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Thursday 11 December 2014

Jeudi 11 décembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 11 December 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 11 décembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Orders of the day?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, thank you. I'm not sure whether I should ask for orders of the day or unanimous consent for the Speaker to wear his Santa hat.

Orders of the day: Government notice of motion number 15.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I move that, on the occasion of the upcoming bicentennial of his birth, this House commemorates the contribution to Canada of its founding father and first Prime Minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Forgive my interruption. It needs to be moved by a minister. Could you please make that arrangement quickly?

The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that on the occasion of the upcoming bicentennial of his birth, this House commemorates the contribution to Canada of its founding father and first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald.

Hon. Liz Sandals: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent that the time available to 10:15 this morning be allotted to the debate on this motion, divided equally among the three recognized parties, and that a recorded vote on the motion be taken at deferred votes following question period today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will recognize the Minister of Education on her motion. Do we agree? Carried.

Minister Gravelle.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much. I would ask for agreement that our remarks be delivered on our behalf by the member for Kingston and the Islands.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: As the member for Kingston and the Islands, it is a particular honour to join my colleagues from all sides in considering the life and legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald. Thank you to all three House leaders

for unanimously agreeing to this important debate, and thank you to Arthur Milnes for suggesting the idea.

With the bicentennial of Sir John A. Macdonald's birth only a few weeks away, on January 11, it is fitting that we pause today to reflect on his considerable contributions to our province and our country.

In Kingston, Sir John A. was a skilled community builder, but that is not where the story starts. Sir John A. called Kingston his home from the age of five, having emigrated from Scotland. Leaving school at age 15, as he did, was common to all but the very wealthy in those days.

After serving as an apprentice lawyer for some years, Macdonald was called to the bar in 1836 and continued to practise in Kingston, seeking to establish his name through taking high-profile cases and through his involvement with numerous local organizations.

In 1843, he celebrated his first election victory when he ran as an alderman in Kingston's fourth ward. Hot on the heels of that, he was elected to the Legislature as a Conservative candidate in 1844.

It is alleged that he was not fond of oratory—I can relate—and relied heavily on supplying voters with large quantities of alcohol to gain popularity. It's true, it's true; it's in Wikipedia.

It was not until 1854, with the fall of the Grits, that Macdonald's talent for consensus-building came to the fore. In that year, he was largely responsible for putting together the first coalition government, known as the Liberal-Conservatives, where he served as Attorney General.

Now to fast-forward to 1867 and Confederation: In Sir John A.'s early career, the seat of government of the newly merged province of Canada had moved from Kingston to Montreal to Quebec City to Ottawa in the space of just 17 years. Macdonald had already been Premier for some time, and had witnessed or presided over a time of great Canadian prosperity and a time when Canadians had started to become one community connected by the telegraph and great railroads.

In 1867, as one of the prime architects of Confederation, his incredible talent for consensus-building was recognized in his knighthood and appointment as Canada's first Prime Minister on July 1 of that year.

In the following years, he was to serve in six majority governments. No leader in Canadian history won more. He was our Prime Minister for 19 years, a feat bettered only by Mackenzie King.

Sir John A.'s immense talents are not easy to sum up in a few short sentences, but I will attempt it now. Firstly,

he was passionate about his work, strong-willed and ambitious, but shrewd enough to know when to wait and be patient—something we don't always do today, I might add. He was pragmatic and exceedingly adaptable—his enemies called that “shifty”—and he possessed the rare quality of being able to gain the trust of highly antagonistic factions. He used that trust to promote the rewards of serving the greater good of the nation.

Underreported is Sir John A.'s compassionate side, perhaps born of witnessing the tragic murder of his younger brother by a drunken babysitter when Macdonald was just seven years old. Indeed, much of his personal life was laced with challenges or tragedy: the death of his first son, the lingering illness of his first wife and the estrangement of his remaining son after her passing. Finally, nothing reveals his loving nature more than his relationship with Mary, his daughter. Her deformity and debilitating mental and physical disease were extremely challenging, yet he doted on her.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are no heroes, Macdonald included, in the story of Canada's treatment of aboriginal peoples. While it is always a mistake to measure historical figures by the standards of the present day, Sir John A.'s legacy with regard to Indian affairs remains complex and contradictory. In fact, measured against the pronouncements of his contemporaries in governments of the day, Macdonald might be considered a moderate in many ways. His granting of the vote to qualified male Indians in 1885 lies in stark contrast to his crushing of the Métis rebellions and the subsequent hanging of Louis Riel in the same year.

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As Prime Minister, Sir John A. was resistant to the continual calls from colleagues and the opposition to reduce the government's interpretation and implementation of its treaty responsibilities. Rather than shy away from the darker chapters in our history, my community is seizing the opportunity to encourage scholarship and discussion with our Anishnawbe and Haudenosaunee friends whose land we share. At Queen's, for example, following in the footsteps of two full academic conferences, the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre just presented an impressive symposium where these issues were discussed freely.

Sir John A.'s impact in Kingston can still be seen and felt. He played a key role in the founding of Queen's University, particularly her world-renowned medical school. As a young alderman, he helped pave the way for the construction of our majestic city hall, which still serves that purpose today. Sir John A. would lie in state in that very building after his death on June 6, 1891. Both the proclamation of Upper Canada in 1792 and Macdonald's proclamation of Confederation in 1867 were made in Kingston's public market square. Yes, Canada was born in Kingston.

In short, Sir John A. Macdonald is synonymous with Kingston, and this is why the municipality, Queen's University, St. Lawrence College, the Royal Military College, the historical society, Tourism Kingston, both local school

boards, theatre groups and others have been planning Macdonald's bicentennial for years. Make no mistake: This will be a far-reaching and magnificent commemoration of our city's greatest son.

Here are some highlights:

—Dr. Terri-lynn Brennan, with both local school boards, has implemented a curriculum unit on Sir John A.'s life;

—A study of Sir John A. and Britain's Benjamin Disraeli at Queen's will be edited and translated by the project's brilliant director, Dr. Michel Pharand;

—Canada Transformed, a collection of Sir John A.'s major speeches, has just been published by our one and only Arthur Milnes, a Sir John A. authority, and Dr. Sarah Gibson;

—a debate between former Premier of this House Bob Rae and federal Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander, moderated by a friend to all members of this House, our very own Steve Paikin, of TVO;

—There will be free fireworks before the OHL's Kingston Frontenacs play a Macdonald bicentennial-themed home game;

—The Kingston Historical Society will be holding their annual Sir John A. Macdonald dinner with Kingston's Mr. Justice Thomas Cromwell of the Supreme Court of Canada;

—On bicentennial day, Mayor Paterson, whom we have in the gallery here, will address the citizens of Kingston at city hall for the city's official Sir John A. Macdonald bicentennial bash. Everyone is welcome. I encourage all members and their families to join us on that momentous day.

I must take this opportunity to thank Arthur Milnes, Sir John A. Macdonald bicentennial ambassador; Mayor Paterson and your officials; staff; and the small army who are putting their heart and soul into making these celebrations a success. Please visit the city of Kingston's website for further details on our Macdonald bicentennial plans for January and throughout 2015.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to reflect on one aspect of Macdonald's life and career that we have made a special point of highlighting in our bicentennial celebration. Sir John A. Macdonald, as we all are—unless we are of First Nations descent—was an immigrant to our shores. He went on to found and lead what has now become a respected G7 country, a country that was built around a collaboration of diverse cultures and viewpoints. The story of Sir John A. Macdonald demonstrates that in Kingston and Ontario and across our beloved country from sea to sea to sea, anything is possible. That is the greatest part of the legacy of a great man who we pay tribute to today.

Happy 200th birthday, Sir John A. Macdonald. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I will be splitting my time in today's special debate with the members for Leeds–Grenville and Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

On January 11, all across Ontario and from coast to coast to coast, Canadians will remember the incredible legacy of our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, born 200 years ago on that day in Scotland. Macdonald's family arrived in Canada when he was just five years old, and Canada would never be the same.

We gather today to celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of a truly exceptional man. They say that to understand where we came from, the roots of Canadian history and its politics, we must understand the life, career and accomplishments of John A. Macdonald.

It's not an easy task. Macdonald's character and achievements continue to fascinate historians, students and all Canadians who enrich themselves by exploring the life and legacy of one of Canada's proud founding fathers.

In his day, he had no political equal. He was an experienced statesman, lawyer, dedicated husband and father, and a far more colourful character that many would assume. He was also a natural and eloquent speaker and pragmatic coalition-builder, drawing people to his side through his words and speeches both inside Parliament and out.

Sir John A. Macdonald always believed in the incredible potential of our great country. Throughout the 1860s, he was a tireless advocate for the Confederation movement and even drafted the British North America Act, under which the four provinces were united on July 1, 1867.

One of the many colourful stories that I think speaks to the fascination we have for Sir John A.'s personality took place in December 1866, when he was in London to work out the final details of the BNA Act. He somehow set his hotel room on fire and burned his shoulder during the accident. Macdonald prudently kept the incident quiet and soldiered on.

I suspect he could hardly resist sharing the story immediately, because by all accounts he had a wicked sense of humour and would disarm people with his quick wit. He once stopped outside a cathedral during the 1878 election, where his local political opponent asked him if he was there to pray for success. John A. smiled and said, "There's a difference between our parties: We pray for the people, and you prey on the people." It's somewhat applicable today, Mr. Speaker. I won't say who is doing what, though.

We've all heard the story of him dismissing another political opponent who called him a drunk after he vomited during an election debate. Macdonald collected himself and he said he got sick not because of drink but because he was forced to listen to the rantings of his honourable opponent. Mr. Speaker, modern election debates just don't deliver such headlines anymore.

Macdonald, despite his tremendous political success, was aware of his foibles and didn't take himself too seriously. As Prime Minister, he prefaced a meeting with the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union by saying he was troubled to start a meeting when he could clearly smell water on someone's breath.

Yes, Sir John A. Macdonald was not perfect. He was known to overindulge in strong drink from time to time, even during debates in the House of Commons. But he was forgiven because he could set aside his own faults and his own partisan biases for a broader cause and more compelling, noble purpose.

In his own words, "My sins of omission and commission I do not deny; but I trust that it may be said of me in the ultimate issue, 'Much is forgiven because he loved much,' for I have loved my country with a passionate love."

As our country's first Prime Minister and one of the longest-serving Prime Ministers in Canadian history, he was the driving force behind the birth of our nation as well as the common values that kept the new dominion together during those fledgling early years and saw it expand from sea to sea.

John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister when the first spike of the Canadian Pacific Railway was driven into the ground. He was our nation's leader at the dawn of hydroelectric power that would later fuel the 20th-century economy. Stitching together our country from west to east with a transcontinental railway must have seemed bold and audacious dream at the time, but Macdonald saw it become a reality through his tenacity.

That same tenacity, combined with charm and diplomacy, kept our young country strong in the face of dangerous political turbulence. Even after winning the Maritimes' approval of Confederation at the Charlottetown Conference, primarily through his diplomacy with the Premiers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada was still fragile. Nova Scotia voters largely rejected the pact, while the ink was barely dry, by electing a large contingent of anti-confederate politicians. Macdonald tactfully brought anti-confederate leader Joseph Howe into his cabinet and used his influence to get Nova Scotians onside.

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Even more astute was Sir John A. Macdonald's political manoeuvring at the Washington conference where Britain and the United States were negotiating Civil War grievances. The British government only wanted him there in case it had to give Canada over to the US to reach a settlement. By the end of the conference, however, Canadian affairs accounted for half the agenda and Canada, a colony of Britain at the time, won the remarkable right to grant or withhold approval of the British-US pact.

Even the most successful politician would have called that a great achievement and walked away immensely pleased. Sir John A. Macdonald, however, wanted the icing on his cake. He also walked away with Britain's agreement to lend a very large amount of money to Canada for his trans-Canada railway.

John A. Macdonald was a true visionary. We all know his history as the Father of Confederation, the father of national policy, the father of uniting the railroad and the father of Canadian conservatism.

But he was also ahead of his time in matters we take for granted now in Canada. John A. Macdonald was the

first democratic leader in the world to publicly argue for women's right to vote. It might also surprise some critics of his decision to allow the execution of Louis Riel that Macdonald held a strong belief that Canada's aboriginal people, whom he called the "original owners of the land," should also have the fundamental right to vote.

His message and vision were always hopeful. Macdonald once described the legacy he hoped to leave: "If I had influence over the minds of the people of Canada, any power over their intellect, I would leave them with this legacy: Whatever you do, adhere to the union. We are a great country, and shall become one of the greatest in the universe if we preserve it."

John A. Macdonald reached out and united a land with diverse interests, backgrounds and creeds. He did it with character, he did it with personality and he did it with leadership. For that, we celebrate the bicentennial of Sir John A.'s birth.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas, happy holidays and happy birthday to Sir John. You've done so much for our beautiful country.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise on behalf of New Democrats to support what we're trying to do here, and that is, to recognize in a very formal way the contribution that Sir John A. Macdonald had not only to the birth of this nation but, quite frankly, for much of what binds us as Canadians today and what identifies us as Canadians today.

It's ironic, when we look at history 200 years ago, the realities that Sir John A. Macdonald faced. They may not have had television back then. They certainly didn't have the Internet and all the things that we have today, but many of the issues he faced were the same: The economic challenges of a nation that is a small population over a large geography and trying to make our own way in the North American continent with a powerhouse just south of us. He understood that if this country was to survive over the longer end, we needed to find ways to link this country from east to west and north to south. John A. set much of the policy in place that, quite frankly, is still serving this nation today. If you think about it, that is a pretty amazing task.

Our country, at that time, had a very small population as compared to today. We were very much outgunned as far as population by the United States, but he managed by way of policy and by way of other people whom he served with in the Legislature and the business community across Canada to develop this nation that we call Canada today.

Think about it. We forged a nation, we survived as a nation and we are on the world stage as a result of a lot of what happened back then, and the challenges were probably not much different than they are today. We have a lot to be thankful for from those people who came before us, which allows us to stand in this Legislature today and call ourselves Canadian and call ourselves Ontarians. Imagine the challenges.

John A., as was pointed out by previous speakers, was not without his problems as far as character issues. I thought the story that the leader of the official opposition raised in regard to John A. Macdonald having an adventure with debate—I always thought that was something that had actually happened in the House of Commons, but I will not tell the story again. I'll believe your version because I'm only going by memory and I wasn't alive back then.

But the point is, John A. Macdonald knew how to take a situation that most of us would see as insurmountable and was able to turn the corner in order to be able to do the right thing. Both in his personal life—because he certainly had challenges—and in his life as a politician and eventually as Prime Minister of this country, this man had huge mountains to move in order to be able to achieve what he wanted to do. The tenacity of that man, to be able to persevere in that type of environment and to be successful, is a testament to the drive and the will that he had as an individual to do what's right.

So I just want to say, on behalf of New Democrats, we should celebrate John A. Macdonald. He is the father of this nation. He is the one who put in place much of the policy that we see today that allows us to survive as a nation. If we are here today, it's greatly as a result of the work that John A. Macdonald has done.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm very pleased to be able to participate in this debate. It was suggested by some wag in our caucus that the reason I was chosen was that I was here when John A. Macdonald was around. That is not true; I can assure you of that.

Also, I have great admiration, as many people in this House do, for Arthur Milnes, who has been an historian and the number-one fan of Sir John A. Macdonald over the years, residing now in Kingston and prompting all of us as Canadians to remember Sir John A. Macdonald and the significant role that he played in our history.

January 11, 2015, indeed will be a very important date for Canada, because our first Prime Minister of Canada was born on that particular occasion and ruled at a time when it was very difficult. We have to look at the conditions under which people lived when Sir John A. Macdonald was Prime Minister of Canada. They're far different from today. An example is—and perhaps I'll elaborate a bit on this a little later on—is the fact that today we can travel from one end of the country in a matter of hours by airplane. If you think of the days of 1867 and previous to that, travel took much, much longer. It wasn't days; it was weeks or months that it took, very often, to travel, depending on how you were travelling from one end of the country to the other.

One of the greatest accomplishments of Sir John A. Macdonald was presiding over the national railway, which took us from one coast to another and helped unite us, because that level of transportation was important to bring Canadians together.

Another thing we recognize in our history—and may I note here that it is alleged that Canadians do not spend as

much time on their historical figures as perhaps those south of the border. I don't know if that's true or not. I know that in popular lore in the United States, there tends to be more about the early political leaders and other leaders in the United States than there is here. But as a former history teacher I can tell you that many people have become very intrigued and interested by Canadian history, and I advise all parents out there who have children going through the school system that one of the subjects that is valuable for them to take is history. There's a plug for history teachers in the province of Ontario.

I want to mention first of all a bit about Arthur Milnes, who is quite an interesting character. He won't be happy at the fact that I have mentioned him rather than Macdonald in this speech, but I was reading some information that was made available. It says that Arthur Milnes, "who shares in that sense of wonderment, is heading the organizing committee that's planning what promises to be the 'biggest birthday party in Canadian history.' Set for January 11, 2015, with some events later this year, the party will celebrate the 200th anniversary of Macdonald's birth.

"As head of the non-profit, non-partisan Sir John A. Macdonald Bicentennial Commission, Milnes is overseeing the planning and execution of events that are scheduled to take place across Canada.

"Our main goal will be to engage Canadians, particularly youth, in the celebration," he says. "It is not just about a history, it's about culture and education, too."

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It's mentioned in the article that Milnes is thrilled that six living former Prime Ministers—Joe Clark, John Turner, Kim Campbell, Brian Mulroney, Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin—have agreed to serve as honorary commissioners, as well as Sir John Major, the former British Prime Minister. So it really takes a person to bring this together, along with His Worship and those in the Kingston area, who have a particular interest in Sir John A. Macdonald and the role he played in Canadian life.

When you look at how the country could have turned out, as opposed to how it did, Sir John A. Macdonald was a moving force. There was a time when it was thought that Canada would be splintered into several different countries rather than provinces at the present time. Even Sir John A. Macdonald, in his early days, couldn't be called a person who was going to think about bringing the country together—with a particularly strong federal government and so on—but changed along the way and recognized the importance for Canada of bringing all parts of this country together, and set out as a goal to do so.

He recognized as well the importance of bringing together, particularly in those days, the two founding nations of Canada, the French and the English. There were divisions, as there are always going to be in circumstances of this kind. He overcame those divisions and was able to work with the opposition, in fact, even though he was a fierce partisan and a very colourful politician, as many will note. But he was also an individual who knew

enough to work with others, who could bring people together, and we should thank him very much for that.

Also, as has been mentioned, in the relationships with the United States—and the leader of the official opposition made some reference to this—Canada was kind of put aside when Britain was negotiating with the United States. We could have been a pawn in those negotiations, and had it not been for Sir John A. Macdonald attending as part of the British delegation in the United States, we might well have turned out quite differently. He fought for Canadian interests.

He would not have been in favour of NAFTA, I think, the North American Free Trade Agreement, because he was very protectionist in his approach to Canadian manufacturing and industry. He set up tariffs to protect them. That has evolved over the years, and perhaps thinking has evolved, but in those particular days, Sir John A. Macdonald said that if we wanted to establish our businesses and industry here, they would need early protection. There might be some who would say—perhaps even me, from time to time—that we could use that kind of protection today, when we're at the mercy of international trade agreements.

One of the things we noticed in Canada as well, as opposed to the United States, because they're two countries side by side, was the way that they evolved. The United States really had the Wild West. People went out west, and law and order was not much of a priority in the early days of the United States. Yet in Canada the contrast was that, through our North-West Mounted Police—our RCMP, eventually—law and order came to the west along with the people going out to the west. So we developed in a very different way.

Macdonald had his challenges from time to time. I thought, for today's debate, that you, Mr. Speaker, or the table, or whoever would make this decision, might exempt us from not having alcoholic beverages in the House, because we're only allowed to have water, of course, and that's probably good for the debates. But in the days of Sir John A. Macdonald, he felt that whisky could be part of the colourfulness of political life in those days, and sometimes fuelled some rather interesting debates. Today, this does not happen in this House, and I don't think that would happen, certainly, in the federal House.

While this is important for Kingston, and we recognize that Sir John A. Macdonald and Kingston go together, when you think of that particular community, all of us as Canadians are proud of him. I remember that, participating as a high school student in public speaking and debating contests, one of my topics was that of Sir John A. Macdonald. It surprised some in the audience, who were aware that my inclination was Liberal, on that particular occasion of making those speeches. But they also saw that in Sir John A. Macdonald I could not resist bringing to their attention his accomplishments on behalf of Canada.

Too often, as I say, we don't place that kind of emphasis on the early founding people of this nation of ours,

those being, in that particular case, maybe the founding fathers, but as has been noted, I think appropriately, he was the first major politician I can think of who thought that women should have the right to vote. I don't know whether it was unmarried women or women, but I saw some reference to it. He was way ahead of his time in that regard and should be thanked for taking that particular tack.

As we look at those accomplishments, I go back to the railroad and think of how important that was in bringing Canada together. If we didn't have that railroad—and there was controversy, I know, as there always is with major projects that governments undertake. There's always some controversy, and there was some controversy that took place in this particular case. It cost him a couple of years out of government, I think, at one time, but he bounced back nicely. Unfortunately for his opponents, and fortunately for him, when his opponents took over, the state of the economy was not very good, and since they took over, they were to blame, of course. When that happened, the economy bounced back and there he was, large as life.

But you cannot underestimate the role that Sir John A. Macdonald played in Canadian history. There were others, and we should pay attention to the others. I see, for instance, an example of perhaps recognition of Sir John A. Macdonald and others that's important is the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway—because it is a freeway, not a tolled highway. I think it's nice when we Canadians name it that; unfortunately, most people call it “Highway 401.” But I always look at that sign with some satisfaction and say, “Here was a person who, when defeated, was able to get together with the opposition, for instance, and form a coalition government. Although he was an ardent partisan, as I made reference to earlier, he recognized that, when the nation needed it, it was necessary to bring people together in a coalition government.

I admired the fact as well, and reference has been made to this, that indeed he brought the Maritimes and particularly Mr. Howe into the tent, because, in Nova Scotia, there was some considerable opposition to forming Canada as a nation. And yet he was wise enough to bring him into cabinet, into the tent, if you will, to ensure that there would be support—to use him, and I say that in a positive sense, to bring the support of people from Nova Scotia for Confederation.

When we look at any of the photographs or paintings of the Fathers of Confederation, the person we will recognize as being the ultimate Father of Confederation would certainly be Sir John A. Macdonald. To the people of Kingston, to the people who have been involved to the commission itself, to all historians who have extolled the virtues of Sir John A. Macdonald, despite the fact he had some personal foibles, I give full credit to them.

I encourage Canadians across this country to follow the events that are going to be part of the Sir John A. Macdonald bicentennial. I think that's going to be very important. I go back and thank Arthur Milnes for his particular involvement. He is, I know, in spirit in this

particular building. However, we know the weather is not very good out there and that the transportation mode may be somewhat challenging.

This is one day that I think we're going to see unity in this House. When we get to question period, that may change, but there's unity in this House in the recognition of Sir John A. Macdonald as a great Canadian, as a great leader, as a great person.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a great privilege to join with my colleagues, particularly my friend across the aisle from Kingston and the Islands, to pay tribute to Sir John A. Macdonald. I have to tell you, I loved the reference to Wikipedia in your speech.

As members know, Sir John A.'s bicentennial will be celebrated in January across Canada, and in Ontario we have some very special reasons to join in those celebrations. I believe it's very important that our province fully participate in the Macdonald bicentennial celebrations, and we should do so for one proud reason. The reason is often forgotten when we consider Canada's Father of Confederation and his commanding legacy. Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, was one of us, an Ontarian. He lived here his entire life. He campaigned and visited more Ontario communities, during a political career that started almost a quarter-century before Confederation and one that continued 25 years after 1867, than perhaps any other leader then or since.

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He served what was to become Ontario as Attorney General for many years. He helped craft laws and policies that still define our province. I say again with pride: Sir John A. Macdonald was one of us: an Ontarian through and through.

Like my honourable friend opposite and other members of the Legislature, I too want to welcome, on behalf of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, the mayor of Kingston, Mayor Paterson. Welcome to Queen's Park. I'm glad you're here today.

Through you, Speaker, I also want to thank the city of Kingston, in particular its Sir John A. Macdonald bicentennial ambassador, Arthur Milnes, who really was the one who wrote all three of the House leaders and asked that we carve out some debate time today for Sir John A. I wish Arthur was here today. I ask you, Your Worship, to please pass along to him my sincere thanks for that request to the three House leaders.

Again, I want to say and talk about Sir John A. and I also want to mention the city of Kingston. Visiting Sir John A. Macdonald's Kingston statue in 1941 on the 50th anniversary of Macdonald's death, former Prime Minister Arthur Meighen, another proud Ontarian, summed up why it is important to pause as we do in this chamber today to recall our shared history: “We turn aside for a mere moment,” Mr. Meighen said, “to pay tribute where tribute is due and to gain inspiration if we can, courage if we can, wisdom if we can, at the fountain of history.” I submit that Ontarians today will find all of these in the story of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Members of my party, joined by members on all sides, recall with pride Macdonald's 150th birthday celebrations in 1965. Ontario's Premier was then John Robarts. He placed his Minister of Education, a young man from Brampton named William Grenville Davis, in charge of the province's Macdonald birthday celebrations that year. A Sir John A. Macdonald book prize was awarded to the top history student in each Ontario high school in 1965. Visiting professorships from Ontario universities and Scottish universities were encouraged.

