



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Monday 23 February 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 23 février 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 23 February 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 23 février 2015

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd Smith: As you know, this is Black History Month in the province of Ontario. Today, we have 300 black students from across the greater Toronto area here for their 10th annual Canadian Black Caucus day at Queen's Park. The theme is Inspiring Youth Politically, and I'd like to welcome all 300 students and Gwyn Chapman, who is the president of the Canadian Black Caucus.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce in the members' gallery Simon Giannini, a good friend. Happy to have you here today, Simon.

Hon. David Zimmer: St. Agnes Catholic School is in my riding, and today I want to welcome Ms. Laverty's grade 4 and grade 5 students, along with their principal, Mr. Shea. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Susan Christianson and Jesse and Joel Britton. I'd just like to point out that Joel is 10 years old and has taken a keen interest in politics. Welcome.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure today to introduce three very special guests who are here with me in the House today: in the east gallery, my parents, José and Arminda Bento, and the smartest 10-year-old that I know, my son André.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today a very good friend down at the ROMA conference, along with many other fine municipal leaders: The mayor of Carleton Place, Louis Antonakos, is joining us here today.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to welcome two post-secondary co-op students who are here with us today. Patty Chang and Aaron Lau are both working on the ministry's Student Voice initiative. Student Voice is a great initiative that allows Ontario students to have a voice in their learning. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to welcome, in the members' west gallery here at Queen's Park today, the mayor of Bracebridge, Mr. Graydon Smith, and the deputy mayor, Mr. Rick Maloney. They are down here for the ROMA/OGRA conference.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the east gallery are students from Victoria Park Collegiate Institute, my former school. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, please join me in welcoming Megan McLean, the mother of our page captain today, Natalie McLean. Welcome to Queen's Park. We really enjoy having Natalie as our captain and our page in our sessions today.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to welcome to the House today Adam Nowina, a great supporter and a great constituent in Etobicoke Centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have with us today in the House, up in the members' gallery, two students from the University of Akron's Canadian studies work experience program. Please join me in welcoming Jermaine Collins and Emily Maher as they begin their 10-week placement with the member from Halton and the member from London-Fanshawe. Welcome to Queen's Park. Thank you for being here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Gerry Lougheed Jr., chair of the Sudbury police services board, told Mr. Olivier, "I come to you on behalf of the Premier." Then he allegedly offered him a government job to step aside as a candidate. But in January, your spokeswoman said, "Gerry Lougheed is not government or Liberal Party staff. He speaks for himself."

Premier, given that Mr. Lougheed is not a government employee or a Liberal Party staffer, where did he get the authority to offer Mr. Olivier a job? Did you give it to him?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said repeatedly, and as I said in a statement on Friday, we reached out—I reached out—to Andrew Olivier. Just to remind the member opposite, I didn't have to have a conversation with Andrew Olivier. I had a conversation with our past candidate because I wanted to make sure he understood that I knew it was a difficult moment that he wasn't going to be the candidate in the Sudbury by-election and we wanted to find ways for him to stay involved, if that's what he chose to do. We wanted to make some suggestions about ways that he could be involved, in the same way that I hope any leader would want to keep a past candidate involved in the party.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: The official opposition and the NDP directly mentioned Gerry Lougheed's involvement in Wynnegate 43 times during

question period last week. The government mentioned him only once. And, Premier, since the Chief Electoral Officer's report was made public last Thursday, Mr. Lougheed Jr. has not been mentioned at all by your government. You've gone silent on Mr. Lougheed.

Premier, you said Pat Sorbara will step down if charges are laid. Will you ask Gerry Lougheed Jr. to do the same if charged?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member opposite well knows, Gerry Lougheed Jr. is not a member of my staff. I have taken, and I do take, this matter very, very seriously; I've said that repeatedly. I understand that it is extremely important that, when there are allegations, we take them seriously and we answer the questions, and we are doing that.

1040

But here is the fact: I made a decision that we would have a candidate in the Sudbury by-election—who is Glenn Thibeault. The past candidate was not going to be the candidate, and there was outreach to him to try to find a way for him to stay involved. That is why I had a conversation with him; that is why Pat Sorbara, my staff member, had a conversation with him, to see if there were ways he might want to stay involved.

As I said, I would expect that of any leader—that they would want to keep past candidates involved in the party.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: Gerry Lougheed Jr. raised over \$100,000 for your federal friend Justin Trudeau. Last week, a senior Trudeau staffer said that Mr. Lougheed Jr. would not be involved in the coming federal election.

Premier, clearly the federal Liberals are willing and probably quite eager to cut this bad apple loose, even after the mountain of money he raised for them. So, Premier, why don't you do the same and demand that Mr. Lougheed Jr. resign from the Sudbury police services board? Do the right thing.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As we discussed last week, we don't direct the Sudbury police services board. They will make their decisions.

What we did was, we—I made a decision that we would have a candidate in the Sudbury by-election who would be Glenn Thibeault, who is a terrific candidate and is going to be a terrific MPP for Sudbury and a strong voice for the community.

We reached out to the past candidate to see if there were ways that he wanted to be involved. But that decision had already been made that a different candidate was going to be in place. That's a difficult moment. As I said in my statement on Friday, I've been a failed candidate. I know, at the moment when you know that you're not going to be the candidate, that that can be a difficult moment. That's why we made the outreach, to see if there were ways that the past candidate wanted to be involved—they were suggestions, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what we did, and I would expect that of any leader.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier. When this Premier came to office, she said that she'd be different from the last guy. However, the Premier has failed to hold herself to the high standard expected from her office. If charges are laid by the OPP, we expect that she'll step aside until they are resolved. If a conviction is made, and if it is found or alleged that the Premier directed Ms. Sorbara or Mr. Lougheed to have those conversations with Mr. Olivier, then the Premier should resign.

A dark cloud hangs over your office, Premier, with four OPP investigations. Premier, will you step aside if there are charges laid against Pat Sorbara or Gerry Lougheed?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's a very interesting question coming, hard on the heels of a report from Elections Ontario that actually exonerated me, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just say to the member opposite that I understand why the member opposite wants to continue to stir this pot, because the member opposite actually doesn't want to talk about the fact that we are making decisions that are going to strengthen this province.

I was at the ROMA/Ontario Good Roads Association this morning, in a very good meeting with the executive, and had conversations with the folks in the halls about the investments that we're making in infrastructure, about the fact that we're working with them in partnership, Mr. Speaker. They have concerns about asset management and about new revenue tools. Those are the things that they want to talk to us about.

I made it clear on Friday that if there are charges laid, then of course Pat Sorbara will stand aside—

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier. Last Friday, Premier, you could have come in and announced that Ms. Sorbara and Mr. Lougheed would step aside until the OPP investigation concluded. But, Premier—and I said this before—if you continue to stand by them, you, Premier, will eventually fall with both of them as well.

Premier, you've spouted ludicrous explanations for your behaviour that fall well below the dignity that your office should hold.

Put an end to this distraction that you've created for your government and your caucus. Premier, answer the question: Yes or no, did you instruct Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed to make those calls to Andrew Olivier with options if he agreed to step aside?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've been extremely clear that any suggestion that anything was offered in exchange for any action is false. I've said that over and over and over again. The fact is, a decision had been made that Glenn Thibeault would be our candidate in Sudbury. That decision was made.

The conversations with Andrew Olivier were about keeping him involved in the party. That's the fact. I have said that repeatedly. I will continue to answer that question because that is what happened. It is what I would expect of any leader, that they would want to keep a past candidate involved, particularly at a time which was difficult, when they were not going to be the candidate in the next election. That's the situation we were dealing with. That's why those conversations were held.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Well, again, back to the Premier: You know, Premier, something just doesn't add up between the call with Pat Sorbara and Mr. Olivier. You said there was a conversation that took place after you had already told the former candidate about the fact that you were going to be appointing Mr. Thibeault. Now, if that's true, why did your deputy chief of staff tell Mr. Olivier he would "force the Premier to move to the appointment process" if he didn't step aside? According to the Chief Electoral Officer, that chat took place the day after you claim that you told Mr. Olivier of your decision.

Premier, is the Chief Electoral Officer's time frame correct, or have you forgotten when you instructed Pat Sorbara to make that call to Andrew Olivier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker—
Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is exactly correct. I had a conversation with Andrew Olivier. Pat Sorbara had a conversation the next day. I had made it clear to Andrew Olivier that I would be appointing Glenn Thibeault as the candidate. The conversation Pat Sorbara had with him was about how he might stay involved in the party if he chose to do so.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There is an investigation going on. In the meantime, I'm not going to force someone to resign in the face of allegations that I do not believe to be true. That actually would have been the easy thing to do, as the member opposite continues to howl for a certain action. That would have been easy, to acquiesce. That's not what I'm going to do. I am going to continue—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Wrap up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm going to continue to do the work of government, Mr. Speaker. I made it clear on Friday: If there are charges laid, then Pat Sorbara will step aside.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The OPP anti-rackets squad is investigating senior

Liberals for their role in the Sudbury bribery scandal, and instead of apologizing or accepting responsibility, the Premier believes she's above the law. Court documents say the investigation hinges on "the corrupt act of dealing in appointments."

Somebody made the decision to engage in that corrupt act and offer Andrew Olivier a job so he could get out of the way. Who directed Mr. Lougheed and Ms. Sorbara to offer Andrew Olivier his choice of jobs?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the leader of the third party knows, there was no commitment to an offer of anything for any action. The leader of the opposition knows that. In fact, I believe that Andrew Olivier is on the record saying that there was no specific commitment in our conversations. So the fact is that there was no offer for any specific action. That did not happen.

What we did was, we tried to work with a past candidate who was not going to be our candidate, and that's a hard thing to accept, but he was not going to be our candidate, and we worked to keep him involved.

I hope that the leader of the third party is working with Mr. Cimino and Ms. Shawbonquit to make sure that they are involved, because those are people who have made a sacrifice; they've put their names on the ballot. My hope is that they are going to be able to be involved in the party if they chose to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When this Premier learned that David Livingston was the subject of a police investigation, she rushed to say, "This is not the way a government should operate, this is not the way a Premier's office should conduct itself and it is not the way my office operates."

But when her top aides are under investigation, the Premier is singing quite a different tune. The Premier obviously thinks it's okay for her office, her Premier's office, her government to operate with top aides under investigation.

