how it works currently as well. That's the part that, when I just do a quick read-through of the bill, if I wasn't a parliamentarian, or even if I am parliamentarian—I don't think I'll ever be a parliamentarian. For someone who is looking for a part of the bill to go after, that would be where you would go after.

There are reasons why the changes to freedom of information are put in there, and we're going to have to be very succinct on why, because there is the tendency—and I'm trying to be so less partisan; I usually am not very partisan. People are always worried about freedom-of-information creep, and we've all got to be really succinct that we are not trying to hide things; we are trying to get this done on behalf of the people as fairly as possible and with as much oversight as possible, and we need those tools to be able to do that.

I'm going to back up, because, when I got elected, it wasn't the first time I was in this building. The first time I was in this building I was—someone got me into the media studio years ago, and I did a press conference about Adams mine, and Richard Brennan, who was one of the reporters, and I had a great conversation. I got out after, and everybody asked how I managed that—getting along with Richard Brennan. I can get along with the government House leader, so I'm pretty good at it. But I didn't appreciate the building. I didn't appreciate the process.

The second time I was in this building, I just happened to be here lobbying for the board of Dairy Farmers of Ontario. I was on the board of Dairy Farmers of Ontario. And I happened to be walking through the hall, and my MPP at the time was David Ramsay. He pulled me aside and he said, "John, you've got to come in here, because we're passing the Adams Mine Lake Act today." I sat right in the government members' gallery the day the Adams Mine Lake Act was passed, and that's the first time I kind of appreciated the building.

The one thing I thought was funny about the building, though, is I got in and I was walking all over and I didn't have to go through a metal detector until I got invited in by the member. That didn't make sense. The security has increased greatly.

**1450**

But I didn't truly appreciate the building until I walked through those doors as a member. And somehow, we have to convey the feeling of that, of the importance of that, that in our system, hopefully, anyone, if they work hard enough or if they represent people, has the opportunity to walk through those doors unhindered. That is the goal.



And speaking about doors: When I got elected, I had never lived in a village. It takes a while to find an apartment or condo or whatever, so my kids taught me how to use—I don't know what it's called—Expedia or something. You find the cheapest hotel that's closest. At the start, I flew. At the start, I thought flying would make more sense than driving. It didn't take me long to figure out that I'm better off driving. But anyway, I would fly to the airport and then take a taxi, and I'd drop off at whatever hotel they had landed. I was thinking about this story because the government House leader was talking about how he slept at the Delta Chelsea a couple of nights ago. Anyway, they dropped me off at the Delta Chelsea. I slept there, and the next morning I went to the concierge. I said, "How do I get to Queen's Park?" He looked at me, "Oh, a tourist?" I said, "No; MPP." And that happened at the Holiday Inn on College, and that happened at several hotels.

Every morning I would walk down this nice sidewalk and go through the front doors. I did this for about three weeks. And the security staff right there, the lady who is standing right there—after three weeks—did something; I'm not sure if she was supposed to do it, but she said, "Sir, I hope you know there are doors in this building that are closer to your office than this one." And my response was, "I have been sneaking into buildings like this for a while. It's nice to be able to go through the front door."

And it will be nice sometime when the front door actually doesn't have just a board holding it shut. And now there's cameras and there's—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's very secure. I'm not saying it's not secure. It's secure. It's just kind of like barn-style, you know? I could engineer that.

But if there's one thing, and I'm going to repeat it—and not just through those doors. The government House leader mentioned committee rooms, galleries. There are things that we can do—think big—to bring people into the House of democracy, to elevate democracy. Because part of the reason why people don't feel a part of the system is they don't feel that they can access the system or access the places of democracy. With security, it's harder now. Security has to be taken into account. It has to. But this is the people's House, the House of the people. And for that, it needs to be accessible to people from all walks of life.

For me, I'm far away from here, so I don't get that many school groups that come here. But when I do, it's a pretty big deal. We have pages who do incredible work with us and we have school groups and ushers. This building also has to be healthy and safe for them. Their families have to be confident that this is a healthy and safe building. And, right now, there are a few things that—you know, when some of that lead paint falls off the ceiling, it's not that healthy.

There has been incredible work done in this building, parliamentary work but physical work as well—anything we can do to preserve that. And watching how they did it, I didn't have a true appreciation of what the decantation—is that the proper term?—was going to entail until I walked through Ottawa. The member for Kitchener-Conestoga

was talking about how they catalogue everything. It is a massive, massive, massive undertaking. We're fortunate that others have done it before us so we can, again, learn from their successes and hopefully learn from their mistakes, because I don't know of any project that hasn't had a mistake. If we can learn from them, and if we can retain the history, learn from the history, fully incorporate the Seven Grandfather Teachings in this building, fully incorporate Indigenous people from all of Ontario, fully incorporate all the people who have come since who have also contributed—that's our goal. Then, we can continue to oppose and propose and respect each other. That's our goal, and the people have confidence that we are going to do that. If we can do those things and continue to do those things, then we can work together on this project.

With that, I didn't make my hour, but I don't think you can stand any more of me, so thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche):** Questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Listen, it's great to hear the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane pontificate on some non-partisan issues. I think we can all really get behind this project. One thing that he talked about obviously is accessibility and, of course, seeing school groups and different types of organizations come into the building. One thing we didn't really get a chance to talk about too much was the new visitor welcome centre that they're building out in Ottawa. They've recently just built out a more elaborate one in Quebec as well. Certainly, we've seen our visitor welcome centre here expand a little bit over the last few years.

Just to get some thoughts on what the member might like to see once things start to happen around here, how might we be able to incorporate some of those best practices into what we could see here in Ontario's Legislature?

**1500**

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you very much for that question.

There have been some changes made here. The security system has vastly improved. The flow of people coming in has vastly improved. I commend the people who designed that and pushed for that. But it actually isn't what I would call a visitors' welcome centre. It's a "get in the building as safely and efficiently as possible centre." A visitors' welcome centre is something that, in the spirit of dreaming big—to be able to come to a place and have it explained. We have a little one for the kids, the mini Parliament, and across there's a little classroom—that, but much bigger, much expanded. "When you come in, here's what you're going to see." Something like that, I think, is a great idea.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche):** Questions?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thanks to my friend from Timiskaming-Cochrane for those remarks.

In the last Parliament, I had the privilege to serve in this place as the disabilities critic, and one of my enduring frustrations in working with so many people, including the late David Onley, is just watching them struggle getting around in this place. So I'm just wondering if you have

any thoughts about the space we're going—I also don't have a crystal ball, my friend, but next Thursday we've got a by-election in the province of Ontario, and I'm cautiously optimistic that we are going to break barriers and have historic things happen, and that will require this space, even right now, being accessible to that person, if that person is chosen by the people of Hamilton Centre.

So do you have any thoughts on the priority of accessibility and making sure this place is open to everybody?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** That's a really good question.

There should be no barrier to anyone who needs to access, who wants to access this place. This is the time for people who are in the disabled community to express their thoughts, their expertise. As the government House leader stated in his remarks, this is one of the big reasons why we're doing this, why we're contemplating this—to make the Legislative Assembly of Ontario open and accessible to all. This is the time. It's not the time for little fixes. It's not the time for, "Right now, a ramp." It's the time when we are going to re-envision to make sure that this is accessible to all.

Thank you for the question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I want to thank the member for his speech. It is actually difficult giving speeches on this because—I do appreciate that the main function of the opposition is often to oppose, critique and look at how we can make things better. I think he did touch on it, though, in how we bring people—who might not necessarily agree with what it is that we want to accomplish. Perhaps if he could expand on that and maybe—I know it's asking a lot—some additional ideas on how we do that, not only here, but outside of this place, because I think the member is correct; that will be a big part of what we do over the next little bit.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I thank the government House leader for that question.

It is probably going to be the most difficult issue for the general public. I think we need to be open about what we're doing, why we're doing it. We need to do it as a group of parliamentarians, not as individuals. I think that's important. And we need to understand that although not everyone is going to agree, as long as we put forward justifiable reasons for why we're doing it—safety, security, accessibility, the need to protect the institutional—that's not a good word, but the memory of our history, because one of the things that spurs me, when I look around, is that we need to protect that so that we don't make mistakes. We're always going to make mistakes; we're human. But so we don't repeat mistakes that we've made or that our forefathers or forepeople have—again, there's a mistake—the mistakes that have been made.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Spadina–Fort York.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I thank the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for his comments today. I want to follow up on the question from the member from Ottawa Centre about getting the disability community engaged in the process here. Right now, the committee reflects the

majority in this House. How do we make sure that the voices of the opposition, of the independents and of the people of all of Ontario are reflected in the planning of the refurbishment of this building so that it truly does reflect everybody in Ontario?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you to my colleague for an excellent question. That's going to be a challenge because this is an oppositional place. The government House leader just talked about it. That is how legislation is made. But with this one—and it might take a couple of hits and misses; I'm not sure. For this one, we're going to have to think as parliamentarians. I think it's one of the challenges and why a separate ministry is being created, because this one isn't just simply that the public service and the government can just take over and rebuild the place and that we can come back. It doesn't work like that either. We have to be sure that the voices of parliamentarians are heard in this and the voices of the people that we represent. We all represent constituencies and have constituencies in our areas that need to be represented.

This is going to be tricky. This isn't a slam dunk. This is the start, but we are going to have to rethink our roles, and I think we will.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Rob Flack:** I've actually quite enjoyed this because the first time I came here, I got permission from my mother to leave school. She drove me down to Mimico or Clarkson; I took the GO train and the subway up. I wanted to see Premier Davis and so I got here. I can remember, at the time, I had my suit on. I was all keen. I had the freedom of the place; there was no security per se. I came in, got home and loved the majesty of the place.

So I would just hope and I would ask, with the changes coming, does the member support that we keep the tradition alive, that we make sure that the tradition that's here now, albeit improved from a capital expense standpoint—that we're going to keep the tradition alive, how it looks and how it feels and remembering our past?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** That's a very good question. I'm thinking about the tour we took at Parliament Hill. I believe they had 20—I could be wrong—areas of historical significance in Centre Block. That's why they took so much time to catalogue everything, so that when you walked in again the historical significance, the grandeur, would still be there.

I think that's something that will have to be discussed, but I think that you and I will agree that the historical significance, what we're looking at, needs to be maintained. We've got to get rid of the wiring, but there are parts of this building that are, for lack of a better word, sacred to us and to future generations. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** We have no time left for questions. We're going to move on to further debate.

I recognize the member for Whitby.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Well, good afternoon, Speaker, and thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak on Bill 75, the Queen's Park Restoration Act.

Given the time of the day, it might be worthwhile just covering what the schedules include:

Schedule 1 of the proposed legislation “enacts the Queen’s Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023. That act establishes the Queen’s Park Restoration Secretariat. The minister responsible for that secretariat has the responsibility of carrying out the project to restore, refurbish, rehabilitate and preserve the Legislative Building (the ‘Queen’s Park restoration project’). Various consulting and reporting requirements are also enacted” within schedule 1 of the legislation.

#### 1510

“Schedule 2 amends the Legislative Assembly Act to facilitate the Queen’s Park restoration project, for example by permitting regulations to adjust the definition of the ‘legislative precinct.’ In addition, the act is amended to allow for alternate commissioners on the Board of Internal Economy.”

Speaker, for those who haven’t been to Queen’s Park, the Legislative Building rises above the historic grounds of Queen’s Park in downtown Toronto. It took six years to build, from 1886 to 1892. It was designed in the Richardson Romanesque style of architecture, which typically features elements from northern Italian structures such as heavy stonework, rounded archways, domed towers and detailed carvings. We see evidence of that as we sit here today in the Legislative Assembly.

The exterior walls were made of pink sandstone quarried from the Credit Valley near Orangeville. As you drive up to the Forks of the Credit and that area, you will still see some of that pink sandstone. Large pieces of stone were brought to Queen’s Park and carved on the grounds by English stonecutters. Can you imagine the amount of work that took? The roof was covered in slate from Vermont, and copper was used over the roof domes.

Inside, the building features cast-iron columns and detailing, oak floors and panelling, and inner walls constructed—listen to this, Speaker—of 10 million bricks. The legislative chamber was lined, as it is today, with beautiful wood carvings made from mahogany and sycamore, and artist Gustav Hahn painted the walls and ceiling with murals. You can see some evidence of that as you look to the far end of the Legislative Assembly.

Two wings branch out on either side of the centre block which houses the legislative chamber. Inside, original oak floors and cast-iron columns in the east hall contrast with Italian marble in the interior west wing of the building. Not many people will know that the west wing was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1909. Toronto architect E.J. Lennox was hired to redesign the west wing and added an additional two floors to provide more space for government offices. A new north wing was also constructed at this time. It was completed in 1913 and it houses the legislative library, a research facility for MPPs and Legislature staff.