Perhaps most importantly, Premier Robarts, joined by Mr. Davis, John Diefenbaker, representatives of Mr. Pearson's government and the government of Quebec, travelled to Kingston on January 11, 1965. Premier Robarts made an important announcement in the speech that night; the deputy House leader alluded to it earlier. In doing so, Premier Robarts, my party's then leader, sought to forever place before our province a tribute to what we would consider as one of Sir John A. Macdonald's greatest accomplishments: the hand of friendship that Macdonald, the Ontarian, extended to Quebec and to all French Canadians.

Mr. Robarts announced on that day in 1965 that the major artery linking Ontario and Quebec, the 401, would be named the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, and so it was. Ontario had official highway signs made. A historic plaque that's still in existence was unveiled. But Speaker, something was missing, and it's missing today 50 years later. The omission will be of interest to members of this Legislature this morning. It's of interest to us because, as MPPs, we have the ability to correct it.

While Premier Robarts did announce that the 401 would be officially named the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway, this name change was never enshrined. Some years ago, in 2003, the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Jean-Marc Lalonde, who was MPP in 2003, placed a bill on the order paper and in this House calling that the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway would be officially designated. After first reading of that bill, Mr. Lalonde's bill died on the order paper.

Speaker, in closing, I would suggest that members of all parties during Macdonald's bicentennial year of 2015, and following Cartier's bicentennial last September, dedicate themselves to correcting this half-century-old oversight, and in this way—small but symbolic, and fitting—MPPs of all parties in our time can then pay the proper tribute to Macdonald the Ontarian, the citizen of our province who reached out with the hand of friendship to the people of French Canada, and by doing so, this proud Ontarian bequeathed us all a nation, a country we love and cherish—Canada.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's truly an honour to be able to participate in this debate today to celebrate the life and times of our first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald.

I'm not going to repeat all that has been said. One thing I would like to put on the record—one of the things that John A. Macdonald fought for—is that he united this

country by giving access to all parts of this country, access with rail. I think that's something, on this day, that we should remember: that in many parts of this country, we're losing that access and in many parts of this country, we are feeling disenchanting—and not just rail, Speaker. The things that we need now to unite this country, the things that John A. Macdonald would never have envisioned but I'm sure he would have fought for, would have been Internet access for all parts of this country. Those are the things he understood.

From what I have heard and from what I have read, and one of the reasons I'm proud that he was our Prime Minister, is that he realized that to bring people together—he did it with rail. Now we bring people together in different ways, but there are large portions of this country where that's forgotten.

While we spend a lot of time concentrating on the major cities of this province—I think that's a good thing—we always have to remember that men like John A. Macdonald united this country by looking at all of the country. We have to remember that: We have to look at all of this province, in his memory.

I'm a proud Canadian, and proud that he was our first Prime Minister.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to be in the House to speak about our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. It really is most appropriate for this assembly to be participating in and recognizing this significant and historical commemoration in January 2015, the bicentennial of Sir John's birth.

I know Kingston has taken hold of Sir John A. as their own, and rightly so. Sir John A.'s presence in Kingston and his long-time residence in and affiliation with Kingston is well known. But as the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, I do want to make mention that Sir John A. also resided and practised law and had his law office in Napanee, Ontario, just outside of Kingston. Of course, the people of Napanee are very proud, and rightly so, of the roots of Sir John A. in their community as well.

I have to say to the members in the Legislature that one of the best books that I've read is Richard Gwyn's biography of Sir John A., wonderful volumes that provide significant insight and recognition of Sir John A. the man as well as Sir John A. the politician and the father of this country.

I would certainly encourage—I'll just take a couple of the things out of—or maybe before I do that, there's also a significant reference for Sir John A. in my riding as well. Although everybody recognizes that Sir John A. was the founding father of this country, and we all know the big things that he had done, there are a lot of other little things that aren't so well known in our history of Sir John A. Macdonald.

One of the great constitutional battles that Sir John A. Macdonald was involved in happened in my riding, in the county of Lanark, and that was that significant federal-

provincial dispute between Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Oliver Mowat. Of course, Sir Oliver Mowat had been Sir John A.'s apprentice lawyer at his offices in Kingston and Napanee. He went on to become Liberal Premier of Ontario. Sir Oliver and Sir John had some legendary disputes over political jurisdictions, and one of them happened in Lanark country on the Mississippi and the Clyde Rivers. It was over property rights. It eventually got settled by the Privy Council in Westminster in 1884; it went on for about 20 years. But the outcome of that was a recognition of provincial jurisdiction on property rights, and the Rivers and Streams Act of 1884. If anybody happens to be driving up in beautiful McDonald's Corners in Lanark county, you'll see a nice historical plaque recognizing those endeavours back in 1884.

This assembly and everybody here are a legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald. His determination, perseverance and ability to bring people together have resulted in this country, this province, this assembly and all of us here. But again, reading back through those history books, I don't think Sir John A. would recognize the political parties of today and the elected representation today as compared to his times.

When he was often asked what his occupation was, he would put down "cabinet maker," which is quite a creative use. And that is what he did. He cobbled together and crafted collaboration and allegiances, and brought people together. The other thing about being a cabinet maker, one of the things that he really hated but recognized was there—I don't think "hated" is the right word. It was a bee in his bonnet, I guess. He referred to members as "loose fish" if they weren't completely aligned with Sir John's cabinet, and he was forever trying to capture those loose fish because, of course, in those days political parties were not nearly as structured or regimented, and there was far greater flexibility and more independence.

So Sir John A. certainly had outstanding qualities; clearly, outstanding perseverance and determination, but also that ability to bring people together. As a result, we have the best country in the world left in our hands to further make greater and better. It's great to see that Ontario is going to be participating in Kingston and is taking those steps to commemorate our greatest Prime Minister ever.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Seeing there is no further debate, pursuant to the order of this House passed earlier, a recorded vote on this motion will be taken at deferred votes this morning.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing that there is no further business, this House stands adjourned—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): —oh, recessed until 10:30 a.m.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I wanted to send you home early, but somebody objected.

The House recessed from 0955 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I understand there may be a list of guests to be introduced. I would remind you to try to be brief in your introductions.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a great pleasure to introduce my two constituency assistants, Yasmin Walji and Janice Findlay. They're doing great in the office, thank you. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm really honoured to welcome and introduce Rob Hyndman, who is the president of the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, and Kris Volpe, who is the secretary of the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association. I want to thank them for their service and welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a number of introductions today. On behalf of the member for Brampton West and a page captain for today, Tyler Vis, I would like to introduce his mother, Jennifer Vis; his father, Rodney Vis; his sister, Hannah Vis; his other sister, Abby Vis; his brother, Carter Vis; and his grandmother, Kathy Jakiwchuk. They will be in the members' gallery this morning.

On behalf of the member for Etobicoke Centre, who just walked in—and I apologize for taking his thunder—page captain Maja Toman's father, Tibor Toman, is here. Her brother, Dario, a former page from the spring of 2008, is here. They will be in the public gallery this morning. We always welcome the families of our pages, particularly if they're former pages; welcome back.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to introduce my constituency staff: Wendy McNaughton, Adam Feldman, Connor Percy and Adrian Zita-Bennett, who are here—and, as was just mentioned, Dr. Tibor Toman, one of the best veterinarians in the city.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Today I would like to introduce to the House Sue VanderBent, who is the CEO of Home Care Ontario; and Scott McNabb from Home-watch Caregivers. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the public gallery is the father of page Nicholas Zalewski: Jack Zalewski. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I have guests all over the place today. From my constituency office in Guelph: Clodagh Manning and Frank Tersigni. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Up in the public gallery are a whole lot of people from the early years division at the Ministry of Education. I think they've come to hear what we have to say about them. Welcome to question period.

And watching on TV is my director of communications, Mike Semansky, who is actually having his last

question period ever. Unfortunately, he's leaving us, so a shout-out to Mike.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: This morning I would like to introduce to the Legislature Mr. Marek Goldyn, known to many members here as "Mr. Europe." He is the CEO of the European Club of Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I have a few guests to introduce today. First of all, for the last four years, I've had the privilege of teaching at the Schulich School of Business at York University. One of my best students is here today: Omar Saadat.

I would also like to welcome Tibor Toman, who is the father of Maja Toman, one of our pages, and Dario Toman, who is a former page and also the brother of Maja, who is a wonderful young lady.

I would also like to welcome Marek Goldyn—whom we all know—one of the leaders of the Polish community. Thank you all for coming.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I would like to introduce, in the members' gallery today, my partner, Chris Van der Vyver—he's come all the way from Kingston—and Arthur Milnes, whose wonderful idea it was today to have the Sir John A. Macdonald tribute. Thank you and welcome.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to introduce Ian Mc-Millan, who is the executive director at Tourism Sault Ste. Marie. He is here in the members' gallery with us today.

Hon. Michael Coteau: There are board members and volunteers for the Ontario Trillium Foundation who are joining here today, and I would like to welcome them all. Thank you very much.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Ottawa–Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am deeply offended by the member from Timmins–James Bay's comments in the House last night, who is quoted in Hansard as saying that government backbenchers don't understand what's going on around this place because we are new—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. That's not a point of order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs would do himself a favour by not interjecting.

We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery a delegation from the board of deputy affairs of the National Assembly of Vietnam. We welcome our guests. Thank you for joining us.

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Point of order.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I filed a number of order paper questions, some of which have been marked as tabled on December 8 and one on December 9, but I have not yet actually received a response from the ministries. I would ask you to look into it to see how they could be tabled but have not been given yet to the questioner.

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

I have been advised that it has been tabled. They have been delivered. We don't know why it's not in your office. So we'll take the attempt to look into it to ensure that what we're saying is factual. Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General confirmed what the PC caucus has been saying all along: that this government has made a mess of the energy file. The global adjustment tax is yet another grab at Ontarians' wallets, cooked up by this government to cover the outrageous costs and losses of the failed Green Energy Act. Ontarians have been duped out of \$50 billion—that's five times the current provincial deficit—and hydro bills are at record highs.

Premier, the Auditor General has said the global adjustment tax has been a bad deal for Ontarians. Do you believe the auditor is wrong about this one, too?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment on the specifics, but let me just talk about what we have been doing in the energy system for the last few years, because when with we came into office, the energy system in Ontario was in a serious state of disarray.

What we have been doing is, we have been modernizing the electricity system across the province. We've invested \$11 billion since 2003 in systems across the province, Mr. Speaker. We've upgraded over 10,000 kilometres of power lines that had been neglected—work that had not been done, infrastructure that had not been upgraded. We've taken that on. We've rebuilt 10,000 megawatts of new, cleaner power for Ontario. The green energy strategy has created \$24 billion in private sector investment.

So, in fact, people in Ontario have the power that they need. It's predictable, and, at the same time, we have made it reliable across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, the Auditor General found that the global adjustment tax on electricity bills has increased by 1,200% since it was first introduced by your government. The Auditor General confirmed that nearly 60% of this \$30 billion goes towards paying for wind

turbines and solar panels in your outrageous subsidies to that industry. It's a double slap in the face to rural communities, like the ones many of us represent. Residents are stuck footing the bill for wind turbines they never wanted in the first place while their hydro bills skyrocket.

The Auditor General's report is further proof that the Green Energy Act has been a complete failure. Your global adjustment tax is the only thing that has kept the Green Energy Act on life support.

Premier, will you admit that the Green Energy Act is failure and pull the plug on your failed energy policies?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

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Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The global adjustments are calculations that are made as part of the pricing policy that exists in jurisdictions across North America and the world. What it is is the real price of energy. By that, I mean that there are certain things that are not included in the market price that's out there day after day. For example, the costs of the Independent Electricity System Operator: They don't actually engage in the creation of generation but they manage and operate the system, and their costs go into the global adjustment as part of the cost of the energy system. As well, many of the costs of conservation are not relevant to the market price of electricity. The Ontario Energy Board approves those costs: the costs of the IESO and the other costs that relate to—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Premier: Since you brought the global adjustment tax—which is a tax that didn't exist when we were in office; you brought it in in 2006—Ontarians, according to the Auditor General, will have paid \$10,000 by this time next year. That's \$1,000 a year extra on a new tax that you brought in. And the minister says that it's to pay for the OPA—the Ontario Power Authority—or the IESO, or new transmission.

Those things were paid for in the cost of electricity when we were in power. We didn't have an extra tax. The reason you brought in the extra \$50-billion tax is that you needed a way to sneakily hide the subsidy to your green energy policy.

When all of those things that the minister is talking about were once paid for at the regular rate of electricity, you needed, the auditor says, another \$30 billion to subsidize Mr. McGuinty's, and now Ms. Wynne's—the Premier's—plan. Will you get rid of the darn thing and stop the Green Energy Act—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Renewable energy represents about 8% of the bill—

Interjection.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It is a smaller portion of the bill—

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: There have been significant investments made in the energy sector because we had a deficit of electricity—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Shifts are being cancelled.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —and we had dirty coal burning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Huron-Bruce, come to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: In order to rebuild the system, to make it clean and reliable, we invested in hydroelectric. We invested in the tunnel in Niagara. We invested, in the Lower Mattagami River, \$2.6 billion.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's why you should burn that policy.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: That put pressure on prices, and we have put in mitigation measures to deal with those.

The steps that we had to take to invest \$31 billion are the \$31 billion in transmission and generation that the previous government refused to invest. That created a deficit and a very dirty system.

Mr. Speaker, the prices come from their negligence in the past, and we're resolving it.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again for the Premier: Following the release of the Auditor General's report, your Energy Minister tried to deflect responsibility by discrediting the work undertaken by an independent officer of this Legislature. His actions were unprecedented.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, come to order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: They were also very unacceptable. On your minister's watch, Ontarians are paying billions of dollars extra for electricity, thanks to a flawed smart meter program and above-market rates that the province pays most power generators. And most of those power generators are under your Green Energy Act.

Premier, you remain committed to the global adjustment tax; you refuse to tear up the Green Energy Act: Will you at least make one smart energy decision and fire your energy minister?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said a number of times yesterday, the decisions that we have made around the energy system, including smart meters, have modernized and upgraded the energy system. We made investments in transmission lines, we've produced and invested in more clean power, and smart meters have allowed us to have data that we would not have otherwise.

I know that the leader of the third party knows that people who work in the system, and people who are experts in the system, believe that the smart meters have

given us data that's important and have allowed conservation to take place across the province.

The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, another officer of the Legislature, said about smart meters, "They are necessary—absolutely necessary for the proper functioning and future functioning of the distribution system for electricity," and he goes on to talk about smart grid technology. We've made very good decisions on—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: The Auditor General's report is tough medicine for the government. Sometimes you need to admit your mistakes, swallow the medicine and spend time in the penalty box.

During my time as a senior cabinet minister, I had to make tough decisions, and I stepped aside when it was appropriate, and I did so voluntarily. The auditor's report on Liberal government programs is loaded with examples of gross incompetence, waste and mismanagement, costing Ontarians billions and billions of dollars. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Ministry of Energy.

Premier, are you willing to take the tough medicine and demand that your energy minister resign?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment in the final supplementary, but as I said yesterday, on the vast majority of the recommendations and concerns that the Auditor General raised, we are in full agreement. We are working with the Auditor General, or we have already begun to work on the concerns that she identifies.

As the Minister of Energy said yesterday, there was a professional disagreement on some very narrow aspects of the concerns that the Auditor General raised. Those have been expressed. The conversations between the Minister of Energy and the Auditor General have been just that: They've been professional. It is not the first time in the history of this Legislature that there has been a disagreement between a government and an officer of the Legislature, so I think that the Leader of the Opposition needs to look back in history and needs to understand that that kind of healthy professional dialogue actually is in the best interests of the people of the province.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: The take-away from the Auditor General's line-by-line investigations is that Ontario can't afford to go on like this. From patients to pensioners, from families with children to our most vulnerable residents in need, hard-working taxpayers are not getting value for the essential public services they rely on.

Spending continues to skyrocket on your government's watch, while accountability and service delivery continue to plummet. The Auditor General now joins the Conference Board of Canada, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the PC caucus, who have all raised serious red flags about your government's out-of-control spending. Following the release of the AG's report, no one believes you will balance the budget by 2017-18.

Premier, if you aren't willing to fire your energy minister over the Auditor General's findings, would you give Ontarians a Christmas present and tell us who the heck is going to take responsibility for the mess you've made in this province?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address the Auditor General's report. There are some significant professional disagreements with respect to the report. One of the areas of disagreement is the position in the report that most of the anticipated benefits of smart meters have not been achieved. Where the professional disagreement starts is with the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who says smart meters are "a shrewd investment that will benefit both individual consumers of power and society as a whole."

If you want to go to Anthony Haines, president and CEO of Toronto Hydro: "That smart meter program is the best thing we've done in the decade." And, "I'm telling you, [the smart meter program] was a deal changer. That was the entry into intelligent use of energy." He also confirmed at the press conference the other day that there is a 3% reduction in use in the city of Toronto, which is a very, very significant savings.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Ontario's energy system is in a hot mess. Hydro bills are going up, the Auditor General says we're not reducing energy consumption, and it turns out the \$1-billion smart meter plan was actually the Liberals' \$2-billion not-so-smart meter plan.

If a regular person went \$1 billion over budget on a project, that person would be fired. Why is this Liberal minister getting away with this and able to keep his job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I challenge the premise of the question. The fact is that the changes we have made in the energy system mean it has been modernized, that infrastructure that had been neglected has been upgraded, that we have a cleaner, more renewable energy system in the province—it's more reliable—and people across the province have access to the power that they need.

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In terms of the smart meters, the decision to have smart meters across the province has meant that there is data available to the system that was not available before and that people are able to conserve in ways they were not able to conserve before. A 3% shift of power off peak time in the city of Toronto alone: That's the equivalent of the power needed for 97 condominium buildings. That's a significant reduction in the use of power, and we're able to do that because of the introduction of smart meters.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the fact is, the Liberals promised that smart meters would help people

reduce their bills. Instead, even people who are doing the right thing, or trying to do the right thing, by doing their laundry at midnight are paying 114% more.

This is incompetence, Speaker. There is no other way to describe it. People are paying the price for this incompetence. My question to this Premier is: Why is her minister not paying the price for his incompetence?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I will once again just read into the record some of the comments that were made about the introduction of smart meters by people who actually know what's going on and are actually seeing.

There's no doubt that there have been increases in the cost of electricity, as there have been in jurisdictions all over North America and the world, but the fact is that we are taking steps to mitigate those increases. We have renegotiated contracts. We have made changes, including putting smart meters in place so that people can conserve.

Anthony Haines, who is the president and CEO of Toronto Hydro, says, "We've seen about a 3% shift off the peak here in the city of Toronto; 3% is 97 condominium buildings—97 condominium buildings that came on the grid over the same period of time. We didn't have to make any additional capital investment because that shift of that 3% provided that capacity within our grid."

That's a cost saving. That's power that didn't have to be built.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, bring it down.

Please continue. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Under the Liberals' watch, the electricity system in this province has become a colossal mess. The global adjustment charge has increased by 1,200% in 10 years. Ontarians are paying three times the market price for electricity. The Liberals are not reducing electricity consumption in this province. Hydro One customers have received astronomical bills for electricity they didn't even use. The list, unfortunately, sadly, goes on and on and on.

In the real world, people get fired for this kind of laundry list of failure. Will the Premier finally do the right thing on the last day of this session and tell her minister it's time to go and ask him for his resignation?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party obviously knows more than Anthony Haines, who is the CEO of the second-largest distribution company in the province, who came before the press conference two days ago and outlined that in the city of Toronto, there has been a 3% reduction in consumption as a result of smart meters, allowing a lot more money to be invested in the system.

As well, the Ontario Energy Board had the Navigant study, which showed that the costs per customer are esti-

mated to be approximately \$12 per year lower because of load shifting and conservation driven by smart-meter-enabled time-of-use pricing. Over three years, that represents approximately \$150 million in savings which have not been accounted for by the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, we are saving dollars.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. This session began with an unprecedented display of arrogance and ended with an even greater display of arrogance by this government. It began with the Liberals using time allocation to shut down debate and to shut Ontarians out of committee hearings. It ended with the Liberals' condescending and sexist attack on the Auditor General. I—

Interjections.

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

Thank you. Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have to ask this Premier: Is that what we can continue to expect from her Liberal government in the weeks and years to come?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me address the first part of the question first and then I'll speak to the second part.

To the first part of the question: When we came back into the Legislature after the election, we made it clear that legislation that had been on the order paper, that we had been working to get through, that had had hours and hours of discussion, we were going to work now in this Parliament to move through more quickly, because there was a backlog. There was work that really needed to be done, like the modernization of the child care system, which resulted out of a concern to keep kids safer in the system.

So we have worked, and I will not apologize for working very hard, to move legislation through. We have provided—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay and the member from Leeds–Grenville will come to order, and if you do that again, I'll jump right to a warning.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have worked very hard—it's true—to get legislation moved through this Legislature. I'm very proud of the amount of legislation that we've been able to move through the process.

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you. I'll address the second part in the supplementary.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Throughout this session, Liberals have been trying to whitewash the gas plant scandal. But the OPP is still investigating the deletion of gas plant emails. In fact, the OPP detectives yet again raided

government offices just a few weeks ago, in November. But Laura Miller and Peter Faist, two Liberal insiders who were, frankly, at the centre of this scandal, are still being protected.

As this session closes, I have to wonder, is this the Liberal brand of transparency and accountability that we're going to continue to see from this Liberal Premier and her government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, the questions are all over the map. But let me just pick up on the transparency and accountability, because this is a member, the leader of the third party, who has been calling for increased accountability. Apparently, that is what she wants to believe is her brand. But her party sat in their place and did not support Bill 8, which is the accountability act, which actually expands the scope of the Ombudsman, sets up a system within the health care system—

Mr. Paul Miller: Another Liberal half-bill—less than half a bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The President of the Treasury Board will come to order.

Now, let me be clear, in case it wasn't heard: The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That accountability act will put in place a patient ombudsman and would put caps in place on executive salaries. They voted against that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I guess that was a yes, Speaker.

While the Premier continues to protect Liberal insiders and Liberal cabinet ministers—she continues to support them and protect them too—she is actually hurting Ontarians. She is slashing 6% out of nearly every ministry. She is cutting schools—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: She is cutting schools; she is cutting health care; she is cutting child care. Families are paying higher hydro and gas prices while the CEOs in this province get new HST loopholes to take to the bank. People on OW and ODSP are worried that the problems that the Premier has created are still not fixed.

The Premier continues with the gas plant cover-up, Speaker. When will this Premier start actually standing up—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I would ask you to withdraw.

Interjection: “Cover-up.”

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Oh, okay. I withdraw.

The Premier continues to not be forthcoming on what the Liberal involvement was with the gas plant scandal.

My question is: When will the Premier actually start standing up for the people of Ontario instead of the Liberal Party of Ontario?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Standing up for the people of Ontario, building Ontario up, working to get legislation passed that is going to improve business and people's lives in this province—legislation like reduction of red tape, legislation like modernization of child care, legislation like the accountability act that will put more accountability into the system, legislation like indexing the minimum wage so that the minimum wage will go up as the cost of living goes up; health care protections like pharmacy safety, blood donation safety; and legislation that will remove costs from the auto insurance system so that auto insurance rates will continue to go down. That's the work that we're doing on this side of the House.

It seems to me that that legislation, all of that, is legislation that the leader of the third party should have supported. We will continue to work to make sure that that kind of improvement—

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

Interjections.

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

Applause.

Interjection: That's for you.

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

New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday we saw in this House a doubling down of your abysmal administration of the energy system and your unprecedented attack on the Auditor General. Today, the only thing piling up faster than the snow outside is your excuses for your failed energy policies.

On Tuesday, we got confirmation from the AG that your smart meter fiasco will cost energy consumers double what you claim. Smart meters haven't cut consumption at peak times, and often they don't even relay the information back to the central data centre.

Minister, this is your chance to admit the errors of your government's policies and take responsibility for this smart meter scandal, which has piled up on top of scandal after scandal after scandal for your government. Will you take responsibility?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I do want to address some of the challenge in the electricity system. As I said, we have made major investments. Smart meters are one of them, and we've provided all of those quotes.

But where were the seeds of this challenge that we have in the energy sector? Hansard, December 1, 2003—Frank Klees, former member from Aurora: “Well, there's one reason that we accumulated that debt in this province under the hydro ledger, and that is that people in this province for years have not been paying the true cost of hydro. It was in fact being subsidized, and a pox on all of the previous governments that had allowed that to happen.” That includes Conservative governments.

A quote from MPP and former energy minister Jim Wilson: “This summer when we didn’t have enough electricity in this province because we hit peak high temperatures and all the air conditioners were running, we had to buy power.... I had to pay \$7 million one day”—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: As I said, more excuses; no answers. Minister, your failure to accept responsibility for yet—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Both sides, bring it down.

Please finish.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Minister, your failure to accept responsibility for yet another energy scandal leads me to believe that you’re the one going to be receiving a lump of coal in your stocking this Christmas.

In another one of your boondoggles, the Auditor General found that from 2006 to 2013, the global adjustment—that is the difference between the price of energy and the cost of the energy contracts you have signed for expensive, unreliable power—increased by 1,200% while the average market price for energy decreased by 46%. That amounts to a staggering \$50-billion charge on the backs of energy consumers in the province of Ontario.