So I ask the Premier again: Who directed that Andrew Olivier would be offered a job?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development will come to order.

Premier.

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I freely admit that I wanted to find ways—if this young man wanted to stay involved in politics, wanted to stay involved in the party, I wanted to work with him, and I wanted us to be able to provide suggestions. Because there are a lot of ways to be involved in politics, short of being a candidate. That's what those conversations were about.

The leader of the third party knows full well that there have been many changes made, in terms of the retention of documents, in terms of the training we've provided on the advice of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. There are many changes that have been made as a result of actions that were taken in the past.

We are constantly working to make sure that we find ways to do government in a way that's open and transparent to the people of the province. That's exactly why I called Andrew Olivier. I didn't have to call Andrew Olivier. I didn't have to call the past candidate, but I wanted to let him know that I understood this was a difficult moment—

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and if he wanted to be involved—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Just over two years ago, the Premier made a commitment to Ontarians. Referring to a decade of Liberal scandals, she said, “We must acknowledge our mistakes, take responsibility for them and work together to guarantee that they are not repeated.”

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Two years later, here we are, all over again, with an investigation into “a corrupt act of dealing in appointments” and “corruption between politically sophisticated parties.”

Will this Premier keep her word of two years ago to Ontarians, admit her mistakes, take responsibility and tell the people of this province who issued the order that Andrew Olivier should be offered what the OPP and Elections Ontario refer to as a bribe?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's just be clear that the leader of the third party is dealing in allegations at the moment. The Chief Electoral Officer said clearly last week, and I quote, “I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone's guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges.” That's the moment we're in right now: There are allegations and there's an investigation.

To the leader of the third party's question about whether I will continue to learn from mistakes: That's what I believe good government is about. When there are mistakes made or when there are issues that have to be dealt with, of course we learn from them. I also believe that's the human condition. The way we go through life is, we start something, we take action, and if it doesn't work, then we find a way to correct it. That's how I function, that's how our party functions and that's how we will continue to function.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. On Friday, the Premier claimed she decided to appoint her candidate in November. Funny, because on December 11, Gerry Lougheed called Andrew Olivier and said, “The Premier, up to now”—December 11—“has always said to me she's in favour of a nomination race. So I want to make that really clear. She's never said to me, ‘I want to appoint him.’”

Premier, those are two very different versions of what happened. My question is: Which one of them is actually the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I had a meeting at the end of November with Glenn Thibeault. I made a decision at that point to appoint Glenn Thibeault. I believed at that point, after my meeting with him, that he would be the best candidate for the Sudbury by-election, that he would be the best representative for Sudbury. Everything that happened after that was about making sure he became our candidate, and if the past candidate wanted to stay involved, that he had the opportunity to do that.

I understand the back and forth of question period; I do understand that. But accusing people of being criminals while an investigation is going on, I think, is wrong. I do not think that's right, and so I reject the premise of the leader of the third party's questions.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Now that her office is facing down federal prosecutors, the Premier is claiming that she told Andrew Olivier that she was going to make an appointment. Well, that's odd, Speaker, because on December 12, after Andrew Olivier spoke to the Premier, he said to Pat Sorbara, “The Premier has to make her decision.” Pat Sorbara didn't dispute that. In fact, she said the Premier is “going to have to make a decision around the appointment.”

Once again, the question to the Premier: two very different versions of what happened. Which one are we to believe? Which one are Ontarians to believe?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just be clear: In my conversation with Andrew Olivier, the whole reason I reached out to Andrew Olivier was that he was not going to be the candidate, that I had made a decision that I was going to appoint Glenn Thibeault and that I wanted to make sure that if Andrew Olivier wanted to stay involved, if he wanted to be involved, he would know what the options were so he could make a decision about how he might want to be involved.

That's the conversation I had with our past candidate. That's the conversation Pat Sorbara had with him the next day. It was all within the framework of my having decided to appoint Glenn Thibeault as the candidate in the Sudbury by-election.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, Ontarians are hearing two versions of the bribery scandal, and they both can't be true. There is a version where we hear three people on tape, a tape that was made long before there was a police investigation. In that version, the Premier hadn't made a decision about an appointment. In fact, Gerry Lougheed said, “I want to make that really clear.”

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: “She’s never said to me, ‘I want to appoint him.’”

And there’s another version, from the Premier herself, made under the hot lights of—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education, come to order, please—second time.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to let me do my job.

Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, there’s another version, from the Premier, made under the hot lights of a possible criminal charge, claiming that she made a decision about an appointment back in November.

I’m going to repeat again: two different stories. I ask the Premier to come clean with the public and tell us which one is true.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I’ve done that and I will do it again. I had a meeting with Glenn Thibeault at the end of November. I made a decision that Glenn Thibeault would be the best candidate for us in Sudbury. I made that decision.

I didn’t make that decision public; it’s true. I didn’t call the leader of the third party and I didn’t call the interim leader of the opposition. I didn’t make a public statement about that. But I had made that decision at the end of November. Once I had met Glenn Thibeault, that decision was made.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is also for the Premier. Premier, you held a press conference on Friday. The whole world was hoping that you would do the right thing. Instead, you doubled down on your sad response from the day before.

Premier, you had the chance to do the right thing. You had the opportunity to cut Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed loose, at least until these investigations are complete. Instead, you chose to stand by them. According to the Chief Electoral Officer, they have broken the law, yet you continue to stand behind Sorbara and Lougheed. Is it because you gave them direct orders to offer inducements to Andrew Olivier? Premier, are you not in fact protecting them so that they’ll protect you?

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, are you not in fact—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Time’s up.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just be clear about what the Chief Electoral Officer said last week: “I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone’s guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges.” The investigations are entirely independent, Mr. Speaker; they are ongoing. Right now, we are dealing with allegations. In

my statement on Friday, I made it clear that if there are charges, then my staff member will step aside. I made it very clear exactly why we had the conversations with our past candidate. I will continue to do the work of the government while those investigations are going on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, you came to office saying you would hold the office to a higher standard. In your two years, you have failed every time you’ve been tested on that promise. You failed again last week. This is your chance for a re-test. Stop protecting yourself by protecting Lougheed and Sorbara.

Interjection.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Two years ago, you said you would run things a new way when it came to ethics and accountability. When it comes to ethics and accountability now, you’re just running away.

Premier, you’ve been caught in your own snare. Now it’s time to come clean. Order the resignations of Sorbara and Lougheed, or consider your own.

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On this issue of doing things differently, one of the things I said on Friday—and I used this example because I think it is a stark example of a change. There have been members of the opposition who have come forward and have asked for appointments from our government in exchange for stepping down from their seats. I’m not suggesting that this is the first time in history this has ever happened; I know there are lots of examples of this. But what’s different, Mr. Speaker, is that I said no. On the advice of my staff and in consultation with my staff, we said, “No. No, we’re not going to do that. We’re not going to proffer an appointment in exchange for an opposition member stepping down from his seat.”

That is an example. I was using that as an example of how things have changed and how we are doing things differently.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. The Premier’s deputy chief of staff and campaign director, Pat Sorbara, is facing investigations for bribery under section 96 of the Election Act.

Will the Premier explain to Ontarians why Pat Sorbara is working in the Premier’s office when there’s clearly evidence that she has broken the law? Isn’t it time for Pat Sorbara to go?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, it appears that hell hath no fury like a party scorned.

The Premier made a decision to appoint a candidate in Sudbury. The candidate she supported for that nomination is a man very worthy of the kind of confidence invested in him by the Premier.

On this side of the House, we actually like to keep people engaged in the political process. We understand that there are many ways to serve, one being as a candidate, but many other ways as well.

Having made the decision to appoint Glenn Thibeault as the candidate, people did reach out to say, "How can you stay involved? There are many ways to stay involved." That's the right way to do politics, and I think the member opposite should take a lesson from the Premier on how to keep past party members engaged.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Staying involved doesn't mean you can break the Election Act.

Gerry Lougheed is the chair of the Sudbury police services board. He's supposed to be part of the system that enforces the law. But Gerry Lougheed is facing investigation for bribery. There is evidence that he broke the law.

Can the Premier explain to Ontarians why she thinks that Gerry Lougheed should still be the chair of the Sudbury police services board?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think the member opposite knows very well that the fact that Mr. Lougheed is the chair of the Sudbury police services board is a decision of the police services board. They in fact met last week, Speaker, they looked at the facts and they voted to keep Mr. Lougheed as the chair of the police services board.

I think that's where the accountability is, that's where the decision-making is, and we should respect that decision.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Associate Minister of Finance. I know the associate minister has been working hard to build Ontario's new retirement pension plan. This is something that the people of Ontario need. The reality is that a significant number of Ontarians don't have an adequate workplace pension plan or are not saving enough for retirement. After a lifetime of hard work, Ontarians deserve better.

A number of Halton residents say that they are pleased with our government taking steps to help Ontarians be financially secure when they retire. Younger families in my riding are concerned about their retirement security and that of their kids and grandkids. The Canada Pension Plan is just not enough.

The minister and our government have committed to engaging with Ontarians on the ORPP. I know the minister has been criss-crossing the province to speak with Ontarians about our plan to enhance retirement security. Can the minister please inform this House about what she's hearing from Ontarians about the ORPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member from Halton for the question. The member is right: The Premier has stressed the importance of consulting on the ORPP in my mandate letter. It has been informative to

travel the province to meet with people to discuss the ORPP and hear their feedback. From Thunder Bay to Ottawa, Windsor to Peterborough, I've had the opportunity to meet with representatives from business, labour, associations and organizations, families and individuals.

There was a diversity of opinions, but the common thread throughout these conversations was that people are concerned about their retirement security. People are concerned that they have not saved enough or that they might outlive their savings. Several people also worry that they may never be able to retire.

Mr. Speaker, that is very troubling to our government. We believe that after a lifetime of working and contributing to the economy, Ontarians deserve a secure retirement. That's why we're moving forward with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you, again, to the minister for her hard work and for that answer. I'm pleased to hear that the minister has had the opportunity to get some solid input from many Ontarians on this very important initiative. I know that Halton residents will appreciate the government's efforts to actively engage Ontario residents on this vital matter.