We heard earlier in some of the presentations that the Ontario Legislative Building first opened its doors on April 4, 1893, and it hasn’t undergone a major renovation for hundreds of years.

The building currently houses the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, offices for the members, offices for members of the media and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. It serves as the centre of government where Ontario’s elected representatives debate and pass laws.

Speaker, in moving forward with this restoration, the government will leverage its significant expertise in managing large-scale infrastructure projects. The proposed legislation, if passed, includes mandatory collaboration with the Office of the Assembly and Board of Internal Economy, along with oversight of an all-party committee of parliamentarians. This will ensure that respect for the assembly’s independence—as it should be—is at the project’s core. The restoration project includes careful interior deconstruction to preserve heritage elements while modernizing building systems to address safety and accessibility issues. In addition, the project will include securing and preparing a temporary place to conduct parliamentary business.

Each day that I walk up the long sidewalk that starts at Queen’s Park circle leading to the main doors of the Ontario Legislature, I remind myself of what a privilege it is to serve the hard-working families from my riding in this magnificent building. And it is a magnificent building.

I also walked these halls at one time—and all of the Queen’s Park Complex but these halls particularly—as a civil servant. At that time, I was a civil servant for the then Ministry of Government Services, and the Ministry of Government Services had the stewardship of this building and of all of what’s referred to as the Queen’s Park complex. That evolved over time. But why would I be walking this main building? At the time, the Ministry of Government Services had an internal newsletter, which was their principal piece of communication with staff. Part of the task of the communications branch was to prepare articles for that newsletter. One of those articles was to talk about this particular building but the underpinnings of this building. This goes back—not unlike what the House leader was talking about—as far back as 1995. Can you imagine crawling through those underpinnings, those little blue doors that you see sometimes from the tunnel and seeing what was below the floors? That’s my background and experience in seeing this building.

Clearly, the building is showing its age. There are lead pipes and asbestos running through the walls, mountains of old cables and wires stacked on top of new ones, an inefficient steam heating system with parts that frequently fail and fire safety systems in need of upgrading.

As I indicated earlier, the Legislative Building has only undergone piecemeal repairs since its construction in 1893. Critical building systems such as plumbing, heating, electrical and IT services are at or beyond the end of life and at a risk of total failure. That’s not surprising, given the age of the building. A full restoration of the Legislative Building is needed to bring it up to modern safety and operational standards, to meet the needs of parliamentarians and to serve the people of Ontario for years to come. The proposed legislation would, if passed, establish the foundation of a comprehensive restoration project and temporary relocation of parliamentary operations while the project is under way. The reason for that is abundantly clear.

In collaboration with the assembly and with the oversight of an all-party committee of parliamentarians, the government will plan and execute the restoration of the

building, leveraging its expertise in managing large-scale infrastructure projects.

That approach is similar to the project under way in Parliament's Centre Block in Ottawa. Members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs travelled to Ottawa and other locations within the city to hear any lessons learned or best practices from officials there and other locations. I want to thank the committee members for their diligence and commitment to the task at hand.

The vast scale of repairs and upgrades needed in the Legislature has been discussed on an increasingly urgent basis for the past several decades, with options on the table such as shutting it down block by block for the construction work. But at the end of the day, we need to decant and have a full restoration happen, and that just can't happen in a piecemeal way—as the House leader pointed out earlier—and still have a functioning assembly at the same time given the scale of what has to happen in the building.

The longer we delay, Speaker, the more likely it is that there's going to be, I would say, a catastrophic failure of one of our systems, whether it's plumbing, electrical or ventilation. We can't just let the building crumble around us. No one wants that.

Upgrades of this scale and complexity are further complicated by designated substances which are present throughout the building, including asbestos, lead and PCBs. These issues taken together present significant challenges for us in staying ahead of the maintenance curve. As we continue to maintain the systems, it doesn't change the fact that the infrastructure as a whole is both hazardous and severely deficient.

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If passed, these legislative changes would allow for consultation with stakeholders on options for a potential new temporary location for the Legislative Assembly occupants. This will include space for question period and other legislative business. While the government will be responsible for preparing a temporary location for the Legislature, parliamentarians will have approval of the decision to relocate through the assembly's Board of Internal Economy.

We are also recommending changes to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act for this project to assert that the existing broad exemption from the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act currently in place for the assembly would apply to records produced by the assembly and disclosed to the secretariat until 20 years after the repeal of the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat Act, 2023. Other project records created by or in the custody of the secretariat would remain subject to typical freedom-of-information requirements.

The proposed amendment, Speaker, is in line with the existing broad exemption for the Office of the Assembly that is in place to protect the autonomy of the assembly and allow the free flow of information between the assembly and the government throughout the project.

While much work lies ahead, I'm confident that the restoration of Queen's Park will make it a functional place

of business for another 130 years and, importantly, a symbol of our democracy of which present and future generations of Ontarians can be proud. At the end of the day, this House belongs to the people of Ontario. My deepest gratitude goes out to all individuals who have dedicated themselves to conceiving this project and to those tasked to manage the implementation. The work ahead is significant. It will be daunting. But underpinning that will be a level of consultation that, collectively, the government and the official opposition and independents will move forward with.

I thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak today and I look forward to any questions that might be coming forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** This is an historic discussion that we're having in the House today. It's about the refurbishment of this building that's 150 years old. Certainly, it needs to be refurbished. As many people have mentioned, it has got single-pane windows; the boiler is just cranked on all the time to try to keep it warm in the winter. But also the refurbishment of this building should reflect the views of Ontarians. It should reflect the needs of Ontarians and the history of this province—not just the recent history, but the 15,000 years of First Nations history here, as well.

What kind of processes would the member opposite recommend in order to make sure that the views of all Ontarians are infused into the planning for the refurbishment of the Legislature?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. In my remarks, I talked about the mandatory collaboration of the Office of the Assembly and the Board of Internal Economy. An important piece in that is the oversight of an all-party committee of parliamentarians.

To the point you made, I would anticipate that that aspect will certainly come up in discussions with the all-party committee of parliamentarians. But added to that, this legislation establishes a secretariat, and we have some of the senior public servants with us today who have demonstrated historically what their abilities are with respect to coordinating the level of consultation that's going to be critical to moving forward with this restoration.

I thank the member again for his question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** One of the things that we haven't really touched much on today is office space. I know that the member from Whitby is kind of chuckling as he has a sip of water, but he's had quite the journey over the last few months with office space. I was wondering if maybe he could touch a little bit on how having, number one, a safe—because I think we've all plugged something into the wall around here and been zapped or something along those lines at one point in time. I know I have. Maybe it's just my electric personality, Madam Speaker; maybe that's what it is.

But can the member from Whitby maybe talk a little bit about what it means to have a safe, clean office for him

and his staff and how that can help him represent his constituents in a much more efficient fashion?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I first want to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for the excellent work and time, and the creativity and innovation that he has exhibited in the course of serving on the committee going forward.

Our House leader has indicated that one of the objectives of this legislation is also to make sure that everyone, every MPP in the Legislative Assembly, will have an office in the main building. I think that's a goal to aspire to. I think we all find—that includes the official opposition as well as the independents—that we're in a circumstance at the present time where we're scattered and we don't have the opportunity to interact at the level that we would anticipate interacting with our colleagues on a number of fronts. Yes, we have a caucus lounge, but what member of Kitchener–Conestoga is speaking of is an operating base that you can have within the main building so that you can interact not only with your caucus colleagues but all members here in the Legislative Assembly.

I think it's a goal to aspire to, and it's a goal we will accomplish together. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Hamilton–Ancaster—hang on.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** You're my neighbour.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** HWAD, Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. Thank you.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you, Speaker. I said the other day that it gets pronounced wrong so often that I now struggle to make sure I say the name of my riding right: Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, HWAD.

My question to the member is around the discussion today about Bill 75. I think it's really critically important that there's oversight on this project. The government has a majority in the House, and with a project of this size it's really important that there are provisions in this bill to make sure that everyone, not just us as parliamentarians but everyone—Ontarians at large—have an opportunity to weigh in on this project.

Can you just expand a little bit further on the provisions in this bill that make sure there's proper oversight?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you to the member for Ancaster–Dundas, who is the MPP for my brother and sister-in-law who live in Ancaster as it turns out.

To the question—and it relates back to a point I made earlier with the establishment of the secretariat. They will have accountability for the level of collaboration, and that will be really the underpinning as we move forward with this particular project. But the add-on, yes, is the all-party committee of parliamentarians. We've seen the evidence of how well that has worked historically with the Board of Internal Economy and in other situations where members have collaborated. As part of that, there's been some very positive outcomes. Again I thank the member from Ancaster–Dundas for the question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Frontenac–Kingston—okay, hang on a sec. It's been a long week.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's not HWAD. Lanark–Frontenac–Kingston. I so apologize.

**Mr. John Jordan:** Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member from Whitby for speaking today. From the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, we heard about the trip to Parliament Hill and how they're preserving the feel and the historic value of Parliament Hill.

I'm wondering if the member from Whitby, given his time here at Queen's Park, could share with us what would be the important elements of this building to preserve, as it is today, as this renovation goes forward.

1530

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Well I think it's a very important consideration. I think what's important in answering that question is also to consider the level of input that we would get from the people of Ontario, because at the end of the day, obviously we all serve the people of Ontario. I can have my own opinion—and I agree with you. Notwithstanding, I think we need to ensure we have a robust consultation with all levels of sectors to arrive at the point that we want to be.

Now, as an add-on to that, that's one of the key reasons we created a secretariat with a single focus to ensure an appropriate governance and consultation structure. In my experience both as a civil servant, not only in government services but in several other ministries here, and as director of communications, it's important to have that type of structure in place to implement such a large-scale project. But I have a level of confidence that we'll be able to accomplish that goal.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I actually just finished a tour of the Legislature moments ago, and I'm really excited to see the work. Well, I'm not so excited to see what's currently there, but the thought of what could happen is really exciting.

I'm not sure if the member has had the opportunity to tour the facility and to see the wonders of this building, but accessibility always comes to my mind. Could the member expand on his thoughts on accessibility and how they should be featured into the building?

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for that particular question. With the establishment of the secretariat, as this legislation proposes, the proposed model would take into account a number of elements, and as you would expect, accessibility would be one of the key aspects going forward. I know that with the standing committee, led by the MPP for Oshawa, there are a number of considerations. But at the end of the day, the proposed project model for this would take into account a number of factors, including accessibility. Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to the member for Hamilton Mountain for the question.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Unfortunately, we do not have enough time for further questions, but we do have time for further debate.

I recognize the member from Oshawa.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I appreciate this conversation. There has been a lot of interest in this project, as there should be. All of us are privileged to serve in this Legislature, in these seats, in this space that has been here for a long time, but democracy has served us well for long before that, and hopefully will continue to. There are a lot of pieces, though, that go into this building, that go into what this building represents, and so I'm glad to have the opportunity for a discussion. Not to diminish people's comments, but we're hearing some warm, fuzzy recollections and we're hearing some sentimental things, and that is part of the importance of this space—the lasting impression it makes from the positive side—but there are other views.

I'm going to just give my first impressions of this space. The first time I came to Queen's Park was actually on the front lawn, and I was here as a protester, proudly standing up for what we were championing. I was on the outside of it, and I remember, after being elected, standing on a stage and speaking to the people on the front lawn and realizing the power of the people—not just in getting one of us elected.

What this building represents to people: It is a wonderful, historic heritage building, and with it, beauty and grandeur, and a storied past. The flip side of it is this is a colonial structure built in a time when a lot of the stories—as we look around not just this room but the building—were stories that said to some people, “You are not welcome here.” And though we have carved the names of some of the people who this building has not welcomed but who have proudly taken seats in this space on both sides of the House—this building has had to carve those names into its walls. So, they will endure in this space.

I tell you that to tell you this: We have an opportunity with a restoration to do impactful, powerful things with this building going forward. The Seven Grandfather Teachings, the carvings there—I hope all of us were able to attend that service. That was awesome. That was one of those moments in time when you thought, “I was there. I was there, and I remember it.”

We're all a part of a process now that, as it unfolds, will unfold probably for a lot longer than any of us will be taking these seats, than any of us will maybe still be having influence in our community. This could be five, 10, 15, 20 years; I don't know. But this is a project that needs to be done well, and if all goes according to plan and work moves forward, we could have a building, a precinct, we could have a space—not just this room; don't just think of this room—that reflects the values of this province as it is now and as it will hopefully move forward in the future.

We've talked about the importance of including voices: the First Nations voices, Indigenous voices—communities that have been historically marginalized. While we're talking about accessibility in this place, yes, I want to think about how differently abled Ontarians access this space; yes, as members, but also as the public coming in to access their House and these galleries. I think this building and the precinct properties folks—everybody has done very

well using what we have here to make do, or to kind of make better, but there is potential to make right—also, accessibility for those who have not been included, not been welcome historically.