Minister, since you won’t accept responsibility for this scandal and all of the other scandalous policies of your government, will you finally do the right thing and resign?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, before the global adjustment, wholesale market prices were insufficient to cover the cost of contract payments to certain electricity generators, leading the government to accumulate billions of dollars in debt, part of the debt I referred to earlier that had been accumulated by the previous government. This contributed to the stranded debt that Ontario consumers continue to pay off through the debt retirement charge. The global adjustment is allowing the costs of the system to be recovered. Previously, they were accumulating debt, and it’s the stranded debt that is on our hydro bills today, which we are going to remove two years earlier—which that party voted against.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Thanks to the Auditor General, we now know that 74 infrastructure projects in Ontario could have been built for \$28 billion rather than the \$36 billion that this Liberal government spent using the P3 model. I want to quote the very competent and qualified Auditor General: Costs “were estimated to be nearly \$8 billion higher under the alternative financing and procurement (AFP) approach than they were estimated to have been if the projects had

been delivered by the public sector.” About \$6.5 billion of this overpayment is a direct result of paying excessive interest rates on money borrowed from the highly profitable Canadian and international banks.

Yesterday, the Premier continued to defend this \$8-billion boondoggle, despite overwhelming evidence that these projects should be built and financed through the public sector. When will the Premier admit that her P3 program is nothing more than a massive gift to some of the world’s largest banks, paid for by the hard-working people of this province?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that the member opposite was listening yesterday when I referred her leader to the heart of the auditor’s report, where there’s a graph that completely explains that you can’t just talk about a cost; you have to talk about a benefit. When you talk about a cost of transferring risk of \$8 billion, you’ve got to talk about the benefit to the taxpayer of a \$14-billion transfer of risk. This means, in the Auditor General’s report, a \$6.6-billion savings to the taxpayer.

It’s not that complicated, Mr. Speaker. It’s right in the Auditor General’s report. I’m going to ask a page, if I can, to bring it over to the member opposite. I’d be happy to have my officials brief her to make sure that they understand that when they talk about a cost—

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s interesting: The minister’s right, and it isn’t that complicated. There is no factual basis, no empirical evidence for that number that’s attached to the retained risks. I have that document. The auditor wrote it, and she was right.

Speaker, the minister or the Premier can use any number that they want to defend their P3 giveaways, because we know that they’re all fiction anyway. I just want to return to the numbers, because the numbers don’t lie. From my initial question: 74 infrastructure projects cost \$36 billion instead of \$28 billion. That’s a 20% premium. We cannot afford that.

The fact is that the numbers being spun by the Premier and the minister are every bit as made up as the so-called value-for-money audits that the auditor said there was no evidence for. We believe the auditor. This is another example of this Liberal government’s habit of desperate and unconvincing attempts to spin the numbers. When will this government admit that its P3 program is a colossal failure and end this massive drain on the public treasury?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, under the AFP program to date, 37 projects are near completion or at completion, 97% of those projects on budget—97%. That is an unprecedented record, not only for Ontario but anywhere in the industrialized world. So for her to suggest that Infrastructure Ontario is failing the people of this province is blatantly incorrect.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo will come to order.

Please finish.

1110

Hon. Brad Duguid: In terms of the value-for-money system of analyzing risk, 19 of 20 OECD countries use that very same methodology. Forty countries—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Brad Duguid: —have come here to learn from us. We're the best in the world, but we're going to get even better at doing this. That's why we do accept the—

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

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Transit is incredibly important for those living in my community in Davenport. Those living in Davenport want to know that they have access to reliable and affordable travel options, whether they are travelling to school—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: Withdraw what?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: I don't know what you're talking about, but I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will simply withdraw.

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, those living in Davenport want to know that they have access to reliable and affordable travel options, whether they are travelling to school, to work or even to the airport.

I know that yesterday the minister, along with the Premier, joined Metrolinx CEO Bruce McCuaig in announcing the fares for the Union Pearson Express.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I understand that there has been a lot of discussion in regard to the UP Express fares lately, and I know that those living in my community are interested in learning more on this topic.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide members of this House with details on yesterday's—

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member from Davenport for this question and for all of her hard work. I also want to say, unlike perhaps the member from Timmins–James Bay, that those of us on this side of the House value every single member who represents a community.

That member is quite correct: There has been a lot of discussion regarding fares for the UP Express, as we call

it, and that's why I was very happy to stand alongside the Premier along with representatives from Metrolinx and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority yesterday to announce the fares.

As people might know, Metrolinx has proposed an adult fare of \$19 for Presto card users. There are also a number of other variable pricing options that have been proposed, including a \$10 fare for airport workers, a discounted fare for students and seniors, variable fares for those getting on or off at different stations, and free access to the UP Express—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —for children under the age of six. This fare structure will allow us to balance revenue and capacity, ensuring enough ridership to allow UP Express to become self-financing within three to five years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for his response. I know that my constituents in Davenport have been very interested in learning more about the Union Pearson Express fare structure.

You mentioned that it is important that the UP Express be self-financing, something which will ensure the financial viability of the service for many years to come. But those living in Davenport will want to know how the UP Express will be different than other options currently available, like the TTC and taxis.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide members of this House with more specifics on how the UP Express will help travellers in my community?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Once again, I thank the member from Davenport for her thoughtful question.

The UP Express was designed as a dedicated express link for air travellers, offering fast and predictable service. This means a guaranteed travel time of 25 minutes for riders as well as trains arriving every 15 minutes, 19½ hours per day. The service will also provide travellers with amenities that make their journey easier, such as airline check-in kiosks, luggage racks and up-to-the-minute flight information.

Travellers will choose the UP Express because it's faster, more reliable and less expensive than any other direct airport-to-downtown modes of transportation they may be using. TTC, GO Transit, personal vehicles, taxis and limousines will all continue to provide a wide range of alternatives for travellers and those working at or near the airport.

Once again, we are very excited about this service that's being delivered on time and on budget. We know that in the spring, when it's operating, the people of this region will be excited as well.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Minister, yesterday I attended both the technical briefing provided by your ministry as well as your announcement regarding the future of MaRS phase

2. I was astonished that you accepted the expert panel's recommendation to sink an additional \$86 million into the project. What concerns me most about the mess you've made is the risk that you've put taxpayers at by spending an additional one third of the building's value. Your goal to have MaRS replace your loan with a commercial loan is more wishful than realistic.

Minister, will you confirm to this House that even if leased up, the government will only receive repayment on the loan and not the \$65-million bailout to ARE or the extra \$86 million you blew yesterday?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to begin by thanking Michael Nobrega and Carol Stephenson for the great work that they've done on behalf of Ontario taxpayers and on behalf of those of us in this Legislature who want to continue to grow a strong economy, who want to continue to invest in our bioscience cluster and want to continue to ensure that Ontario remains a global centre for innovation and growth.

Their advice, which comes from many, many decades of experience, is advice that provides us with a very solid business plan to ensure that the investments we've made in MaRS are fully secured, fully protected, to ensure that the loan that we have made will be paid back in full with interest and to ensure that this project will now be finished, that jobs will be created and this will continue to be an Ontario success story.

I'm glad for that advice and I'm glad the government has decided—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Minister, you can spout all you want about your positive vision for a building, but at the end of the day, it's our party over here that's the only one that cares about the taxpayer. Your government has blown \$400 million to build a building we never needed, only to fill it with even more government-funded institutions.

Your announcement yesterday confirmed what we've been saying all along. The only way you would fill this building is by leasing it to government-funded tenants. At the end of the day, we are just funding them to pay you. That's not a good business model, but we already knew there never was a business case for MaRS.

Minister, will you tell this House today what percentage of tenants or those who have signed letters of intent are private companies that receive no government funding?

Hon. Brad Duguid: On one hand we have the advice of two of the most esteemed people in our business community who have decades of experience in these kinds of transactions; on the other hand we have the advice of the member opposite. Call me crazy, but I'm taking the advice of the expert panel—

Interjections: Crazy. You're crazy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: And the opposition will be happy to do that. The opposition will be very happy to do that.

But I and this government are taking the advice of the expert panel because it's a good business plan. It's good business advice.

The party opposite, when this project was having challenges, wanted to let a building at College and University rot in the ground. They wanted to let this potential building, that's going to generate jobs and economic development, go to absolute waste. That would have been the wrong thing to do then; it would be the wrong thing to do now. We're taking the advice of the expert panel and we're moving forward.

CORONER'S INQUEST

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. A tragic boating accident in the Sudbury area caused the deaths of three people last year. The only survivor was Rob Dorzek, who lost his spouse and two of his close friends. The president of the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association has said there were "major deficiencies" in the emergency response system that evening. Mr. Dorzek, the people of Sudbury and the professional firefighters have all asked for an inquest into this tragedy.

Will the Premier do the right thing and support the people of Sudbury by demanding an inquest into this tragedy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services will want to comment on the supplementary.

I want to assure everyone here today that this is an issue that we take very, very seriously. I understand that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services met with the Sudbury firefighters' association this morning, and I had an opportunity to speak to two of the members there. I would like to thank the first responders for the hard work they do all over the province, including in Sudbury, to keep communities safe.

My deepest condolences go to the family and friends of the victims of this tragic incident. Obviously, it is a tragedy. While the regional supervising coroner decided not to call an inquest into the matter, it's important to note that the family of the deceased may appeal this decision to the office of the Chief Coroner of Ontario, and so we will let that process unfold.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: After meeting with your ministry representatives or with the government's ministry representatives, Mr. Dorzek and the families involved still feel that they have been receiving conflicting stories on this matter. These families, and the people of Sudbury, need assurances that they can actually trust their emergency response systems. An internal report by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care outlined an emergency response system that is rife with miscommunication and with confusion. The people in the Sudbury area need to know that when they dial 911, they are going to receive the help that they need.

The chief coroner's office is under the purview of this Liberal government. Instead of asking these families to go through more paperwork, why will this Premier not do the right thing and just call for the inquest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member opposite for the question. Let me first and foremost share all our condolences in this House for the tragic accident that took place in Sudbury and those who lost their lives. Obviously our thoughts go to the families.

I think the member opposite knows very well that I, as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, or the government do not have the power or the capacity to ask the coroner to conduct an inquest. It's an independent, arm's-length decision-making process, and it's totally up to the coroner to make that determination.

As the Premier mentioned, it is up to the families to avail the appeal process. My understanding is that the families may be doing this.

But, Speaker, this is a very serious issue. We take it very seriously. I had a great opportunity to meet with Sudbury firefighters, and I look forward to continuing to work with them to ensure that we restore the faith and confidence in emergency management in Sudbury.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, it's fundamentally important that our government protect the voluntary blood donation system. Every year, thousands of Ontarians voluntarily give blood and plasma to help others survive accidents, surgery and life-threatening conditions.

Voluntary donation is an important pillar of our nation's public blood system. In fact, I know many of my constituents in Newmarket–Aurora are regular blood donors and have been asking about this new legislation passed yesterday.

I'm very proud of our voluntary life-saving blood donation system, and I'm also proud of the care that health care professionals in Ontario provide patients every day. I encourage all Ontarians to donate blood if they are able to do so.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to tell us about the importance of protecting the integrity of our voluntary blood donation system and why this bill was so important to pass.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's true: Yesterday, our government passed Bill 21, Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014. This bill combines our government's actions to safeguard our voluntary blood and plasma donation system in the province, as well as the regulation of hospital pharmacies to strengthen oversight and improve patient safety.

Health Canada had received licence applications from at least one private for-profit company seeking to open plasma collection sites in Ontario that would pay people

for their plasma, a component of blood. However, Health Canada has left the decision to permit or prohibit payment for blood or plasma donations to the individual provinces and territories.

Our government took action. We heard from many health care organizations, advocacy groups and individual Ontarians who were opposed to private for-profit plasma collection. As a government, we agree. We stand firmly against payment for blood or plasma donations in Ontario, and that's reflected in the legislation that passed yesterday with unanimous support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Chris Ballard: Yes, it certainly did pass with unanimous consent. Congratulations.

I heard the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care reference the second part of the bill that I've not yet had the opportunity to ask about. My constituents in Newmarket–Aurora were shocked by the news last year that over 1,000 patients in Ontario received weaker doses of chemotherapy drugs than had been prescribed by their oncologists. That was a very serious incident. No one should ever have to go through what those cancer patients and their families went through.

I know that Dr. Jake Thiessen was appointed to review the incident and to lead a third-party review of the cancer drug system. Dr. Thiessen brought forward a report and recommendations. My constituents in Newmarket–Aurora want to know how these recommendations are captured in Bill 21.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, how is the government addressing Dr. Thiessen's recommendations to prevent a tragedy like this from happening again?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for this very important supplementary question. The member is correct when stating that no one should ever have to go through what the affected cancer patients and their families went through in this tragedy.

Following Dr. Jake Thiessen's report, our government accepted and endorsed all of his recommendations, and our legislation, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, now enables our health regulatory colleges to share more information with hospitals and public health authorities so that we can prevent future incidents from affecting patient care.

Our legislation also reflects Dr. Thiessen's recommendation to authorize the College of Pharmacists to inspect and license all our hospital pharmacies operating in Ontario as a means to ensure that medication management and processing systems in hospital pharmacies are standardized.

I'd like to thank every member in the House for supporting this very—

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

New question.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Speaker, the previous minister was so

concerned last May about being unable to produce his high-speed rail prefeasibility study, he pledged: “One of the first things we want to do if we’re re-elected is get those studies out there.”

It may be one of the first things he wanted to do, but apparently the current minister didn’t get that message. I had to wait two months after asking this House for the study to be produced before making an FOI request. I’m happy to report that we now have the study, through FOI, but we found about 20% of it has been redacted.

In the spirit of openness and transparency, will the minister provide the missing information from page 48 under the heading “Could There Be an Integrated Solution”—in the spirit of openness and transparency?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I always begin by saying, I want to thank the member from Kitchener for his question. I was really thrilled to have the opportunity, just a number of days ago—late last week—to be in London, Ontario, a wonderful community that is very lucky to be represented by the Deputy Premier and President of Treasury Board. At that particular event, we were jointly with the mayor of London, Mayor Brown, announcing the launch of the environmental assessment process for the high-speed rail project, which is very exciting news for London, for Kitchener–Waterloo, of course, for Windsor—in fact, great news for all of southwestern Ontario.

As I said that day at the announcement, this is an environmental assessment that will take place over the next four to six years. It will help build on the work done in the prefeasibility report that the member opposite is referencing. It will discuss items around technical requirements, technical options, the routing, the number of stations. But the bottom line is that the people of London, the people of Kitchener, the people of Windsor, the people right across southwestern Ontario are very happy—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: You must need a special pair of glasses to see what is written in here.

Anyway, I know he wants to talk about the EA for 2015, the same EA the Premier announced was already under way a few months ago. The fact is, the Wynne Liberals were so eager to label themselves as bullet train champions before the election, they got a London, England, firm, First Class Partnerships, to do a rush job to provide them high-speed rail credibility.

In fact, FCP’s Michael Schabas told CBC, “We did in two weeks what normally would take three to four months.” They didn’t even have time to examine the railroad in person, so FCP relied on Google Earth. This was nothing more than a pre-election bid to get votes with \$115,000 of taxpayers’ money.

Will the minister tell us why we should take direction for a multi-billion-dollar high-speed, high-risk transit project from a rush-job study?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thought I heard that member at the beginning of his question suggest that somehow the EA was announced previously. In fact, it wasn’t; we launched it last Friday.

It’s understandable from my perspective that that member would be confused about all of the good news coming from this government, particularly for Kitchener–Waterloo, for London, for Windsor and for all of Ontario, because of the very ambitious, robust transportation and transit infrastructure plan that we have.

But don’t just take my word for it. Let’s actually look to see what the new mayor of London, Matt Brown, said about the launch of the EA just last week. I want to quote the mayor of London, Matt Brown. He said, “This is fantastic news for London. High-speed rail will benefit many vital economic sectors in London. We look forward to working with the province on this initiative.”

I would have thought that that member would want to work with us to deliver positive results for Kitchener, because that is the work that we are doing.

1130

WATER QUALITY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Seven months ago, the Premier went to Walkerton, where seven people died 14 years ago due to drinking water contamination. She said, “There was a failure of oversight, a failure of enforcement. Cuts have consequences.”

In 2006, the government promised to protect our drinking water from contamination at the source. This was a key recommendation of the Walkerton commission, and yet, when the Auditor General checked in eight years later, the government had approved plans to protect the drinking water of only 5% of Ontarians.

How hypocritical is it for the Premier to stand in Walkerton and say—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I’ll withdraw.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: How shameful is it for the Premier to stand in Walkerton and say that cuts and poor oversight caused this tragedy when her own government is planning deep spending cuts and has still not implemented key recommendations from the Walkerton commission?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. Ontario is one of the only jurisdictions in North America with source water protection plans, and these plans are one element—they’re just one element—in a robust water protection system that was put in place to ensure that Ontario’s drinking water is among the best protected in North America.

Let me be clear: Despite what the Auditor General alludes to in her report, another Walkerton will not happen in Ontario. Following the Walkerton inquiry, Justice O’Connor made 121 recommendations on areas related to protected drinking water. Ontario is acting on all 121 recommendations, every single one of them, including the source water protection plans. By the end of this year, half of the water protection plans will be implemented,

and by the end of next year, all 22 plans will be implemented.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Speaker, the government has still not approved the plan to protect the drinking water of the Credit Valley, Toronto region and central Lake Ontario area, representing more than half of the people in Ontario. This plan includes provisions to protect against pipeline spills.

Because the government refuses to approve it, Enbridge has refused to follow the planned safety rules for its Line 9 pipeline. The Auditor General wondered why this government's water safety plans did not protect against industrial spills. Perhaps it's for the same reason the government refuses to approve a water safety plan that would regulate pipelines.

Why won't the government put public safety ahead of private interests and approve this plan to protect the drinking water of more than half of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The plans are in the process. As I said, by the end of the year, half of the water protection plans will be implemented. At the end of next year, all 22 of the plans will be implemented, so they are in process. That work is under way. They have to be finalized in order for them to be approved.

It's measures like these that are making us a leader in source water protection. Quite frankly, all over the world there are jurisdictions that are looking to us for our clean water technology. When I travelled to China, there were businesses that were coming with us who have developed clean water technology because of the regulation, because of the system that we've put in place in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we are leading the pack on this. Not all the plans are approved yet; that is absolutely true. In terms of the pipeline, the member opposite will know that just a couple of weeks ago, we signed an agreement with Quebec that we are putting some principles in place to make sure that environmental protections are put in place around the pipeline.

ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Scarborough.

Mr. Mike Colle: Southwest. You forgot about southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Southwest. Scarborough is big. Southwest.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It is a nice place to go.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. According to the 2011 census, almost a quarter of First Nations people in Canada live in Ontario—more than any other province. Some 80% of the aboriginal population of Ontario lives off-reserve, with 62% residing in urban centres.

Aboriginal people living in urban centres experience lower socio-economic status and poorer quality of life

than the non-aboriginal population in Ontario. Approximately 37,000 aboriginal people are living in Toronto alone, including Scarborough Southwest, with large populations in Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and throughout Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, through to the minister, what is our government doing to support urban aboriginal communities across the province?

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for the question. Aboriginal people living in urban areas face unique challenges like higher unemployment rates, lower health status and a lower rate of high school education compared to non-aboriginal peoples.

Over the past two years, the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs has undertaken a variety of initiatives to understand and alleviate some of these challenges. We have established the off-reserve aboriginal policy engagement table with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Métis Nation of Ontario, all this with a view to support policy development aimed at fostering sustainable, healthy and resilient urban aboriginal communities.

We will work with partners to closely develop and identify the work going forward. For 2014-15, the table's priority will focus on exploring policy opportunities related to literacy supports to urban and off-reserve aboriginal peoples.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary. I apologize to the member from Scarborough Southwest; I should have said those last two pieces.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it very much. Scarborough Southwest rarely gets mentioned in this House, but it's nice to hear you say it today.

Thank you, Minister. It's great to hear such good news. This really points out that the whole government approach that Ontario is taking to support the aboriginal community is being done properly. We know that a constructive, co-operative relationship with aboriginal people in Ontario leads to improved opportunities and a better future—not only for aboriginal people, but for all people living in Ontario, including Scarborough Southwest.

I am aware that this year we launched the Urban Aboriginal Action Plan. I just want to ask the minister: Could you please inform the House how the action plan will continue to support urban aboriginal people in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: I want to thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for that follow-up question.

Look, the Urban Aboriginal Action Plan will support urban aboriginal communities by providing \$2.5 million in funding over the next three years to develop strategies that reflect local interests and lead to the improvement of local socio-economic outcomes. And we will coordinate an engagement strategy with aboriginal peoples, municipalities, and the federal government—if they'll ever come to the table—to be able to better deliver programming directed towards aboriginal communities.

We also have selected two demonstration projects for community development initiatives in the next year. We will be partnering with the North Bay friendship centre to implement its strategic plan and we will also be working with the Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle to conduct a community-driven needs-assessment plan to research and develop a strategic plan.

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

New question?

HOUSING SERVICES CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: The Housing Services Corp. makes their money from charging affordable housing providers a premium on gas and insurance. In 2013, the CEO earned over \$300,000—double what the CEO made four years ago—plus expenses of \$65,000. That's enough to reopen seven affordable housing units that are boarded up because of disrepair. The chair of the board gets \$375 per conference call. Minister, these are just two examples. This money was designated for affordable housing.

Will you ask the Auditor General to perform a value-for-money audit to find out where this money is going?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I appreciate the question. I'll tell you exactly—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's extortion.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. I want to bring it to your attention first. The member from Renfrew will withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): By the way, I think there's a W behind your name on my list.

Carry on.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to respond, Mr. Speaker. When the Housing Services Corp. was set up by the previous government, there were no accountability provisions at all. In 2013, we brought in accountability provisions, including the requirement to file full reports with us, reports that I read.

When I read the report and discovered some anomalies, I wrote to the board. The board chairman wrote back to indicate to me that they will be complying with the expense regulations of cabinet and the other bodies here. One of the board—

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

1140

VISITORS

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I know it's not a point of order, but I do wish to introduce, in the members' gallery, Graham Lloyd and also Bill Emmott, the six-year chair of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, you're right, it's not a point of order, but he's from my riding so I'll let it go.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As this is our last opportunity to have our morning chat between 10:30 and 11:30 in 2014, I just want to take this opportunity to wish everyone in the House and staff and everyone who's here a very happy holiday.

I know that members are going back to their ridings and there's a lot of work to be done between now and the real break, but I do hope that you will have an opportunity to spend time with your friends and families. Thank you very much, all of you, for the service that you provide to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to recognize the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I too want to join with the Premier and with, I'm sure, the leader of the third party in wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a happy holidays and, if possible, some prosperity in the new year.

On behalf of the PC caucus, happy holidays and happy Hanukkah to all the people of Ontario. May you enjoy the warmth of the season and the gathering of good friends and family as you celebrate the birth of Christ.

On that note, Premier, if you're thinking of giving me a Christmas gift—which I hope you are—all you have to do is pass my Christmas Tree Day Act.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd also like to recognize the leader of the third party on the same point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The holidays are a time for friends and for family, for cherishing our relationships, for rekindling old relationships and perhaps establishing new ones.

On behalf of New Democrats, I want to express our desire that everyone who is involved in this Legislature, whether it's as staff, as members, as pages—in fact, all Ontarians—we want to wish you all some peace, some joy, some prosperity for the future.

Most of all, I want to say that I hope everyone has a safe holiday season, one that has a lot of joy, but one that is also a safe one.

Season's greetings and happy holidays to everyone.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do know that the member from Prince Edward–Hastings has a point of order. I opened up a Pandora's box, I believe.

Mr. Todd Smith: I have no Christmas greetings, but I do wish everybody a merry Christmas and a happy holiday.

I just received a note from a former colleague of ours here at the Legislature, Rob Milligan, the former member

from Northumberland–Quinte West. He was bringing his grade 10 civics class, along with Mrs. Caroline Campbell, down to view our question period this morning, but they're stuck on the 401 in the winter storm out there. I'm sure that the crew, when they arrive, will be visiting our transportation minister just wondering where that extra equipment is on our highways.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the spirit of the House—and the cringing of the table, because I'm actually supposed to be moving right into deferred votes—I want to announce to the members a very special and sorrowful note: This is the last day for our pages, and I think we should say to them—

Interjections: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure that you will join me in saying thank you very much to our pages for the work that they've done.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you very much. There still is some business to do.

DEFERRED VOTES

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

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

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

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

The division bells rang from 1145 to 1150.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Norm
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoskins, Eric	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Hudak, Tim	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Clark, Steve	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy

Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McDonnell, Jim	Yakabuski, John
Forster, Cindy	McGarry, Kathryn	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	McMahon, Eleanor	Zimmer, David
French, Jennifer K.	McMeekin, Ted	
Gates, Wayne	Meilleur, Madeleine	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 88; the nays are 0.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

SECURITY FOR COURTS, ELECTRICITY GENERATING FACILITIES AND NUCLEAR FACILITIES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ DES TRIBUNAUX, DES CENTRALES ÉLECTRIQUES ET DES INSTALLATIONS NUCLÉAIRES

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

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote?

Interjection: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 10, Mr. Flynn moved third reading of Bill 35. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Munro, Julia
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Ballard, Chris	Hudak, Tim	Naqvi, Yasir
Barrett, Toby	Hunter, Mitzie	Nicholls, Rick

Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael

Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McDonell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Oraziotti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vernile, Daiene
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakubuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McDonell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Smith, Todd
Sousa, Charles
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakubuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

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

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

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

Motion agreed to.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bisson, Gilles
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.

Gates, Wayne
Gretzky, Lisa
Hatfield, Percy
Horwath, Andrea
Mantha, Michael

Miller, Paul
Natyshak, Taras
Sattler, Peggy
Taylor, Monique
Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 73; the nays are 15.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do want to take liberty and indicate to you that I wish all of you a merry Christmas, season's greetings and a happy new year. Take care of your families. Make sure that they are taken care of because they take care of you. I thank all of you for the work that you do in this province. Thank you very much.