Mr. Speaker, again, through you to the Associate Minister of Finance: Our government has been actively advocating that the federal government needs to make a modest enhancement to CPP, without success. As we move forward with the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, some of my constituents have asked whether we are continuing to press for a CPP enhancement. Many say this would be the best way to ensure a secure retirement. Can the minister please inform the House about whether our government is still pursuing an enhancement to CPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, again, to the hard-working member from Halton for this important question.

Our preferred option to address retirement security remains CPP enhancement. The Premier and Minister of Finance have been advocating for CPP enhancement since 2010. Over a year ago, having extensive discussions with the provinces and territories, there was agreement to continue moving forward with discussions on CPP enhancement. Unfortunately, the federal government unilaterally shut down any and all further discussions on this issue.

We know that Ontarians expect their government to take leadership to help us secure their retirement. We also know that we cannot wait for another government to take action on this important issue. That is why we're moving forward with a made-in-Ontario solution with the ORPP so that we can strengthen retirement security for Ontarians.

As a participant, a small business owner in Markham, said, "When we share a little, we gain a lot."

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, last week's very disturbing report released by the Chief Electoral Officer on apparent contraventions of the Election Act is, in his own words, "unprecedented." As AG, you have a unique responsibility to advise cabinet on legal matters. Have you advised the Premier that, according to the Election Act, a specific job offer is, in fact, not required for an apparent contravention to have occurred?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I'm going to repeat again, the Chief Electoral Officer is an independent officer—we know that—of the Legislative Assembly. As I mentioned previously on numerous occasions, this process exclusively involved non-partisan officials within the Ministry of the Attorney General. The system is already designed—and I think the Chief Electoral Officer stipulated that on page 4 of his report—so that only non-partisan officials handle any complaints. The third party and the opposition know that. If they want to have more information, they can reach out to the Chief Electoral Officer and he will explain the process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: And on page 10 of the report, it very specifically says, "an apparent contravention could be established if a candidate is offered a range of options rather than a specific role in a specific office." Sound familiar, Premier?

Minister, what assurances can you give the public that this investigation will be dealt with quickly, before memories fail and evidence is deleted?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order, please—a second time.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Control, Alt, Delete.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing, please come to order—a second time. Attorney General.

1110

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I'm going to repeat it again: The system is already designed so that only non-partisan officials handle this complaint. As I said last week, the matter has been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada by the ministry. The member should know the process, because the Chief Electoral Officer said in his report that his office briefed the opposition about the independent process. I guess that these questions should not be asked if they have read the report.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. Has the Premier or her staff ever offered jobs or appointments in order to keep anyone else from running?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've answered this question many times in reference to the Sudbury situation. There was no offer made for any action. We've been very clear about that. It hasn't been done in the Sudbury situation, and it hasn't been done elsewhere.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier seems to think that everyone is going around and doing these types of activities and that this is very commonplace. It may be standard in her party; it's certainly not standard in ours.

Pat Sorbara called Andrew Olivier and she said this to Andrew—

Interjections.

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

Please put your question.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you. Pat Sorbara said this to Andrew: "You're like the third person I've even heard her ask this of.... That's why she said, 'I hope we're standing ... together, and we need to find the longer-term ... role here, not in Glenn's shadow, but in ... your own voice.'"

Because, as she continued to say, "If there were other things that" Olivier was "particularly interested in" that are within the Premier's realm to make Olivier part of, then "she is more than prepared to do that."

Who are the other two people that the Premier has made a call to, and what kind of offers did she make to them that were within her realm?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really don't know where this question is going. I've been very clear that the conversations with our past candidate were about suggestions of ways that he might want to stay involved.

There are many ways to be involved; there are many options. That was the conversation that I had had with Andrew Olivier. That's the conversation that Pat Sorbara had with him.

I know that those are conversations that have been had by other parties. I know that Jonah Schein and Paul Ferreira both had ways of staying involved in the party. Of course it was after an election; I understand it was after an election.

But the fact is, people stay involved in parties. That was the conversation that I had with Andrew Olivier, and that's the conversation that Pat Sorbara had with him.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail, the Honourable Kevin Flynn, and it concerns the global economic marketplace.

Speaker, as you'll appreciate, the economy of Ontario, in order to be globally competitive, must always deal with the evolving challenges and the constant changes that are before us.

In today's workplace, for example, many people are often not keeping the traditional 9-to-5 business day and taking weekends off. In my own riding of Etobicoke North, I hear stories about families who are, for example,

affected by a number of these different changes that affect their life, their personal economy, their home situation and, of course, their workplace.

From globalization to the aging workforce, people in this province want to know that we as a government, in our capacity as stewards of the economy, are in fact planning for what's in store.

My question is this: Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to ensure that Ontario's labour laws adapt to the ever-changing marketplace?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the honourable member from Etobicoke North for what I think is a very insightful question.

As the member will know, and as all members of the House will know, all the members of cabinet received public mandate letters. In my mandate letter, I was asked to undertake a review of Ontario's changing workplace, to ensure that the labour laws and the employment standards we have actually meet the needs of our modern economy.

Starting very shortly, in March, public consultations are going to begin. They're going to look at the Labour Relations Act and the Employment Standards Act, and we want to know how they could be amended in order to meet the challenges of the changing workplace.

We'll be looking at the increase of non-standard working relationships, the rise in prominence of the service sector, and the impact of new technology. These special advisers that I've appointed will report back with recommendations within the next 18 months.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I appreciate the steps, initiatives and programs the government is undertaking to tackle this particular issue, especially as we go forward in this challenging global marketplace.

Minister, you mentioned that the review will be undertaken by a number of advisers and an expert panel who will, I believe, be charged with reporting back to the House in 18 months. I presume that their recommendations will help inform what changes may be required to employment standards, labour relations and a number of other aspects in the labour domain.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please tell this House who the advisers will be and a little bit about their vision for how they'll guide this important review of Ontario's changing marketplace?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for the supplementary.

I'm really pleased with the choice we've made here. We've appointed two special advisers: Michael Mitchell and the Honourable John C. Murray. They're going to lead and co-ordinate these upcoming public consultations and the review itself.

These people have a depth of relevant legal knowledge and experience that I think is unmatched in the province of Ontario. Michael Mitchell is a former senior partner at Sack Goldblatt Mitchell. His 37 years in practice have given him a wealth of experience in the field; he's even

co-authored a textbook on the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

The Honourable John C. Murray has been practising law since 1969. Appointed to the bench of the Superior Court in 2004, he has provided legal advice to numerous public institutions, universities and hospitals. He's a pioneer of alternative dispute resolution. He's well-prepared to face the challenge of this review.

We should be especially proud of the opportunity to undertake this review with these two fine individuals. I would urge all members of the House to both become involved themselves and to urge their constituents to get involved as well.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier: Premier, there's a sad irony in what has transpired since last Thursday in question period. You informed the House last Thursday, as we all learned about the contraventions of the Election Act by your staff, that you would take time to consider and deliberate about the report before you responded.

I was hoping for honesty, a quality that you preach constantly. But as I left, astonished, on Friday, instead of speaking honestly, you impugned and maligned the reputation of every member in this House with an unwarranted attack.

Premier, it's telling that no one trusts you. Even your candidates bring tape recorders to their meetings with you because they all know you say one thing and you do another. Why should anyone trust you about anything, especially after what has taken place in Sudbury and your involvement?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I really do challenge the premise of the question. But I want to just say to the member opposite that I spoke in the Legislature on Thursday—that's exactly right. I answered questions. And I got a lot of advice and I thought long and hard about what I was going to say on Friday. At 4 o'clock in the morning I got up and actually wrote the statement that I made on Friday, because I wanted the people of Ontario to know exactly where I was coming from on this, why I was doing what I was doing, why I had done what I had done.

And I did include in my statement the fact that there have been actions taken by other parties, like members coming across the floor to ask for appointments in exchange for stepping down from their seats. I made that point, Mr. Speaker, because I needed the people of Ontario to understand that we said no. We said we're not going to do that. We're not going to operate like that, even though that is what has been done before. That's why we're—

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: Premier, you continue to malign and impugn members in this House. If that's a fact, come forward, come clean: Tell us who they are.

Premier, you challenged the premise of my question. I'm challenging your integrity. You have stood in this House and have said one thing after another, and they've all borne out to be false, each and every time. With each falsehood, we have another OPP investigation—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm drawing the line on that. Withdraw, please.

1120

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'm listening carefully.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Premier, there are four investigations now. Every time you say one thing, you do another. There's clear, clear evidence of your involvement here, and you need to come clean with the people of Ontario. You can't continue to impugn the members in this House in defense of your actions—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let's just be clear about what the Chief Electoral Officer said. Once again, the Chief Electoral Officer stated, "I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone's guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges." That's the fact. We're dealing with allegations, Mr. Speaker.

Let me just say to the member opposite: Unlike the way he might do business, I was making a point in my statement on Friday. I wasn't creating a situation where individuals' names were going to be dragged through the mud. That's not what I was doing. I was making a point.

The fact is that this is something that has happened in the past and it has happened in the recent past. It's not about going after an individual. It really is not what it was about. I was trying to put in context the fact that we are doing things differently. We said no in those situations when in the past the answer has been yes.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre.

Speaker, the Premier is protecting Pat Sorbara because the Premier insists Mrs. Sorbara was offering what the OPP is calling "bribes" on the Liberal clock instead of on the government clock. It's the government's job to make laws, not to break them. Moonlighting in another position doesn't give you an excuse to start violating fundamental principles. A bribe is a bribe no matter whose time card you're punching. It's not a "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" type of a situation.

Speaker, does the Premier really think that it is okay for senior staff to be on the job while they are under criminal investigation? Because, frankly, Ontarians don't.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This story is not that complicated. The story is that there was a seat vacated in Sudbury five months after the election. An NDP MP decided that he wanted to run for the Ontario Liberal Party in Sudbury. He had conversations with the Premier. The Premier was enormously impressed, as well she should be, and made the determination that Glenn Thibeault would be our candidate in the upcoming by-election. After that decision had been made, there were conversations with the past candidate about how to keep him involved.

But let's just talk about who Glenn Thibeault is and why the Premier would choose to actually appoint him as our candidate to make sure that he would come to Queen's Park and represent. He has fought tirelessly for the most vulnerable people in Sudbury: people with disabilities, people with autism. He's worked with the Big Brothers Big Sisters—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Back to the Premier: My question is about Pat Sorbara, who offered Andrew Olivier "a full-time or a part-time job at a constituency office" or "appointments to boards or commissions." It doesn't matter what hat Mrs. Sorbara was working with—it was wrong. It is spelled out in the Criminal Code and in the Election Act. It is wrong.