So, for this government, for the next government, for the government after that—as we had the opportunity to see as the committee in Ottawa, successive governments of different stripes have been at the helm of a project that has been able to continue and change a little bit, but all with that overarching vision. I think that's what we need to undertake from this point.

This particular bill is a three-schedule bill, this Queen's Park Restoration Act. Others have delved into what it achieves and how it is worded, and that's good, but I think that there probably will have to be more to come, I anticipate, as we are learning what is needed and what this will entail.

This is a massive project. To that end, I want to talk about the privilege that I have, Speaker, as I have been able to work with the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. It's my first time serving as a Chair. If I'm speaking frankly, it's my first time working on a committee that has, to this point, worked quite positively and well, in a mostly non-partisan way. Since I've been elected, I've served on committees, and when you have a government majority—as I have always been sitting opposite—that isn't typical. I hope, going forward, it continues to be the case.

I know that in this bill there is a provision to work with our committee. It says:

“Consultation and reports

“7(1) The minister shall consult with, and provide reports to, a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly on the general plans....”

I'm assuming that is the committee that we're a part of, that has been doing the work to this point. We'll see as things move forward, but that committee still has a majority government. We want to make sure that, as we move forward, we see things in the best interests of public access, public accountability. I don't yet know what the committee will decide to do, and that's part of the fun of this space. It's hopefully up to the members.

But I'll tell you what has come out of the first interim report. I say “first interim report” because even—and anyone at home who wants to go back and read the Hansard, the public record of the committee, will see there have been quite interested conversations. I say “interested” conversations because the committee members have been quite engaged in asking questions and imagining not just what can be done with this precinct, with this building, with the potential, but also that accountability.

We want Ontarians to pick up this report—sorry, am I using it as a prop? It's the committee report. If Ontarians pick up this report, they're going to see some interesting pictures and not necessarily know how these bundles of cables—is that enough of a reason to move? Well, it's far beyond that, as the report lays out: health and safety concerns, the nature of a building that's about 100 years old. Things have to be changed, things have to be fixed,

and they've been doing a beautiful job. A round of applause to the folks in behind the scenes, behind the curtains who have been making this work, who have been keeping us safe to this point, because they have been doing a fantastic job. But they came to the committee and they made it very clear that this is not sustainable, that we need to look at a full decant or decommissioning, and whether it happens now, should have happened years ago or happens in the future, it is an inevitability for a space that conducts business as important as this. In how it's done, though, we need to do right by Ontarians and future parliamentarians and make sure that it is entirely accountable.

1540

A lot of things happen in this building. In fact, I'm going to talk about Nana Shaw. Nana Shaw, Margaret Shaw—the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas, it was her nana, Nana Shaw. I asked her, “What was the first time you came to this building?” She said, “You know what? It was to come to visit my Nana Shaw because she worked in the cafeteria.” So flash-forward however many years and the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas comes to this place, takes her seat and thinks, “Man, I remember when Nana Shaw was in the cafeteria.” There are a lot of people in this building doing very important work, who make the magic happen, who bring democracy to life. Nana Shaw could have told you who was nice, who was cheap, who was rude, who ignored her, who took the time to learn her name.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** She reported.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Yes, and she reported it out—a reminder to all members.

This place does not revolve around us. This place is not just a building; this is a community with a lot of folks doing good work. They have job requirements. They have need of a safe and fully utilizable building. I wanted to take us back in time because I think it's important. We are all connected in Ontario, in a way, to this building, whether it is because Nana Shaw works in the cafeteria or because for generations they have been coming and banging on the door and saying, “We need better.” Right? A lot of people interact with this space.

So, looking at the actual committee report—and I encourage members to pick it up and take a look at it. It's been a privilege to do this work. I see members on the other side of the Legislature who are members of the committee, members on this side—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Yes. I see a lot of folks in this room.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Hi.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** The member opposite, I was referencing him but he was—I've got his attention now, which is exciting.

All of these committee members have been very privileged and fortunate to have tours of this space, learn what goes on behind the scenes and look at it from all of the different angles. We also had the opportunity to go to Ottawa and talk with the folks there. I encourage all mem-

bers to read this first report, but I also encourage all members to give some thought to what this building could be, what this precinct could be for their communities. Who in your community cannot access this building? Who in your community is not represented in this space? And who in your community would come into this building as it stands now and say, “I'm not welcome here. I can see the history written on the walls, and they don't want me here”?

While it's very important to see a new carving on the wall, what can be considered when we work with the heritage experts? There's preserving, but there's also a chance to reimagine and create what will become the heritage of this place.

When we had the experts, the folks from the precinct properties branch and the Deputy Clerk come before us, it was clear—and I'll quote from the report—“that a full rehabilitation of the building and grounds would allow for ‘much-needed upgrades to meet modern safety, security, environmental and accessibility standards and to make the building once again functional for generations to come.’”

Here's an example: In the 1990s, when they took the roof off, there was a massive roof renovation. They went in at that time and they put in massive HVAC units. I've been told they have sort of a 25-year, 40-year life, if well maintained, and they are well-maintaining them because if anything goes wrong, like really wrong, are we going to take the roof off to get them out of there?

That's just one piece, but it's indicative of a building of this age that was not built for modern technologies. It was also not built to the safety specs. I encourage all members to walk around this building and count sprinklers. It won't take very long. They weren't put in on the first three floors. I've had a lesson in the chases and spaces and firestops and fire dampers and all of the things that you can have—a special door that would close to cover up a hole so that in the event of a fire, the smoke and the fire can't spread. Oh, but then folks would come in and just drill holes in for cables because there's nowhere else. This building did not have Internet in mind. Even when we talk about wireless now, we think, “Oh, we don't need wires anymore.” Yes, you do. You still need power, right? So there are different things that—I'm in the weeds, but it's worth taking a tour. As you walk around and you see the beautiful marble tiles, the hand-laid tile floors that we walk on—

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Mosaic.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** —the mosaic, and you look at that and you say, “Oh my goodness, are they going to...?” Well, I asked today on the tour; I said, “What are you going to do with this?” There are things, heritage-wise, that we can't imagine this place without, and that will be determined by the experts. But heritage has to be at the fore of this, and health and safety and accessibility. We want to hear from all parliamentarians, but all Ontarians, really, because there are groups who would say, “Here's an opportunity.” Here's an opportunity for this Legislature to partner with a college that has a skilled trades program, like we saw in Ottawa—Algonquin College, Carleton. They were doing amazing stuff, really high-tech modelling, and what they contributed was

actually relied upon by the different engineers and architects. That was a thoughtful partnership and an opportunity with local students. That is one tiny example.

But in this building—and you know what, I’m not going to carry water for this government. The government can justify whatever, but in the committee report, we did important work and I have every faith in the committee—

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Even me?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Even the member opposite—even that member. I have every faith that the committee members will continue to ask those thoughtful questions and invite people before the committee to help to show Ontarians that we’re doing this in an accountable way.

That said, I don’t work for the government. I’m the Chair of a committee, right? And it is a committee of parliamentarians and it’s supposed to be on behalf of the Legislature, so the government has to, on its own, ensure that accountability.

We have wonderful expertise in this room. The member for Toronto Centre: We were having a really neat conversation earlier about their work as a councillor—at the time I think this was part of their ward—about protecting the viewshed. I forget what they told me about which building—but about having to go to the Speaker at the time; no one else seemed interested in protecting the Queen’s Park viewshed, as it was called.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Peters.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Yes, it was Steve Peters who was the Speaker at the time who kind of realized that we have an opportunity here with the construction that was encroaching: If we don’t protect that viewshed of Queen’s Park, it will be lost. So that was important work done at that time. This is going to be a broader community, not just the city of Toronto and the folks that live around here. Ontarians will be watching and will want to see that this is done well and thoughtfully for generations—that idea of future-proofing it. I hope that the folks at home who are maybe interested in this project—I do hope that there will be an opportunity for them to weigh in and share their expertise and shape this project.

The transparency, the accountability—we really do have to keep that at the fore at every turn. Creating a secretariat—I mean, I still have some questions, but it’s more because this is a new thing. What will this look like? How will we make sure of the accountability and all of that, because there’s going to be money flowing; there’s going to be decisions that are tough to make. We want to make sure that that is all accountable, but remembering and keeping at heart what this building means to people and how it can best operate. Please read the report about designated substances like asbestos, the future needs of technology and what that could look like.

1550

We have shafts in this building; they call them “chases,” I guess. Here’s one example, and I’m not sure why I’m focusing on this specifically: We can look at this place and think it looks pretty good, but then, talking to precinct properties, from the outside they saw a little damp spot on the wall, and they thought, “That doesn’t belong

there.” That was an indication of a leak from the steam pipes that went up in a chase through to the outer wall. And so, when they started looking for that leak to fix, of course you’ve got layers of wires and cables, and there was a power cord that had been cemented in a floor that didn’t belong. You’ve got the steam, which is outdated and problematic for lots of reasons—the original piping from when this building first started. No matter where you look, there’s something to fix.

I could also speak at length about what we learned in Ottawa, but Ottawa is its own project, and it’s a global leader. Different jurisdictions, ourselves included, have been learning from them and will continue to. As the Chair of the committee, I look forward to moving forward with that work with the committee, hearing from members. If members fill out a survey and say, “I want a pony,” chances are there’s no way you’re getting that pony, but I don’t believe that members want that. I think members in this House recognize that this isn’t about us; this is about future generations of parliamentarians’ access to this building. Do we focus on education? Do we focus on how folks are invited in, how they can see what happens, how they can participate in what happens?

I do think that we have a very important opportunity to do this well, to do this right. And so, Speaker, with that, I will again remind everyone that this report just came out the other day. Please read it, if for no other reason than to look at the pictures of what’s behind the walls of this space. But if you have questions and you want to be involved, I know that this is going to be a long-standing project that is inviting input for accountability and for a really remarkable future for democracy, I hope.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It’s now time for questions.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to the member from Oshawa, obviously representing us as the Chair of the procedure and House affairs committee. She has done a great job in my estimation, so far—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Harris:** We have the Vice-Chair clapping along over there, so he’s in agreement.

I guess when we talk a little bit about oversight—the member had mentioned that a couple of times through her speech. I wonder if maybe she could touch a little bit on some of the things that we’ve heard so far from the committee: things that we can talk about that were not necessarily in camera sessions, and how some of those things have already started to feed into where we’re going, what we’re looking at doing and what’s coming next from the committee perspective.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I appreciated seeing this bill because it kind of clarified—as the Chair of a brand new committee and first-time Chair, I’m also interested in seeing the potential that the committee may have in their role; not just their responsibility, but their opportunities.

This government secretariat, that section about interacting with and reporting to the committee: I’m not steering the committee, but I know that the committee members, based on their thoughtful conversations, are interested in



knowing about the decant and how things fit, because the committee, frankly, doesn't work for the government but should be able to work with the government on a project like this. Whether it's oversight, whether it's interaction—all of that, I know, will unfold, and I hope it is in a way that reflects the work of the committee so far.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I want to actually start by congratulating the member from Oshawa, as the Chair of this committee, and all of the members of this committee. You've done a lot of hard work, so thank you.

You have identified this in your remarks tonight, but I'd like you to maybe say a little further for the people to be reassured, because the committee structure reflects the makeup of this House, and we know that the government has a majority, and we've had some experiences where they've used their majority for things that we think haven't been in the best interests of the people of the province of Ontario.

So how can you assure all the members here and even the people in the province of Ontario that this will be a truly democratic process, and that all people's ideas will be considered and taken into account and there will be good accountability on such a massive project?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** That's a really good question, and I have the same one. Thank you for saying that the committee has done hard work. They have, but—no, they've done neat work so far. We've done work, but it's been really special to learn, to see what's happening in Ottawa and all of that. But I think the next stretch for this committee and the next committee and all of the different folks involved is about being thoughtful and bringing the experts before us to shape this project, not in our own image as parliamentarians, but to talk to the architects, the heritage experts, the accessibility experts, Indigenous communities, right? Create that.

So the balance in a committee—I don't know, I feel that as Chair I shouldn't—but anyway. I hope that it continues to reflect the voices of all members, and I look forward to doing that work.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Don't all get up at once, guys. My gosh.

So let's talk a little bit about committee. I think we've worked very non-partisanly so far. I don't think there's been any really overly contentious things that have come from, let's say, a government majority. Correct me if I'm wrong, the member from Oshawa, but I think we've all been quite collegial and have gotten along very well, and are, in fact, doing things in the best interest of Ontarians, of course, and also to represent our fellow parliamentarians and the staff here at the Legislature.

I just don't see anything from my perspective so far that leads to that type of assumption, but maybe the member could elaborate a little bit more on some of the good things we've been able to accomplish through the committee so far.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Well, this interim report is the first example, and we'll continue to do that work. It's not about being partisan or not, but the balance. I just want to make sure that the work of the committee and the work of the secretariat takes into account the independents, the official opposition, individual government members—because there will be different opinions on government benches as well, right? We want to talk about sustainability and green opportunities—all of that.