This House stands recessed.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1300.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have another deferred vote, a vote on the motion by Mr. Gravelle respecting Sir John A. Macdonald. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1158 to 1159.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Gravelle has moved that, on the occasion of the upcoming bicentennial of his birth, this House commemorates the contribution to Canada of its founding father and first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant

Gravelle, Michael
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hudak, Tim
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Oraziotti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to introduce the brother of page Mikaila Nouhra. Her brother is Mark Nouhra. Mark isn't here right now because of the weather, but he is on his way from Leamington, and we look forward to seeing him a little bit later on in the chamber.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to inform the House that the FIT contract for the Conestogo Wind Energy project has been terminated, effectively ending the project.

This is nothing less than a victory for those who did not want industrial wind turbines imposed on their communities. It's a victory for the grassroots organizers who worked tirelessly to preserve their neighbourhoods, farms and their way of life. They prevailed over a multi-national wind company, as well as the Liberal government, whose process was rigged against them. That's extraordinary.

It's also a victory for the municipality of North Perth and the township of Perth East. They stood with their

constituents as unwilling hosts. I was proud to serve them at every step. I have repeatedly spoken up for them to two Premiers, three energy ministers, two environment ministers and to Invenegy itself. I hosted and attended public meetings, and wrote to the government about 500 times.

Tragically, the victory came at a cost. The individuals, families and municipalities have spent considerable time and money. They will never get it back. All this could have been avoided if the government had just listened to us in the first place.

We know the Liberals' Green Energy Act has been an absolute failure. This legislation put the Conestogo wind farm proposal in motion, dividing our community and pitting neighbour against neighbour. Now, it is time to heal the rifts this project has caused. I look forward to working with the community to help make that happen.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: 'Tis the break before Christmas—

and all through this House ...

The members are thinking of turkey, not grouse.

Up in the press gallery, I'll wager a bet

The scribes are all gone, you'll find no ink-stained wretch.

Some ministers are either in hiding—or—

Making their way back to their ridings.

My supposition—that here in the opposition we are sticking it out ...

Still firmly believing we actually have clout.

And Speaker—we do—as I'm sure you have heard ...

We usually find a way to get in the last word.

'Tis a wonderful season, in this legislative place ...

When we set aside our differences, and actually are seen with a smile on our face.

Oh, we may have huff and puff—and pretend real rages ...

But always being careful not to scare our young pages.

Yes—we can be persistent—but we'd really be lost—without our legislative assistants.

Speaker, even you, sir, you're quite the agreeable fellow ...

But you'd be lost if it wasn't for Clerk Miss Debbie Deller.

Applause.

Interjection: Not done yet.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Members will know I live near the American border—

But I haven't yet heard, "The member for Windsor-Tecumseh will please come to order."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Being here is quite an education—

I'm learning more than I ever expected about time allocation.

So I better wrap up and be on my way,

I'll see you on that February Tuesday after Family Day.

Yes, here's where I'll be—

Yours truly, the member from Windsor-Tecumseh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can agree with most of what you said.

Members' statements.

SANTA CLAUS PARADES IN CAMBRIDGE

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's hard to top that one. I'm wondering if the member from Windsor-Tecumseh can sing the following: "Children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile." The lyrics of the traditional song Silver Bells capture the spirit of the three annual Santa Claus parades in my riding of Cambridge. Hundreds of hours put in by many spirited volunteers make these much loved parades continue to be a highlight of the holiday season for Cambridge and North Dumfries families.

The Cambridge Santa Claus Parade, held at night, is a magical experience for children. It's organized by volunteer Dave Howell and over 35 dedicated community members. Parade-goers assist others by bringing food for the Cambridge Self Help Food Bank, and Canada Post letter carriers pick up the children's letters to Santa.

The village of Ayr parade is organized by volunteers from the North Dumfries Lions Club. The Ayr-Paris Band, a favourite for over 125 years, kept the beat as I handed out candy to the kids.

Hespeler Santa Claus Parade marshals Peggy and Russell Bygrave, volunteers for over 30 years, stand out in white top hats and suits.

A sponsor summed up the reason that he volunteers: "It is every business's duty to help support local traditions and build community. This is a great cause to support. Besides, we can't say no to Santa, can we?"

Generations of children and families in Cambridge would certainly agree. Thank you to all the Cambridge parade volunteers.

CHATHAM GOODFELLOWS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: In 1954, the Chatham Goodfellows embarked on its first annual campaign to ensure there is "No Child Without a Christmas." Through donations and volunteer efforts, the Goodfellows have helped brighten many on Christmas morning, ensuring there are toys for children and food for a holiday meal.

Recently, I was privileged to speak at their 60th anniversary and to see the large number of people in support of the work that the Chatham Goodfellows do. It was very encouraging, to say the least.

But on a sad note, last month, \$3,700 worth of toys slated to be given to local children in need as Christmas gifts were stolen from the Chatham Goodfellows. On a happier note and in the spirit of Christmas, volunteers were not discouraged and they have received an out-

pouring of community support. Chatham-Kent residents donated over 50 banana boxes full of toys and non-perishable food, and they raised over \$35,000 in only a couple of hours during the Chatham Goodfellows 60th annual porchlight campaign. For one night, a small army of volunteers walked door to door collecting donations.

Back in the early 1960s, my father, Fred Nicholls, was a Goodfellow and he worked closely with his good friend and then president of the Chatham Goodfellows, Jay Vickers. I wasn't even a teenager when my father recruited me. I remember standing on the corner of King and 5th Streets just outside the then Royal Bank selling Goodfellow papers to help raise money so that the Goodfellows could buy toys and put food in their Christmas baskets for the less fortunate families. Yes, Speaker, at a very young age, I learned how important in life it is to offer a hand up to those in need. Personal values were being instilled.

I also remember, though, how cold those wintry, snowy days were while I stood outside, but what I would do is I would go into the Goodfellows trailer parked on King Street to enjoy a nice heated drink of, yes, Vernors. Yes, I said heated. You should try it; you'll like it. It was good. Throw a cinnamon stick in while you're at it.

During the first 60 years of operation, thousands of volunteers from the Chatham Goodfellows have helped thousands of families. Despite the growth and success of the Chatham Goodfellows, their premise has always been and will remain: "No Child Without a Christmas."

HOMES 4 WOMEN

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Housing-first approaches to ending homelessness are founded on the principle that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed, then provided with the services and supports they need. Evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of housing first is based on research—research primarily focused on men.

But women's experience of homelessness is different. It is often invisible and frequently involves children. Women who experience homelessness have higher rates of mortality than men and are less likely to access resources and services. When they do access these resources, women are less successful in maintaining stable housing, with success rates of less than 50%.

To address these gender differences, an innovative collaboration is under way in my community of London to develop a housing-first strategy that responds to women's unique needs for relational supports rooted in the neighbourhoods in which they reside. Called Homes 4 Women, this two-year project is funded by the London Community Foundation. Partners include the Canadian Mental Health Association Middlesex, My Sisters' Place; Women's Community House and Health Zone Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

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The project will provide housing for 50 women, with a variety of units scattered throughout the community. A

housing stability worker will provide individualized supports and a 24/7 hotline. A housing coordinator will ensure coordination across the units and connection with community partners.

Not only will Homes 4 Women improve women's ability to find and maintain stable housing in London, but it will also generate a new housing-first framework that can be shared across Canada to end homelessness among women.

MISSISSAUGA TRANSITWAY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Mr. Speaker, recently, I was at the opening of the Mississauga Transitway's rapid bus phase 1 at the new Dixie station, in my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South.

Phase 1 is the end result of extensive planning and preparation by all levels of government. Our government has invested \$65 million towards resolving one of the most pressing issues: gridlock. Over the next three years, by 2017, 18 kilometres of transitway from east to west, with 12 stations, will become a reality. The transitway will be a great two-way artery, facilitating movement of people, vehicles and commerce in and out of Mississauga. It is a complement to existing transportation routes and systems. It will integrate suburban areas with urban and encourage more use of public transit.

I'm proud to be a part of a government that is taking action to solve the problem of gridlock. This is a perfect example of what communities can achieve when all levels of government work together.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise today to provide the Legislature and the people of Ontario with an end-of-session report card on the Liberal government.

With regard to working together, the Liberal government gets a failing grade. Way back when this Parliament first started, the government House leader asked for some co-operation between the opposition parties on getting consensus and getting some bills passed.

Initially, it was four bills that the government wanted passed, then it went to six and then it went to seven. We, on this side, were going to allow a number of bills to move forward quickly in the legislative process, but there were a few that needed public input, such as the tow truck operators, the blood plasma companies and also independent daycare operators.

But what we learned was that the government House leader's request to work with us was just a shallow promise. In fact, the corner office, the Premier, shut us down at every opportunity to have those hearings. I can't believe that we can't, in this Legislature, sit down and get a few private members' bills passed.

In our caucus, we had Ryan's Law from Mr. Yurek, Bill 20, that I think could have been easily passed; from the NDP, Bill 17, in the name of the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, for child performers. There

were a number of Liberal bills as well. There was a bill on Hispanic Heritage Month from the member for Davenport; Ms. McMahon's Ontario Bike Month; Mr. Qaadri regarding radon awareness; and Mr. Potts on his tip-out bill. There were a lot of bills we could have co-operated on.

As far as I'm concerned, the government received an F. One of the members said that they believe in transparency at only the right time. Well, you know what? The right time has passed, and for that reason, they get a failing grade.

SNOW QUEEN 2014

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a young talented Scarborough–Agincourt resident, Sachil Patel, a former student at Stephen Leacock Collegiate, in his fourth year at Ryerson University, whom I've known since 2006.

For his final thesis project, Sachil and his fellow students at the Ryerson school of media are producing Snow Queen 2014, a community benefit to support the 519 Church Street Community Centre. Snow Queen is a live 60-minute holiday-themed production with drag and musical performances at the Winter Garden Theatre that will take place tomorrow, December 12.

For over 35 years, the 519 has been working with the LGBTQ community to build healthy, welcoming spaces to meet, participate and celebrate together. The production of Snow Queen received significant sponsorship from Ryerson University president Dr. Sheldon Levy and notable LGBTQ organizations. The students themselves also raised additional funds on their own to help cover the costs of producing the show.

I'd like to congratulate Sachil Patel and all his classmates for producing Snow Queen 2014. Their dedication to the LGBTQ community in Toronto is an inspiration to all residents, especially young people, in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, and tomorrow I'm looking forward to seeing the production of Snow Queen 2014.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to stand up as the last members' statement of this session and to talk about something that's most appropriate, the Christmas tree-lighting ceremonies I've had to enjoy.

Recently, Mr. Speaker, I participated in your own Christmas lighting when we lit up lights across the country at a certain time. When I was able to bring greetings on behalf of the Premier, I was delighted to do so.

Two weeks ago, I was down at Danforth and Victoria Park at the East Lynn Park, where DECA, the Danforth East Community Association, had its own tree-lighting ceremony. We were entertained by a bunch of wonderful children. Angela Matich set up that facility. We had Pegasus Studios and Zero Gravity Circus. We lit up the lights; it was most inspiring.

On that same day, I went down to the foot of Leuty Avenue, on the boardwalk in the Beach, and there we had

an incredible ceremony where we lit up the Leuty lighthouse. For those of you who have seen my Christmas card, that's the Leuty lighthouse, with those wonderful trees in the background.

The DeClute real estate family for the last 10 years has been lighting up the Beach. It was an unbelievable event, with Liona Boyd, the first lady of guitar, and I singing Here Comes Santa Claus.

Finally, there I was at Kew Gardens last week with the Beaches Lions Club. What an incredible organization doing such good work in our community and around the world. There we were, joined by Mr. and Mrs. Claus.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, all of these tree-lighting ceremonies have certainly filled my heart with seasonal joy. I am looking forward so much to sharing this time with my community and with my family. I want to wish all members a merry Christmas, season's greetings, happy Hanukkah, and to all a good break.

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

MOTIONS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice to establish the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, and that the question be put without debate or amendment.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that a select committee be appointed to make recommendations to the Legislature with respect to prevention of sexual violence and harassment and to improving our response to Ontarians who have experienced sexual violence and harassment.

That the committee shall make efforts to include diverse voices, including those of young people, aboriginal people, visible minorities, LGBTQ, seniors and people with disabilities;

That the committee shall consider ways to shift social norms and other barriers which prevent people who have experienced sexual violence and harassment from coming forward;

That the committee shall offer witnesses the option to testify in camera;

That the committee shall meet on Wednesdays following routine proceedings until 6 p.m.;

That the committee is authorized to meet at the call of the Chair but must recess during the oral question period when meeting at Queen's Park;

That the committee shall present, or if the House is not sitting, shall release by depositing with the Clerk of the

House, an interim report by June 4, 2015, and a final report by December 10, 2015.

That the committee shall have the authority to travel within Ontario;

The committee may seek the advice of experts and those with experience of sexual violence and harassment for the purpose of developing recommendations.

That, notwithstanding standing order 113(a), the committee shall be composed of six members from the government, one of whom shall be the Chair, two members from the official opposition, one of whom shall be the Vice-Chair, and two members from the third party;

That the House leaders of each of the recognized parties shall indicate in writing to the Clerk of the House, no later than January 9, 2015, their party's membership on the committee, including the names of the members who shall be Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that a select committee be appointed to make recommendations to the Legislature with respect to prevention of sexual violence and harassment and to improving our response to Ontarians who have experienced sexual violence and harassment.

That the committee shall make efforts to include diverse voices, including those of young people, aboriginal people, visible minorities, LGBTQ—

Hon. David Zimmer: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before I do move—this is a little unorthodox, but because of the weather, I'm going to take a moment to introduce, in the east public gallery, Mr. Rob McMillan, Northumberland-Quinte West in the 40th Parliament. Congratulations. Welcome.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Milligan. I think I said "McMillan"—Milligan.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I will do the honourable thing: I apologize.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PAN AM GAMES

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, I rise in the Legislature today, here on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit, to join my colleague Minister Coteau in telling the House of our government's efforts

to ensure aboriginal people in Ontario fully participate in and benefit from the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

A few weeks ago, Minister Coteau and I attended an event hosted by the Law Society of Upper Canada. The theme of the evening was sport, reconciliation and healing.

At the event, a segment of the film *FrontRunners* was shown. It's a documentary, and it tells the story of 10 First Nations teenagers who were selected to participate in the torch relay opening in the 1967 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games in Winnipeg. Several of the frontrunners—about four or five of them, six of them—were on hand at that event.

These exceptional young First Nation athletes carried the torch—they ran the torch—over 800 kilometres from St. Paul, Minnesota, in the United States, to Winnipeg. But when they arrived at the stadium carrying the torch for the opening ceremony, they were not allowed to enter the stadium with the torch. Instead, the torch was taken from them and that honour of running the torch around the stadium was given to a non-aboriginal runner.

Thirty-two years later, the Pan Am Games returned to Winnipeg. At this time, the province of Manitoba issued an apology to those 10 teenaged runners. As an act of reconciliation, these men were then invited to carry the torch into the stadium to mark the opening of the 1999 games some 32 years later.

This story is particularly powerful to me, because it speaks to the importance of reconciliation and the power of sport to heal relationships and unite us all.

Here in Ontario, we are making progress by working together with our aboriginal partners in the Toronto region. The 2015 games represent an incredible opportunity for aboriginal people to participate in and benefit from an event that is taking place on their traditional territories here in Ontario.

Now I'd like to invite my colleague Minister Coteau to tell us in detail about some of the initiatives that he is undertaking as the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further comments? The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

I'm pleased to take a few minutes today to talk about the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games and the contributions of the aboriginal community to this historic event that's going to take place.

Next summer's games are inclusive and celebrate the rich diversity and the history of this province that we are so fortunate to have. I'm pleased to tell the members of this House that the aboriginal community is a full partner of this great event that's taking place. Celebrating the unique aboriginal spirit through our culture and sport and legacy initiatives is a priority for our government during these games. Our promotion, celebration and legacy

strategy includes investments in the aboriginal community.

Last month, myself and the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs announced that Ontario is investing half a million dollars into an aboriginal pavilion that will provide programming and cultural events during the Pan Am Games. We're so proud of this investment as a government, as ministers. We believe that the pavilion will be a gathering place for the aboriginal community and visitors to come together to learn about the traditional and the contemporary aboriginal culture and their achievements.

This undertaking is possible because of the involvement of the Aboriginal Leadership Partners, the ALP. The ALP is a collective of 14 First Nations and aboriginal organizations driving the planning, engagement and communications between the TO2015 games organizing committee and the aboriginal committee to deliver a successful games, a games that is inclusive and respectful.

I was very moved and excited about some of the inspiring stories from the aboriginal heroes of the past attached to these games, and, of course, contemporary participants in the games. For the 2015 games, Waneeq Horn-Miller, an aboriginal woman from the Kahnawake Mohawk territory, will be an assistant chef de mission for Team Canada during the games. Ms. Horn-Miller won a gold in the 1999 Pan Am Games as a member of the national women's water polo team. Her achievements in life and in sport and her strong mentorship will no doubt inspire the next generation of athletes here in Ontario and across this country.

Another incredible aboriginal athlete's story will be on display through an art installation, a statue that will be at the aboriginal pavilion next summer. Tom Longboat, a member of the Onondaga Nation, was born on the Six Nations reserve and was one of the most successful athletes in the early 20th century. He was a distance runner who won most major events and set a spectacular record as an Olympian. He was also a war hero. I was very excited to hear about the art installation in honour of his achievements at the games next summer. This will be a stunning tribute to his legacy as a Canadian.

We are proud that these games present a forum for learning for all Canadians, and we are proud of the legacy that these games will leave on our aboriginal community and Ontario.

In March, the province announced the transfer of a section of land in the West Don Lands, home to the athletes' village, to Anishnawbe Health Toronto, who will utilize this site to house an aboriginal community health centre and urban aboriginal community hub.

Speaker, the 2015 games are important not only to the infrastructure investment of this province, the job creation and tourism, but also for the celebration of our rich diversity and our history.

I'm also proud that the aboriginal community is taking such an important role in these games. These games will be a source of pride for all Ontarians and Canadians, especially when we celebrate our rich aboriginal history

and past here in this province. We look forward to these games and the full participation of all communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries?

It is now time for responses.

Mr. Todd Smith: I rise today in the House to acknowledge the many important roles that members of our aboriginal community have played in the history of Canadian sport and our culture here. It's important that we have moments like this in the House, because we need to recognize both the importance of our history as a province and the role that we can still play in fostering a better future for all Ontarians.

One of the constituencies that I'm proud to represent in Prince Edward-Hastings is the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and their territory, so I have first-hand experience with the many important contributions that our First Nations people have made to our sporting culture.

As the minister has pointed out, the games that take place next summer will be on the traditional lands of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. The games' organizers have gone to great lengths to ensure that visitors to the games next year will have the ability to experience exhibits, concerts and performances by members of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. Both ministers just spoke about some of the pavilions that will be available for spectators and visitors to our province for the games to take in. I'm very excited to hear that.

The history, rituals and culture of our First Nations are the foundation blocks of our history as a country. It's only fitting that when we act as emissaries to the sporting world next year, we provide a glimpse into the rich cultural and sporting history of this country, and we simply could not do that without putting our First Nations people front and centre.

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The ministers have spoken of some of the great aboriginal competitors that we've had in various games over the years, and those will be highlighted as a part of the games and in those pavilions. Some of the nation's greatest sporting traditions have their roots right here in First Nations communities. By engaging our First Nations people in next year's Pan Am celebrations, we're giving the world the ability not only to enjoy the performances of great amateur athletes from Canada and abroad, but the ability to understand where sport in Canada has its roots.

While the management of the games are often the subject of much division and some argument in the House, we don't take a partisan stance on functions of the games like what we're talking about here today. We don't take opposing stances on supporting the athletes or the volunteers. We don't take opposing stances on engaging our First Nations people as part of the Pan Am and Parapan Games; the reason that we don't is because those elements of these games are selfless. They're done not for legacy or publicity; they're done because of a common belief in the better purpose that they serve.

These athletes train religiously for the honour of wearing their country's colours. Our volunteers show up every day because they want an experience that contributes to celebrating what Canada's athletes mean to all of us. We engage our First Nations in what truly is the largest multi-sport event in Canadian history because it acknowledges that our sporting tradition in Canada is largely descended from those First Nations communities.

We should also take this opportunity to recognize the many First Nations athletes that have contributed to improving sports in this country, and the minister has just given a snapshot as to some of those great performances over the years, and I'm sure we'll hear more about them when the games roll around in July.

Next year, the athletes of the Americas will be coming to Toronto. They'll spend part of their summer in Canada's largest city. But they'll take part in events on the traditional lands of First Nations across the province, in Oshawa, Minden and St. Catharines. It's an honour for the games to have the Mississaugas of the New Credit as the host First Nation.

I believe I said Minden; I meant to say Milton. I'll correct my record before having to correct my record.

As I've said, there are things about these games that are contentious and that the minister and I frequently disagree on, but this doesn't come close to being one of them. We have a rich history in this country; perhaps it's one of our Canadian traits that we so regularly boast about. Using the Pan Am Games as a vehicle to highlight these important elements of our history does an honour to the city of Toronto and to the athletes that wear Canada's colours because it helps them tell the world a little bit more about our story here in Canada and here in Ontario.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I want to share my time with our critic for the Pan Am Games, but I just want to say this. I think it's fitting that we do everything that we can in order to be able to assist our First Nations brothers and sisters to be able to be full participants in our economy and full participants in what is the social and cultural mosaic of—not mosaic, but part of what Ontario is all about.

I want to just tell this story. I remember when Mr. Cheechoo, the hockey player—his first name, I should know—

Mr. Todd Smith: Jonathan.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Jonathan. I know too many Cheechoos. I was going to say Gilbert, who is a good friend of mine.

Well, when Jonathan Cheechoo made it to the NHL, the great hockey player that he is, it was to see the pride in the faces of the kids back on the James Bay coast, not only in Moosonee but across all of the James Bay coast, to be able to see that one of theirs was a star in the NHL and was doing such great things and giving them a source of pride; but, more importantly, giving them a sense of hope that maybe one day they'll be able to be lifted from the life that they live in and live that experience that Mr. Cheechoo has found.

I hear what the minister is saying, and I don't want to be critical and I'm not going to use this to be partisan—I

don't think it's the time or the place. But I think it goes beyond just doing this; it's doing the things that are right so that we can help the lives of aboriginal people in our province.

You've heard me speak on a number of occasions in this House, saying that the conditions that First Nations live in, in many of the communities in Ontario, are worse than the Third World. I think we all have a responsibility in this House to figure out, in the little way that we can ourselves, to make that life a better place.

I want to take the occasion to thank the Minister of Community and Social Services, Helena Jaczek. I went to her about three weeks ago in regard to an issue with the First Nations people of Kashechewan who were evacuated into Kapuskasing. They had lost their northern allowance. For them, it meant they couldn't buy food; they couldn't buy Christmas presents for their kids; they couldn't have a little bit of hope to enjoy what all of us take for granted.

We have a responsibility, I, as the member who represents them, but, more importantly, her, Helena—and I'll use the word "Helena," because I see you as a friend—as the minister responsible for the crown, and she moved heaven and earth to make sure that the kids of Kashechewan living in Kapuskasing can actually have a Christmas.

Those are the little things that we all can do in order to make sure that our First Nations friends are able to live in this province and feel that they're not left behind, that we really do care, and we really do want to make their lives a better place.

To the minister, I thank you, because I think it was the right thing to do. On behalf of the constituents, thumbs up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I too would like to mention Tom Longboat. Tom was from the Hamilton area. I've had the honour and privilege of playing against some of his nieces and nephews in hockey, baseball, you name it. I've even refereed some of their games.

I'll tell you, I have the greatest respect for aboriginal athletes. This is no pun intended: A lot of times, they got the short end of the stick when it came to recognition. They are excellent athletes. They're competitive, very proud athletes. They make a game of any sort, whether it be lacrosse, hockey or baseball, more exciting too, because of their competitive nature and the fact that they play as a team. They show unity, they show bravery, and they also show ability, which is a nice combination.

I, too, would be remiss if I didn't mention Stan Jonathan. Stan Jonathan was an NHL player with the Boston Bruins. Stan was an enforcer and a very good athlete and played many years for the Boston Bruins. He was also a Hamilton boy.

Jordin Tootoo: I believe he was with LA for a while and he got traded. I think he went to Anaheim. Jordin is a role model for the Inuit and the nations of the north. All kids up there wear his sweater. He goes into communities

and signs autographs. It's like the Pope was visiting, when he goes to these places. He's a hero to the kids, and they love him.

The more hockey equipment and the more resources we can pour into the northern communities that need them, that can't afford them, the more we do.

I remember Howard Hampton used to take a planeload of used equipment up to the reserves up there, and he was like Santa Claus. It was stuff they could use and utilize and better their abilities.

I encourage constant involvement by the aboriginal communities, because they bring a lot to sports. Over the years, they certainly did not get their fair shake when it came to recognition. I hope this is all going to change in the year of the Pan Am/Parapan Games.

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

I would be remiss if I didn't mention this, as the Speaker—I don't think he would mind, the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek—that Stan Jonathan was from Six Nations, and that is in my riding. But it's in the Hamilton area, so I'll give him that, along with Tom Longboat as well.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We're so parochial around here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So parochial.

I thank all members for their statements here today.