But the Premier says, "The role that Pat Sorbara plays as a director of campaigns is quite separate from her role as deputy chief of staff." Why is the Premier okay with Pat Sorbara offering what the OPP is calling a bribe with her campaign director hat on, if she thinks it is wrong to offer bribes with her chief of staff hat on?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I've known the Premier since we were both elected back in 2003. She is a woman of enormous integrity. She is a woman who is thoughtful, who is principled, who will sometimes do the difficult thing when it's the right thing.

In this case, she has chosen a difficult path. The easy path would be to just throw people under the bus. She has chosen not to do that. She has chosen to actually let the investigation unfold. She has chosen to co-operate fully with any investigation. She has chosen the right, the principled, the thoughtful path, and I have even more respect for her now than I had before because she has chosen to do the difficult, but right, thing, and has rejected the easy path.

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and, may I add, a fine MPP.

This government has demonstrated its commitment to invest in people, to invest in infrastructure and to support an innovative business climate in Ontario. Despite the government's efforts to support economic development through mainstream programs and services, aboriginal people continue to face significant economic disadvantages.

Our province's diversity is one of its greatest aspects, and my riding of Davenport is truly emblematic of Ontario's rich cultural diversity. As a society largely made up of immigrants, it is imperative that we recognize the contributions of Ontario's First Nations peoples to our province's diversity.

We all recognize that a strong and vibrant aboriginal community strengthens Ontario culturally, socially and economically. Speaker, through you to the minister: While we are making progress in many areas, can the minister inform the House about some initiatives this government has undertaken to better cater to the needs of aboriginal communities and organizations across the province?

Hon. David Zimmer: The member is correct: Mainstream programs often fall short in delivering the necessary programs to our most vulnerable populations.

We have been active on many fronts, creating many opportunities for both the private sector and communities to participate in a meaningful way and to help the Ontario economy. Just last week, we announced the continuation of our New Relationship Fund. The fund is designed to support aboriginal communities and organizations' participation in meaningful consultation and engagement with government and the private sector.

Ontario has invested \$97 million in the New Relationship Fund between 2008 and 2014. We are glad that the aboriginal communities are benefiting from this program in their relationship with the rest of Ontario and the development of their communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Minister, thank you for informing this House on the New Relationship Fund. It is wonderful news. This is a great investment in helping people, communities and businesses, and in helping to create a more robust business environment.

However, the fact remains that the unemployment rate for First Nation people is approximately three times the Ontario average on-reserve and twice the Ontario average off-reserve. We know that a constructive, co-operative relationship with aboriginal peoples in Ontario leads to improved opportunities and a better future, not only for aboriginal people but for all people living in Ontario.

Through you, Speaker: Will the minister expand further on just what is happening with this investment and how it is directly benefiting aboriginal communities in Ontario?

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, we want to see the gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people closed off, because when aboriginal people prosper, all of Ontario prospers.

The fund was originally announced as a four-year commitment in 2008, but it has been so successful that we will continue to invest in the fund on an ongoing basis.

During the 2014-15 year, aboriginal communities and organizations pursued a number of projects through enhanced program funding. With a \$14.5-million investment this year, the ministry has funded over 103 core consultation projects, representing 154 communities; and 30 enhanced consultation projects, representing some 51 aboriginal communities and organizations. These projects will continue to show that aboriginal communities are pursuing innovative solutions that ensure their future prosperity, and I commend that; we should all commend that.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. It's clear that your party is willing to rule a verdict of innocence without trial. You continually tell the people of Ontario that you and your staff did nothing wrong, as if being elected Premier made you both judge and jury for your unscrupulous actions.

After several complaints from the public, the Greater Sudbury police board decided in a closed-door meeting that Gerry Lougheed Jr. would continue as chair, despite the investigation.

1130

Premier, I was listening to this morning's opening prayer; it referenced honesty and integrity. This investigation is not going to disappear. Why won't you ask this man to step aside while under investigation?

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As I've mentioned and stated on numerous occasions, police services boards are responsible for the provision of adequate and effective policing within their municipalities. Among their duties, police services boards generally determine objectives and priorities with respect to police services in their jurisdictions and establish policies for the effective management of police services.

Under the Police Services Act, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has no jurisdiction or power to remove a member from a police services board. All police services board members, however, are appointed by the province or a municipal council and are subject to a code of conduct that is enshrined under the Police Services Act through a regulation. I understand, as the member mentioned, that the board considered this matter itself and have decided to elect Mr. Lougheed as chair of the board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Again, back to the Premier: What does your government have against accountability? You've questioned the integrity of the Auditor General, you have brushed off the report from the Chief Electoral Officer, and it doesn't seem to concern you that there are four ongoing OPP investigations into your government's

unethical political practice. These are all independent accountability officers who are saying that you and your government have done wrong. More reports are on their way.

Premier, everyone is telling you that you have done wrong, so when will you do the right thing and have Mr. Lougheed step aside?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The fair and most accountable thing to do would be to let an independent body which is responsible for review of these matters conduct its business, as opposed to raising these issues in the House and asking for some sort of political interference, which the opposition is doing.

As I mentioned, there is a code of conduct which is in force by regulation. It's regulation 421/97, just for the member's reference if he wants to check it. It's up to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission—the OCPC—to consider whether the code of conduct is being complied with or not. That's an independent body, an arm's-length body, and it's up to them to see whether the code of conduct is enforced. I will leave that work up to the OCPC, as opposed to the political interference that is being sought by the members opposite.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. One of the Premier's top aides is under criminal investigation, and my constituents think that's pretty serious. So do the OPP, Elections Ontario and federal crown prosecutors. Where I come from, when someone is accused of something and they're in a public position—like one of the most powerful non-elected positions in this province—when they're under investigation, where I come from, they step down until the investigation is over.

What does it take for the Premier of this province to do what would actually be normal practice in most places and have that person step down until the investigation is over?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Again, let's go back to what's actually happening here. What's happening is that the Chief Electoral Officer has called the allegations against two people baseless: the Premier and Mr. Thi-beault. Those allegations have been considered baseless.

There are two other investigations going on, and we are fully co-operating with these investigations. I think that when an allegation is made, that does not make it true. Anyone listening today would think that there had already been a conviction, for heaven's sake. There is an investigation under way. We're fully co-operating with the investigation. The Premier has said that if, in fact, a charge is laid, then that changes the story. But I think that what's important is that there is an investigation under way, and we are completely co-operating with that investigation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again to the Premier: The Premier has refused to accept any responsibility for her

actions in this matter. She is protecting Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed from this scandal. The Premier apparently doesn't see any problems with Andrew Olivier being offered a job to get out of the way, even though the law is clear.

But for my constituents, the biggest issue is, we need to be held to a higher standard. The people who are involved in this investigation need to step back so that the investigation appears to be open and transparent, the words we hear all the time from your government.

Again, why don't you take normal practice and force these people to step aside until the investigation is complete?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The Premier has received lots of advice on this. I think both opposition parties have been very generous in their advice.

That advice has been heard. You heard from the Premier today that she did take that advice seriously. Then she really thought through the issues here. She took a thoughtful, principled, ethical approach. She made the determination that when allegations are baseless, as she knows them to be, she will let that investigation unfold. But she will not force the resignation of someone when the allegations against that person are baseless.

I actually think our Premier has demonstrated a new and different and better way—not an easier way, but a better way—of dealing with opposition allegations.

IMMIGRANTS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Minister, both Ontario's culture and its economy rely greatly on our immigrant population. Each year we welcome many highly skilled newcomers, who bring with them a wealth of knowledge and abilities that do contribute to our province. Without immigration, Ontario's working-age population will begin to decline.

There are many talented newcomers in my riding of Kitchener Centre who do contribute greatly to our community, and we want to make certain that they continue to be welcomed in our province and meet with opportunities.

Speaker, could the minister please tell us what actions the government is taking to ensure that Ontario continues to have a healthy immigrant population?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question. I want to thank the honourable member from Kitchener Centre for asking.

As an immigrant myself, just like many of my colleagues here today, I know the struggles that many newcomers face.

Ontario was built by immigrants. Our government is committed to making sure that they continue to find success in our great province. This is why we recently re-introduced Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act. If passed, it would make Ontario the second province in the country, after Quebec, to have its own immigrant legislation. Bill 49 will put in place the tools and authority

needed to welcome immigrants who will help Ontario meet its future labour and market needs.

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I'd like to draw your attention to standing orders 23(h) and (i). The Premier's comments today in this House in response to my question, as well as her comments last Friday, are tantamount—they are making allegations against another member and imputing false or unavowed motives to another member and, I would say, to all members.

I would like you to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I was listening carefully all the time. I did not hear that. I thank the member for his interjection.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton on a point of order.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you for the indulgence. I'd love to introduce today page captain Dhairya Bhatt and his family: mother Mamta, father Amish, grandmother Bina and grandfather Nilesh.

I want them all to feel welcomed in the House today. Thank you so much for being here.

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

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LEO JORDAN

Mr. Randy Hillier: I was sorry to hear of the recent passing of a great community leader: William Leo Jordan.

On Saturday, I was joined by my colleagues Steve Clark, John Yakabuski, Jack MacLaren and Ted Arnott in Smiths Falls to commemorate the life of Leo Jordan, along with Leo's family and many friends.

Leo was a former reeve of Montague township in my riding. He served on Lanark county council and also served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for almost a decade.

Leo was first elected in 1990 as MPP for Lanark–Renfrew and served in opposition as critic for a number of important portfolios, including energy, which drew off of his 39 years of experience at Ontario Hydro.

After securing his seat for the second time by more than 10,000 votes, Leo served as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism in the Mike Harris government.

I first met Leo when I became an advocate for property rights and smaller government and had the pleasure of his ongoing support.

Leo will be sadly missed by his family, as well as the many people and friends whose lives he touched and helped over his long career.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, as you know, this is Black History Month, and I want to tell about something we're celebrating in the town of Tecumseh and indeed in the entire region of Windsor and Essex county.

This is a story about our rich heritage, the success of the Underground Railroad, and the brave black men who served the crown and fought in the Rebellions of 1837. It's also a story about two dedicated descendants of these African Canadian pioneers: Elise Harding-Davis and Glen Cook.