So I think it will be up to the committee to bring forward ideas for who they want to talk to, and I hope that that is fulsome and comprehensive work that isn't met with any kind of resistance. I'm not anticipating there would be, but we may hear from folks who say things that the government doesn't want to hear. So what? This is the time to gather that, put it together in a way that the next governments who are following through on this project can factor in. That's what I'm hoping will happen.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I really want to congratulate all members of the committee, and especially the Chair. It's an honour and a privilege to work with her. She is, I think, an excellent selection. She is so detail-oriented. She really, really takes this job seriously, and I think she will serve this committee amazingly well being its Chair.

When I think about it, it must be so exciting—the tours, learning so much about the history of this building, what's going well for it, some of the deficiencies, maybe some of the things that would have been okay a hundred years ago; not so much these days. But it also—and I know this has probably dawned on the committee members, but it has certainly dawned on me—is a real legacy. The members that are part of this committee really have a hand in the future, which will become history one day, and so I think it must be such an honour for you.

My question is simply this: This project is so big. It's not just about this building but about what's going to happen when the work is happening. Where are we going to go? Would you be able to share with us some of what you're looking at in terms of finding another location for us? What are some of the things that you're looking at?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Okay, that was a lot of praise. Thank you. It's a lot of responsibility, though. I think the committee members recognize that. That's what I said earlier, that it's been neat and interesting work to this point. But it better be hard work. It better be important work. We have a significant responsibility to do our due diligence, to gather information.

**1600**

Ultimately, the secretariat and the government—those pieces—will be making decisions. It is not relevant what I or any individual committee member thinks about what would be a good space for us to decant into, or multiple locations. The government ministry will do its part and figure out how the committee fits, because there's a lot at stake.

All the folks who do the work behind the scenes—like, forget us. We just have to stand in a room and talk. Any

one of us can do that. Yes, there's a lot involved—thank you to the broadcast folks—I know, but everybody in this building has job requirements. So wherever we go, they need to be factored in and considered, and that's a truckload of work just for the decant. I hope it's done well.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member from Mississauga–Malton.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is such a monumental bill. I was listening to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga and I just want to say one thing: I don't know if I'll be able to come back to the new building, but definitely I know my daughter will be coming, hopefully.

My question to the member from Oshawa is simple. When you're looking for another space, can you please advocate for the riding of Mississauga–Malton? It is right next to the airport. There's a lot of greenery, and I think everyone can get the benefit. You come out of the airport; you can go and come back. Again, once this building is ready, I think it's going to be a great building.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I'm going to say to him what I'm going to say to folks who are already showing an interest broadly in the community: I'm not the deciding factor. Please direct your thoughtful comments to the committee, to the Clerk of the Committee.

But I think that the committee will be—now I'm saying it as the Chair. The committee, likelier than not—I think we've almost got quorum here—will be inviting different ideas, but I know that the ministry, the secretariat, is doing actual work out in the world. So perhaps talk to the minister. I know we all have thoughts and opinions, but that's on the decant. That's on the next—what is it, 10, 15 years? I don't know; I'm guessing. I know nothing more than anybody else in this room about how long it will take, but as far as Mississauga–Malton, I'm not at liberty to discuss.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** It's a pleasure to speak today to this bill. I want to start by telling a story.

During the recess last month, two months ago, I was at home, and my daughter has been watching *Murdoch Mysteries*. She's just old enough to start watching them. She really enjoys them, and I enjoyed watching them with her. It's set about 120 years ago and, quite often, this building appears in the show. It appears perfectly in place in that show because it's from that era. We've done such a good job of preserving certainly the exterior that you could pretend it's in the 19th century and nobody would blink an eye.

The reason I tell this story is that this building endures. We have made sure it endures, and what it is is a symbol of our enduring commitment to democracy and responsible government. So I'm very pleased that the government is interested in restoring this building.

I have served on the procedure and House affairs committee, and I've gone on the tours to look at the condition of the building from behind the walls, so to speak. I know that we cannot drink the water that comes out of the taps

here. In many places, the heating doesn't work. My office gets too hot. There are other places where there's no heat. Then, we know that the electrical and plumbing systems—well, we can't stick any more cables anywhere because there are wires that, instead of being removed, because that's too risky, have just been added over time. That all has to be redone as well as the plumbing.

I'm very glad we're going to look at putting in the resources to restore and renew this building to emphasize our enduring commitment to democracy. Let me just express a hope of mine, which is that we reinforce the other things that I think make Ontario great.

Growing up in Ontario, I benefited very much from our school system. I think that our Ontario school system is an important part of growing up in Ontario and it's an important benefit that growing up in Ontario confers to us. I remember talking to some people on picket lines in October when they were protesting Bill 28. There are a lot of things we need to improve in schools. The education workers were emphasizing how we needed to have enough educational assistants and other resources in schools. Why is that? It's because schools represent our enduring commitment to equality of opportunity. We should never let go of that. That's one of the reasons we should be putting in resources to preserve our school system.

Our health care system, our hospitals—make sure that physical ailments, physical disadvantages don't get in the way of our enduring commitment to equality of opportunity. I think it's very important to make sure—I know our health care system is not doing well right now, but we've got to fix it. We've got to put in the resources to do it. I think there's an analogy here with what we're trying to do with Queen's Park. Queen's Park is an institution. It represents our enduring commitment to democracy. But we have other really important institutions.

I'll also mention, for example, the highways: for me, growing up in Kingston, the 401; for northern Ontario, the Trans-Canada Highway. These are really important parts of our economy. They're an enduring symbol of our economic strength, as is the industry that we have in this province.

We have Niagara Falls and the wind farms in Ontario that are another part of our economy, that are what make Ontario great.

We have the greenbelt, which is a symbol of our enduring commitment to preserving the environment here in Ontario. As much as I am glad that the government is proceeding with restoring this symbol, I very much hope that the government has an equal commitment to preserving and building up not just symbols but the very real things that make Ontario great.

Speaking of a Parliament building, I'd like to suggest something for this project. I've read in the press before that it may cost something like a billion dollars. That's about the ballpark figure based on what we were told when we went to Ottawa to look at the renovations of the Parliament buildings there. We did learn a lot from making those visits. I wonder if we should be doing a smaller pilot project so that we here in Toronto can learn how to do a

restoration project efficiently and, perhaps, we can make the mistakes in the smaller project.

I want to talk about a contemporaneous building, which is the Frontenac County Courthouse in Kingston. It's located on land, in fact, that was purchased originally to potentially be the site of Parliament buildings for Canada, before Queen Victoria decided that it should be in Ottawa. On that site today is located the Frontenac County Courthouse, which was opened in, I believe, 1858, so it's a little bit older than this building, but it's contemporaneous. That building right now has a lot of features that are similar to this building. One is that they're spending a lot of money to fix things all the time. They're just patching, patching, patching and fixing things, and really, it needs a renovation. Just for comparison, the cost of that renovation is about one tenth the size of the work that needs to be done in this building. I have suggested to the government House leader that it may be a good pilot project for the wheels of provincial government to be tested and honed to run a restoration project of an old 19th-century building.

1610

In Kingston, the courts are spread out in three different locations across the city, and judges and staff and citizens are constantly moving in between them. It's not a great way to locate a court system, to have it in three different locations throughout the city, but there are a lot of things that don't work in the building. For example, if lawyers and their clients want to have a confidential discussion at the Frontenac County Courthouse, currently what they do is go out into the parking lot where the prisoners are held so they can have that confidential discussion.

There are also a lot of concerns from the judges and the lawyers about safety and security. For example, if they walk in the door to go up to the law library, that's the same door that all the prisoners and their guards have to squeeze through. The Frontenac County Courthouse is not compliant with the AODA, so if you're in a wheelchair, there are a lot of things that are very difficult-to-impossible to do if you're using that courthouse.

This building, Queen's Park, is in bad shape behind the walls, but it shouldn't just be turned into a museum and replaced by some modern building, because it's an enduring symbol of democracy and—more important than democracy—our commitment to democracy forever and ever. We don't believe that it should be converted into a museum and replaced by some modern building.

I would say the same thing about the Frontenac County Courthouse, that it shouldn't be turned into a museum. There is, in fact, a plan in place that's been in place for about 10 years to turn it into a modern courthouse for Frontenac county, for the Ontario Court of Justice, the Federal Court and the Family Court to locate on that site—if it were to be restored and renovated, we could put all three courts on that site. It would be safe and secure. There would be access to technology to ensure that anybody, even somebody who didn't have a computer, could have equal access to the materials they need to seek justice.

So my suggestion to the government House leader is to consider the Frontenac County Courthouse as a small pilot

project to train the team and get the team working successfully. Perhaps if there are mistakes to be made, make it on that smaller project—that's why pilots exist—so that the legacy of the restoration of Queen's Park goes much more smoothly and is something that, 10 years from now or 15 years from now, we can be very, very proud of, and it can be a legacy of this government and, in particular, this government House leader who is spearheading the restoration.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my great colleague from Kingston, and also a colleague on the committee. I really enjoyed his speech on advocating for infrastructure funding for his riding. It's great to see that he's advocating for his riding.

He was with us on the tour in Ottawa and, similar to other members in this place, has served in the Parliament in Ottawa. I was wondering if he can comment on some of the things we learned there and some of the things he took away that could be applied to this potential restoration here.

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** We saw a lot of scaffolding and brickwork and careful labelling of marble and physical things. But I think the thing that struck me most is the conversation I had with the project leader—that it was very, very important to find the right people to lead the project, to manage the project. It's somebody that you have to hire for 10 years, and if you get the right people in charge, you have a much better chance that the project will go smoothly and that all the technical things will be done right. So the thing that I took away is, spare no expense to get the right people in charge of the project.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for Kingston and the Islands for your work on the committee.

My question is, what kind of energy-efficient and green technologies do you think should be incorporated into the refurbishment of Queen's Park?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** To answer that question, let's step back. We know that we want this building to last, let's say, a hundred years. What kind of energy are we going to be using in a hundred years? I'm going to say it's probably not going to be the same natural gas boilers that we have right now. So we should be thinking about what kind of energy we're going to be using a hundred years from now.

Government procurement is a really good way to stimulate local economic development, so how could we, for example, use heat pumps in the new building to have energy-efficient and cost-efficient heating and cooling? Remember that heat pumps can both heat and cool; how can we use that technology so that we can lead the way for the next hundred years? There's an opportunity here to use the enormous procurement that will happen when we restore this building to stimulate local industry in new technologies, and also to stimulate the training of tradespeople. That's something that they explicitly did in Ottawa.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Hon. Michael D. Ford:** Thank you to the member for the presentation.

Throughout the debate, we've heard certain things come up around the historical context of the Legislature here and over a century of history. In those conversations and question-and-answers, a lot has come up around—over the century of history here in the Legislature, a lot of good has come out of here, some not so good, and this hasn't necessarily been a place for all people throughout the history of the Legislature.

As the committee moves forward and the process moves forward, how would you suggest we balance keeping the historical context and the heritage of the Legislature, but also creating a new, modern Legislature?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** That's an excellent question from the minister.

My preference is to combine historical things with new things. I think that we should be building upon the history that we have. I don't like erasing history or replacing it with something else; I like to take history and then add to it and add to it. I think that tells a better story about who we are.

I think that there's an opportunity in the restoration of this building to look at different groups, different people in the history of Ontario, and try to adjust—whether it's woodcarvings or artwork or other parts of the building—to reflect the different cultures, the different origins and the Indigenous peoples in this building as much as possible.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the member for Toronto–St. Paul's.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** I would also like to say thank you to the Chair and every member of this committee, because it is quite interesting and intriguing to hear of the changes that will happen over the next couple of decades, for sure, to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

My question also revolves around the topic of representation and the colonial and Eurocentric history that is embodied in this building. As a Black MPP, I walked in here on my first day, and I certainly looked at the walls and did not see myself reflected. If not for Zanana Akande, who's on the walls, as well as Alvin Curling—when I feel really out of place in this building, which is very frequently, I often just stand in front of Alvin Curling or Zanana Akande's picture, to remind me that it's okay that I'm here.

So I'm wondering: How will you incorporate, how will you think about, the very troubling history of colonialism, of racism and—to name it very specifically—anti-Black racism and anti-Indigenous racism? How will this committee grapple with those very real histories that are still very present today, and how will we bring in, possibly, experts from those communities? I think of, automatically, the Ontario Black History Society, which has such a long knowledge of Ontario history. How are we going to ensure that there are groups representing the very folks who were only allowed—if at all—to clean in this building at a time? How do we ensure that they are at the table as experts, as knowledge keepers, respected in this process?