PETITIONS

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

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

"Whereas post-secondary students requiring a vehicle to commute to campus receive less OSAP funding if the cost of their vehicle is higher than the assessment exemption level;

"Whereas many students in rural, suburban and northern communities require a vehicle to commute as public transit is unavailable;

"Whereas in 2012-13, 4% of OSAP single student applicants reported owning a vehicle worth more than their exemption level of \$5,000;

"Whereas in the same year, 20% of married and sole-support OSAP applicants reported owning a vehicle worth more than their exemption level of \$10,000;

"Whereas in February 2014, the government of Canada removed the student vehicle assessment from the Canada student loans program to better reflect the needs of students who commute or work while studying;

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

"That the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities recognize the current realities facing post-secondary students in Ontario by removing the student-owned vehicle assessment from OSAP's needs assessment process."

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support and send the petition to the table with page Mikaila.

1340

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Paul Miller: "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

"Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, e.g., to be attended to for toileting needs; to be fed; to receive a bath; for pain medication. Since 2008, funding for 2.8 paid hours of care per resident per day has been provided. In that budget year, a promise was made to increase this funding to 4.0 hours per resident per day by 2012. This has not been done; and

"Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and under-regulated;

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

"(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

"(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January 2015;

"(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers."

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, signed by people from Mississauga, for which I'm very grateful. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with, on his last day before Christmas with us, ironically, page Nick.

RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Todd Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the loss of transportation service will further destabilize rural economies and impede on residents’ ability to get to school, work, doctor or hospital appointments, or any other service unavailable locally;

“Whereas the prosperity, productivity and participation of all segments of society depends on a viable, accessible transportation network;

“Whereas the lack of a transportation service negatively impacts those people with special needs, accessibility challenges, seniors and those living below the poverty level;

“Whereas there is no secondary carrier serving rural Ontario’s students, workers, volunteers, tourists, business travellers and any resident without a driver’s licence;

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

“To immediately strike an all-party committee at Queen’s Park to study transportation needs in rural and northern Ontario.”

I agree with this. I’ll send it to the table with page Maja.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: These petitions keep coming in from northern Ontario. It’s a vast area. These are from Marathon, up to and including Thunder Bay:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Lumley and Popsipil families in my riding. Many others have signed other copies, but this is the one I’m reading.

“Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly funded French-language education; and

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto ... and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school ... yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school ...

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools ...

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools ...

“Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that ‘... time is running out to address the serious shortage ...

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has confirmed that we all benefit when school board properties are used effectively in support of publicly funded education ...

“Whereas parents and students from both French Catholic and French public elementary schools in east Toronto are prepared to find common ground across all language school systems to secure space for a French-language secondary school ...

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

“That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or

shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school ... in the community ... so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

I agree with this petition, sign my name, and leave it with Jenny and wish her a merry Christmas.

HEALTH CARE

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

“Whereas providing patients with access to information about their medical doctor’s treatment history is fundamental to regulating the medical profession and ensuring Ontario’s health-care system is accountable and transparent;

“Whereas currently, Ontario patients do not have access to this information, which is also an important measure to improve patient safety and empower them when making decisions about medical treatment;

“Whereas making public all information about complaints, cautions and remedial action taken against a physician does not diminish the College of Physicians and Surgeons’ ability to self-regulate, but rather brings balance to the relationship between doctors and patients;

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

“That the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care act immediately to implement the transparency and accountability measures contained in Bill 29, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991.”

I’m pleased to sign in support of this petition, and I’ll send it to the table with page Claudia.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again, these petitions keep coming in from northern Ontario:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

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

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I couldn’t agree more with this petition—important for all Hispanics in this province.

1350

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Todd Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this and will send it to the table with my man Tyler.

HYDRO RATES

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

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as ‘delivery fees’;

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the ‘delivery fees’ looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

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

“Stop Algoma Power’s influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Moiz to bring down to the Clerk.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING STATIONS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition regarding ending coal for cleaner air in Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians have growing concerns surrounding climate change and the quality of our air, it is integral that more is done to provide Ontarians with cleaner air;

“Whereas the combustion of coal to generate electricity is conducive toward higher levels of carbon dioxide emissions, which pollute the air and contribute immensely toward climate change;

“Whereas the cessation of coal use as a means of generating electricity in the Atikokan, Lambton, Nanticoke, and Thunder Bay generating facilities will result in cleaner air for Ontarians, which will ensure the long-term preservation of our air, environment, and public health;

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support Bill 9, the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, to stop generating facilities from using coal to produce electricity, which will eliminate high levels of carbon dioxide emissions and will in turn ensure cleaner air for Ontarians now and for future generations,” such as people like Ella, who is the page who will take this after I sign it enthusiastically.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

MILITARY SERVICE PIN

Mr. Steve Clark: I move that, in the opinion of this House, to express the gratitude all Ontarians feel, the Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin should be

established to recognize the sacrifices of Ontarians who have served, or are serving, in Canada’s armed forces with valour and distinction in conflicts around the world to uphold the values of liberty, justice and peace that we all hold dear; and that the pin should be designed to be worn on civilian clothing in order that those who have served may be recognized when they are not in uniform.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Clark has moved private members’ notice of motion number 5. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Speaker.

It’s an honour to rise in debate of my motion to give Ontarians an opportunity to do something we can’t ever do enough, and that is to say thank you to the brave veterans and active duty members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Off the top, I want to say I’m honoured this afternoon, as a friend of my local regiment, to be wearing the regimental tie and pin of the Brockville Rifles. The Rifles—or the Brocks, as we call them at home—will mark their 150th anniversary in 2016, and I’ll have more to say about that later. For now, I’ll just say a proud “semper paratus” to Lieutenant Colonel Shawn Herron and all of the men and women under his command.

The freedom we enjoy today, including the ability of each of us, as MPPs, to take our place in the House, is only due to the sacrifices of those who have served throughout Canada’s history. Let there be no doubt, Speaker: Whenever duty has called, soldiers from communities large and small across Ontario have answered. From the trenches of World War I to Afghanistan and, today, in the Middle East, they have stood shoulder to shoulder with men and women from across Canada. Their sacrifices on battlefields around the world helped forge our proud nation’s independence and Canada’s international reputation as a country that has always been counted on to punch above its weight.

To people around the world, our proud maple leaf flag represents the values of peace, freedom and justice. We must never forget our veterans, the price they paid, and the blood they shed to uphold our values. As the recent tragic events in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu showed, our Canadian Armed Forces members are as much on guard protecting us at home as they are overseas. They are also the foundation upon which our democratic institutions have been built.

It is often said that we owe our veterans, and those men and women serving in uniform today, a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid. No truer words were ever spoken. Speaker, we know we’ll never balance the ledger, but that does not absolve us of our responsibility and our duty to make regular installments by honouring their service. That’s why I’ve introduced this motion to create a Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin. The pin would be a unique honour, in that it would be designed to be worn on civilian dress by Ontario veterans and active-duty Canadian Armed Forces members.

Since tabling the motion, I’ve had overwhelming support from constituents I meet in the community.

While I'm proud to stand here today to champion this motion and ask for the support of my colleagues on all sides of the House, I have to give credit to the person who inspired it. That person is Roy Brown, a great friend, constituent, supporter, and one of those tireless advocates for veterans. He's one of the most tireless advocates I've ever met in my life.

He's a retired Ottawa police officer whose military involvement began in service with the HMCS Falkland sea cadets, then as a member of the Governor General's Foot Guards, the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps C-class full-time reserve; and a regular member of the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Roy is a 22-year member of the Royal Canadian Legion and he was instrumental in a wonderful project to restore Kemptville Cenotaph. Along with another veteran and outstanding North Grenville citizen, Owen Fitzgerald, he also created the Veterans Way Memorial Committee, a group that oversees a kilometre-long roadway of remembrance in Kemptville's G. Howard Ferguson Forest Centre, and successfully re-created the one-acre Veterans Way Memorial Park.

As I said, few veterans have done more than Roy Brown to honour the service of our veterans.

So that's why he wrote to me last spring, to make me aware of an initiative by the Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Saskatchewan. Roy noted that she had established that province's Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin last year.

He wrote to me: "May I respectfully request that you promote a similar course of action to recognize the service of our Ontario veterans by encouraging the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Honourable David C. Onley, to consider adopting a comparable military service pin program." From the moment I read this letter, I knew it was an initiative worth pursuing.

Of course, Mr. Onley's distinguished service as Lieutenant Governor ended last year. Certainly, I join all Ontarians and members of the House in thanking him for his outstanding service to our province. As we all know, in September, right here in this chamber, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell was installed as Ontario's 29th Lieutenant Governor.

I want to stress that I'm very respectful of the fact that the Lieutenant Governor is the cornerstone of our parliamentary democracy. My motion is in no way an attempt to tell Ms. Dowdeswell what to do. I would never, Speaker, be so presumptuous. It is simply an opportunity for this House to show its support for the creation of this new honour.

Ontario's Lieutenant Governor has an important role in the many honours and awards regularly conferred upon exceptional Ontarians who distinguish themselves in a variety of ways. The Lieutenant Governor, for instance, is the honorary chair of Ontario medal programs, including the medal for good citizenship, the medal for young volunteers, the medal for firefighter bravery and the medal for police bravery.

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Ontario's Honours and Awards Program also recognizes leadership in accessibility, volunteer service and senior achievement. Each of these programs is important and allows us to celebrate the commitment of Ontarians to build stronger, healthier and more vibrant communities. These recognitions also serve to inspire other Ontarians to follow in the footsteps of those honourees by becoming active citizens themselves.

But, Speaker, listen: I think we can all agree it's time to add our veterans and those still serving us at home and abroad to that list of outstanding Ontarians to recognize.

Why do I say this? I can think of no better answer than to quote Saskatchewan's Lieutenant Governor on the launch of that province's military service pin: "We created the pin to honour current and former members of our military, and police officers who have served in military operations, for the sacrifices they have made to serve our nation. When these Canadian heroes are in civilian clothing, people simply don't know about what they've done for the world; we hope this lapel pin will identify them to the public so that we can all express our thanks to them."

Speaker, we've all witnessed that special moment when someone spots a soldier in uniform and buys them a cup of coffee or extends a hand to thank them for their service. Who among us has not been moved when seeing young schoolchildren pay tribute to soldiers at Remembrance Day services? This military service pin would give Ontarians a chance to recognize and celebrate that service year round, not only when they see that soldier or veteran in uniform.

The eligibility criteria used in Saskatchewan, where I understand 4,000 pins have been awarded, are straightforward. All recipients must have resided in Saskatchewan at one time, and this includes having lived there for military training or posting. As I've mentioned, it's available to all current and retired members of the Canadian Armed Forces—regular, primary and supplementary reserve forces, including Canadian Rangers.

Saskatchewan has also extended eligibility to current and retired members of police forces, including municipal forces and the RCMP, who have served in military operations.

Finally, on a discretionary basis, the pin may be presented to Saskatchewan residents who are current or former members of allied forces, such as the United States military and those from Commonwealth nations.

That's an example of the sorts of eligibility criteria we could adopt in Ontario.

I think it's also important to hear what Canada's Chief of the Defence Staff, General Tom Lawson, told the crowd at Government House in Regina when the pin was launched on November 5, 2013. He spoke of the great relationship between the military and Saskatchewan, and I would say Ontario has a similar bond with our forces. General Lawson continued: "The initiative to create this pin is a great demonstration of that relationship, and signals the pride you have for your sons and daughters in

uniform who serve with such distinction. On behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces, thank you for your tremendous support.”

That’s the perspective of the Canadian Forces when it comes to this type of honour, and I would hope General Lawson’s words are a strong endorsement for members of this House.

Since I tabled this motion during our summer session, I’ve been pleased to receive support from a number of organizations that support active-duty and retired military personnel.

One of the first endorsements was from the True Patriot Love Foundation, a remarkable organization I’m sure all MPPs are familiar with. The foundation works tirelessly on behalf of veterans, active-duty force members and families from coast to coast. In addition to being an outstanding advocate, True Patriot Love has raised more than \$20 million to support military charities since 2009. So it was an honour when Bronwen Evans, a founding director and current managing director of the foundation, offered the following endorsement of my motion: “We applaud this initiative that recognizes the selfless sacrifices of our members of the Canadian Armed Forces and we believe that it will help inspire all Canadians to appreciate that the freedom we enjoy comes at cost to the men and women who serve us.”

I also received a quick response from Ray Gilroy, who is a constituent and commander of the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command, zone G. I asked for his thoughts. He endorsed it. He represents many of the Legion branches in my riding. He fully supports what I’m saying.

Just last week, I heard from Gord Jenkins, president of the NATO Veterans Organization of Canada. They too have pledged their support.

I want to thank each of those organizations and the many others who have encouraged me to bring forward the motion that we are debating today.

Speaker, we’re coming to the end of a truly remarkable year in which Canadians and Ontarians alike have had many occasions to celebrate and honour those who have served. The year 2014 marked the end of Canada’s mission in Afghanistan, a conflict in which 158 soldiers lost their lives, including two from my riding: Corporal Randy Payne of Gananoque and Private Blake Williamson of Kemptonville.

This year has also given us the 70th anniversary of D-Day and the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

These special milestones in our history and the tragic recent events on our home soil have helped spark a rebirth of remembrance in our province and our nation. Evidence of this rebirth can be found in the tremendous crowds at this year’s Remembrance Day services. I’m sure all of us noticed those crowds this year and saw the amount of schoolchildren and others who were at our local cenotaphs.

Today, I want to ask for the support of all of our parties, all the members of this Legislature, in an effort to allow the province to pay its respects to these brave men

and women through the creation of the Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin. I hope the members from all three parties will band together. I think this is an incredible initiative, one that, as I said earlier, the province of Saskatchewan has done first. I think we can build upon it. I believe we have a great honours and awards program, and I feel that a military service pin of this type would be an excellent addition to what we already do.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I rise with great pleasure, as all New Democrats will who have a chance in this debate, to support this particular motion. I think the point here that is important to say is that unfortunately there are far too many soldiers—him and her—who have served in active duty in the history of our Armed Forces since the time of the Boer War, going back to the turn of the previous century. A number of those people, unfortunately, didn’t make it back; some of them did and had to live with the scars of what happened to them and what they saw when they were actively serving in the Armed Forces in conflicts around the world. But there are many other soldiers such as myself, who served in a peacetime army, who is lucky enough to say that I never had to fire a shot at anybody unless I had a BFE at the end of my gun—a BFE is a blank flash eliminator. Why? Because I served in a peacetime army in the 1970s. We were not at conflict with anybody in the world. That was a good thing. We were doing peace missions around the world, but those were very small contingents as compared to the Armed Forces of the day—which was about 100,000 to 110,000 men and women who served in our Armed Forces at the time. Unfortunately, for people like me—and for me, it’s not a big deal, but for others it may be, and I think we need to recognize that—they don’t have an opportunity, when they go out on Remembrance Day or they attend Legion events or whatever it might be, to show that they actually served in the Armed Forces.

I remember the first time I went to the all-wars banquet in Kapuskasing some years ago as I started to represent that part of the riding—my riding used to be Cochrane South, and it became Timmins–James Bay in 2009, when I ended up gaining the communities along Highway 11 from Smooth Rock Falls going north. I remember going to the all-wars banquet, and they went to the part where they said, “We would like anybody who has served in the Armed Forces of this country to please rise and give their name, rank and serial number.” Of course, these were all vets. At that time, a lot of vets still were living, and a number of people got up and yelled out their name in pride, they yelled out their regiment in pride, they yelled out their SIN number—50 or 60 years later, they still remembered it—and stood in the Legion in Kapuskasing to give that. I got up and said, “Bisson, Private, 445775171, sir.” Everybody was shocked because nobody knew I had served in the Armed Forces. I wasn’t there long, but I did my tour, and I felt proud when I did that. I thought, “This is the first time since I

left the Armed Forces back in 1974 or 1975, whenever it was, that I got to actually say publicly that I was a member of the Armed Forces.”

So for people like me who didn't serve in that conflict, it's an opportunity to be recognized for the service that we did for our country. We weren't in active service. We didn't have to fire at any enemy. What we were doing was training to be the best soldiers we could be for our country in case we were called. Fortunately for me, I was never called. I'm so lucky. So I say to my good friend, the House leader of the Conservative Party, obviously we'll support this bill.

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The last point I want to make, because I want to leave most of the time for my good friend Mr. Mantha, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, is that private members' hour is a description of what he and I have been talking about in this House all this fall. If we could work together as members and actually listen to each other every now and then—a little bit of give, a little bit of take—and not time-allocate everything but actually take the time to see what the value of everybody's position is and the value of what they have to contribute, we could do some really good work. What we see at private members' on Thursday afternoons are members like the member from Leeds–Grenville coming forward with a very good idea that all members of this House, no matter what side of the House they're on, can stand behind and support. I just hope in this time of giving and Christmas, people will remember, hopefully, when we come back here in the next session, that the government will understand that the opposition has something to contribute to this process. That's what parliamentary democracy is based on. It's based on the government being able to govern to get their agenda through, but with an opposition being able to hold that government to account and suggest where they think it's necessary to suggest improvements or change.

To that member, I say thank you for bringing this forward.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure and a privilege to speak to what I think is a very fine initiative on behalf of my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. I'm just going to take a little digression to wish him, his caucus, his family and all of those a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous 2015. I've enjoyed serving with the member, who serves his constituents very well. I hope those comments don't come back on his campaign literature in the next campaign.

To bring up what our colleague from Timmins–James Bay was just talking about, he has brought up a very interesting idea. I think that is, in fact, part of what our Legislature is for. I say “our Legislature” because, as members, it is our Legislature, and when one of us comes up with an idea that's not partisan—it doesn't really pertain to programs and services, but it's just a good idea—this is a good place to talk about it.

Now, the member has presented it in the form of a resolution, which means he hasn't given us a fait accompli to make a decision on. What he has said is, “Let's start a conversation, and let's see whether or not this idea has some merit and some traction.” He has talked about some of the feedback that he has gotten in his own riding in eastern Ontario. I'm sure I would find much the same reaction if I were to go down and bend an elbow with some of the boys at Royal Canadian branch 139 Streetsville and say, “You know, my friend Steve Clark suggested this,” and then describe the notion of the medal. Now, of course, being ex-army guys, they would have a whole bunch of questions that neither of us could really anticipate. I'm sure if we were to ask for the input of Ontario command of the Royal Canadian Legion, they too would say, “We don't mean to either denigrate or criticize the idea, but let's talk about it in terms of the implementation.” That doesn't mean that they find fault with it; it means that they're trying it on and taking some degree of ownership of the issue. I think that's the most important thing here, that we can try it on for size and see whether or not it's a good idea. I think it's a pretty good idea.

For example, would this be retroactive? That's something that we would need to discuss. Does it apply if you're born in Ontario, if you're currently living in Ontario, or if you just passed through Ontario? Those are all valid issues that we would have to wrap our minds around. What if, for example, as a Canadian citizen, you had at one time served in the uniform of either an allied or another Commonwealth nation? Would having done so qualify you for this particular service medal? I think that also is well worth putting on the table and seeing what our legion thinks about it. What would be the ramifications of it?

Canadian tradition has it that we are a nation of citizen-soldiers. The member for Timmins–James Bay was discussing some of the genesis of the Canadian Armed Forces, which were really units raised, very often, by a very committed individual who said, “I'm going to put up the money to do this myself. I'm going to help recruit people, and we're going to take them”—initially it was abroad to South Africa for the Boer War, but even during the First World War there were a lot of regiments that were raised by the initiative of a single-minded, strong-willed individual who said, “We've got to do something here. Those things that we considered dear and those that we cherish are in fact in peril; and if I don't do it, who will?”

We were at the time a much younger country than we are now, and a much smaller country in terms of population and resources, and it showed the kind of initiative that a committed individual was able to take at the time. It's on those traditions that we've built our armed forces and done so in a lot of ways differently from many other nations.

We as a nation were not born in the cauldron of war. By and large, we talked the British out of it; the Americans had to fight them out of it. So that has given rise to a

very different way in which as a nation we have traditionally looked at our armed forces and asked our armed forces to feel about themselves.

When the veterans of World War I came back and formed what they then called the dominion overseas veterans association, which morphed into what we now call the Royal Canadian Legion, initially it was because people couldn't understand what those boys went through while they were over in the trenches in World War I. They started to get together themselves to say, "If nobody else can understand it"—with today's concept of post-traumatic stress syndrome not at the time defined—"if we can get together, we can do this ourselves. We can help ourselves readjust to modern"—at the time—"20th-century civilization."

So we are asked now, should we in fact enable our veterans, who have served us in one capacity or another—a capacity I think the member will agree we have to spend some time defining. Should they choose to wear that on their lapels, as many of us, indeed most of us do, very proudly with our legislative pins? That's an idea that's got a lot of merit. That's an idea that I think we could have a really productive, positive conversation about in this province, and one that I hope gives rise to looking at not merely our veterans who have served in uniform but perhaps some of our people who have served in public service and done their time, very often for a much longer period of time. And when you leave, you know, you think: Okay, you've left; you were the mayor, the reeve, the MPP or the MP, and maybe it's time we could consider that as well because that, too, represents honourable service to the citizens of this province.

I'm voting for this. I would be very interested to see how this conversation and exploration of the subject plays out, and I certainly commend the member for bringing it forward.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today in support of my colleague the member from Leeds–Grenville on his motion that would see the government of Ontario establish the Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin to recognize those Ontarians who have served or are serving in Canadian Armed Forces.

Canadians are fiercely proud of our veterans and those who serve in our military. Each and every year on Remembrance Day—I have, I think, 17 cenotaphs in my riding alone, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—I try to attend as many services as I can to honour those people who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedoms. With millions of Canadians wearing a poppy, of course, it's the symbol of our national pride and respect.

During the recent conflict in Afghanistan, thousands of Ontarians would make their way to the Highway of Heroes along Highway 401, from CFB Trenton all the way to Toronto, to pay their respects to the fallen soldiers upon being returned to Canada. Of the Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan, 52 were from Ontario, including

two soldiers from my riding: Corporal Nick Bulger, from the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; and Corporal Mark McLaren, who attended public school in Omeme and high school at I.E. Weldon in Lindsay.

When we go to the services on Remembrance Day, it's interesting that for years there weren't many around who were Silver Cross mothers. Now we have mothers who have lost children in battle—they're younger than I am—and who are laying the wreaths at the cenotaph.

So I just put that out there to say that at this time there's a renewed sense of appreciation for the men and women of the Canadian Armed Forces. It's important that Ontario does recognize the thousands of its citizens who put themselves in harm's way to defend our nation and the values we stand for around the world.

Our Armed Forces also contribute to a variety of domestic initiatives, from search-and-rescue to disaster relief, and all that keeps Canadians safe from harm.

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Creating this honour not only shows the province's appreciation for Ontarians who step forward to serve their country; the fact that it is designed to be worn on civilian dress provides all residents with an opportunity to recognize veterans and active duty personnel and extend their gratitude when they see them.

The pins, as mentioned in the proposed motion, would be available to veterans' organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion branches and military organizations to present at local ceremonies, providing an opportunity for further recognition in communities across this province. I can tell you that they would be much appreciated in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. We always want opportunities to praise our veterans.

This type of recognition has been done before in other parts of Canada—in Saskatchewan, as the member from Leeds–Grenville mentioned. I think this is a great motion that directs the government to establish the Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin to honour current and former members of the Canadian Armed Forces, including reservists from Ontario who served in military operations. I'm getting a sense from the House that it's going to have a very positive vote at the end of today's sitting.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's with pleasure that I rise today. When we're speaking about our veterans, I'm always thinking about the Byers and Arnold families from back home. Those families lost—the ultimate sacrifice—their loved ones. When I speak about veterans and speak on behalf of individuals who served, they are always foremost in my thoughts.

I want to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for his motion to recognize the sentiment of many Ontarians who are wishing to show gratitude for the many sacrifices of Ontarians who have served and are currently serving in the Canadian Armed Forces with the establishment of the Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin.

New Democrats stand with all Ontarians in recognizing and reflecting on the sacrifice—including the ultimate sacrifice—of Ontarians who have fought in foreign wars. We acknowledge Canada's long history of international conflict resolution and leadership as peacekeepers around the globe.

I am a proud member of Royal Canadian Legion 561 in Elliot Lake. I enjoy visiting and spending time with the veterans there. I enjoy standing by the bar, maybe dumping down a few drafts, a few cold ones. It's always there that you learn and you see the pain in the eyes of the veterans when you sit down and actually listen to their stories. I have many friends whom I speak to on a regular basis, who tell me their many incredible stories while serving. But they also tell me of the many challenges veterans face across this country.

This week, I was able to speak with some good friends, like Bob Manual, Tom Hywarren, Chuck Myles and Colin Pick. They were eager to speak to me and share information and documents that they had. They wanted to make it clear that they are very much in favour of this pin, but they wanted to express their stories of what the reality is of these individuals and the recognition and honour they rightfully deserve. Every one of them was pleased to see this motion and the recognition for the many heroes here in the province with the Lieutenant Governor's Military Service Pin. I am glad to be following the example of Saskatchewan, which introduced this motion last year and is recognizing the many men and women in that province.

As we know, the many regiments across this province have had a long and distinguished legacy in fighting for, protecting and preserving the many liberties we enjoy as Canadians. These brave Canadians left their loved ones behind to fight for freedom, democracy and peace—for fundamental Canadian values. The liberties we enjoy as Canadians today were preserved by the bravery of Canadians in Normandy nearly seven decades ago. Their legacy endures as we pay tribute to our men and women in uniform serving in Afghanistan, Haiti, Libya, Sudan and elsewhere around the world and here at home.