During slavery, in the United States, as property, blacks had no say or control over where or even if bodies were interred. So when refugee slaves came to Ontario, they established settlements, built churches and, for the first time, these pioneers bought land for their own graveyards. That's the background of this story, Speaker.

I live just off Banwell Road. Just up the road and over the tracks you'll find a small five-acre cemetery. All that remains are five headstones, but they tell a story that needs to be told. One stone is dated 1865. Other markers are dated 1870, 1877, and, for James Ross, 1908. James Ross was murdered for his pocket change. His murderer was the last man hanged in Sandwich.

There are others buried there beneath sunken markers on overgrown plots and in dense woodlots.

Elise Harding-Davis and Glen Cook have documented their history, and I'm proud to say that, because of their work, the Ontario Heritage Trust, with help from the town of Tecumseh, will erect a provincial heritage plaque there later this year.

So, Speaker, through you, a salute from the Ontario Legislature to Elise and Glen for their dedication to this very important project and for helping us all understand and celebrate our shared heritage.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARDS

Mr. Yvan Baker: In January, I had the privilege of presenting the 2014 Community Recognition Awards, recognizing the positive difference being made by individuals and groups in Etobicoke Centre. The awards were presented at my New Year's levee and were awarded to people living, working or volunteering in Etobicoke Centre who make a real difference in the lives of people in our community.

I'd like to take this moment to recognize the recipients of this year's awards in this House. For outstanding volunteer service to the community: Brian Brennand, Oksana Cherchuk, Jim Fielding, Bruce Gleeson, Barbara Hayworth, Odile Sahl, Ted Scott, Florence Thiffault, John Varley, Bill Wilson and Mary Wilson.

For outstanding volunteer service to seniors: Dr. Ronald Groshaw, Sharon Bradbury, George Alexandris,

AnQi Chang, Elizabeth Ditchew, Gayasha Perera, Mary Klamas, Helen Kerekes, Lydia Lelyk and a group of volunteers from Etobicoke Services for Seniors congregate dining.

For outstanding volunteer service to the community by youth: Matthew Barrett, Johnathan McAvoy, Kathy Huang, Victoria Lee and Kirby Wong.

For outstanding service by professional staff, employees or employers: Daniel Bogue, Mary Green, Luke Lynch, Rose Wang, Sandy Simmons and Wendy Samuel.

The recipients recognized come from a range of ages and backgrounds and contribute in a range of ways, from caring for seniors to engaging youth to volunteering in their parish. They make a difference every single day.

I'm honoured to represent Etobicoke Centre and to have the opportunity through these awards to recognize those who are making a difference in our community.

Thank you to all the recipients for what you do and to all those in Etobicoke Centre who work to make Etobicoke Centre and Ontario better every single day.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Harris: This week we're seeing work by both opposition parties to update regulation 316/03 under the Highway Traffic Act that allows utility task vehicle, or UTV, owners the same rights to drive on designated roads and trails as ATV owners, something the government continues to stall on despite all-party support.

In the wake of more foot-dragging, we've seen the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and later this week my caucus colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka, bring forth private members' bills to step in where government has stalled.

It was over a year ago—November 7, 2013, to be exact—that the government member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell put forth a motion to make rules fair for off-road vehicle drivers across the board. We continue to wait for that playing field to be levelled, as promised, through regulation.

Since the motion's passing, I've written the minister on numerous occasions asking for the regulatory update that would help Ontario businesses, farmers, agribusinesses and recreational clubs like golf courses, campgrounds and riding groups to make better use of their off-road vehicles.

Down in my neck of the woods, in New Hamburg, Ontario Drive and Gear has been manufacturing the Argo since the 1960s, a vehicle that has a world-renowned reputation for its versatility and capability in traversing difficult terrain. Updating regulations to reflect what is available to safely ride between trails and properties on rural highways will generate greater demand for these Ontario products and, in turn, help create well-paying jobs.

Speaker, it has already been a decade too long. It's time to kick-start this needed change and allow for off-

road vehicle ownership to drive on designated roads, highways and trails, as other all-terrain vehicles do.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I rise today to talk about the recent by-election in my city, in Sudbury, and to talk about what could have been. February 5 could have been a day of pride for the people of Sudbury. We could have sent Ontario's first severely disabled person or even the first aboriginal woman to the Legislature. You see, Speaker, everyone who cares about Sudbury knows that we've had an image problem in the past. Think about the moonscape. Well, left to ourselves, we could have made history, for all the right reasons.

Electing the very first quadriplegic person or First Nations person could have united all of us together and allowed us to stand proud and say, "Sudbury did this. We did this."

The media from all over could have come to our city to see how progressive, caring and inclusive Sudbury really is. We could have showcased the Northern Lights Festival Boréal, the longest-running folk festival—and not only is it bilingual, it is a multicultural event; or TG InnerSelves, which works with transgender people; or a visit to the Samaritan Centre to see the Corner Clinic, which is dedicated to caring for the homeless people of Sudbury. This summer the Parapan and Pan American athletes could have come and made the trip up north to celebrate one of their own and to see more of what a progressive, inclusive and caring community Sudbury is. This is the story that could have been. We all know what we got instead.

1310

ELIJAH MARSH

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise today with great sadness to relay the story about the tragic death of Elijah Marsh. As you know, three-year-old Elijah was found frozen, with no vital signs, beside a house in my riding last Thursday.

Young Elijah is, to say the least, greatly, greatly missed by the whole community in Neptune, and by everybody across the country. In fact, I think Elijah's tragic death has struck a chord around the world.

I would like to thank the men and women at 32 division; Sam Fernandes, the division superintendent who led the search; and the volunteers who came from across the GTA to search for Elijah. I'd like to also thank all the members of the community who are standing with the family right now, getting them through this incredible grief that they are having to endure.

Out of this horrible death—it's just remarkable the amount of good that this tragedy has elicited from people. When I was there the other day, there was a group of students from Dante high school who stopped and said the Our Father beside a little makeshift vigil where Elijah—it was marked of his passing.

So we say to Elijah's family and the greater community at Baycrest and Neptune: Rest in peace, Elijah. Out of your tragic death, you've inspired us all to come together and remark on what is important in this life, and that is taking care of our children.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in this House today to recognize the local efforts to raise awareness on the state of the maintenance of winter roads across Parry Sound–Muskoka. For the past two winter seasons, the conditions have been particularly challenging.

Last week, on the day that the Legislature resumed, I tabled in this House a petition containing 2,500 signatures. Today, I have added 250 signatures to that record, and individual support continues to pour in.

These individuals are all calling for positive change that will improve the delivery of winter road maintenance and make our roads safer. The petition specifically calls for a return to a delivery model that allows Ministry of Transportation staff to be able to direct the contractor on deployment of vehicles as conditions dictate.

Taking into account the amount of snowfall and cold temperatures experienced the past two winter seasons, I believe that the experience under the previous model, compared with the current model, illustrates the need for change.

I'm pleased to have the support of many municipalities across Parry Sound–Muskoka. I hope that the government and the Minister of Transportation will listen to municipal delegations at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association/Ontario Good Roads Association conference going on this week and make improvements to winter road maintenance.

ICE YACHTING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Mr. Speaker, I'm delighted to tell you about an incredible sporting event that was recently held in my riding of Kingston and the Islands: the international ice yachting DN class world cup championships. This event is held annually, alternating between Europe and North America.

Naturally, the decision on locality is always a last-minute one, based on weather and ice conditions—challenging when competitors must ship their boats internationally. Imagine about 100 competitors from 15 countries or more, including Poland, Sweden, Finland and France, poised with all their equipment to descend at short notice on the right place.

With eight inches of glass-like ice and clear skies, Lake Ontario was the right place to be, and, frankly, the only place to be sailing on Lake Ontario is Kingston, with its reputation of the best sailing in the world.

At speeds of up to 100 kilometres an hour, ice sailing is not for the faint-hearted. I invite to you look at my social media to see a stunning video of this event.

Precision team spirit was demonstrated by the Kingston Yacht Club, Queen's students, the Kingston Economic Development Corp. and many volunteers. State-of-the-art sport and spirit with the best possible human infrastructure—that, Mr. Speaker, is a typical Kingston classic.

Merci. Meegwetch. Thank you.

FAMILY SKATING EVENT

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This past Family Day, I held a free public skate event in our riding of Kitchener Centre at the Kitchener Memorial Auditorium's Kiwanis rink, and I know that many of my fellow MPPs did the same. Much to my delight, I was absolutely overwhelmed by the response. We had hundreds of constituents come out to have some fun with us.

Ironically, the event gave us all an opportunity to escape the frigid cold outside and warm up inside an arena where we keep ice. The crowd was very diverse. Some were experienced skaters whereas others were out there for the very first time. The event was also a great opportunity for new Canadians to get involved in the community and, more importantly, to help them to adapt to Canadian culture. One such individual was named Padha; she's from Burma. She was lacing up her skates for the very first time as she took part in our communal gathering on the ice.

Having grown up in a family that immigrated to Canada from Italy, I can appreciate the value of any experience that helps immigrants become more accustomed to Canadian culture and climate. The event gave our constituents a chance to not only have some fun and get some exercise, but it provided them with a chance to network and connect with others, which is really invaluable to help immigrants integrate into our culture here in Canada.

I want to extend my gratitude to everyone who made the effort to join us, and I'm so pleased at the level of community building that I witnessed. Thank you.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RAISE A GLASS TO ONTARIO ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 POUR PORTER UN TOAST À L'ONTARIO

Mr. Smith moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 67, An Act to amend the Liquor Control Act /
Projet de loi 67, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les alcools.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: The Raise a Glass to Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to change the system for the retail, sale and transportation of alcohol in line with several recommendations made by the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. It also seeks to make amendments that will allow for a new warehousing regulatory regime that will provide better access to market and stronger growth potential for many products that are manufactured right here in Ontario.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
AMENDMENT ACT (VOTING HOURS
EXTENSION), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES ÉLECTIONS MUNICIPALES
(PROLONGATION DES HEURES
DE SCRUTIN)

Mr. Berardinetti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 68, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to keep voting places open until 9 p.m. / Projet de loi 68, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales pour que les bureaux de vote restent ouverts jusqu'à 21 h.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: This bill amends the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, to extend the hours when voting places are open for votes, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Mr. Bradley.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98, the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr. Smith and Ms. Elliott exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Smith assumes ballot item number 30 and Ms. Elliott assumes ballot item number 42, and that notice for ballot item numbers 31, 34, 35 and 36 be waived.