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**Mr. Ted Hsu:** People ask me sometimes, “What's one difference between the House of Commons and Queen's Park?”, because I've served in both places. One thing that strikes me about this building is that there's so much art around, compared to the House of Commons.

To answer the question from the member for Toronto–St. Paul's: I think that that is where the opportunity is—through the art that is displayed—to depict our history. Let me just say that it's not so bad to hang art that is painful to see, if it's a reflection of our history. I think that's what we want to do. We want to reflect our history. Some of it is painful. Some of it we can be very proud of. But let's put our history on the walls, so that people who are the product of that history can see themselves and their pasts.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. David Smith:** I'm a little concerned, hearing about the pilot project that he's talking about here this afternoon—

*Interruption.*

**Interjection:** He wants your vote.

**Mr. David Smith:** Yes.

In regard to the question, when he's talking about pilot projects, I was trying to get a sense, since that adventure to the House of Commons, on that tour, what exactly—did he find out anything about a pilot project for the project that's going on in Ottawa, causing him to be making the example for us here in this House with a pilot project before going ahead?

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** When I was in the House of Commons—I arrived there in 2011, and at that time they had already moved out of the West Block and the renovations were proceeding in West Block. In the Parliament Buildings, they got to do building after building after building, and I think that if you're doing several buildings, by the time you get to the second or third one, you're pretty good at it.

Here, we just have one building, so I would say that from a risk management and project management point of view, it's a little more risky, because we just have this one building, compared to the parliamentary precinct in Ottawa, where they had several buildings, and across Wellington Street they had other old buildings that they had been doing renovations on when I was serving as an MP. I would say that from a project and risk management point of view, having just this one old building is a little more risky, and so that's why I think a pilot project would be good.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Unfortunately, we do not have time for further questions or answers.

Further debate?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** It's great to be here today and have this important debate. Thank you to the committee members in the House, and the legislative staff, who have already been thanked many times; we cannot thank them enough for the important work they do.

Whether you first took your seat in the chamber 33 years ago, as the member from Wellington–Halton Hills did, or 10 months ago, as myself and many members of all

parties did—I would be remiss not to highlight that while many of us may be here as individuals, we sit here on behalf of the thousands of constituents who sent us to this place to represent them, whether they voted for us or not.

Since 1893, this chamber has sat only a privileged few thousand people, and their voices have been here to represent all Ontarians, working to ensure that they are represented here over the decades. This place has seen governments rise and fall. It has seen intense debate and times of compassion and unity. Over the years, this place has seen Progressive Conservative governments, Liberal governments, a New Democratic government, and even a United Farmers government. Needless to say, this place has seen Ontario at its highest moments and lowest ones.

With that in mind, I believe I can speak for many of us here today in highlighting some of the operational, logistical and safety needs where this space may fall short in modern building standards.

Although it is us who sit in these seats, speak in this chamber and walk these halls, this is really the people's House. Every day, we host guests here. We introduce them in the chamber. We meet with advocacy groups who deepen and strengthen our democratic process. It's for these people, and indeed all the people of Ontario, that our government is introducing the Queen's Park Restoration Act, 2023.

Going about our duties in this place, it is clear that there is a clear and demonstrable need for comprehensive restoration of Ontario's Legislative Building at Queen's Park. Like all other 19th-century Legislatures in other jurisdictions, this Legislature has faced tremendous structural challenges—in particular, over the last few years—be it the lead pipes which were already mentioned by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands, the hazardous wiring, or structural damages to the walls. We all know that this building needs to be fully restored to the quality the great people we serve deserve. Piecemeal repairs are no longer viable. A full restoration of the Legislative Building and relocation of operations is needed to bring it to the modern safety and operational standards that are required for the 21st century, for the people who work here and those who visit here and serve the people of Ontario for years to come.

Many of us who are endeavouring on this—it is a great honour to endeavour on this—will not be here when these restorations are finished. Maybe the member from Niagara West will be here, but I believe everyone else will have gone on to greater things by that time.

Speaker, if passed, this bill will allow our government to take on the project of a full restoration—firstly, establishing a secretariat within the government tasked with planning and executing the restoration efforts. We'll support the inclusion of a variety of experts, stakeholders and the public—very importantly—more broadly in the entire process, start to finish. Further, given the government's expertise in managing large-scale infrastructure projects, it's crucial to have a mandatory collaboration with the Office of the Assembly, the Board of Internal Economy and, along with that, oversight from an all-party committee of parliamentarians.

It's a privilege to serve as the Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, with my colleague from Oshawa as Chair. I know we do great work together. I look forward to continuing to work with her as we move forward on this project.

I know full well just how important it is that we need to revitalize and restore this place after participating in discussions at committee and with members of all parties. We travelled together to Ottawa, as mentioned earlier, last month to assess the ongoing restoration at Centre Block and the federal parliamentary precinct. It was really a great privilege to be able to tour the Centre Block and see the impressive work that's going on there. As the member from Oshawa mentioned earlier, it is a world leader. The House of Commons in London has visited as well, and other jurisdictions, to see the important work they're doing. We're very lucky to have something so close and to be able to rely on the experts in Ottawa as we embark on this endeavour.

Even as we discuss it now, it's difficult to declare the sheer magnitude and the scale of this restoration project. In Ottawa, our committee saw, as I mentioned, how integral construction management was to such a project. As I'm sure we all know, the restoration of Centre Block in Ottawa has been a long and necessary process. Members of our committee learned a lot from our recent visit to the parliamentary precinct in Ottawa, and I have no doubt that some of my colleagues here today may draw parallels between some of the frustrations and challenges and also opportunities we have here at Queen's Park.

One thought in particular, surrounding the conditions of West Block and the temporary relocation of Canada's House of Commons, is one of that highlights some of the challenges we may have to consider and overcome as well. The West Block was built, for example, without eaves-troughs, and has consistent drippage on the heritage side of the building. The reason they didn't include eaves-troughs at the time was because it doesn't fit with the heritage aspect. But now they must pay money every so often to clean the stone and brick, which is an extra added cost to the government of Canada.

We will have to balance heritage priorities, certainly equally as important in Ottawa as they are here. As in the case present, some of the difficult considerations will have to be made collectively around how to balance different factors around heritage, culture, accessibility, safety and security.

Broadly, we cannot allow that same level of deterioration that has happened in Ottawa to happen here, to the point that we are rushed to our restoration project without fully thinking out the plan or the models in place. So I'm pleased to see this government bring forward some legislation to begin addressing this important issue.

#### 1630

While it may be a monumental project, nonetheless, the Queen's Park Restoration Act really allows our government to take the necessary steps to ensure a full revitalization can be undertaken and that there may be clarity in the timeline and budget of the project.

Having said that, I want to reiterate that this is the people's House, and in recognizing that, members from all sides of the House need to come together to support a comprehensive initiative to ensure that this place continues to reflect highly upon the people we serve.

Speaker, that means employing the best project managers, engineers, construction workers and others for the important work of modernizing and restoring the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. As was mentioned earlier, with various members speaking in this place today, it's a great opportunity to leverage our post-secondary institutions in this part of the province, as they have done in Ottawa with Carleton University, the University of Ottawa and Algonquin College. It really gives a great opportunity for those in the very specialized skilled trades, whether it's heritage skilled trades or brick for masonry work. Usually, there is not a project that individuals in those fields can work on so close to home, so this presents a great opportunity to collaborate with many great post-secondary institutions in Ontario; specifically, in the GTA and southwestern Ontario.

Just to take another point from our committee's trip from Ottawa, I want to highlight the consultations and discussions that have taken place among our federal counterparts. We were privileged to meet with members of procedure and House affairs of the House of Commons and to get some thoughts from them on their process and restoration project, which has been greatly facilitated through a non-partisan parliamentary body that has helped take some of the politics out of the decisions and ensure the process continues through a change of government and through elections. This group of parliamentarians facilitated conversations with stakeholders, government and experts in the field to really chart how this project was going to unfold, doing so in a way that kept politics out of the process, as I mentioned, and helped them maintain the stability of the restoration process as well as maintain a sense of clarity on all sides of the House with respect to the project as it was unfolding.

I do recognize that those of us who sit in this Legislature, for the most part, are actively partisan in politics. That is the nature of our system. We have contrasting ideas, values and world views. But I do want to remind all my colleagues that, at the end of the day, we all share the same spirit of service in doing what is best for our communities and for our province more broadly. That's why we're here, really—and I think it's to keep that in mind. We all can see and understand the necessity of the Queen's Park restoration project.

At the same time, I also want to take the time to highlight that there are many moving parts and processes in this project as we move forward. It not only entails a full-scale restoration of the project, but also, as has been mentioned earlier, an initial decanting of this building that we're in. That includes a decanting of all the furniture, the books, the art and the many artifacts that make this place so special. Of course, another part of the process will be ensuring the safe and secure storage of all these items, and lastly, their careful replenishment and restoration, if

required, once the Legislature is completed. As we toured Ottawa—the reality, obviously, in Toronto, is that we don't have as much space as our federal cousins do. It's significantly smaller in Toronto than the federal precinct. The decanting process will still be similar; however, there will be challenges unique to ours. Whether it's legislative staff or parliamentarians picking everything up and moving to a new location for an extended period of time—that in itself will be a challenging task as well. Many of our colleagues have office spaces in this building that would need to be fully packed up and moved elsewhere, in addition to relocating the legislative staff that we appreciate so greatly and their respective working environments that will need to be re-established elsewhere.

We also need to consider the logistic challenges of providing gas, electricity and other utilities on site to support the workers in their restoration of the project, requiring immense amounts of pressurized gas and other supplies. Especially, as I mentioned, in a densely populated city like Toronto—I believe it's the fourth most populous city in North America now, fourth or fifth—planning and modelling are important here, compared to other locations similar to Ottawa, where they have more space, as I alluded to—so finding those challenges and meeting those logistic challenges.

Speaker, we all know there's enough space on the front lawn for several thousand people to congregate, but when you consider the space needed on-site to store equipment and potentially very large construction vehicles, as well as general working spaces for the people who will be working here, it's clear that logistical and safety challenges will be presenting themselves regularly. As I've already alluded to, this is no simple task.

With that in mind, it's important for me to emphasize just how important it is that we all understand the dire need for the restoration, and I encourage my colleagues in this place to read the great report that the Clerk and the research bureau put together for us in this place. It highlights some of the things, and there is an appendix with some key pictures to really show you how dire certain parts of this place really are.

Speaker, it's an enormous undertaking, no doubt, but as my committee colleagues and I saw in Ottawa, if we all coalesce around the need for this restoration and if we commit to a non-partisan approach and ensure collaboration in decision-making, we can ensure that we, as parliamentarians, working with experts and officials and the public—it's very important to include the public. I'm confident that in the future, we will be proud of what this place can become and the potential it has.

One of the important points I want to highlight, Speaker, is the non-partisan nature of the committee. I sit on two committees currently, and it's really a joy to sit on procedure and House affairs. It highlights the democratic traditions here in Canada and suggests that many of us in this House may no longer be here at the completion of it, but we're coming together, so far, to work together to continue this. I'm hopeful that this will continue into the future as they really get to work on this.

The aim of the Queen's Park Restoration Act is really centred around preserving the physical space in which we as elected members make democracy work. Whether it's debating bills like we are now, studying some of the pressing issues facing Ontarians in committee, participating in question period or meeting with constituents, the functionality of this space must reflect the deep respect we all have for the work we do and for the communities we serve in this place.

Logistically, which is important, this bill, if passed, will establish the Queen's Park Restoration Secretariat, a ministry presided over by the minister, and would allow for the appointment of a deputy minister and the appointment of staff to carry out the responsibilities of the minister. Given the full-scale nature of the restoration project, it's important for the government to be able to maintain official points of contact on the matter, which will facilitate it through the minister and deputy minister, obviously, and the staff, whether it's the planning process leading up to the commencement of the project, surveying the day-to-day operations and securing temporary locations for the legislative activities, or a variety of other responsibilities—the unknown unknowns—in the process and working through those challenges.

Beyond that, this act would allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the minister to establish an advisory committee to advise the minister on the Queen's Park restoration project and appoint members to the committee and approve terms of reference. Once again, this aspect of the bill reflects the necessity to include public consultations in the restoration project, something that I believe all members really agree on in this place.

Fundamentally, if passed, this bill will initiate the early stages of the Queen's Park restoration project, something that has already been pointed out and is clearly necessary for us as parliamentarians to continue to do our jobs representing our constituents effectively and safely.

Moreover, this entire process will also revolve heavily around the relocation of legislative activities while the restoration is under way. When the location is decided, another aspect of the process will come into play. By relocating the legislative activities to an alternate location for an extended period of time, we'll need to work with, obviously, the Office of the Assembly, the Sergeant-at-Arms and other legislative and administrative offices to ensure the functionality, safety and security of that space.