When I spoke with my friend Bob Manual, he highlighted that it has only been recently that the federal government has finally recognized the veterans of Vimy Ridge. It is before the Senate to vote to recognize National Peacekeepers' Day. Most other nations already do this. Only now is the government beginning to recognize the true value of our servicemen and servicewomen and the enormous contribution they have made and are making to our country and to the world. My friend Tom Hywarren echoes these same sentiments.

My friend Chuck Myles had a lot to offer, and I want to ensure that his voice is heard in regard to his concerns. While many of these concerns technically fall under Veterans Affairs and federal jurisdiction, I feel that as a province there are many ways in which we can work with our federal and other provincial colleagues to ensure that we address the concerns of our provinces' and country's heroes.

Chuck spoke a lot about the Cold War and Canada's reluctance to officially recognize the contribution of servicemen and women in this effort. Because it was not actually a war, they won't acknowledge the contribution of those who served, were injured or even died between 1945 and 1991. He has repeatedly tried to obtain information and statistics on casualties. He has made requests for information through the freedom of information act and has been turned down each and every time, being informed that there is no data available. He couldn't even find out how many Canadians served in the Cold War, how many Canadians' lives were lost overseas, how many died on Canadian soil. The response was, "Unfortunately, following a thorough and complete search for all records in response to your request, it is determined that no records could be located within the Department of National Defence."

When Canadians left Europe in the 1960s, they left behind Canadians in Germany, France, Belgium, Sardinia, England and Holland: 1,374 Canadians who died in these places during the Cold War. At least 965 Canadian service personnel died in Europe during the Cold War. How many died on the high seas? How many died right here in Canada? No one can say and no one can find out.

Mr. Myles says he believes that Canadians who served during the Cold War years deserve rightful recognition alongside those who died in other wars. We should honour them alongside veterans in World War I, World War II and Korea, and the peacekeepers who served under UN command.

I also spoke with a good friend of mine, Mr. Colin Pick, who has been tirelessly fighting for veterans his entire career. He says:

"Thank you for your interest in Canada's veterans and the challenges they face as a result of massive problems still existing with the ... New Veterans Charter, as follows: In 2006 two chief executives of Veterans Affairs Canada presented an idea to the Conservative government that would save them billions of dollars in cost-cutting measures, but upon the backs of Canada's veterans.

"The ... government grabbed at the idea, had it rushed through Parliament, then the Senate, because on the surface it sounded like a good idea, but underneath the elaborate wordings were hidden agendas that would rob our veterans and their families of fair and just entitlements to benefits for many years to come.

"Even now, some nine years later, there are hundreds of issues" that veterans face with "veterans' death and disability benefits, which are much underpaid as compared" to "payouts by the courts for civil deaths or accidents of equal standing....

"On a similar note, just as the NVC was a disaster for veterans, likewise is the recent WSIB policy changes that" were "allowed into law by the Wynne government on November 1 of this year, and without care or concern for the fact that such harsh and hurtful policy changes were pushing injured and diseased workers into the poorhouse or onto the streets of ... cities."

He goes on about many other concerns that he has been fighting for continuously for veterans' affairs.

When I talk to the veterans of our area, they do want to see this pin. They do recognize the importance of it. Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Elliot Lake has the only cenotaph in Canada that honours the victims of the Cold War.

Again, I want to reiterate the good work of the member from Leeds–Grenville and that New Democrats stand with all Ontarians in recognizing and reflecting on the sacrifice, including the ultimate sacrifice, of Ontarians who have fought in foreign wars. We welcome this honour that would be bestowed upon them.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: This debate offers us an opportunity to pay tribute to those who have served in various capacities in the Canadian Armed Forces over the years. The member has suggested an appropriate recognition of those in the form of the motion that is before us today.

All of us are deeply grateful to the veterans' organizations within our communities. In St. Catharines, Branch 24, the H.T. Church Branch, of the Royal Canadian Legion is probably the oldest one. We also have Branch 350, which is the Port Dalhousie Branch; the Merritton Branch, which is known as Branch 138; and the Polish Legion, which is Branch 418; along with the Imperial Veterans, who have a branch of their own in our community. All of them strive to provide service, recognition and ongoing communication with those who have served, both in times of war and in times of peacekeeping.

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There's a thought that perhaps those who have served in war—and obviously they're the ones who have faced the most dire circumstances—should be the only ones who are recognized, but we recognize in Canada that many of our troops who have served in the United Nations forces have placed themselves in considerable danger as well. In fact, there have been incidents taking place around the world where harm has come to United Nations troops. So there are those who have been peacekeepers, those who have assisted in one way or another.

The member would know and has said that when there is an international disaster—we have a situation with Ebola in Africa, for instance, at the present time, where members of our Armed Forces have been designated to provide assistance. It is an imposition on family and friends when people are taken away from what might be normal activities, we would expect, to join the Armed Forces, whether they be full-time members of the Armed Forces or those who would be in the reserves. So recognition is appropriate.

All of us, on at least two occasions I can think of, consistently—one is Remembrance Day, where we gather at the various cenotaphs around the nation to pay tribute to those who have made the supreme sacrifice of their lives. But there are many, as well, we think of on those days who have come back battle-scarred. They can

come back with both physical and psychological wounds, which are part of participation in wars.

The wars are not as they are often characterized in the popular media, that being movies and some television shows, where perhaps they are portrayed in a different circumstance than what really happened. Those who have actually served would tell you that it was not a pleasant circumstance at all times. Yes, there was camaraderie. Yes, there was a distinction of serving one's country. But often they served in times of bitter cold or tremendous heat, when they served in the African campaign, for instance, in the Second World War, where there would be tremendous heat that was very oppressive at that time. They were in winter, they were in summer, they were in rainfall, they were in hot sunshine—all of them served our country to protect something that is vital.

We are in a Legislative Assembly here today. The reason we are able to debate and discuss and, yes, disagree from time to time on policies when legislation comes before the House is because there were people out there in the past, on an ongoing basis, who were there to defend this way of life, our democratic system of which we are all justifiably proud, the liberties that we have in this country.

It's always good, I think, to find a way to recognize those who have served. The member has come forward with a resolution which recognizes them appropriately in a very tangible way. It's not that those who have served seek glory or seek this kind of recognition; the gesture by the member for Brockville—Leeds–Grenville, as it is known—is more in recognition of the fact that they have served and that we want to demonstrate a way in which we can once again show our gratitude.

What is heartwarming when we have our parades is the round of applause for veterans, because many of the veterans are quite elderly now. We, the political representatives, are often in these parades. We're not necessarily accorded a round of applause, nor do we seek it. What we are heartened by is when we hear the round of applause that comes when the veterans, many of them quite elderly, some of them infirm, are making their way down the street toward the cenotaph.

And of course, on Decoration Day, as well, in various cemeteries around the province of Ontario and our country, the graves are decorated in recognition of those individuals. The same day is also Canadian Armed Forces Day.

So I want to say to my friend the member for Leeds–Grenville that I think he will find considerable support in principle for this particular resolution, and I commend him for bringing it forward.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's a distinct pleasure to rise in support of such a poignant motion by my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. This resolution proposes the creation of a Lieutenant Governor's military Service Pin in recognition of all Ontarians who have served or are serving in the Canadian Armed Forces. I think this is a great idea.

It's a modest proposal, but it couldn't be more appropriate.

The Canadian Armed Forces have finished their 13-year mission in Afghanistan, and the world is facing unprecedented threats, unlike anything we have experienced in the modern world.

True, the battlegrounds may be far, far from home, but it is our men and women in uniform who fight on our behalf against determined enemies. Their bravery and courage are to be admired and recognized for all time.

A Lieutenant Governor's military Service Pin that can be worn by veterans in civilian clothing would make it easier to recognize these heroes and easier, then, for us to thank them personally for their service when we encounter them when they are back at home in safety.

We must never forget the 158 Canadian soldiers, one diplomat, one journalist and two civilian contractors who gave their lives in Afghanistan. Fifty-two of the soldiers killed were Ontarians. My riding was not without its sacrifice. Sapper Brian Collier and Warrant Officer Robert Wilson were killed in action in Afghanistan. And we can never forget the thousands and thousands of fallen men and women in World War I, World War II, Korea and other devastating conflicts. This military service pin would remind us that our peace is fragile and we should never take it for granted.

My riding is home to the Queen's York Rangers Regiment, with over 250 years of history. The Rangers have provided service to both the York and Simcoe communities and have made many of us proud in their accomplishments overseas. The Queen's York Rangers cadets provide youth with unique opportunities and the most valuable, up-to-date training available. I'm very proud that the Rangers continue to carry on and strengthen their traditions in York-Simcoe and continue to impact and inspire our youth. I'm pleased to know this new honour will recognize the Queen's York Rangers' historic service as well.

This Lieutenant Governor's pin will not be the first of its kind. It is modelled after one established in 2013 in Saskatchewan, and I think that its success only means that ours is going to be successful as well.

As Canadians and Ontarians, we are privileged not to live in war. There are places in the world that have been embroiled in war for more than a generation. We should remember our soldiers who also support war-torn citizens with humanitarian aid, food, clean water, medicine, and building infrastructure like schools.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage every member of this House to proudly support this motion.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm thrilled to speak on behalf of this motion in order to recognize the sacrifices made by Ontario's veterans who have served with valour and distinction in pursuit of liberty, justice and peace. At a time when Canada's role and influence in the world is expanding, it's important to foster a renewed sense of appreciation for the men and women who risk their lives,

both at home and abroad, in order to defend our nation and the values we all hold so dear.

Additionally, as one of our most major missions in the past century comes to a close, it seems fitting to honour over 40,000 soldiers who have selflessly served our province and our country over the past 14 years in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Issuing a pin to soldiers is a beautiful custom that allows for soldiers to receive the pins at public ceremonies, yet another venue at which to celebrate and appreciate their services to our province and our country. It's a custom that is already in place in various other countries around the world. The example that comes to my mind right now is Israel, where every soldier who fights during a conflict is awarded a pin for their dedication and service at the end of that conflict. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure you wouldn't be surprised to hear that there are a lot of Israelis living in Thornhill, and most of them, if they're adult age, have served in the Israeli army.

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I can still remember being about 12 years old when the phone rang, and I answered it—my maiden name is Gladstone. A gentleman said, "Is Private Gladstone there, Miss?" I felt like saying, "Wrong number" until I realized my older brother had joined the cadets. He very proudly joined. There were a lot of training exercises and a lot of weekend trips and things like that. He at the time was in what's called CEGEP in Quebec, which is sort of our grade 11 and first-year university. They gave him these badges that I had to sew on for him over his pocket that said "Gladstone." I managed to snag one for myself and sewed it on one of my shirts that I wore very proudly. I got a sort of khaki, army-looking camouflage shirt, and I put "Gladstone" on it. It was my favourite thing to wear with my little combat boots.

I think that the character-building and the camaraderie of our military is very well known and very well respected. It behooves all of us to encourage our children to contemplate at least getting involved in the junior level of the cadets or whatever other programs are available.

I just want to mention a little bit more about the pin, which I understand is designed to be worn not only on their army uniform but also on civilian clothing as well. It would give the soldiers the opportunity to be recognized for their service, their achievements, dedication and bravery by the people they serve. It's a shame that, when soldiers are out of uniform, people don't recognize them and treat them to a coffee at Tim Hortons like so often is done.

I strongly recommend this movement to recognize soldiers outside of their army bases. I know that when I see somebody in a military uniform, and when I see somebody now wearing the pin that I think hopefully will get delivered to our veterans soon, I would go the extra mile to pay my respects to any soldier who has, in some cases, gone 5,000 miles to protect me, my family and, very importantly, my values. Honouring a soldier can be done in many ways. A pin is a small token to show how appreciative we are of their efforts.

I hope to see this motion passed quickly. I want to thank the member for bringing it forward. I want to thank everybody for the comments.

I especially want to mention that, on our side of the House, in the official opposition, it was three women who spoke on this military topic. We now have a Lieutenant Governor who is a female, and we also have the first secrétaire générale de l'Organisation internationale de la francophonie who is the first woman serving in that capacity. As a female, maybe I look for those opportunities to mention it, but here's another opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for Leeds–Grenville. You have two minutes for response.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the members for Timmins–James Bay, Mississauga–Streetsville, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Algoma–Manitoulin, the Chair of Cabinet and minister without portfolio, and the members from York–Simcoe and Thornhill.

I mentioned earlier, Speaker, that it's with great pride that I'm standing here wearing the tie of my Leeds–Grenville militia unit, the Brockville Rifles. I'm proud to be a friend of the Rifles.

It was a privilege, following this year's Remembrance Day service, for me to attend a ceremony at the Brockville armoury where the Brocks unveiled their Afghanistan Battle Honour. More than 20 Brockville Rifles reservists served with bravery and distinction in Afghanistan. I know I speak for everyone in Leeds–Grenville when I say we could not be more proud to call them our own.

But there was a special person missing from that ceremony on Remembrance Day, and I'm saddened he's not here with us at today's debate. That person is Ben TeKamp, a former mayor of Brockville and honorary colonel of the Brockville Rifles, who passed away on October 12. Earlier this year, I gave a member's statement in tribute of Mr. TeKamp.

I would be remiss in the context of today's debate if I didn't also salute Ben's lifelong commitment to the men and women of Canada's military. I know Ben would have been the first person to congratulate me for this initiative and to encourage everyone to support it, because he recognized the need to honour those who have served at every opportunity.

I just want to take this opportunity to tell one story. In the House, we have our Vimy pin that all members were given. I jumped on a plane, flew to Ottawa. As I was getting off the plane, a young man came up to me and asked me about the Vimy pin, asked me where I got it. I said that as a member of provincial Parliament, we were all given a copy of the Vimy pin here in the Legislature. He said to me, "I asked my CO for one of those, and it's very rare." He couldn't get one. I took the pin off my lapel and I handed it to him, and he asked me, "How much for the pin?" I said, "No, you deserve it more than I do." I would never have known that that man was with the Canadian Armed Forces if he hadn't mentioned his commanding officer.

I ask for everyone's support for this motion. I think it's high time we recognize our veterans here in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote on the motion at the end of private members' public business.

TRANSPORTATION OF AGGREGATES

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Transportation should continue to work with the aggregate and excavation industry to consider viable solutions to resolve weight compliance and safety issues regarding commercial shipping; and provide updated definitions of aggregate and excavation materials after comprehensive industry consultations as part of the Ministry of Transportation's ongoing review.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Malhi has moved private members' notice of motion number 17. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

The member for Brampton–Springdale.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: It is a pleasure to debate this resolution this afternoon, and I am pleased we were able to fit this into the legislative schedule before the House rises for the holiday break.

I'd like to present the resolution one more time: that in the opinion of this House, the Minister of Transportation should continue to work with the aggregate and excavation industry to consider viable solutions to resolve weight compliance and safety issues regarding commercial shipping; and provide updated definitions of aggregate and excavation materials after comprehensive industry consultations as part of the Ministry of Transportation's ongoing review.

I've had the opportunity and the pleasure to meet with the dump truck industry representatives and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce some of those representatives as guests who have joined us today to watch this debate. I know some of them are here today while others could not make it due to the weather, so I'm going to go with my original list. First and foremost, Babneet Punia, who is a director with the association; Sukhpal Jeet Kang, who is the vice-president; Baljeet Grewal, the president; Anandpal Singh, the safety director; Jarnail Mand, director; Kirpal Grewal, member; Jasbir Singh Chahal, director; Jaspal Singh Deol, director; Inderjit Singh Goosal, general secretary; Hardeep Hayer, director; and Darshan Banit, general secretary. Thank you for coming out and joining us today.

These dump truck operators provide a lot of business, employment and economic activity in my riding of Brampton–Springdale and across the province. They are an important part of Ontario's economy. I agree with their mission statement, which is to promote the importance of their industry as well as to support their businesses in a safe, professional and sustainable fashion. That is exactly what this debate is meant to champion: a safe, professional and sustainable industry in our province.

First, let me begin by saying that I know that the Ministry of Transportation continues to work closely with the

aggregate excavation industry in Ontario and is currently undergoing a review of the issues we are discussing this afternoon. They are working productively together to develop viable solutions to resolve weight compliance and safety issues.

I've been working with the minister and the Ministry of Transportation and I am pleased that the ministry is always open to listening to our partners' concerns and working co-operatively with them on solutions. I know that as a ministry, MTO's first concern is the safety of those using our highways, and I think they do a great job at providing a safe transportation system here in Ontario. This is all to say that the laws we have in place, including vehicle weight restrictions, are designed to ensure that our roads are safe.

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I'd like to use a part of my time to give a brief overview of the issue of weight compliance. Overweight loads on dump trucks are a major concern. That's because aggregate haulers are expected to comply with allowable gross weight requirements. What are these requirements? They are that charges will be laid if the amount of a gross weight overload exceeds 2,000 kilograms.

As previously mentioned, the aggregate and excavation industry and the Ministry of Transportation continue to work to develop viable solutions to resolve weight compliance issues.

Currently, the MTO has temporarily suspended axle weight enforcement. This policy applies to aggregate haulers and includes any "vehicle combination that is designed for dumping or spreading sand, gravel, crushed or uncut rock, asphalt, slag or rubble or any mixture of such materials"—basically, those operators engaged in the aggregate industry. It's my understanding that all of the above are covered under an exemption from December 2013 through to March 31, 2015.

Beginning March 6, 2013, no enforcement action for weight violations was to be taken by MTO enforcement officers. Further details include that operators will be required to remove a portion of the load only when the amount of the overload exceeds the allowable gross weight by more than 3,000 kilograms for vehicles or combinations with five axles or less, and 5,000 kilograms for vehicles or combinations with six axles or more. The amount of the overload must then be corrected to within 2,000 kilograms of the allowable gross weight.

Deferred enforcement of load equalization requirements for safe, productive, infrastructure-friendly vehicles within section 14 of Ontario regulation 413/05 will continue. There will be no weight reductions imposed for improper load equalization.

I understand that the suspension of axle weight enforcement is a temporary measure while we all work to develop long-term solutions.

In addition to all of this information, I believe we need to further clarify the definitions of "aggregates" and "excavation materials." It seems as though the main distinction is that aggregates are defined as "sand, gravel,

crushed or uncut rock, asphalt, slag or rubble or any mixture of such materials." But what is the difference between sand versus dirt or soil? Shouldn't this be defined as well? And if it is, what is the difference? What rules should apply?

I also want to speak to the issue of safety. Industry representatives have informed me of a few of the concerns they have been experiencing, and I would like to take a moment to speak about them.

First, it has come to my attention that while the vast majority of gravel sites have scales, I have been told that all sites do not have scales that measure weight prior to leaving the site. This falls under the ongoing review of the MTO.

Second, truck drivers are not able to interfere with staff who load their trucks at gravel pits or excavation sites. As a result, many trucks are loaded with improper axle-weight loading specifications or are in excess of weight restrictions, which result in violations at the MTO scale sites. The concern here is that this may potentially lead to intentionally overloaded trucks. Shippers and loaders on-site load trucks and should be aware of and comply with weight regulations, but it appears as though many are not as vigilant as they should be.

In some circumstances, truck drivers are asked to spread the load in their trucks to ensure axle weight is evenly distributed. This is not their responsibility, yet they are fined if their truck is overweight.

The more one can overload a truck, the less overall number of trucks need to be contracted to complete a job. The result is that drivers are given the ultimatum of taking the load or losing potential future contracts with these companies.

Speaker, the following are some thoughts about potential solutions. First of all, I believe that safety is paramount and should come first. Secondly, perhaps we should look at implementing some more stringent rules that hold sites without scales liable for excess weight or improper axle-weight loading specs on trucks that they have loaded. Perhaps tickets should be issued to the site as well as to companies, not just the drivers.

Also, could the MTO possibly consider using a mobile scale, periodically, outside these sites to weigh trucks before they leave the premises? Random mobile checks may provide increased motivation to make sure the standards are being met, thus decreasing violations.

I believe it may be also a good idea—a concern that was raised—to have diverse multilingual inspectors at the provincial weighing scales.

I also want to speak briefly about the issue of brokers in the dump truck industry and how it affects fairness and safety. To clarify, a broker is a person or company who arranges with an operator to carry the goods of another person or company by commercial motor vehicle for compensation. Essentially, a broker is an entity that is sometimes used to contract the carrier, the dump truck operator.

Representatives of the industry have informed me that there was legislation regarding load brokers, i.e., Ontario regulation 556/92 under the old Truck Transportation

Act. When the TTA was repealed, the requirement for the load broker certificate and surety bond were eliminated. It appears as though the former was more comprehensive than what remains in the Highway Traffic Act today.

These brokerages are not regulated in Ontario. According to research from the legislative library, Quebec is the only Canadian jurisdiction that currently regulates truck brokers. Perhaps it would be appropriate to consider regulating these brokers like Quebec. I know that drivers want regulations for brokers. Why should drivers carry all the risk and receive all of the penalties?

My debate time is almost up. Before I end my presentation, I would once again like to thank our guests for joining us. I would, again, like to focus on what we talked about in terms of safety and the concerns that they face. This has been an ongoing issue and we need to commit to working with the dump truck association and the other stakeholders in the industry to resolve these issues so that we can have safer roads and better regulations for our drivers.

I would like to thank my colleagues for joining me in this afternoon's debate and I look forward to hearing more on this issue.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to join the debate on today's resolution. I want to thank Ms. Malhi for bringing this forward.

Mr. Arthur Potts: The member for—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, the member for Brampton—

Ms. Soo Wong: Brampton–Springdale.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Brampton–Springdale? Yes, she took over from Linda Jeffrey in the last Parliament.

Ms. Soo Wong: That's right. Mayor Jeffrey. Your Worship, to you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, she is Her Worship Jeffrey now, yes. I wanted to thank her for bringing this item to the Legislature today. I, like her, encourage the government to enact a solution to this problem that's been going on too long. The right thing is in place today. There is a moratorium on the fines, only because the law, as it exists, is essentially unenforceable because, clearly in the minds of those who made the decision, there was a gross unfairness to it—"gross," no pun intended to the gross vehicle weight ratio that we talk about as truckers.

First, I want to talk a little bit about aggregate in general because I have a lot of time here, and the member for Brampton–Springdale has articulated the problem very well. The question now is, what do we do to arrive at a solution? She's absolutely right: You can't have one segment of the equation bearing all the risk. If you're the guy behind the wheel of that truck who gets the fine, the risk is all on you—I don't mean that in a singular gender way—if you're the person driving that truck. We have lots of female truck drivers today and they're darn good. Some of them are better drivers than me.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Most likely. But it shouldn't be their risk. For the driver, at the end of the day, if they

get hit with a significant fine, that day is lost. And maybe more than a day, because they're not going to be making any money if they're getting fines when it is an unjust situation and all the risk is borne by them. So I want to thank her for bringing this forward to the Legislature.

I want to talk about aggregate in general. I've got a lot of aggregate in my riding as well—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: We can tell.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, yes. The gravelly-voiced doctor over there—no pun intended—tells me I've got a lot of aggregate in my riding.

It is an absolutely essential component of our society today. If we don't have aggregate and we can't mine and extract aggregate, we stop. We've got to take that into consideration as we enact all of these regulations surrounding aggregate and remember that the farther we have to truck that aggregate, the greater effect we have on the environment. We need to think about that when we're failing to licence new pits simply because someone doesn't want that pit licensed near their place of residence or where they like to believe that nature is alone with them. We've got to take that stuff into consideration.

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If you don't have aggregate, you've got nothing. You can't build anything. If you can't build anything, your society fails. You can't build a building without aggregate. Even if it's an all-wood building, you've got to get that aggregate in some way. If you haven't got roads, you can't build that building because you can't truck the aggregate there, and if you don't have aggregate, you can't build the roads. It's an essential part of what we do. The aggregate industry sometimes—it's not the sexiest industry: gravel trucks running up and down the road. They don't see that maybe quite as glamorous as the video game business. You see the ads on television and you've got to get the latest video game. Well, if we didn't have aggregate, there would be no place to make those video games because we wouldn't have been able to build the roads or the buildings to house them. Sometimes we've really got to think back and remember just how essential and basic that industry is. If we didn't have an aggregate industry, we wouldn't be here, so I want to thank the member for Brampton–Springdale for bringing this forward.

On the flip side of it—so we're talking about a moratorium that goes until the end of 2015. Correct? Well, the government has to act and act expeditiously, because the situation, as it exists without the moratorium, is not right. You have to have a situation that is fair to all of the players so that the burden isn't being borne by one part of that equation. The emphasis and the onus is on the government to move. I appreciate the member, as a member of the government, bringing a resolution that calls upon her government to actually do something, because lately, as we've been seeing, they don't do very much other than time allocation. Maybe they could bring a bill in for these changes and put it on time allocation and get this taken care of, but they may not see it as being important

enough. The member had to take it upon herself to bring this before the Legislature.

But the issue is there before us. The government will be able to make their own decisions about how they're going to act with respect to this motion. It is the last day of the House before the Christmas break and a bit of a break for the Legislature. We'll return on Family Day. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the transportation ministry will have a chance to look at this. I expect that this resolution is going to carry because I can't see anything in this resolution that would give me any reason to be opposed to it. It's a positive move on the part of the member, and I think it would be a positive move on the part of us, as legislators, to bring this forward. This issue will be, when we return, when you see me next—

Ms. Soo Wong: Yak, yak, yak.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, if I'm lucky enough to come back, Soo, when you see me next, hopefully, the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Natural Resources will have had the time—because they've had enough time already. The reality is that they should have had this taken care of. They've been spinning their wheels, no pun intended. The wheels are spinning; the wheels have seized.