1320

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98, the following changes be made to the public ballot list for private

members' public business: Mr. Smith and Ms. Elliott exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Smith assumes ballot item number 30 and Ms. Elliott assumes ballot item number 42, and that notice for ballot items 31, 34, 35 and 36 be waived.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?
Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Norm Miller: I've received more petitions to do with improved winter road maintenance, and the petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the area maintenance contract system has failed Ontario drivers the past two winters;

"Whereas unsafe conditions led to the maintenance contractor being fined in the winter of 2013-14, as well as leading to a special investigation by the provincial Auditor General;

"Whereas the managed outsourcing system for winter roads maintenance, where the private contractor is responsible for maintenance, but MTO patrols the region and directs the contractor on the deployment of vehicles, sand and salt, has a proven track record for removing snow and ensuring that Ontario's highways are safe for travellers;

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

"That the Ontario Ministry of Transportation take immediate action to improve the maintenance of winter roads based on the positive benefits of the previous delivery model, where MTO plays more of a role in directing the private contractor."

I support and have signed this petition.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have here a petition submitted from across Ontario, but specifically I see names here from Oshawa and from Durham, and I'm pleased to read it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas emergency response workers (paramedics, police officers, and firefighters) confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

"Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

"Whereas Bill 2 'An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder' sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational

disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.’”

I am pleased to affix my name to this and to send it with page Julie.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to page Dhairya to bring forward.

HEALTH CARE

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s lack of priority funding is causing the closure of the South Bruce Grey Health Centre restorative care Chesley site as of May 1st, 2015; and

“Whereas in three years, the 10 beds dedicated to this program have seen over 300 patients utilize the program and at this time there is a waiting list for this successful program; and

“Whereas currently over 83% of patients are discharged from the restorative care program to home after a two- to eight-week program which has prepared them to confidently return home, recognizing this program increases their quality of life through the regaining of strength, balance and independence; and

“Whereas the closure of this program will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health

and mobility benefits that the restorative care program offers; and

“Whereas the alternative to the restorative care program will see patients staying in active medical beds longer, while they wait for long-term care; and

“Whereas the return of investment on the restorative care program far exceeds conventional approaches when considering the value of quality of life in the patients’ own home as compared to a long-term-care facility; and

“Whereas it is our understanding that the CCAC has cut back its services enabling patients to remain confidently in their home;

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

“That the South Bruce Grey Health Centre restorative care Chesley site be recognized for its success; and for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to showcase this program as a model to be followed across the province; and

“That the closing of the South Bruce Grey Health Centre restorative care Chesley site on May 1st, 2015, not proceed and the provincial government support this health care model with base funding as an investment in the health and welfare of patients so they can confidently remain in their home.”

I support this, will affix my signature and send it with page Hannah.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

“Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

“(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

“(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

“(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it, and give it to page Arlyne to take to the table.

DISTRACTED DRIVING

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is committed to ensuring the safety of drivers, passengers and pedestrians on Ontario’s roads and making the province North America’s most cycling friendly jurisdiction; and

“Whereas, on average, one person is killed on Ontario’s roads every 18 hours, and one person is injured every 8.1 minutes; and

“Whereas drivers who use cellphones while driving are four times more likely to be in a crash than non-distracted drivers; and

“Whereas evidence has shown that Ontario’s impaired driving laws need to be strengthened to apply sanctions for driving under the influence of alcohol to those impaired by drugs;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 31, the Making Ontario’s Roads Safer Act, 2014.”

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and will give my petition to page Ali.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the good people of Lombardy for supporting Norm Miller’s Bill 58. I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition, and I’ll send it to the table with page Muntder.

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas accessibility to our public health care system is a foundational value of Ontario; and

“Whereas all individuals should have equal access to health care services regardless of their ability to pay; and
1330

“Whereas patients requiring health care services often have to drive to a hospital to receive these services; and

“Whereas hospitals are increasingly using parking charges as an avenue for revenue generation thereby impacting some patients’ access based on their ability to pay; and

“Whereas the Liberal Party promised during the 2014 election campaign to cap hospital parking fees;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand that the government of Ontario follow through on their commitment to cap parking fees at Ontario’s hospitals at a level that ensures equitable access to health care.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to give it to page Amber to bring to the Clerk.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have another petition here 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.”

I agree with this, affix my signature, and give it to page Dhairya to bring forward.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Bill Walker: “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 fully support this petition, will affix my signature, and send it with page Inaya.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect, and substandard care for patients at our hospitals and long-term-care homes;

“Whereas there are more and more cases of hospital acquired infections;

“Whereas people with complaints have no independent body to listen to their concerns;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of hospitals and other front line care organizations;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s hospitals, long-term-care homes and other front line care organizations.”

I sign my signature to this petition and give it to page Muntder to deliver to the table.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition regarding fluoride for all Ontario people who drink water.

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable

to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the #1 recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I shall put my name to this and give this to page William, of the wonderful riding of Kitchener Centre.

TAXATION

Mr. Toby Barrett: I have a petition I picked up quite early this morning at the Pioneer station in Hagersville. It’s titled “Say No to New Gas Taxes” and addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Kathleen Wynne’s carbon tax may not only apply to gasoline but also to diesel, heating oil, natural gas, propane;

“Whereas lower gas prices are the only break recently to Ontario’s middle class;

“Whereas Ontario already has gas taxes of 14.7 cents per litre plus 13% per litre HST and of course the federal excise tax of 10 cents a litre;

“We, the undersigned, emphatically say no to any new or additional gas taxes or carbon taxes imposed by the Wynne government.”

I fully agree and will affix my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TRANSPORTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (MAKING ONTARIO’S ROADS SAFER), 2015 LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE TRANSPORT (ACCROÎTRE LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE EN ONTARIO)

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 19, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2012 sur l’autoroute 407 Est et le Code de la route en ce qui concerne diverses questions et apportant une modification corrélative à la Loi sur les infractions provinciales.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When the House last debated Bill 31 at second reading, the member for Burlington had the floor. I shall now ask for further debate.

The member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you very much, Speaker. I welcome this debate in our Ontario Legislature on Bill 31. I think it's an important bill. Transportation is important, and obviously road safety is important.

In the province of Ontario, we've been building roads to get from A to B. I do know that, well before the present province of Ontario was established, roads have certainly been under construction going back for the last several hundred years. I know that my great-grandfather and my grandfather were responsible for Mill Road. At that time, you were responsible for the road in front of your farm. In the spring, out would come the horses and a scraper, and they would attempt to grade that road. I always considered it our road. Our home farm is still on Mill Road.

We build roads. It obviously fosters social life and, most importantly, economic life, but also designed and built—construction—to be as safe as possible.

In my riding over the last 12 years, there are several projects—provincial issues—that are long overdue. Particularly, I would like to briefly make reference, because we're talking about transportation, to the bypasses and bridges of Haldimand county. There are several projects. Studies have been done—ongoing debate over the years. We need a link from the Hamilton airport bypass down to the Caledonia bypass.

The reason I say that is primarily for reasons of safety: Old Highway 6, south of Hamilton, coming down Upper James south towards Caledonia, is a four-lane highway with no barrier in between. There have been some horrendous accidents and deaths on that stretch of highway; right around Haldibrook Road on provincial Highway 6. We need the construction of that bypass. I have a Ministry of Transportation map in my office that shows the planned bypass as a series of dotted lines, again, pretty well coming down from Hamilton airport to the Caledonia bypass bridge over the Grand River.

1340

We need a Hagersville truck bypass. Provincial Highway 6 comes right through town. It always has, ever since the inception of provincial Highway 6. With the heavy trucks, particularly steel, coming out of US Steel—again, the noise, the congestion and serious truck accidents that have occurred over the years, a number of them recently, right in downtown Hagersville. It's timely: I just received a report, a master's paper coming out of the University of Guelph authored by Wilrik Banda—he worked with me, the mayor and others on this report—outlining the complete story on the need for a Hagersville bypass.

A third major project that has been in abeyance for 12 years—in fact, it was about to begin back when I was a government member—is the Caledonia bridge over the Grand River, a 700-foot span, that was built back in 1927. It's long overdue for replacement. Again, it's limited: You can't put trucks over that. I don't think you can put a fire truck over that bridge. I'd be very worried about some of the heavy equipment going over a bridge

like that. Again, it's long overdue; certainly, over the last 12 years.

Another bridge is the Cayuga bridge. This is another very serious holdup. The Cayuga bridge was built in 1924. Again, it's long overdue for replacement. Granted, these bridges seem to be holding up. There have been repairs. But these major bridges on major provincial highways, across the Grand River, 700 or 800 feet long, are long overdue to be replaced.

I've stood out on the Cayuga bridge. In fact, the late Bob Baigent was quite a champion of replacing this 1924 bridge. He asked me to take the time someday to walk out on that bridge, stand in the middle of the bridge, wait for a heavy load of steel, a load of coil, to come along, and see what it does to that bridge.

Again, this legislation, to its credit, is all about safety. I support much of what's in this legislation. Again, the title of Bill 31, Making Ontario's Roads Safer—we have to get on with this.

There's a clear and present issue with the last project I mentioned, the Cayuga bridge. I stood in this House before Christmas and indicated that the Ontario Ministry of Transportation are doing their best to try to get around the delays with constructing the Cayuga bridge. The serious problem—and this is a justice issue; it's a law-and-order issue—is that the bridge periodically gets occupied by native activists from Six Nations. They take over the bridge. This has happened several times now. Construction workers, essentially, determine that discretion is better than valour, and they leave, oftentimes within minutes. That's downright dangerous. The last time this happened, the barge, the equipment, was down below in the bridge while winter was coming, and there was certain work that had to be done.

I do know that our Minister of Aboriginal Affairs has been involved with this, but that's not good enough. I just reiterate my call today to Ontario's Minister of Community Safety; we need him down there as well. The Ministry of Transportation is trying. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs—again, I've observed this for the last nine years with respect to the Grand River and Caledonia and Cayuga—has been relatively ineffective.

I will point out that this coming Saturday, February 28—I regret to say this—is the ninth anniversary of the occupation of a very large subdivision in the town of Caledonia. That's nine years of mayhem, disorder, serious construction delays, and blockades.