The challenge is one of many that the bill will look at solving as we get closer to that point of the restoration project of the Queen's Park precinct commencing. Not only is this restoration project effort a non-partisan one, but it's also one that must take into account the broader community and the people of Ontario and those who work for the Legislative Assembly and the expertise that they bring. Whether it's about preserving the culture or heritage and the aspects of the Legislature which we all enjoy, modernizing the technology capability for the future of work spaces, repairing the structural hazards, or building upon safety and security measures, which have been alluded to, these offices of the Legislature are all critical sources of input and insight that need to be part of the strategic planning process.

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When we look ahead a little bit at what this project might really look like and who it might involve, I would be remiss not to highlight some of the incredible opportunities, as I mentioned, for the skilled tradespeople, engineers, architects, designers, emerging artists, and many others to contribute to this project. Our government has taken a variety of important steps to promote the skilled trades in Ontario—a great announcement yesterday by Minister Lecce and the Premier and Minister McNaughton. We've been adamant that we want to transform the skilled trades programs in this province so that they can bring more young people to play an important role in building Ontario. And it's a tremendous opportunity, as I alluded to earlier, for the next generation to participate in this restoration project in revitalizing Queen's Park and contributing to that project.

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario has always been a place of historic and cultural value, showcasing some of the most important stories of our province, our nation, even the world.

Just a few weeks ago, I had the honour of visiting the Ukrainian year of resilience—which the Lieutenant Governor organized in her suite.

In Ontario and Canada, we have a unique and diverse culture and heritage, very different from when Confederation occurred many years ago, and we need to acknowledge—obviously, it has been alluded to earlier—our Indigenous communities. The committee has already started talking about how we can include them in the process—and including working with our Indigenous communities. My apologies—not “our”; I do not want to infer that. We value their partnership very much.

We've also had many contributions from newer Ontarians who just joined us from all over the world, including their perspectives and lived experiences.

It's clear that all of us want to see the Queen's Park restoration project move forward, and it's an enormous undertaking. As our committee has seen in Ottawa, these kinds of full-scale rehabilitation projects are not easy, and they require a great amount of care and expertise. I've spoken extensively on how this place needs to be truly, fully an embodiment of all Ontarians and people who live here. In this spirit, I implore all my colleagues to carefully consider the importance of this project and what is meant for our province and the state of our democratic institutions. In doing so, I'm confident that we can all come together in support of the Queen's Park Restoration Project Act, 2023, to reflect on the sense of unity and strengthening our democracy as we begin this project and really create a space for the future generations.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's time for questions.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would like to thank the member, particularly for being our Vice-Chair on the committee. He talked about accountability. He talked about the structure of the committee. But what we see is the committee structure is set up according to the government structure, so the outweighing of seats, to me, I think, on an issue that is so non-partisan, is concerning; I wish that it

was a little more levelled out. I don't think that there is a need for a heavy-handed majority on that committee.

I would like to know how the member feels all members of this place—the government, the opposition, independents—can be assured that their ideas as well as ideas of all Ontarians will be considered.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I thank the member for her question and her work on the committee.

I do know the Board of Internal Economy has a lot of power in this process as well—it's equal members on that. Currently, the House leader of His Majesty's official opposition and the government House leader sit on that board as well. That process laid out in the bill would also transfer through an election, so when the Legislature is technically dissolved, it would also ensure that whether there's a new government—I know governments on this side and this side would like to think we're going to be in power for the next 20-plus years, but obviously things change. So we establish and lay out processes for the changing of governments to ensure this project moves forward.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Rob Flack:** I enjoyed my colleague from Perth–Wellington—your talk was great. I love to hear the enthusiasm of a young man caring about public service and this institution.

I guess, with the many years I've served the people of this great riding, I would ask a simple question: What would you like to see different here? How do you think, in generations to come, this place could serve you and your constituents better in terms of Parliament, in terms of how this place functions physically and keeping our traditions alive?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my great colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London. It's great to be able to serve with him in this place and rely on his deep knowledge on a variety of issues.

One thing we really noticed in Ottawa—and there is a website for the project, which all colleagues can go and see—is that they're really rethinking how people are welcomed to the House of Commons. It's going to be a beautiful space once it's done, but it also incorporates security aspects to that—obviously, working to ensure that we improve security. Unfortunately, it is what it is in the modern age.

One thing, as well, for constituents from your riding and my riding and all ridings that come here—common spaces to meet. I know, as someone who's newly elected and who is a parliamentary assistant but does not have an office in this building—hopefully there will be an office for all members, no matter whether it's a minister or parliamentary assistant or just a member of this place, to do the important work for their constituents in that place.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I thank the member for his presentation.

The question I have, and I hope he'll be able to address it in some detail—is concern that we have an opportunity to reshape this building for the 21st century. And I know

that we have to do that and that it's critical we do this by retaining the heritage features. But we need to change, fundamentally, the way we approach energy and energy efficiency.

Can the member speak to how the plan will ensure that we don't contribute to deepening of the climate crisis in the new energy system that, I assume, is going to be provided to this building?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to the member for the important question.

I don't want to presuppose any work that the committee will do, but I do know that we are looking at bringing in experts. In Ottawa, they brought in many engineering experts and, obviously, energy experts.

One thing, as the member may know, is, the temporary building in the West Block has a beautiful dome; it's where the House of Commons is now. It's designed to be energy-efficient. But what we learned on our tour was that the Centre Block—the two courtyards that used to exist will also be covered in through one. Then it reduces heating because it's an enclosed space but it's also extra space—as I alluded to in my answer to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London—to meet with constituents or have other meetings.

So I don't want to presuppose what the experts may say, but I know the committee looks forward to meeting with all experts, even around energy efficiency.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mrs. Nina Tangri:** I want to thank the member from Perth–Wellington for his insight, and I want to thank all members of the committee for the great work that they've been doing.

Almost a year ago, I fell and broke my ankle, and it's times like that when you realize how important accessibility is and how inaccessible many places are. So I'd like to ask the member for his thoughts, and the committee's, and what you discussed about making sure that all of the places here and around us are made accessible for everyone, and always.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my great colleague for the very important question.

Yes, this building was built in the 19th century and is not accessible, so we do need to bring it up to the modern standards for accessibility. As I alluded to in my remarks, it is the people's House, and so we need to ensure that all people in Ontario can come and witness their democracy at the provincial level in action and meet with their representatives and share their concerns. I know, as the House leader and minister was alluding to in his remarks, it's something that he has noticed as well—that we really need to address the accessibility issues, both at whatever place we go to, but also, obviously, in the restored Queen's Park. 1650

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I want to touch on a couple of things. It's not really a question; I'm just more or less going to make a statement, and then you can decide how you want to answer it.



We talk a lot about the procedure and House affairs committee, but there's a lot more to it than just the input that's coming to the committee. It's one piece of the puzzle. Obviously, the input that will come in through the Board of Internal Economy is very important. There's a lot of input that will be brought in through the Clerks' office, through the Speaker's office, but also through just general consultation that we're all going to have an opportunity to do over these next few years, as there are more articles and more people are becoming a little bit more interested in what's going on here. So I don't want everything to feel as though it's just sort of falling on top of the committee on procedure and House affairs. There are a lot of different intakes. We're going to have working groups. We're going to have industry experts. We're going to have folks from all across these different communities that we've spoken about independently here today.

I don't know if our Vice-Chair of the committee and the member, my next-door neighbour, from Perth–Wellington just wants to elaborate on a little bit of those things.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to the great member from Kitchener–Conestoga and my neighbour.

It's a great point. This committee cannot do all of the work; hence the reason for establishing a separate ministry, or the secretariat.

What they do in Ottawa, which I think is great, and we'll get to that point, I'm assuming, as well—again, not presupposing the process—but any member of the House of Commons can book a tour, essentially, with the project managers, and the project managers will go through and take you through the process. One thing we heard from procedure and House affairs in the House of Commons was the importance to have the involvement of the elected representatives in the process from day one, which they didn't necessarily learn in their decantment, but they're learning now more with the Centre Block.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Final question.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** The question that is on my mind and, I imagine, on everybody else's mind is, how will the committee decide where our temporary location is going to be? I know we had a pitch for Mississauga–Malton. I could suggest Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Just Hamilton.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Yes, just Hamilton.

How is the committee going to select and decide where our temporary location will be?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you to my colleague for the comment.

I don't believe it is in the committee's purview, or we'll rely on staff to suggest those things to us. I would obviously love it to be in Hamilton or Mississauga–Malton, because it makes my commute way shorter than coming to downtown Toronto. I know the Kingston and the Islands member, as well, has suggested Kingston as the original capital—a little further, but a nice city. I know we'll rely on the ministry and the secretariat to provide that recommendation as they consider many things, whether it's security, functionality, and then, for my colleague from Brampton North, parking, obviously.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** It's time for further debate.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** As a subbed-in member to this committee, I am thrilled, quite honestly, to have the opportunity. I know a space came available from the New Democrats for somebody who was interested in sitting on this committee and doing this historical work, and I was quick to put my hand up. I think it's an absolutely fantastic opportunity to be a part of history and a part of our democracy, in the building that our democracy is made of, of going forward in the future.

I want to bring up a few things that I'm not sure—I wasn't here for the openings. But there are a few things that people may not know, and maybe they're just tuning in at home.

Queen's Park is a public space, of course, a historical building completed in 1893—1893 is when this building was completed, and it took six years to build. The exterior walls of the building are made of pink sandstone, which was quarried from Credit Valley near Orangeville, Ontario. Large pieces of stone were brought to Queen's Park and carved on the grounds by English stonecutters. The inner walls are constructed of over 10 million bricks. Wow.

Fun fact: On opening day, April 5, 1893, one horse-cab ride home cost 20 cents, and a ride with two horses cost 25 cents.

*Interjection.*

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Yes, today we have Uber.

It has been our House for 130 years, and it has seen countless politicians, dignitaries, visitors, staff and so much more. If you walk down the halls of the basement, you will see some of the amazing visitors who have joined us here. Royalty, and so many folks—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** From around the world.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** —from around the world have come here, and they're on the walls downstairs in photographs, which is so cool.

This is a project that is going to be the next 15 years and more—meaning that most of us probably won't sit here any longer. When people worry about the structure and they talk about who's going to be in charge, they also have to keep in mind that this government very well may not be the same government; it will not be the same minister, it will not be the same government House leader, and it could be any other person who is elected to this Legislature in coming elections, and it could change again—in fact, that was a really neat aspect of our tour to Ottawa, and how we heard how they were able to keep politics out of it and ensure that the work continued in a proper way. They did that by ensuring that—what were the words that I wanted to use? It's right here:

“Members drew attention to the importance of non-partisanship to the success of the Parliament Hill rehabilitation project. One member highlighted the fact that the project began under a Liberal government, was continued under a Conservative government, despite the recession of 2008, and continues under a Liberal government. The member stressed that the creation of a vision plan that is revisited periodically”—and that was something that we heard: that they reassess their vision

every five years. As we know how quickly technology moves, that is going to be something that is so important. I believe it was the member from Oshawa who talked about WiFi. Really, what will that technology look like, even in five years, as we see things move so quickly? So I thought that was really good.

“At the same time, members drew attention to the importance of the parliamentary oversight,” which is obviously a concern. There is no writing blank cheques from us to this government. That would not be something that we would do. We think that oversight is absolutely important, as it would be not just for this government, but for any government in charge of such a large project. The member drew attention to regular committee appearances undertaken during the Centre Block major rehabilitation to illustrate ways and different mechanisms of political oversight, and how they can interact with project management to ensure that elected and accountable members are involved with navigating major decisions. “The member indicated that examples of such decisions include establishing the appropriate balance between heritage conservation and functionality for key areas of the parliamentary precinct.”

I bring that up because that is something that we are definitely going to see here. And the tour of Ottawa was something that I think all members want to see reflected here in the structure of governance—the way that the committees are struck, the way that oversight is managed, the way that MPPs would have insight, the way that the community would have insight, and the architectural community. There are so many different aspects that will be welcomed into the Legislature and into the committee process to ensure that we’re getting it right.

I said how old this building is, 130 years. On the tour that I did today, I’ve seen some pipes that are still 130 years old and they’re a major heating system for our building. So I said to her, “How long is the lifespan?” She said, “I think we’re past it.” That says the work needs to be done.

1700

The deficiencies of this building are not something that can be maintained any longer if the job isn’t done properly. And to do that job properly, there is no other way that we can see other than the decanting, moving us all out of this Legislature and into another location to allow that critical work to happen.

The asbestos, the fire hazards, the steam heat—there are so many aspects of this building that weren’t thought of back in those days. The technologies that we’ve had to add in layers on top of it are definitely something that need to be addressed. So decanting and allowing people to do the very important work and to be able to keep the feel of this building is critical.