If the ministers want to get together on this and bring forward a solution, I'm sure this Legislature will be prepared to act tout de suite, because we want to have an aggregate industry that is fair to all of the players so that we can continue to build what I believe is the best place to live, work and raise a family, right here in Ontario. In spite of the fact that the government is not doing a very good job, it is still the best place.

I want to wish each and every one of you a merry Christmas and a safe holiday season.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's just not fair, Mr. Speaker, to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. It's actually not fair that I get to follow him. He always enlightens this House with his passion when he speaks on behalf of his constituents and on behalf of Ontarians.

There's not much that—I didn't disagree with what he was bringing forward, that, yes, this is a motion that we're dealing with from the member from—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Brampton–Springdale.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Brampton–Springdale. This could have been a private member's bill. This could have been a piece of regulation that could have come through the government. This could have been dealt with back in 2012, when this was really highlighted. This is something that the Liberal government has had in their possession for a very long time, and they could have acted on it. It's nice to see that the member has taken the initiative and she has listened to the constituents in her area and now is moving forward with this.

But again, it is at the last hour, and once we do come back in February—I agree with the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—the proof will be in the

pudding. We'll see where your priorities are when we resume here in February and how you're going to be bringing this forward. That's going to be very important. Again, we have our friends who are sitting here with us. They are the ones who are being impacted by what this potentially might do for them. We will see what happens when we get back here in February.

I rise today to speak to the Liberal member from Brampton–Springdale's motion regarding weight compliance of commercial aggregate haulage. On behalf of my New Democratic colleagues and as NDP critic for transportation, I am pleased to support the member's motion that finally calls on her Liberal government to work with the aggregate and excavation industry to consider viable solutions that seek to resolve weight compliance and safety issues when it comes to commercial shipping.

This motion reminds me of a similar one last week by the Liberal member from Durham in that this Liberal government is doing a terrible job at regulating the extraction industry. My hope is that with this motion, we're finally able to pay a little bit more than lip service to an issue that has cost the hard-working families of Ontario both money and safety. We can be doing a lot better, especially with issues that this government has known about for over two years and one that we have yet to see any action on.

Mr. Speaker, in August of this year, a local newspaper in Caledon obtained results of a survey completed by this government's Ministry of Transportation for TAPMO, the top aggregate-producing municipalities. It was conducted two years ago. The survey indicated that almost half of the 434 vehicles surveyed within a two-month period exceeded and therefore violated their gross weight allowance. The study noted that, "overloading is a systemic problem which involves shippers, carrier, drivers and" the Ministry of Transportation.

When asked about the report at the time, the ministry claimed that the survey was part of an internal review. In January of last year, the Minister of Transportation, at the time the member from Ottawa West–Nepean, wrote to the city of Kawartha Lakes and acknowledged that there was a systemic problem and pattern of non-compliance for both gross and axle weight. Yet, when the ministry was asked about the issue by the local newspaper, a spokesman told them that there were no proposals for new legislation and that there were no plans for the ministry to work alongside the Ontario Provincial Police to increase enforcement.

A deeper look at the issue before us, and it's easy to note that enforcement only scratches the surface of this issue. For some reason, Mr. Speaker, this government has refused to make more information available to community groups about the study that the ministry conducted, what the purpose of it was and any proposed action that they intend or intended on taking.

On behalf of my New Democratic colleagues, I am glad to see this issue has come up again, though hardly surprised that there has yet to be any due action to solve the issue at hand. It's my hope that in passing this

motion, the member opposite will finally trigger the Ministry of Transportation to take a deeper look at the issues and take the necessary action to consult with communities and industry groups at stake to fix this.

Specifically, the issues at hand beg a series of questions:

(1) Are the aggregate hauling trucks really overweight?

We're joined here today by friends from the Ontario Dump Truck Association, which the member highlighted earlier. I would like to again introduce Kirpal, Anandpal, Baljeet, Jarnail, Babneet, Sukhpal and Jaspal joining us here at Queen's Park. Welcome. You are the faces of the individuals who are being affected by the lack of action by this Liberal government.

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They work in the industry each and every day and talk about their loads constantly being overloaded at job sites. When faced with ministry inspections, their trucks are constantly found to be overweight.

(2) Is this a safety issue on Ontario roads or simply one of overweight vehicles causing too much damage to roads and, as a result, causing an infrastructure cost concern?

(3) Or is it both, and if so, what role does the ministry have to play, being the number one user of aggregate in Ontario? If our government is actually the biggest consumer, the biggest customer, why aren't we dealing with this issue more aggressively?

The issue here is not only one of enforcement or compliance. We can set up weight stations all over Ontario and continue to impose hefty fines on trucks that are found to fall above their gross allowable weight, but as the questions above note, that would only solve a portion of this issue.

What we have here seems to be a flawed system, and a motion that I support in principle but would like to see action on immediately.

The ministry and the industry's discrepancies in weighing trucks need to be fixed. Ministry rules stipulate that trucks need to be at or below a gross allowable weight maximum. They are given one whole number. So when aggregate trucks are loaded at pit sites, they're weighed as a whole, and if they meet this ministry standard, they're simply let go. You get on the scale, you get your weight, you're below the target; off you go.

Despite the Ministry of Transportation stipulating this one maximum gross weight, when they themselves set up screening stations to weigh haulage trucks, they weigh each and every axle individually. Both scales are certified; both scales are used; both scales are a different system.

What's found here is, naturally, that loads shift in the process and trucks often have more material either at the front or at the back of their loads. This obviously shifts and throws off the individual axle weight. Once the ministry applies its formula adding up the totals of each individual axle weight, it's found that trucks are largely and disproportionately found to be overweight, facing hefty fines as a result.

The Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association confirms this discrepancy in the methods used by both industry and the ministry, as does the vice-president of James Dick Construction, Mr. Greg Sweetnam. Both are among a list of industry personnel who confirm that the numbers in the ministry's study are grossly disproportionate as a result of the flawed and unfair system.

Mr. Speaker, in the letter that the member from Ottawa West-Nepean wrote, it was promised that this issue would be followed up on by February of last year. A meeting did take place in March. However, the issue is still before us, and we have yet to hear what steps this government is taking to resolve the issue.

Given that it has been on this Liberal government's radar for over two years, I'm glad that this motion is before us today, and I am pleased to stand in this House to speak to it and support it on behalf of my New Democrat colleagues. I would urge the government to take the necessary steps and the timely steps to disclose what the issues are, what steps are being taken to resolve them, and to finally take action on this particular file.

It's in your court. It's your responsibility. I sit where you sit, way back over here. You have to plug in and get into their ears and make sure that this becomes something that will be part of what you want to see and what your constituents want to see going forward when we come back here in February, and make sure that it is a priority for your government. It's a priority for us, it's a priority for the truck drivers here, it's a priority for Ontarians, it's a priority for our economy, and it's a priority for our municipalities. Make it a Liberal priority, and it shall be.

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

Mr. Vic Dhillon: It's an honour to speak on motion 17, a motion encouraging the Ministry of Transportation to consider solutions to resolve weight compliance and safety issues regarding commercial shipping.

First of all, I just want to reiterate what the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke said. He said without aggregate we have nothing, and I say without trucking we don't have aggregate, so we have more nothing. I just want to highlight the importance of the trucking industry in terms of the role it plays in our lives, because we often think a lot of the goods we consume lie in warehouses, but in fact most of the goods that we consume are on the road in trucks. So I feel it's very important that we pay attention to this very important industry.

I also want to welcome and thank the members of the dump truck industry for coming to Queen's Park in support of this very important bill.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Sat sri akal.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Sat sri akal. Mr. Speaker, I'm from the riding of Brampton West. A majority of the population in Brampton West was born outside of Canada. Out of this population, a large number of members of this riding are employed in the trucking industry, not just as drivers but in spinoff jobs: in offices and in other jobs relating to the trucking industry. As a matter of fact, my riding is home to new immigrants who are often highly

qualified but have difficulty in connecting and matching their skills with the right job. A lot of them have chosen the trucking industry in behind-the-scenes jobs, such as dispatch. I know of a few people who have used skills such as computer skills that they used in the country of their origin and applied them to the trucking industry to make software, which helps the drivers do their job much more easily.

Mr. Speaker, I was elected in 2003, and trucking has been an issue that I have been dealing with on a very, very regular basis. I can say I've met with every Minister of Transportation with regard to issues affecting the trucking industry in one way or the other. We have made strides, although in small steps, working with the government and industry in resolving some of the issues. I think we all need to continue to keep an eye on the problems that are faced by our residents in the trucking industry.

In particular I want to speak about the aggregate industry, which includes sand, gravel, rock, asphalt, slab and rubble. What's surprising is that soil is not a part of this list. So what happens is, if a trucker is stopped with soil as the load in the back of his truck, he receives a ticket. Some of these tickets are in the thousands of dollars. I've had people actually show me the tickets that they've received for what I believe is no fault of their own, for what I believe is a small technicality that we can fix by working with the Ministry of Transportation and all the other stakeholders.

Talking about speaking with the Ministry of Transportation, I have brought this issue up with our minister, the Honourable Stephen Del Duca. I've written to him, and he has responded to me. I realize that in government things take time. Hopefully this issue, along with the passage of this motion—I firmly believe that this issue will be expedited if all of the members of the House support this motion so that we can give our members in the lobby some relief.

The second major issue that I think needs to be discussed is the axle weight issue, meaning that the weight of the load in the back of the truck should be equally divided amongst all the axles, depending on the number of axles on the truck. This is also an issue that has been brought to my attention many, many times. I can certainly tell you it's not the fault of the truck driver or the trucking industry, because they have no control over how much weight is placed in the cab of their truck. It's the loaders that load the different types of goods into the cab of the truck, and oftentimes—I can tell you, unequivocally, the trucking industry and the truck drivers do not want to carry more weight than they're allowed, but it's out of their hands. It's the companies that hire these drivers, and if they complain, at times they've gotten an ultimatum, "Do you want to keep your job? Do you want to continue working for us? You do as I say," which I think is really unfair.

1520

For this very reason, we must shift some of the responsibility to the loaders, that it's the loader's responsibility. That's the point of origin of the load. It's very

easy for the loader, first of all, to have a scale that measures the actual weight on each of the axles from the point of origin. The best way of resolving this issue is by placing more responsibility to the companies that load these trucks.

Again, I've had many conversations with the different Ministers of Transportation, most recently the Honourable Glen Murray.

As well, technology has improved. The trucking industry isn't what it was 40 years ago. There are machines—and another viable option for the government could be the new technology, possibly making it mandatory for truck drivers or the trucking industry to have these new mechanisms placed on their trucks so they can actually verify and make sure they're within the law.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sharing my time with the member from Beaches. I did have six minutes, and I'm into some of his time.

Again, I want to thank the members of the trucking industry for coming here. I would like to commit to you, on behalf of the government and myself, that this is a very, very important issue, because a majority—well, not a majority, a big majority—of the people that work in my riding rely on trucking as their source of living, and it's a good source of living. I want to make sure that you guys are protected, that safety is respected and that there are no further hindrances to your industry and your jobs. So thank you very much.

And thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the time.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm only going to take a brief moment to encourage the member for Brampton–Springdale to use the comments that have been made here in the chamber this afternoon to put pressure on her own government.

I had some experience as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, and the issue almost 15 years ago was gross vehicle weight and axle weights. This industry has been badly served by the government in not establishing something that protects them. They need protection from the fact that, as was just explained, the gravel is put in the back of the truck, the driver has no idea how it's being distributed, and they have no idea of the difference between gross vehicle weight and axle weight. It's more dangerous going around a corner. Bridges are the most dangerous. They also do the most damage. The loaded trucks going around the bridges are going off a bridge and on to a cloverleaf.

I would just want to add these comments to encourage the member that it's past time that the government came up with something that guaranteed the safety of the driver, protected the road and made the responsibility of what's in the truck that of the person loading.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you very much, Speaker, for having the opportunity to rise to talk to the bill. I only

wish that my colleague who's up talking to the truck drivers would have actually left me my six minutes so I could talk on the bill like I like to, but unfortunately, that didn't happen.

I think the intent of this motion is good; the question is whether or not it will be listened to. Working together to maintain roads affected by the weight of the truck is good, but allow me to speak on the root cause of this issue here: truck being overweight.

Surveys are telling us that 47% of the vehicles hauling in Ontario are over the maximum weight allowance. Some people working in the industry are telling us that this has more to do with the weighing situation—as far as I understand, weighing one axle at a time—than it does with transporting loads that are too heavy. I'm not entirely sure what the issue is here, as I'm not an expert on this kind of transportation, but I can tell you that no one seems to have reached a consensus on the figures. We may have trucks driving around with loads that are over the weight limit, but we may not. The major problem here is that we don't know. There are no figures that the MTO, the industry and the community groups can agree on. What this means is that there may be trucks on the road way over, but there may not.

We can agree on one thing: The MTO needs to be more transparent on this issue. They need to be open and public about the discussions that we've had on this issue since it was first raised well over a year ago. That tells you how important it is to the government.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It does bring me pleasure today to rise to speak in favour of my colleague's resolution on aggregate weight distribution compliance.

I wish to congratulate the member from Brampton–Springdale for introducing her first resolution to the House. As one of the newest members in the House, a pleasure that I share with her, she has launched a debate which is very complex, not quite as simple as it may be laid out, and we look forward to speedy resolution, because it's something we all agree on. It is an important debate and it deserves a thoughtful resolution.

Now, when she asked me to speak, I told her I was happy to do so because I quite realize this is a very "weighty" problem for the aggregate industry, the dump truck operators and the ministry. I wish to thank the member for so succinctly summarizing the issues at stake, and the other members of the House for putting it in context with respect of the solution or the problems we must address.

This debate does reflect, however, the fact that our government does want to consult and collaborate with all our stakeholders who are impacted by our policies. Although there's criticism that this hasn't happened fast enough, there has been distraction in a minority House in the last couple of years. We have a chance now, with our powers of a majority, to bring resolution, not being

distracted by other things. I want you to know we are committed to do so.

The ministry has been working with both aggregate and the excavation industry to resolve the weight compliance issues. In particular, we are working with a series of industry stakeholders to identify the causes of overloading and to work out a sustainable long-term solution. So in addition to the Ontario dump truck associations who are here today, I know our government has been working with a whole raft of other organizations, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, who are represented by the city of Kawartha Lakes, and the Indian trucking association, represented by HQ Truckline. Nelson Aggregates have been involved, as have Dufferin Aggregates, Bulk Transfer Systems Inc., the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association, the Canadian Transportation Equipment Association and the United Independent Operators. The Ontario Provincial Police, the Ontario Trucking Association, the Ontario Road Builders' Association and the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association have been involved.

I've done a lot of work in the past with the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association, working to develop a group known as Aggregate Recycling Ontario, our mandate being to try to use broken concrete from bridges and road construction in new road construction so we're not always bringing new primary aggregate from the moraine but are using a resource that we can find close to projects—material that has been broken up from a road or a bridge. I've had a chance to work with that association and I know they all are feeding into this debate. It's an important debate, and we look forward to a speedy resolution.

I appreciate, as the member talks about, that we do have a moratorium in place: March 31, 2015. I'm very hopeful and pleased to believe that we will be able to find a resolution which will satisfy people before that moratorium comes up.

But at the heart of the issue, we all agree, is public safety. It's important we have a rule on the books for the weight. I don't think we're disagreeing with that weight. How it applies to an axle is obviously an important disagreement. But the safety issue has to be our number one consideration moving forward in this debate.

1530

Now, as our government is investing \$29 billion over the next 10 years to build our province, you can imagine that we will have a lot more aggregate coming from quarries around the province that needs to be trucked by our good friends here. It needs to be done, like I say, in a safe, responsible way that respects all members of every association, so that all parties who are responsible for the loading—there's agreement, moving forward, that there will not be undue reliance on one party to bear the burden for transgressions of the law. We know there is an incentive to overload, because the more you have on a truck—it's a fixed cost to get there—it's cheaper per tonne. We have to balance those competing interests.

I know the government is working hard with all stakeholders, and we appreciate you coming down here

to advocate on behalf of your association. I look forward to a speedy resolution.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise to speak for just a couple of minutes on the topic brought forward by the member from Brampton–Springdale. I'm quite impressed with the level of debate this afternoon on this topic in the Legislature. I thank the members of the association for coming down.

I think we've all heard that the issue of—fairness does not exist: The truck drivers are maybe getting fined, but they're not responsible for the person who put the load on the truck.

I know that Kawartha Lakes, which of course is part of my riding, has been mentioned. They have been in the papers and spoken to ministry officials about the problems that exist within the riding. Kawartha Lakes being the third-largest aggregate producer in the province of Ontario, I have a little bit of aggregate going on in my area.

I think that what has been said about getting on with the process is dead on. The Ministry of Natural Resources does need to deal with several things on the Aggregate Resources Act. I think the Ministry of Transportation is involved in our motion today. I sat on the committee to review the Aggregate Resources Act for a year and a half. We brought in 38 recommendations. I know that the Speaker who is in the chair now was with us, on some of that committee, and so was the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. It was October 2013 that we tabled the report.

The Top Aggregate Producing Municipalities of Ontario, TAPMO, was mentioned earlier, but I will mention them again. They did a presentation at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in August highlighting what we had done on the Aggregate Resources Act. I see the member from Ajax–Pickering over there, nodding his head. He was with us on the review by the committee.

So the government has had a lot of input. They have to make decisions. We want them to act on the Aggregate Resources Act review. A top priority was actually the levies, which need to increase, because the municipalities that produce the aggregates—a lot of the roads that those trucks run over are municipal roads; the breakdown of the roads. The municipalities are losing money because they are the ones responsible for repairing the roads. That was highlighted in both of those reports that I mentioned. Right now, Dewdney Mountain in my riding is a big project, and I know that it's under an OMB review to discuss haul routes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot has been said and could be said on this topic.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member from Brampton–Springdale. You have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I would like to take a minute to recognize all of my colleagues who spoke on this motion today: the member from Renfrew–Nipissing, the member

from York–Simcoe, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, as well as the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the member from Niagara Falls, the member from Brampton West and the member from Beaches–East York. Thank you all for your valuable input. Thank you for taking the time to speak on this resolution.

I look forward to working with the ministry, as we have been, and moving forward on this issue. It's an issue that is important to all of us and, of course, to our constituents. It has been an ongoing issue. The ministry is committed to moving forward. I have been in conversations with the minister. In the near future, we do plan on meeting with the dump truck association as well as all of the stakeholders in this industry to come up with a viable and long-term solution for the issues they are facing.

There were a number of things that were brought up during the remarks I heard today from all of my colleagues, and I want to reassure my colleagues that we are committed to connecting with all stakeholders. We are committed to consulting with all of our stakeholders so that we have a solution that works for everybody. I want to commit to the dump truck association and everybody who is here today, and our guests, that I'm committed to advocating for you and continuing to advocate for you to our ministry. As with my colleagues from Brampton West and Beaches–East York, we do understand the issues. We did have an opportunity to meet with you earlier this year. We did make commitments. We are committed to carrying forward and advocating on those commitments.

Thank you so much for coming out in the snowstorm. I really do appreciate you coming out and showing your support for my motion.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(SCHOOL BUS
CAMERA SYSTEM), 2014
LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(SYSTÈME PHOTOGRAPHIQUE
RELIÉ AUX AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

Mr. Nicholls moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Nicholls has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Nicholls.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's with great pleasure that I rise today to deliver remarks for my private member's bill, Bill 50, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (School Bus Camera System), 2014.

Before getting into the details of the bill, I'd just like to describe how this bill came to be. I was at an event in my riding a couple of months ago when a concerned bus driver came up to me and told me about a shocking number of vehicles that, what we call, "blow by" stopped school buses as they pick up children with their stop signs deployed and red lights flashing. It's an issue that I wasn't totally familiar with, but I was hooked the moment the bus driver shared the story with me.

After the issue was brought to my attention, my office arranged a meeting with local school bus operators so we could gain insights and expertise. They told me that I would not believe the number of drivers that pass buses with their stoplights flashing on a daily basis. It was clear to them that we had a serious problem on our hands. At that point, it was very clear to me that, yes, we did and still do have a very serious problem on our hands.

It's currently against the law to pass buses with deployed stop signs and stop arms, yet the majority of cases go unreported as bus drivers are unrealistically expected to grab a vehicle description as cars blow by.

Earlier this year, the Independent School Bus Operators Association launched the I Stop You Stop campaign, which was their attempt to benchmark province-wide stop arm violations. They received reports from 21 transportation consortia throughout the province, and their findings were truly shocking. In only five days, from May 5 to 9, a total of 754 incidents were in fact reported.

Bus operators and police shared with me that convictions rarely occur even when a school bus driver can get a vehicle description. Not all police forces have the resources to pursue the matter.

You would be hard pressed to find a group more passionate and more concerned with safety than bus operators and their drivers. I sometimes call those drivers the unsung heroes of the roads, who work hard to protect our children's safety. These drivers bring over 800,000 students to school each morning and drop them off every afternoon throughout the province. It takes a lot of dedication to ensure that this is done safely. Frankly, they don't get enough recognition for all the work that they do. Sadly, it often takes a tragedy for us to pay attention to school bus safety, but these people are devoted to it.

After hearing just how extreme the problem is and seeing the concern and worry that this places on drivers and parents, I knew something had to be done. Initially, I considered making it mandatory for all school buses in Ontario to install stop-arm camera systems; however, after discussing the issue with stakeholder groups, including bus operators and associations, I discovered that this would bring a list of potential problems.

First off, bus operators told me that cameras are not needed on all the buses in the province, as certain routes don't have any on-road student pickup or drop-off. There were also concerns about who would pay for the cameras and the camera systems. I asked them, then, "What can I do to help?" In other words, it was the old, "Help me help you. Is there anything at all that the province could do to help, even if it's just a minor change?"

1540

They all agreed that amending the Highway Traffic Act to allow images obtained from stop-arm cameras of motorists illegally passing school buses stopped with their red-light warning lights flashing was a great start.

This is why my bill is limited in scope. It doesn't seek to sort out who has to install the stop-arm cameras; that's a decision best made by municipalities and bus operators. My bill also avoids spelling out who should be responsible for the purchase of these cameras or their maintenance. These decisions are best left to the Ministry of Transportation, in full consultation with expert stakeholders.

However, what this bill does seek to do is to ensure that communities that have begun pilot projects for stop-arm cameras on school buses, and other communities that will follow, won't face any roadblocks when they attempt to use the evidence that they have gathered in court. This is something that is already occurring in many jurisdictions throughout the United States, as well as Canada. Numerous states have already passed laws allowing the use of cameras on school buses to capture video images of motorists illegally passing and endangering children, and some have even made them mandatory statewide.

Here in Canada, PEI passed specific legislation. Pilot programs have begun to spread throughout the country. Manitoba currently has a number of school boards using cameras, and a northern Albertan school board recently launched their own pilot project last year. Closer to home, Ottawa initiated their pilot project earlier this spring. Toronto has since followed suit and is in the early stages of their own test program.

It's clear to me that the use of stop-arm camera systems is increasing as communities look for ways to reduce the number of dangerous blow-bys that happen on a daily basis. This bill is based on a section of the Highway Traffic Act dealing with red-light cameras. If you're caught running a red light, that image can be used in court. It's all laid out in the act.

This bill, if passed, would mean that a photograph of a vehicle obtained from a school bus camera system may be received as evidence in a proceeding under the Provincial Offences Act. This was asked for directly by the people who were involved in the initial stop-arm camera system pilot projects here in the province.

Police have run into roadblocks when trying to take offending drivers to court because there aren't any clear rules on the books for these new systems. We need to take a proactive approach when it comes to this issue. These systems will continue to be installed on more buses, and the Highway Traffic Act must be updated to reflect this trend.

School bus drivers that I've met with have all been incredibly supportive of the bill. They know all too well the danger and the potential for tragedy that occurs every day. Police officers with whom I've spoken about this program agree that clarifying the Highway Traffic Act and putting in rules regarding stop-arm cameras is a good way to assist their efforts to catch drivers that illegally pass stopped school buses.

Just yesterday, I received a letter of support from the Ontario School Bus Association. I'd like to read just a portion of that letter:

"The Ontario School Bus Association (OSBA) supports Bill 50, which proposes the use of cameras on school buses to capture video images of motorists illegally passing school buses stopped with their red warning lights flashing. The video images can be used by police as evidence to prosecute owners of offending vehicles rather than the driver. These cameras, commonly referred to as stop-arm cameras, have proven effective in other jurisdictions across North America by increasing the prosecution rate and raising awareness of the consequences of breaking the law."

Any school bus driver will tell you that illegal passing is a regular occurrence on Ontario's roads. Motorists who are either distracted, not paying attention, in a hurry or unaware of the law illegally pass school buses that are stopped with their red warning lights flashing. The consequences of this behaviour can be the injury or even the death of a child getting on or off a school bus. Stop-arm cameras would augment the on-road enforcement efforts by police in areas of the province where illegal passing of school buses is a problem.

In addition, the Independent School Bus Operators Association has been a tremendous help. They also share a strong focus on promoting the safety of our children. I'm incredibly thankful for their expertise and their support.

Lastly, I've also heard words of encouragement, not only from members of my party who have been supportive every step along the way, but also from members on the government side. I hope that they will lend their support to this bill and help protect the schoolchildren of this province.

I'm also thankful to promote this issue right here in the Legislature. Drivers, police officers, councillors and bus operators have all said that at the end of the day, awareness is the key to getting drivers to think twice and stop when school buses are picking up children. With that in mind, we've already succeeded as we stand here today and discuss the problem.