I've distributed photographs to every member of this House of a group of native activists lifting a minivan over the side of a bridge and dropping it on the provincial highway down below. It was either on fire when they pushed it over the overpass or was set on fire down below. I have those photographs; it has been nine years. We talk about OPP investigations here. The OPP have had those photographs for nine years. Nobody has ever been charged with throwing this minivan off the overpass onto a provincial highway. This is what goes on down in Caledonia.

Because of this chill—and I see it as essentially political correctness run wild—we don't have action. We can't get anything done down there, and it's downright dangerous. I have had people phone me because their sister is in a coma in the hospital because native activists have shut down a highway like the bypass in Caledonia, and you get these godawful detours around back roads; however, people are still barreling down these secondary roads at provincial highway speed.

The more that we can do, as this title suggests, under Bill 31 to make Ontario roads safer would serve my riding very well and would serve Haldimand county very well. All we ask is for the law to kick in and for these projects to kick forward.

Speaker, whether it be transportation or native protests on the highways or on the main street of Caledonia shutting down infrastructure projects, very simply all we ask is a return—I don't think it's too much to ask—for peace, order and good government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm always happy to stand in this House and to talk about legislation that's happening, the effect that it will have on the province and our agreement or disagreement with what the Liberals are bringing forward or what the government is bringing forward.

There are a lot of good things in this bill that we're very supportive of, things like stiffer penalties for distracted driving. When I did my debate in this House, I talked in depth about the folks that we have seen driving distracted and the statistics that were brought forward regarding the amount of accidents that happen because of distracted driving. So I'm really happy to see that that's being addressed in this bill.

Drugged driving: We know that there are not proper measurements to test these folks yet for whether they're under the influence of drugs. Yes, we have measures to test for alcohol, but drugged driving is something that I'm definitely happy to see in this bill, and making sure that we have provisions to make sure that people are safe on the streets.

New legislation for cycling: A one-metre distance is a good thing, making sure that—it's your bill, right?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's our bill.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's our bill. The member from Parkdale–High Park is just saying that that's our bill. That's something the New Democrats have pushed for, and we're happy to see that it's in this bill.

What else? One of the problems that I see with this bill is on the 407 and how it weakens the notification process for the 407. We know that sometimes a bill could be missed in the mail, or something could happen. The 407 seems to have all the ability of law to just wreak havoc on a person's world. I'm sorry to see that that's in here.

Thank you, Speaker; I appreciated the time.

1350

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to stand up and talk for a few minutes about Bill 31, which makes a large number of amendments to various traffic legislation. I agree with the member from Hamilton Mountain that there are really a lot of good things in here.

From the point of view of a Minister of Education, one thing that may not have gotten a lot of notice is the fact that there is a prohibition on any bus other than a school bus being painted that classic chrome yellow, because we want the public to be aware, when they see a bus and it's painted chrome yellow, to have absolute certainty that it's a school bus, not something that maybe isn't a school bus. It will make it clear that only school buses can use that classic paint colour.

In a time when we're also encouraging children to walk or bike to school, it's also good to see the traffic rules around people who are cycling being toughened up a little bit, such as requiring drivers to give a metre when passing; making it clearer that it's actually legal to drive your bike on paved shoulders, other than on the controlled-access highways and the 400 series; and increasing penalties if you're a person who opens a door without checking and doors a cyclist, as people in the cycling community would call it. It's great to see some of those amendments in there.

One that has always been a problem in our constituency office has been trying to bring some clarity around the whole issue of people who have medical conditions, which leads to a loss of licence.

We need to get on with passing this, because there are so many good amendments in here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm going to speak at length a little bit later this afternoon on a number of items in here, but I really want to bring out one that resonates with me a lot: the emergency vehicles. It says, "We support the requirement of all drivers to move into another lane when approaching stopped emergency vehicles and tow trucks with flashing lights."

I'd like to commend our PC caucus colleague Garfield Dunlop for bringing the government's attention to this issue with his "slow down, move over" private member's bill. It's certainly something where, particularly for our younger generation, I'm not certain at times that they really have had the experience to understand that, when you see the flashing lights—in our case, there are a lot of volunteer fire departments that have green flashing lights, and it's something that is law. It is legislation that they should be doing it.

Sadly, I was down in the Windsor area just after Christmas for a family friend's father's funeral, and I was so impressed and so struck by how many cars actually pulled over as the funeral procession was going by. That's not something that's legislated; that, to me, is just good common courtesy and respect for the person who had passed. It was just so striking to see all the people—almost every car actually did that and allowed the whole funeral procession to go by.

But it raises the issue, again, of the green lights. Our volunteers—those men and women who volunteer in our fire departments out in rural Ontario—come out and put their life on the line. They're speeding to try to get to, perhaps, your loved one—you are injured; your house is on fire—and people are pulling over and ensuring that they can do that, so they can go on unimpeded and get there as quickly as possible. That's certainly one that I like to see in here.

There are a number of good points in this bill. I'm going to speak to them. It's almost like an omnibus bill. I think there are about nine different categories, so I'm not going to be able to cover them all.

My colleague so aptly brought up—I think one of his main tenets is general law and order, to make it safer for everyone in our community. I think we need to do that. I think we need to go back to basics. Having said that, I also want to make sure that we're not making more regulations, red tape and administrative burdens for the people of Ontario, but to be an efficient and safe province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my distinct honour, of course, to rise in the Legislature and speak on Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act in respect of various matters and to make a consequential amendment to the Provincial Offences Act. Any time that we have the chance to make our communities safer, that's an important conversation to have.

My colleague made the comment that this is almost an omnibus bill. This bill crams a whole lot of different ideas in here and, as we read through it, a number of different recommendations. For example, the CAA has been pushing for this “slow down, move over” piece for a long time. So it's important to see that many of these recommendations are being pulled in and factored in.

When we're talking about communities and safety—as we know, I come from the public education world. School zones and crosswalks are right outside our front door. There's a piece in this bill that strengthens the distinct visual identity of school buses, and that's an important piece. No part of a bus other than a school bus can be painted that chrome yellow that we all know and recognize and identify.

From slowing down and moving over to bus safety—we cover a number of things in this bill. Also, distracted driving: The OPP says it's our number one killer.

I'll tell you a story, and I probably shouldn't. I may have had a speeding ticket in my day. I may have, once or twice, had a speeding ticket. But being in a room making my case and hearing those around me, everyone else in that room, with maybe one or two exceptions, was there because of distracted driving. That really drove it home, if you'll pardon the expression, that this needs to be a priority, and we're glad to see this in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments for this round. I

return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thanks, Speaker. I appreciate the actually quite diverse comments in return—and again, given the nature of what has been described as somewhat of an omnibus bill. It's an important issue. It's an important bill to keep moving forward through debate.

Canada was not built by people who were afraid to take on challenges, especially with our road and bridge projects and other infrastructure. Imagine Canada, for example, without the Trans-Canada Highway. I guess it was in the early 1960s that that link was made. I remember that our father drove us up there to show us where the road ended; you couldn't get to the other side of Ontario from there. The Canadian Pacific Railway: That was a mammoth project where politicians and everybody pulled together. Pipelines, infrastructure, water and sewer, upgrades to rail, sea links and road links—all important to pull us together, our social cohesion, and important for manufacturing and agribusiness and our primary industries.

My concern: the distraction, to put it mildly, of wasteful spending that takes away money from capital projects, a situation where we know of the horrendous debt in the province of Ontario; money that is being borrowed, essentially, for the day-to-day operation of this province to meet the payroll, to meet the pension obligations. Normally, one would expect government to borrow money, obviously, for a crisis or what have you. You would expect this money to be borrowed for infrastructure projects like roads, not just to meet the payroll.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's a great pleasure for me to rise in this House, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to join the debate on Bill C-31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act. This is a very comprehensive bill that brings together two previous pieces of legislation that were introduced in the last Parliament but not passed: the Highway Traffic Statute Law Amendment Act, which gave municipalities additional tools to collect defaulted traffic fines from drivers; and the Highway Traffic Amendment Act, which included provisions to enhance pedestrian, driver and cyclist safety.

In addition, Bill 31 includes important new measures to deal with drugged driving as well as stiffer penalties for distracted driving, which has become the number one killer on Ontario's roads, as we hear from the OPP.

1400

Since I have limited time for debate today, I won't be able to speak to all the provisions of the bill, but I did want to highlight a couple of aspects that are particularly significant for my community. Those are the cycling safety provisions, which were originally introduced by my NDP colleague the member for Parkdale–High Park, and municipal traffic fine collection.

There is great work going on in my community to promote cycling and encourage more Londoners to cycle.

The Medway Working Group has been working hard on a plan to identify and address barriers to active transportation, including, of course, cycling. Earlier this month, the city of London launched its rapid transit initiative, Shift, a plan that will also map safe cycling routes throughout the city.

This Friday there is going to be a mapping party organized by London Cycle Link to engage the community in planning London's new bicycle routes. Of course, provincial legislation to ensure the safety of cyclists is vital to support and strengthen and grow these local initiatives.

The other part of the bill that is critical for London, as well as communities across the province, are the new tools for municipalities to collect unpaid fines. We heard during pre-budget hearings from the mayor of London about the millions in unpaid traffic fines that are owed to the city. Certainly, municipalities need these tools, and the bill is a good step to streamline the process. We, on this side of the House, do have some questions about how the bill will enable the collection of fines from out-of-province drivers, and how it will enable the sharing of information across ministries.

I'm going to use the remainder of my time to focus on the section of Bill 31 that clarifies doctors' and optometrists' obligations regarding medical licence suspensions. My reason for focusing on this section of the act is the increasing number of phone calls and emails I've been getting from constituents about unacceptably long wait times for people to get their driver's licences reinstated after they've received a clean bill of health from their medical professional. This is a matter that is critical to my constituents in London West, especially those who rely on their vehicles for employment.

Bill 31 includes regulations to prescribe which medical professionals must support a medical condition and which medical conditions must be supported. Clearly, clarifying these responsibilities is a welcome improvement over the current situation, which is open-ended about responsibilities for reporting the medical conditions that may make it dangerous for a person to drive. My main concern, as I mentioned, is that the bill does not do anything to address the other issue related to medical licence suspensions: the wait times once the medical condition has been resolved.