We are sitting here, and some folks came to sit up in the gallery—I don’t know if you’ve ever sat in the visitors’ gallery, and I know they don’t see it on TV, but it is so steep, and it is so terrifying to be up there, and yet we bring in schools. Children are coming in and climbing into these seats. It’s absolutely terrifying.

So how can we do things like that better, to ensure safety for the visitors who come to this building to share in the amazing work that happens here?

There are some really important aspects of the introduction of the first report that I want to get on record, particularly for people who are at home and have concerns and don’t understand the nature of the work. This is from committee day on November 29. The committee heard from Deputy Clerk Trevor Day, who is definitely one of our beloved Clerks and is completely non-partisan, and Jelena Bajcetic, the director of the precinct properties branch. I had a tour with her today, and she’s absolutely fantastic, knowledgeable, wonderful, and it was great.

This is what they said: The witnesses “have been invited to brief the committee and take questions on the current state of the building, and discuss the need for restoration.” Mr. Day gave a brief overview of the challenges of maintaining the building, particularly its aging mechanical, electrical, light and fire safety systems, which are at or approaching the end of their service life. He stated that a full rehabilitation of the building and grounds would “allow for those much-needed upgrades to meet modern safety, security, environmental and accessibility standards and to make the building once again functional for generations to come.”

That would absolutely be the goal for all of us as we look into the future, as we welcome guests in the future, and as young pages come into the House and spend a lot of time here. There are people from across the world who come to visit us here at Queen’s Park and to visit the Legislative Building. I think it’s incumbent that it’s safe and that it’s functional and that it meets the needs.

We’re grateful for the 130 years that this beautiful building has given us. We’re grateful to the people who work throughout the precinct, who work so hard to maintain and to keep the levels that it is, but it’s just not possible any longer. So I know that doing this work is the best opportunity for us to be able to preserve the building and to make sure that we can keep the beautiful facade that we see.

Like I said, I think this bill moves us in the direction of being able to start this work. It’s critical; it’s going to have to happen someday. Let’s get it started before things happen that put us in a place that is irreparable and they have to do things like take off the roof. That’s just not going to happen.

I will leave it there. I will welcome the questions if they so choose.

Thank you for the opportunity, and thank you for the opportunity of being on this committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Questions?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It has been a pleasure to have the member from Hamilton Mountain on the committee. I know she was able to tour the Legislature and see some of the deficiencies for the first time today to get a more comprehensive look. Many of us who are on the committee on procedure and House affairs have had a chance to go through a couple of times.

I’m just wondering what stood out for her today as the biggest—well, I’m trying to be kind—a glaring issue,

maybe, that she saw in her deliberations around the building today.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you for that question.

There are offices with more wiring than you could possibly imagine coming out of floors, running behind radiators, and health and safety concerns that go along with that. And then, just to see how much old structure is in the building that is full of asbestos, and walls that have—

**Interjection:** Lead.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Walls that have lead. Sorry. Thank you.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Asbestos.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Lead and asbestos and—

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** The lead is getting to her.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Yes, exactly—and the inaccessibility of the building. It was glaring to see it firsthand, and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to have had that tour.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'm learning so much from you and your time in Ottawa, and I know you spoke about that.

It's Thursday afternoon, and I just have to say that there are stories about ghosts here in the Legislature. Did you hear any ghost stories when you were in Ottawa?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** That's a great question.

No, I really don't think so, but I've definitely heard stories here in the Ontario Legislature, and I know many others would have more stories. We've had members who come in very early in the morning, because they try to beat the traffic, and when they're sleeping on their couches, they've got people wiggling their toes, but nobody is there. There have definitely been some interesting stories that we've heard.

Maybe if the pages have heard any stories, they can come and whisper in my ear and share those with me.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** Like the member opposite, I'm very thankful to be able to serve on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, and I have been able to visit Ottawa alongside the member and see the work that's under way there. I think there were a lot of take-aways from what's happening in some other jurisdictions and how we can apply those best practices right here in Ontario.

I'm wondering if there was anything in particular, some overwhelming piece, that stuck out to the member opposite when we were there. I know we had a wonderful team of people on the administration side that we interacted with, and I'm wondering if there was any big take-away that we should all be thinking about here in this Legislature?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** There is one, actually, and it's about the look: what the House of Commons looks like, and that it has to continue to look like that postcard. People put trust in the fact that when we look at that postcard, we know that's the House of Commons, the home of Canada. So there were some very minor changes made, but you couldn't see it, because they put such intricate work into

ensuring that you couldn't see it and that it looked exactly the same.

That's something, actually, that one of our members brought up today—a fight that she had to have back in the day for the viewshed, and buildings that are being erected around the building. If you erect too many buildings around it, quite frankly, when you take that photo of Queen's Park, you're going to see all those buildings in the background.

So I think that's something that we should also continue to pay attention to, so that we also have that clear view of our Parliament Building, and it's the postcard view, and it's not altered by not just the work that we do here, but the changes that happen around us.

1710

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**MPP Jill Andrew:** Thank you to the member from Hamilton Mountain for your presentation and your work on the committee.

My question is around accessibility. The late, great David Onley—he certainly gave and championed across his entire lifespan for accessibility in Ontario. I know that the dream, in some ways, is a deferred dream, and one that now rests on the shoulders of the government, of all members here—to ensure we have an accessible Ontario. So I'm wondering if you can elaborate on how important it is to make wherever is our Legislative Assembly of Ontario accessible so that new members who are coming into our building to serve their communities can feel that they belong, can feel that the building is welcoming and they can get the job done on behalf of their communities.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Yes, I wholeheartedly agree. I think it's so important that we have accessibility throughout our communities, particularly in our houses of Parliament. I believe the Speaker had a big role in playing with the band—what's it called? It's for the hearing impaired to be able to have those sound bands so that, if someone with a hearing aid went into—what's it called?

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Hearing loop.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** An ear loop? A hearing loop. I know the Speaker had a big part in that in Hamilton, in our city hall, in our rec centres and those new buildings—so making sure that we have that accessibility and thinking out of the box for things like that. That people with hearing aids would be able to have that exception and be able to hear within our buildings is a wonderful thing. Those are the types of things that we'll be looking forward to hearing from disability communities, as part of the work going on in the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Following up on the previous question—I spent 15 years as an adaptive technologist working in an accessibility centre at a community college. The focus of my work at the time was on, I'll say, the non-physical disabilities, on the learning disabilities, on ADHD, on a wide variety of disabilities. What I learned in that process was that universal design is the absolute direction that we need to go in.

I'm hoping that the member will be able to speak to the ideas around universal design—so that everyone, regardless of the nature of their ability or disability, is able to access this House.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member opposite.

This is actually something that I worked on many years ago, and it's part of our platform, as New Democrats, for the last few elections—universal design, making sure that any new build is built with a universal design. I don't think that our Parliament Buildings should be any different.

I hope that the new member who comes into this House from Hamilton Centre is a member from the New Democrats. She's in a wheelchair, and I know they're already doing the work to structure the floor so that she will be able to participate in our democracy.

When we're rebuilding, accessibility has to be a huge focus. It makes me quite excited to think about it, knowing that everybody will be able to access every part of our building with faith that they're safe.

And, sorry, you brought up the—

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Response?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you. Next time.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further questions?

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** Thank you so much for the insight and the enthusiasm in seeing this space be renovated, to encourage so many different bright minds and encourage more debates.

In the world that we have today, people are feeling the pressures of life, and people are very passionate about making sure their thoughts, ideas and opinions are being heard. Sometimes that can put many of us in very unsafe situations, as members and representatives of government and community. So how will you ensure, in your position and at that table in committee, that security is as important—and accessibility is important, but especially the security, as many people are targeted and attacked. How will you ensure that security is at the forefront?

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Thank you to the member opposite. That has definitely been something that the committee has spoken about, has focused on. Part of our trip to Ottawa was also very much focused on that. Security is a big part of this plan—and one of the people and groups that will be at the table on a regular basis.

But something was brought up to me today—these windows allow us to hear the people on the front lawn. I hope that continues. I hope that we'll always be able to hear the voices of people from our community right here in the chamber.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I am seeking unanimous consent of the House that a change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business such that the member for Beaches–East York assumes ballot number 33 and the member for Hamilton Mountain assumes ballot number 34.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent of the

House that a change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business such that the member for Beaches–East York assumes ballot number 33 and the member for Hamilton Mountain assumes ballot number 34. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Point of order.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Speaker, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the schedule of the House.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice respecting the schedule of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I move that when the House adjourns today, it stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on Monday, March 20, 2023.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader has moved that when the House adjourns today, it stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m. on Monday, March 20, 2023. Agreed? Agreed.

Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Calandra has moved second reading of 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. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion carries.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I'll have the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** So ordered. Orders of the day?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Madam Speaker, I think if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to see the clock at 6.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to see the clock at 6. Agreed? Agreed.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

### HONOURING OUR VETERANS ACT, 2023

### LOI DE 2023 VISANT À RENDRE HOMMAGE À NOS ANCIENS COMBATTANTS

Mr. Coe moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016 / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2016 sur la semaine du Souvenir.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 100, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** I'm pleased to rise and speak at second reading of Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, which amends the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, and, if passed, will require members of the Legislative Assembly, on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day in each year, to pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts. Members are also permitted to make speeches.

I would like to acknowledge the support of my caucus colleagues and the government House leader, the Honourable Paul Calandra, for permitting me to bring this bill forward.

1720

At its core, the nobility and the majesty of Remembrance Day can be found in the story of ordinary Ontarians who become extraordinary for the most simple ways and reasons: They loved their province and country so deeply, so profoundly, that they were willing to give their lives to keep it safe and free.

The fallen we memorialize gave their last full measure of devotion not so we might mourn them, though we do; not so that our province might honour their sacrifice, although it does. They gave their lives so that we might live ours; so that our sons and daughters might grow up to pursue their dreams; so that a wife might be able to live a long life, free and secure; so that a mother might raise her family in a province of peace and freedom.

"The torch; be yours to hold it high," wrote Dr. McCrae during the First World War. From fighting alongside our allies in the first and second wars, Korea and Afghanistan, generation after generation of Ontarians have answered the call to serve. Our service members have worn the Maple Leaf with honour as they represent the best of what it means to be Canadian. Rightly, each year on Remembrance Day we say thank you to all those who gave their lives for our country, for our freedom. It is when we pay tribute to the names of those etched on the cenotaphs in the towns, cities and hamlets situated in the region of Durham and other parts of Ontario so generations who follow remember the price of their duty.

Our hearts also go out on Remembrance Day to the families left behind, young mothers who raised their children alone, and mothers and fathers who face perhaps life's greatest heartbreak.

It is also when we honour all those who served in conflicts past and current and have returned home to towns, villages and cities across our great province, their service complete. As Ontarians, we have never looked for conflict, but always rise to the occasion when asked to defend our ideals.

Speaker, now more than ever, I think it's important to listen to our veterans, to hear their stories, to remember. Prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic, I regularly visited Whitby's long-term-care and retirement homes at

Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Those visits have started once more. It provides me with an opportunity to meet with veterans and, in some situations, sit at veterans' bedsides and listen to their stories. I'm inspired not only by the bravery they showed all those years ago, but by how that bravery continues to shine in their eyes in their twilight years.

We know and appreciate what a special place we call home, where differences are settled with ballots, not bullets, where tolerance binds us together and fear does not tear us apart. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we join together to pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives and those who suffered the ravages of war on our behalf.

While the nature of war has changed over time, the values that drive our brave men and women in uniform remain constant: honour, courage, selflessness. Those values lived in the hearts of everyday heroes who risked everything for us, men and women who now rest forever. My uncle James is one of them, killed in a battle in France during World War I. Speaker, in addition to his name, the words on James's dog tag were also those of scripture: "Greater love has no other than this, than to lay down your life for your friends." It is a debt we can never fully repay, but it is a debt we will never stop trying to fully repay, by remaining a province worthy of their sacrifice, by living our own lives the way the fallen lived theirs—a testament, Speaker, that greater love has no other than this, than to lay down your life for your friends. We are so grateful for our veterans, for their families.

Time may make the service of so many seem a distant memory, but that is their lasting gift: a peace that endures, a belief in democracy and a spirit that won't die.

Once again, the Honouring Our Veterans Act amends the Remembrance Week Act, 2016, and if passed, will require members of the assembly, on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day in each year, to pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and in peacekeeping efforts. Members are also permitted to make speeches.

Our wars, Speaker, have won for us every hour we live in freedom, and I think you would agree. But our wars have taken from us the men and women we honor and every hour of the lifetimes they had hoped to live. Lest we forget; lest we forget.

I look forward to hearing the presentations from both my caucus colleagues and members of the official opposition.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** It's always an honour and a privilege to rise and be able to speak on behalf of the residents here in St. Catharines. I also would like to thank the member from Whitby for his heartfelt words and for bringing this bill, Bill 65, Honouring Our Veterans Act, 2023.