I think that we can all agree that the safety of our children is our number one priority. Every day, hundreds of children are needlessly put at risk as drivers speed by stopped school buses. Catching the drivers who endanger our children is critical. It would lead to greater awareness of the severity of the issue.

Stop-arm camera systems are starting to be more widely accepted and adopted by bus operators in communities across the province. This bill will allow them to continue their good work, knowing that legislation will help them, not hinder them.

This bill will also make it easier for school bus drivers to do their jobs. It's unrealistic to expect drivers to simultaneously operate a school bus, look after the children who are getting on or off the bus and also grab the licence plate number and vehicle description of a car that blows by their stop sign. It's why so many offenders are never caught.

Today I would hope that, right here in the Legislature, all three parties will join together and support this bill. We need to do the right thing. Let's make life a little bit easier for school bus drivers, who have got enough on their plate as it is. Most importantly, let's work together to protect our children.

I know that my time is close to an end. But we do know, as I mentioned earlier, that these school bus drivers are unsung heroes in many cases, simply because they look out for and guard and protect the safety of our children. We need to make their job easier. With their help, with this bill passed and the proper legislation in place, I know we can make it work and we can help protect our children.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always an honour to stand in this House on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin and also as the New Democratic Party's critic on transportation. I want to commend the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for putting this bill forward, and I'm pleased to express support from our party for his Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. It's a bill that is going to be well received by my caucus and my colleagues.

In doing so, I would urge my fellow members in the House to take advantage of this particular opportunity to strengthen school bus safety across the province, a point I will make in a little bit. I will come back to it later—

M. Shafiq Qadri: Grappe industrielle, s'il vous plaît.

M. Michael Mantha: Ne fais pas ça.

The proposed legislation at hand would allow any photograph obtained from a school bus camera system to be used as evidence against drivers who violate subsections 175(11) and (12) of the Highway Traffic Act. As we all know, this section makes it illegal to pass a school bus from either the front or back when the bus has the red signal lights flashing. The penalty for doing so is upward of \$2,000 on the first offence, upward to \$4,000 for repeat offenders and up to six months of prison time. Up until now, photographs on board any school buses could not be used as evidence, and this bill would change that.

I would like remind my colleagues that this is an extremely important issue and that we cannot take it lightly. It's worthy of our attention as it affects the approximately 800,000 young children who travel on over 18,000 school buses, covering almost two million kilometres each and every day here in our province.

1550

Studies have shown that when a fatality involving a school bus does occur, it's most likely to happen when students are getting on and off the bus. I am confident that the use of the camera evidence would certainly deter drivers from breaking the law and encourage them to immediately stop upon seeing a school bus's flashing red light.

Unfortunately, despite the hefty penalties, studies have shown that drivers often put the safety of young children at risk across Ontario by ignoring school bus stop lights and passing buses that have their stop lights on anyway.

In a recent study by the Independent School Bus Operators Association, with data from school bus operators in Bruce-Grey, Huron, Perth, Thunder Bay, London, Toronto, eastern Ontario, Waterloo, Sudbury, Renfrew county and York, a total of 754 incidents had taken place over a five-day period whereby drivers refused to stop despite a school bus having its lights on. This is an average of 151 incidents a day, where drivers in each of these areas put the safety of children getting on and off of school buses at risk. I'm certain we all agree that this is 151 incidents too many.

To my surprise, our province is one of two in the country that does not mandate that school buses, like traffic lights, first issue a yellow warning signal cautioning oncoming drivers to proceed with care and slow down before flashing their red lights to stop, despite advocacy from expert groups in the field pushing for this for many, many years.

Research indicates that any school bus manufactured after 2005 would certainly have the wiring capabilities to easily make the switch. This is something that experts in the field of bus safety have strongly advocated for for a very long time. Indeed, allowing school bus cameras to be used as evidence by a third party serves as a deterrent to drivers, though, despite being a good idea that I strongly support, I do caution that it is a reactionary measure that would help solve these cases only after a tragedy has already occurred.

By following the footsteps of legislation in other provinces across the country, as well as that in almost all US states, we can bring our safety measures up to speed and take this issue one step further instead of simply implementing the sort of reactionary legislation.

I'd like to take this time to remind my colleagues of the tragic case of five-year-old Adam Ranger, who, on February 11, 14 years ago, was struck and killed by the driver of a one-tonne truck while being dropped off from his school bus in the town of Mattawa, Ontario.

Adam's older brother Alex Ranger, then 12, had to witness the horror of the incident and has since fuelled the gut-wrenching memory into raising awareness about his brother's senseless death. He does so by advocating for school bus safety and has long since advocated for the use of school bus cameras to be installed on all school buses.

Bill 50 is an effective piece of legislation that certainly could prevent tragedies like that of Adam Ranger by serving as an effective deterrent to drivers. My colleagues and I certainly believe in the effectiveness of allowing school bus cameras to be used as evidence of those who break the rules.

However, I would add to this by also urging members of this Legislature to go one step further, and let's implement the amber warning light system on school buses, bringing us up to speed with the legislation across this country. It is only through preventive measures that we can ensure the safety of school children who ride on school buses across this province.

I want to end there with my short comments. I want to share some of my remarks—or the opportunity for some

of my colleagues to share their own remarks in regard to this bill.

But I do want to commend the member for bringing this forward. It is a good initiative. Let's take this good initiative and look at how we can actually enhance it and make it that much better so that we can get it through the legislative process, get the support of all the members in this House and we can move this forward.

Again, thank you for the time to speak on this, Mr. Speaker. I commend the member for bringing it forward.

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to join the conversation on Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act, that was brought forward by the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I would beg your indulgence for just a moment. I notice that I've got two of my Kitchener Centre constituency office workers here: Carolyn Longman and Allison Remillard. They're here for training. Hello, ladies, and thanks for making it in.

I'm new to the House, and it's very encouraging to see members of different parties working together on an issue that really does make sense and looks at ways to keep our children safer on the road, so thank you very much for spearheading this very important initiative. I am the mother of three children. They're all in their twenties now, but I can tell you that when they were younger, and on and off school buses during their elementary years and high school years, as a parent, I did worry about their safety.

Now, in other jurisdictions around the world where kids ride school buses, we've seen some different initiatives, everything from seatbelts on buses—in the States, in particular, there are many school districts that already have adopted on-board video cameras, although there I understand they're also used as a tool for cracking down on bullying and crime.

I can tell you that here in Ontario, about 800,000 students ride school buses every day on 18,000 school vehicles. Safety on Ontario roads for everyone is one of the highest priorities for our government. Research that has been carried out by Transport Canada informs us that taking a ride on a school bus is 16 times safer than travelling in a family car, so we are very proud of our record of having among the safest roads not only in Canada but in all of North America.

But we are committed to doing more to further improving our road safety record, so here's what I can say about our initiatives to date. We have increased funding to transportation services by 40%, to a total of \$880 million, since 2003. We are in close consultation with our road safety partners to better promote school bus safety. What we're doing together is providing important information to educate riders, parents and motorists.

It is important to remember that our current laws do require that all drivers stop for school buses when the buses have their overhead red signal lights flashing. All drivers need to pay close attention, leaving enough space

and staying alert when approaching or passing a school bus, and those who don't stop for school buses should be punished under the law, and every school bus driver in this province must meet strict licensing rules, along with holding a standard driver's licence.

So, again, we very much appreciate the intent of Bill 50, keeping Ontario school kids safe while travelling on school buses, but there are a few areas where I think the bill could be improved. Currently, the way the Highway Traffic Act is written, it allows for the installation or use of school bus cameras, but a witness is also needed in court along with the video evidence. Bill 50, the way that it is being presented to us, introduces a very unusual rule, that just the video could be used in a case, without having a live witness. The problem is this: Can we be assured of the reliability of the video evidence? Can we count on that? Bear in mind that these video cameras and the digital images that they record would be owned, operated and maintained by private companies. I think that we need to be concerned about the possibility of people being prosecuted and we're depending on the evidence collection process as being completely reliable. Can we be assured of that if this is all that we're counting on?

We also need to be very concerned about how this bill is going to mesh with existing privacy laws. Under our Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Bill 50 could raise some very serious problems in that regard. The business of respecting people's privacy needs to be carefully fleshed out as we talk about and debate Bill 50.

Now, here is another concern: Is it appropriate for a Provincial Offences Act officer to certify evidence from a private company's video camera? We also need to think about the cost to school bus operators. This has been talked about. If we are going to require that all school buses have cameras on board, this should really be costed so we know what it is we're paying for.

We need to hear from school boards and other stakeholders across Ontario on how this is going to affect them and impact their budgets.

And I want to offer this final question that's worth considering: Since our main concern is the safety of children on and around school buses, are there any additional tools that might exist that we could be adopting to increase safety? Perhaps there are some other practices or tools in place that we should consider.

1600

Again to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, we appreciate the intent of Bill 50. Keeping Ontario's children safe is absolutely imperative. This is the highest priority for our government. We know there's always more that we can do to keep our roads safer. We recognize there are some areas of the bill in which we need to give careful consideration and review. But overall, this is a very positive initiative, and I want to thank the member for bringing it forward.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join in supporting my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex on his bill today.

I want to address a couple of things that were raised by the member for Kitchener Centre, the former riding of John Milloy. She has raised a couple of concerns and I'd like to address them.

Yes, under this bill, the evidence should be accepted in a proceeding, should there be a criminal proceeding or a Highway Traffic Act proceeding, with regard to seeking a conviction on someone who has contravened the act. I don't think we would be looking at the evidence of the camera alone, but also the testimony of the school bus driver in that case as well.

We're not talking simply about the evidence presented by a piece of photographic equipment owned by a private individual or company. We're also talking about eyewitness evidence which—the problem today is, as my colleague indicated, it's very difficult to have all that evidence and then, based on, “Well, I think it was a Ford Fairlane from 1965,” or whatever, and we have licence number this, this, that and that—if we have that video evidence, if we have that picture, if we have that photograph in conjunction with the person's visual memory, I think we have a lot more evidence.

I'm going to support this bill, because I think anything we can do to make our children safer—and I respect the comments from the member from Kitchener Centre as well about how safe our school buses are—because they are. But it's not just because of the laws we've enacted, but it is because of those unsung heroes who operate those buses and take a tremendous amount of care in ensuring that our children—not my children anymore; they're done with their busing days, but we've got grandchildren now who are using the school bus. I myself never went to school on a school bus, not in all my life. Some people would say, “You probably never went to school,” but that's a debatable point. But our grandchildren today, of course, do go on school buses, and a lot more kids today go on school buses. I had to walk over a mile. I was in grade 1. I walked over a mile, or a mile and a half, to go to school. That didn't bother me—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: In the snow too.

Mr. John Yakabuski: But in snow—uphill both ways.

Anything that we can do to prevent injuries or fatalities to our children, I'm going to be in support of that. This bill will certainly go a long way in order to do that. The best, the greatest natural resource we have in this country or any other is our children, so we're going to do whatever we can to protect them.

I know the member from Kitchener Centre has raised some legitimate concerns, and I respect her for that, but I hope she will still support the bill, because this is a very important piece of legislation, and I want to thank my colleague for bringing it forward.

Having this will serve as a significant deterrent, because the people out there will know that in addition to the testimony, the recollection of the driver and possibly even some of the older students on the bus, they will now have a tangible piece of evidence, a photographic piece of evidence that says, “Yes, that car was there.” That is going to be hugely important.

If we were able to have photo radar—we've got cameras on the 407. We're talking about cameras in police cruisers and all of those kinds of things. A picture is a picture. We've got to not muddy the waters by saying what came from a school bus operator. We've got to empower them to say, "We have this trust in you that we're going to place an additional burden on you. In addition to all the burdens you already have, we're going to place on you the burden of compiling evidence if someone breaks the law and goes by that school bus when those red lights are flashing."

This will serve, I believe, as a significant deterrent to all those people who think that because a conviction under the current circumstances is difficult to achieve—they'll think twice. They'll be much more careful, and our school buses, which are among the safest in the world, will be safer yet.

I thank my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex. I'm going to take a chair now and pass the debate on to others as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Windsor West.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oshawa.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Oshawa. I have trouble with that seat; it's so far away. Sorry about that.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, well, it's okay. I am very pleased to be able to stand in this House, regardless of where I'm from, but I am pleased to be specifically from Oshawa. So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me the opportunity.

I'm pleased to speak to Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Thank you to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for bringing this forward and for speaking to it. I'd like to make similar points that we've heard from the members from Kitchener Centre and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and, of course, my colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin.

As I've said many times before, I'm coming to this Legislature by way of the school system, so I have a number of personal connections. I have spent much time on a school bus. I have fond memories of class trips and I have not-so-fond memories of being a student on a bus. There are lots of opportunity for life to happen on a school bus, and I spent much of that time maybe facing the wrong direction, chatting with friends around seats, over seats and whatnot. Then, as a teacher, I spent much of the time on school buses redirecting our students to keep them safe and moving forward and facing the right direction, working to keep them safe.

Certainly my fond memories of being a teacher on a bus were that, oftentimes when I was on that bus, we were headed somewhere special. We were off to a class trip; we were off to learn together, which is a great opportunity. You want to be able to get where you're going. You certainly want all of those students to make it to their destination safely. At the end of the day, when you send them home, you want to know that they're all safe and going to make it to their caregivers.

I'm looking forward to sharing many of the ways that we do ensure student safety, but I'm pleased to address this bill because the goal in this bill is to catch those drivers who fail to stop and who fail to prioritize the safety of our children and the safety of our students.

A little bit about our school system and prioritizing safety and the well-being of our students: Many of you might remember having fire drills in schools. We have those, and we have lockdown drills now. I spent some time in the States and we had earthquake drills. But we also have bus-safety drills. The bus parks out front, and class by class we take our students out and we make sure that they know not just the rules of how to behave or how to conduct themselves on the bus, but that they understand a bit about bus design, that they are a safe vehicle. They understand why it's important not to distract the driver or each other. They talk about what that danger zone or that safe buffer zone actually is around the bus, what 10 big steps looks like in front of the bus before they cross, to stay safe.

Our students know how to be safe while waiting for the bus, they know how to be safe on the bus, they know how to be safe when they get off of the bus, and they also know how to hop out of the back door, in case of an emergency, safely.

We make sure that our students and our teachers are safe. We have assemblies where we go through the same thing, year after year after year. We reinforce this with our students; we reinforce it the parents.

This bill, Bill 50, is an important step to make sure that those in our greater community, who are posing the most risk to our students, who know the rules and know how to be safe—to ensure that we can catch them, that we can find them and we can hold them accountable.

The idea of camera placement is an important piece to that. There is a part in this bill that says, "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations ... prescribing what constitutes a school bus camera system." It will be interesting to see if some of the ideas involve a camera that not just focuses on the outside and on the drivers but also maybe captures what happens in the bus as well.

1610

I think that's a part of the conversation to be had as well when we're talking about potential bullying or the safety of the driver. That's a conversation that will be interesting to have.

We're seeing pilot projects in Sudbury and North Bay and getting feedback from those communities. They are trying these cameras in areas where there have been complaints. There is a very real need here. In addition to the cameras being used and allowing the photographs to be used as evidence in proceedings, I think the education piece in the greater community is so important. Rather than just educating the students in our schools, we need to be focusing on educating the greater community as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you, and my apologies for the wrong riding.

Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise today to speak about Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. I want to talk not just about the member's proposed legislation; his predecessor, Pat Hoy, had been a strong advocate of children, bus safety and what have you. I want to remind the members here in the House that his predecessor from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Pat Hoy, also brought forth several bus safety regulations and bills. I want to remind the members here that his proposal in 2004, An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario's roads, would eventually become adopted by then-minister Harinder Takhar. So, the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has some history there.

I'm very pleased to hear my colleague from Kitchener Centre raise some very valid points with respect to this particular bill, and I think that everybody in this House supports the intent of this bill, that the government is committed to ensuring road safety, especially for our youngest citizens. Which member do you know in this House who won't support young people? There's nobody, okay? The fact here is that we do have very safe school buses.

I also want to put on record, Mr. Speaker, that some of the major violators and challenges with regard to school bus safety occur in suburban areas. The conversation we need to have is: What's going on with those suburbs? Are they in so much of a hurry at the risk of the safety of our students and the children in school buses? That has to be addressed.

I think my colleagues from Oshawa as well as Kitchener Centre raised a point about the school board. As a former school board trustee—this issue, if passed, will be a cost to school boards across Ontario. If this is a mandatory requirement, somebody is going to pay for it, not just the independent operators of the school buses. That conversation needs to be had so that we make sure. I know that on the Toronto District School Board, we spend millions of dollars to transport students across the city just on school buses. This conversation needs to involve the school boards, but also the operators, because at the end of the day, who is going to be greatly affected by this proposed legislation? Yes, safety is our first priority, but then there are also costs attached to it.

The other piece of the legislation I want to speak about is the fact that right now school bus operators can already install the cameras. The question that is being asked here is that we need legislation so that this can be used as evidence in the courts. I hear the comments made by the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex with respect to the city of Ottawa looking to us to deal with this particular issue.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that other provinces—Prince Edward Island began a pilot project in 2011, and then it became province-wide legislation; I believe that Alberta launched having cameras on school buses last year; and Manitoba. I also believe that we need to look at data from these other jurisdictions: How it has improved safety; and also when they present it to the courts. Very clearly, PEI, which started back in 2011, has some

history, but they also have some evidence and some data that we can learn from, because this is not a new type of tool to improve safety for our children in a school bus. There are other jurisdictions that have used these particular devices, and the question needs to be asked: What are the data? What can we share? What can we learn?

The other piece here—I know the Minister of Transportation is very, very keen on ensuring every road in Ontario is safe. The recent passage of a bill, the proposed bill dealing with distracted drivers, is a very classic example. You, Mr. Speaker, know about this issue about distracted drivers: One of your residents was killed recently by a distracted driver.

So at the end of the day, with respect to the whole proposed legislation, I think there are many of us in this House who would be supportive of the bill, to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, but I think there need to be more conversations with the various partners, because this bill alone is not just about the Ministry of Transportation. This bill also greatly affects the Ministry of Education and others who are being affected every day as an operator for school buses.

Last but not least, I want to thank the member for bringing this particular bill to the House because this is probably his first bill in this session. But also, you have passion about this particular issue because you heard from your constituents and you brought it back to us, and that's the right thing to do. I want to say thank you, and I also want to congratulate you for bringing forth this particular issue to ensure that every student in the province of Ontario is safe when they are in and out of the school buses.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just want to begin by saying how pleased I am to be able to respond to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex and his initiative around school bus cameras.

I had intended that I would begin my speech by offering to introduce constituents of mine who had come to hear today's debate, but I think everyone would agree that to have an undisclosed length of a trip to Toronto today for a potential 20 minutes of debate is unrealistic. So when they called this morning and said, "Thank you for the invitation; we'd love to be there," we certainly understood why they wouldn't. But it was Jim Switzer and Vicki Manning from Switzer-Carty Transportation. Since I'm sure they didn't have the buses out for the kids, they weren't going to then try to get down here.

I think one of the things that—when we're looking at this information and suggestion that this member has brought forward, we need to put it in the context of how many thousands of people are in a school bus every day. Every day, thousands of students across Ontario rely on school bus transportation to get them safely to and from school.

Parents trust that the buses are safe, and I think that that isn't in question. I know the school bus industry and

the drivers make student safety their priority, and they do that good work every day. However, it is the drivers, the out-of-control drivers, that the buses meet on their trip. Kids' safety is put in jeopardy when a car does not stop for a school bus even when the arm is down and kids might be crossing the street.

It's horrifying to think that all the efforts of, first of all, stopping, then the flashing lights, then the cautionary flashing lights, then the arm—over the years, all these things have been introduced as methods of ensuring student safety, and it's hard to believe that we still have a problem. In fact, the Independent School Bus Operators Association counted a total of 754 incidents of drivers passing school buses when they should have stopped. How long a period? Five days. In five days, 754 incidents had taken place.

Even though it's illegal, it is difficult to enforce. This option that we're looking at today is a method of increasing the opportunity to enforce what is already against the law.

1620

As other members have mentioned, there are pilot projects going on, because the key is whether or not the information that the camera picks up will be deemed appropriate in a court of law. There's no point in having it if it doesn't stand that test. We would hope that with these pilot projects, it will become clear that the courts do need to accept this kind of tool that would help us.

We can't stop in our effort to deter people from passing a school bus, because we have to find a way to make children safe when they get on and off a school bus.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to rise to support a bill that highlights and promotes safety for our children. The Highway Traffic Act states that drivers must come to a stop when a school bus flashes its lights and extends the side arm on the side of the vehicle, but unfortunately, we know that many drivers do not.

The suggestion to put cameras in, I think, is a very good suggestion because we know that all too often people don't do the right thing unless they think somebody is watching. They know it's hard for a school bus driver to try to catch their licence plate. I think that people will think twice about driving by a school bus. We're left to wonder why people do it. Obviously, many people know that they're doing something wrong and they just go ahead. Possibly, some people are distracted and just not really remembering what the rules of the road are. Maybe we have to have some kind of public awareness campaign.

We have so much great technology now and signage that I wonder if we could have an electronic sign on the back of the bus reminding people of the rules of how far they have to stay back—maybe not in terms of metres, but maybe in terms of how many car lengths they need to stay back—because I see cars stop, but they're stopping far too close to the actual school bus.

I wonder if we need more adults inside the school buses sometimes. Like many people here, I have spent some time on school buses—not so much as a child; more as an adult going on field trips, even to visit the Legislative Assembly here sometimes. I'm not sure which age is more difficult to have on your school bus. I think that people who have ridden on school buses with kids are in awe of how the driver is able to watch what's going on on the road and is still able to focus with so many kids on the bus. Oftentimes, the kids are having disagreements with each other and things like that.

I'm reminded of one of my neighbours. The babysitter called the mother at work because her daughter didn't come home from kindergarten on the bus. Immediately, they called the bus company and they went out in the yard, into that bus. There was nobody on the bus except for one little girl, four or five years old, asleep in her seat.

It does make us wonder what we can do, as legislators, to make the buses as safe as they can be to ensure that cars aren't driving by the buses—it's called "blow bys," which is a new term for me to learn—and also to make sure that the kids are safe on the bus.

I think that we should take advantage of cameras—they're so much less expensive than they used to be—and we should take advantage of everything at our disposal, including, maybe, LED flashing signs on the buses. Maybe just the flashing lights aren't enough.

I really hope that we can come back to work after the Legislature breaks and get working on many of these very worthwhile bills that have been presented.

I just want to wish everybody a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah, a happy new year, and just in general, happy holidays, and a safe drive home or flight, depending on how you're getting home.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have 21 seconds left on the clock, and I want to be the last speaker on the last day of the last session.

More importantly, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, this is an important bill. We'll do what we can to support it. We want to keep rural children safe.

I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and happy new year.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. I now recognize the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex. You have two minutes.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I sincerely want to thank the members from Algoma-Manitoulin, Kitchener Centre, Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Oshawa, Scarborough-Agincourt, York-Simcoe and Thornhill for their insightful remarks.

You know, it was Neil—I almost said Neil Diamond, but it wasn't. It was Neil Armstrong who said, one small step for man, one giant step for mankind. I look at this bill and I truly think that this is a big step moving us in the right direction.

All this bill does is allow evidence captured by a camera, capturing the licence plate on a vehicle, to be allowed as evidence in a court of law. That's all this bill does. I stated earlier that when it comes to perhaps looking at the other associated costs—for example, one member mentioned, “How much is it going to cost? Are school boards going to pay?” This bill doesn't address that. That's for down the road. But right now, we need to get this in place.

I also want to thank a number of people: first of all, Sergeant Mark Gaten from the Ottawa police, and Kathleen Both, the owner of Bradley school bus lines in Ottawa. They've been running a very successful pilot project, and to them I want to say thank you. So far this pilot project has resulted in a number of charges laid, and 100% of those charges have resulted in convictions.

I also want to take a moment and thank the Independent School Bus Operators Association and, of course, the Ontario School Bus Association. These are stakeholders I sat down with, met with and kicked ideas around with. They were very instrumental in helping me come up with this bill. To them as well, thank you very much. We'll work together in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MILITARY SERVICE PIN

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 22, standing in the name of Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark has moved private member's notice of motion number 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORTATION OF AGGREGATES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Malhi has moved private member's notice of motion number 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (SCHOOL BUS CAMERA SYSTEM), 2014 LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (SYSTÈME PHOTOGRAPHIQUE RELIÉ AUX AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Nicholls has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the committee—

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Justice committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the justice committee. Agreed? Agreed.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

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

An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

An Act respecting The Loretto Ladies' Colleges and Schools.

An Act to revive 1474486 Ontario Limited.

An Act to revive Bensfort Wood Inc.

An Act to revive Bruno's Alignment Limited.

An Act respecting Bible Baptist Temple (St. Thomas).
An Act respecting The Macdonald Stewart Community Art Centre.
An Act respecting Saint Paul University.
An Act to revive 1807041 Ontario Inc.
An Act to revive 752458 Ontario Ltd.
An Act to revive 469118 Ontario Limited.
An Act to revive 658055 Ontario Inc.
An Act to revive Walker Towne Centre Inc.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. David Zimmer: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? I heard a “no.”

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Seeing that this is the last session and that we’re now going to go on our break, I would like to wish every one of you a merry Christmas, a happy Hanukkah and the best for the new year.

This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1632.

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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Sudbury	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cindy Forster
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
Vacant, Vacant
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Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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