Every time an opportunity presents itself to speak up for, memorialize alongside or reflect on the sacrifices of

veterans, I am honoured and appreciative of these moments in this chamber. It is why I am honoured to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. The House will not be surprised to hear that this bill will get my full support.

The bill would require members of the Legislative Assembly, on the last sessional day before Remembrance Day in each year, to pause and observe two minutes of silence in honour of those who died serving their country in wars and peacekeeping efforts. Following the two minutes of silence, members are permitted to give speeches for 15 minutes.

It has been my distinct honour to stand in this Legislature and speak in recognition of Remembrance Week and Remembrance Day nearly every year since I was elected. Once again, this House, this province and, indeed, this entire country will be asked to participate in two minutes of silence on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

The two minutes of silence we are asked to participate in is indeed much easier in comparison to what the men and women we are honouring have done for us and for our freedom in the past. Any opportunity for enshrining precedent or future addition to honour that we as legislators and leaders in our community can bestow on the veterans is a welcome addition.

What we do in this chamber is reflected in our communities and in our own backyards. I am fortunate to represent a community, St. Catharines, with a rich military history that has produced tangible and concrete reminders of who and what we should remember every November 11.

**1730**

Like cities all across this province, St. Catharines has an established Royal Canadian Legion and veterans' clubs, and they also have the Lincoln and Welland Regiment dedicated to the veterans and their families in St. Catharines. We have four active, vibrant Legions: downtown Branch 24, Polish Branch 418, Port Dalhousie Branch 350, and I'm going to give a shout-out to my home branch, Merritton Legion Branch 138. These Legions conduct annual ceremonies in remembrance at our cenotaphs and, just as importantly, raise both funds and betterment of all local veterans and local initiatives. They promote remembrance and awareness for those whose names are engraved in our war memorials and on our cenotaphs and memorial walls.

We are a community in Niagara with many seniors, and much of our city planning originated from the generous creation of wartime housing, which moved veterans into the region after World War II. We had over 1,700 wartime houses built in St. Catharines between 1941 and 1947, mostly along Facer Street downtown and in the Merritton area.

In St. Catharines, veterans are often part of our family. As Canadians, we have lots to remember. We must remember that veterans in Canada, that have sacrificed so much to protect our Canadian values, are diverse. We are a country of many communities, and it is important that I

reflect on their contributions as veterans, as we are not one singular group in Canada; we are diverse.

In the First World War, more than 4,000 Indigenous people served in uniform. We honour that with a cadet award that was just presented to this Legislature last week.

I annually attend an event in Niagara honouring the contributions of Black Canadians and veterans. It is why more voices memorializing, reflecting and honouring veterans for Remembrance Day is vital to be as inclusive as possible when we speak to the sacrifices of our veterans.

I admit, and the members of this House that have been around me most know, that I often speak from a place of personal and family pride when it comes to speaking to the service of our military people. I have a son in active military service that I'm very, very proud of. My husband, Jim, and our whole family are just as proud of him.

Some of us in this House, like myself, have active-duty military members serving our country today. As the mother of an active service member, a petty officer first class in the Royal Canadian Navy, I am familiar with the hardships faced by his wife and his two young children—actually, my granddaughters. Three-to-six-month tours of duty away from home and his family in support of this country: I understand that sacrifice. I wear it on my sleeve, and it colours my world. It provides context and gives the work that we do about honouring veterans another considerable degree of meaning and intention. It is why I have always strived to do more for our veterans, both retired and active, both older adults and young.

When I was a city councillor, I pioneered free parking for our veterans across the whole city. In this chamber, I strive to close the gaps that we might have in this province that would have our veterans fall through. It is something I know we all feel the same about. Most often, I gain all-party support on these measures.

It is also that honouring our veterans is not just about creating monuments and memorials. It is also about recognizing and supporting the needs of our veterans today. Providing support is critical for ensuring that our veterans are able to live a healthy and fulfilling life after their service is complete.

Speaker, I would like to take a moment to suggest that whenever we talk about Remembrance Day, we should look at expanding it in the province as a statutory holiday, similar to some other provinces. Perhaps, down the road, myself and the member opposite can talk about this, as I see our shared values with honouring veterans.

Speaker, in conclusion, and related to this bill, Remembrance Day could always use more space for reflection, and this is why I appreciate the work of this bill. Who should we be remembering? This may be a little bit more difficult. It involves names: the names of husbands, fathers, sons and daughters; names that are being remembered mostly by spouses, parents, children and grandchildren of those who did not return. The names and the faces are different for us, because the two World Wars happened so many years ago; not so for Afghanistan and

not so for the Korean War, and not so for many Canadian peacekeeping missions.

There is a lot to remember, but we must always remember the sacrifice that was made to get Canada to where it is today. We may take our rights for granted sometimes—rights, privileges and freedoms. We must never, ever forget how we got them.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Ms. Patrice Barnes:** It is an honour for me to be able to speak to this bill. It is not only important to me, but it's also of historical importance to my riding of Ajax.

Madam Speaker, it is important that we remember all those who have served and sacrificed, not only physically but mentally, bearing the scars of war to create the country in which we live today.

I have the utmost respect for our Armed Forces, who are willing to put their lives in danger so that we can stand in this House and debate the issues we believe in. We frequently take our Canadian values and institutions for granted, as well as our freedom to participate in cultural and political events and our right to live under a government of our choosing. However, Canadians who stand up to defend our values truly believe that without freedom, there can be no peace, and without peace, there can be no lasting freedom.

It is the greatest country in the world in part because of the sacrifices of our military personnel and veterans. We should all take the time to appreciate the wonderful life we have in Canada. This wonderful freedom is protected by the rule of law and is enshrined in our Constitution.

But freedom is not, and has never been, free. Over the centuries, it has been won on bloody battlefields. I'll focus on just two of the many stories that come around this time. Ajax history is steeped in military history.

In 1940, surveyors started assessing the land that would be the future Defence Industries Ltd., or DIL, munitions complex in Pickering township, then a predominantly rural municipality 40 kilometres east of Toronto. Over 9,000 men and women worked there at the peak of production. The DIL recruited some 2,350 women from the prairie provinces, the Maritimes and various parts of Ontario. Given yesterday was International Women's Day, it is important to note that most of the men served as managers, administrators, foremen or supervisors, while the women worked the assembly line.

Their jobs could be dangerous, as well as repetitive to the point of being monotonous. They handled TNT, amatol and RDX day in, day out, and among other things, they filled percussion caps, detonators, small bombs, anti-tank mines, armour-piercing artillery and anti-aircraft shells.

Production of caps and detonators began in July 1941, and by the end of the war, the men and women of the DIL

had produced more than 51 million units of heavy ammunition and nearly 234 million caps, detonators and pellets. An employee of the facility is famously quoted in saying, "We knew our importance. If the boys didn't have shells, they couldn't win the war."

But that was far from the end of the story. A town called Ajax arose on the site of the former munitions complex and today it is a flourishing suburban community, with a population exceeding 100,000 people. The women of the DIL were part of the inspiration for the hit series *Bomb Girls*, which ran on Global Television in 2012 and 2013. They are veterans in their own right.

**1740**

In February, I had the great pleasure of attending the unveiling of the commemorative No. 2 Construction Battalion coin released by the Canadian mint in memory of the largest Black unit in Canadian history and the obstacles they had to face to overcome. In August 1914, tens of thousands of men across Canada rushed to their local recruiting centre to enlist for service in the First World War. Many Black men tried to enlist as well, but were rejected. Some were told that this was a white man's war, while others were told that their services were not required. By the end of 1915, at least 200 Black volunteers had been rejected. This reflected the racism in Canada at the time.

These rejections were unacceptable to the leaders of Black communities across Canada because they thought that this was their country. They wrote to the militia headquarters and the Governor General to request that Black Canadians be allowed to enlist. They also questioned why they were being rejected.

Madam Speaker, it was not until May 1916 that Black men who wanted to fight for our country were allowed to enlist. The men of the No. 2 Construction Battalion showed the dedication of Black communities across Canada towards their country. It was the largest Black unit in the history of Canada and played an essential role in the First World War.

Their story, once lost, has now been told. Many of these untold stories exist within all different parts of our communities. Even though there are a lot of untold stories known only to family and friends and unsung heroes whose voices have been lost, and even though now, as we lose our aging veterans, we struggle to adequately take care of our young soldiers, taking a moment of silence to show minimum appreciation is the least we can do.

That, Speaker, is why I support this bill to recognize a moment of silence on Remembrance Day, with speeches of tribute to our veterans.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** It's my honour today to stand to support our member from Whitby bringing this piece of legislation. It is very important to show respect to our veterans, and not only to our veterans but their families who have suffered the most. They suffered the loss of a loved one or suffered an injury of some member of the family, and there is a tendency to feel, at some point, that they have been forgotten about—everybody got busy with

their life, and those veterans feel like they've been left behind.

With this piece of legislation, it's a very small token of appreciation to show some appreciation for those veterans who served their country. People in uniform are different—a different life than the rest of us. They actually have no exact schedule: They don't take vacations like the rest of us; they don't get to enjoy being with their family at Christmas or Easter or religious vacations or summertime. They have minimal time with their families and their kids. They are sacrificing a lot and, of course, the cost of sacrifice is if some of those veterans lost their lives.

In my riding of Erin Mills, I meet from time to time with Bob Cairns, who is a World War II veteran, and his wife, Moira. When we speak about the time during the war, it's not like today, where information and emails and updates come momentarily; they used letters. So they would wait for a letter or some news, and it was a very difficult and stressful time for the whole family. He can tell lots of stories about the war.

Again, in my riding as well, we have the family of Marc Diab, who was 22 years old and lost his life in Afghanistan on March 8, 2009—22 years old, a very nice young man, with his parents Hani and Jihan Diab from Mississauga. I would imagine how they would feel when they see the whole Legislature honouring the legion of their son as one of the veterans. I think that's a very small symbol of respect.

The other part which I want to speak about is, we need to do all that we can do to teach our second generation, to show them how much we are honouring the veterans, how much we are honouring the people in uniform who are making those sacrifices, how proud we are of those people in uniform. We need to build that patriotism in their personalities, the feeling that the whole country, the Legislature, everybody—I remember when I was young, when we had small villages, when one of the members of the village came home from his war duty or an assignment somewhere, the whole village would do celebrations, proud that one of the village members is serving the country. So I think it's not a big thing, but it shows at least some respect to those veterans.

I will say, for everybody here, if you go to one of the Legions, you'll see some of the members of the veterans. Sit with them. Have a coffee, have a beer, and talk with them about their memories of the war. At least that will give them some feeling that somebody still remembers what they did for this country. I know that everyone gets busy, and families get busy with their lives, and the veterans feel that nobody is appreciating what they did or that nobody still thinks about what they did.

So I think it's a very important piece of legislation to show some respect to those veterans, who, in my opinion, even during their day-to-day work—they leave home, and they don't know if they are coming home or not. They might get an assignment, leave the country in a hurry and never come back to their families. This is very stressful. All the people in uniform, when they leave their home, they don't know if they are going to see their family again

or not. I think it's a very big sacrifice from them, from those members, from their families, from their kids, and what we are doing today is a very small token of appreciation, of showing some of the appreciation for what they did and they do every day—and giving an example for the people who are currently in the service that we honour their work, we honour their sacrifice.

What I would like to add to that, too, is I would like to say that it's not only my honour, but I really strongly support the bill. Just tell them that we still will always remember them. Lest we forget. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Further debate?

Back to the member for two minutes.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** What an evening of extraordinary speeches from each of the presenters, and I thank them for that.

I was at the 90th anniversary of Branch 112 in downtown Whitby a couple of months ago—which I'm a member of, and I'm an affiliate member of Branch 152 up in Brooklin, which is the hamlet of Brooklin, in the north part of my riding, just before you reach Myrtle station, a little agriculture community going forward.

And at that time, at the dinner, I not only spoke about the sacrifices that veterans had made and their families—and that's an important piece. But it became more apparent to me that our veterans are aging, Speaker, particularly our World War II veterans, and now our Korean veterans. I think what we're doing here tonight they will see, when they step back, to be a fitting tribute for their sacrifices that they made for our freedom, as I spoke to.

I'm going to conclude with what was on my uncle James's dog tag: "Greater love has no other than this, than to lay down your life for your friends." Thank you, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired. Mr. Coe has moved second reading of Bill 65, An Act to amend the Remembrance Week Act, 2016. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Pursuant to standing order 100(h), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Speaker, I'd like to refer the bill, please, to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

**The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Donna Skelly):** Is it the majority of the House that this bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs? Agreed. The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been completed, this House stands adjourned until 10:15 a.m., Monday, March 20, 2023.

*The House adjourned at 1751.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
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	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	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
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	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
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	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	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	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
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	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
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	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	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	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	