The ministry currently says that their target service standard is four weeks for a driver to get their licence back after a medical suspension. The ministry says that they hit this service standard 85% to 90% of the time. I can't speak for the other members of this House and what is happening in the rest of the province, but I can tell you that in London West the ministry is not even coming close to meeting that target.

I'd like to share with this House the stories of some of my constituents whose jobs and ability to earn a living have been put directly at risk because they have been forced to wait months and months for the ministry to reissue their driver's licences.

My first example is Dave Wilson, a transit driver who had a medical issue that resulted in his class C commercial licence being downgraded to a class G. Dave was required to serve a waiting period while his medical condition was being treated. When his waiting period ended, in October 2014, Dave contacted the ministry to ask what was required from the medical review section to get his licence reinstated.

He was told he needed a letter from his doctor. So he promptly went to his doctor, got the letter and faxed it to the ministry. Two months later, Dave received a letter from the ministry saying he, in fact, needed a full medical as well as many other forms to be completed by his doctor.

Now, why did the ministry not give Dave that information the first time, when he inquired in October about what he needed to do? Dave immediately faxed the medical reports that were required from his physician to the ministry, but it then took numerous inquiries from my office before he finally received a letter from the Ministry of Transportation giving him leave to reapply for his class C commercial licence.

Speaker, it took more than four months for Dave to get the okay to begin the process of having his licence reinstated. Over that period, Dave's employer became concerned about the length of time it was taking for the reinstatement of his licence. Dave worried that he could lose his job. Four months is a completely unacceptable length of time for someone to wait, especially when they are as diligent as Dave was in terms of contacting the ministry to find out what the next steps were in the process.

My second example is Peter Hanford, owner of Hanford's Tire and Service, located in London West. Peter experienced a medical issue in September 2014 which resulted in his licence getting a medical suspension. In November, Peter's physician gave him the green light. He submitted his health information to the ministry. He was obviously anxious to get his licence reinstated. He made numerous attempts to contact the MTO and was often forced to wait in an answering machine queue for longer than an hour. All he wanted to do was find out why he had not heard back from the ministry about the status of his licence.

My office also became involved, inquiring with the ministry about the status of Peter's case. Two months later, my office received a response from the ministry indicating that more medical information was required. Again, this is well beyond the 30-day ministry service standard response time. So we're now nearing the end of February—remember that this issue first started in September 2014—and Peter Hanford's situation has yet to be resolved.

Peter has described the process of having his licence reinstated as "excruciating." He says it has been "impossible to get information about what is required from the MTO."

A third example—yet another example—is Steve Everett, who has also experienced long delays, along

with the ministry misplacing his medical records while he's been dealing with the medical review section of the Ministry of Transportation. Steve had a job offer and has come very close to losing out on his ability to get employment because of the ministry's delays, through no fault of his own.

These are just a few of the stories I've been hearing from my constituents. They highlight the fact that unacceptably long wait times at the MTO are jeopardizing people's ability to find and maintain employment.

Certainly Bill 31 is an important piece of legislation. We're glad to see it move forward. But I'm also concerned that it does not address the serious issue I have raised about wait times at the ministry. The ministry's practice of conducting reviews on a first-come, first-served basis does not take into account the impact on people who depend on their vehicle for employment or basic mobility.

I look forward to a response from the Minister of Transportation about the concerns I have raised today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: It's my privilege to address Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act. There are, of course, many, many different components regarding this bill, whether we're dealing with impaired driving—whether it's due to alcohol, drugs—enforcement issues or demerit points. Perhaps I might, just for a moment, as a physician parliamentarian, speak a little bit about the medical aspects.

There are, in the course of medical practice many, many different conditions that can affect the ability to drive, whether it's related to eyesight or drug addictions, drug dependence and, of course, alcoholism; but even, perhaps, hidden conditions, conditions you may not really recognize if you just meet an individual, whether, for example, it's the predisposition to have low sugar attacks, or hypoglycemia, in insulin-dependent diabetics— or even individuals who have conditions such as epilepsy.

1410

So I think it's very important that physicians out there who are counselling, treating, and catering to their patients' needs let them know that this is one more aspect of counselling they should be aware of. It's probably not, generally speaking, really part of a standardized medical history to get a "driving" history, but as these conditions occur on a very frequent basis, and as many of these conditions can be hidden, I will use this opportunity, as I said, to let Ontarians know—and of course my physician colleagues particularly—that this this is an aspect that needs to be catered to. As well, perhaps, hopefully directly, addressing some of the concerns which are of course very legitimate, I think we've all had the experience of attempting to communicate with various ministries and having things disappear into the vortex. But I think this is yet another aspect.

The reinstatement of your licence after a medical condition has precluded it is, I think, something that of course we will devote our attention to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's my pleasure to rise to speak to the member from London West's comments on this bill.

Being from the country, I've had to get used to the bicycle business in Toronto since I've lived here. Most cyclists take their time and try to obey the rules of the road, but I find some interesting things in here on the bicycle business.

One of them is that bicyclists will be required to obey bicycle traffic control signals, which are something the government proposes doing. I would suggest that if bicycles enjoyed the rules of the road, period, they wouldn't have to worry about bicycle signals, as I read this bill.

The other one is that this bill amends the act to remove the prohibition against riding or operating a bicycle on a crosswalk. I myself would like that to be struck out. I think it's very important that on crosswalks, if they're going across the street or whatever they're doing around a crosswalk, they should dismount their bike. I've had to dodge them out here when I have come down Wellesley Street when they're fooling around in these crosswalks riding their bicycles.

Something that I think is very serious in this bill is the one metre between a vehicle and a bicycle when a motor vehicle is passing a bicycle. It says at least one metre. I would suggest that for large transport trucks going by bicycles, especially out in the country, that are going at the speed limit, one metre isn't enough because they can be sucked into these things. I think the government should rethink that one a little bit.

I think this bill was made for the city, not so much for the country.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: It's my privilege to speak to my caucus colleague the member from London West and the thoughtful debate she put forward. She talked about the cycling that was brought forward by our colleague from Parkdale–High Park, and she talked about a city being able to collect the fines, but I want to focus more on the MTO and the medical review portion.

She talked about her constituent Dave and the more than four months he had to wait to get his licence back after his doctor had approved him to be healthy enough to drive. He was being proactive, asking questions, but he still wasn't getting the proper answers until it was way far into the time. She talked about Peter; she talked about Steve.

Speaker, I have spoken in this House about residents of mine who came through my office with the exact same issues. The problem is, they're sitting on the queue, as the member from London West had said, for an insurmountable time. They're waiting so long before they are even getting to the point of frustration for them to be coming to our offices. When they get to our offices, our staff are calling, trying to get the MTO to move quicker,

but as she said, it's on a first-come, first-served basis. You have to wait until the proper table is there to speak in regard to your issue when yet they have a doctor's note—the same doctor who took them off of their licence and said that they can't drive doesn't have the qualifications, I guess, would be the concerns of the Ministry of Transportation, to be able to say that the person can have their licence back. If they're good enough to say that they can take it away, why is it that a doctor cannot reinstate their licence? Why do we have to go months and months on end to be able to get these licences back for our constituents? Quite frankly, it could just as well make them lose their job.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's a pleasure to speak for two minutes on the comments made by the member of London West. The bill, entitled the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act (Making Ontario's Roads Safer), 2014, addresses quite a few issues regarding driving, bicycling and the fines related therein.

The first point, I think—this maybe addresses some of the issues that were brought up by the member who spoke on this issue—is that there are more cars, more bicycles, more motorcycles, mopeds and other vehicles on the road than ever before. There has been a tremendous increase in that.

I live in Scarborough. Everyone in Scarborough has to have a car, a bicycle or a motorcycle to move into downtown Toronto or to commute to work. People don't want to wait for the bus service or a taxi drive; they'd rather drive or take a bicycle or some other way of transportation downtown. I've seen this all throughout the city, and even when you drive outside of the city: that there are a lot of vehicles out there and it's getting more and more distracted. I've noticed more people texting and more people on their phones even though it's prohibited—distracted drivers who pay more attention to their phone in front of them than to the road that's in front of them. Instead, they look at their texting, or they're messaging or they call someone and they get on the phone. It's very distracting.

This bill increases the fines and makes it a bit stricter. There have been a lot of accidents on roads. It's easier to hit someone when you're distracted—either on a bicycle or a pedestrian. It happens all the time in my riding and happens all throughout Ontario. I've noticed, in my area of Scarborough Southwest, almost every weekend someone gets hit on the road, usually fatally. So this bill at least addresses and improves the conditions that presently exist outside on the roads.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. We now return to the member for London West for her reply.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to thank the members for Etobicoke North, Perth–Wellington, Hamilton Mountain and Scarborough Southwest for their comments on my remarks.

There were a couple of issues raised that I want in particular to highlight. I was encouraged to hear from the member from Etobicoke North acknowledging the legitimate concerns that I raised in my remarks about the bottleneck at the medical review section of the Ministry of Transportation and the serious impact that this is having on people in this province.

Certainly, I also appreciate the stories that were shared with us by the member for Hamilton Mountain about what she's hearing from her constituents, who are experiencing similar delays—months and months waiting for their licence to be reinstated and the potential risk that this creates on their ability to maintain their employment.

I wanted to respond to the member from Perth–Wellington. He talked about bicycle safety provisions and questioned the relevance of those provisions. Members may be interested in knowing, in fact, that the Ontario coroner had called for much more stringent conditions and had called on the government to go further and include mandatory truck side guards to protect cyclists and pedestrians. That call was repeated in reports in 2010, 2012 and 2013. So, clearly, there is a need for bicycle safety provisions to protect both cyclists and pedestrians.

1420

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to provide a few comments on the record regarding Bill 31. It's a great chance for me to join and speak about issues in my riding of Leeds–Grenville.

I don't have the largest riding in terms of the 107, but I do represent a largely rural area, and I have more than 3,000 kilometres of roads. So I speak to you in that regard. I have to tell you, though, Speaker—and you were up in our neck of the woods on Saturday—that I think I was probably over a lot of those 3,000 kilometres of roads with my events.

Our riding, outside of the city of Brockville, does not have a public transportation system. There's no subway or streetcar that gets you from Lyndhurst to Delta to Spencerville to Oxford Mills. It's a predominantly rural riding, outside of Brockville. The majority of residents in Leeds and Grenville—their public transportation is the roads and the bridges that we all drive every day. They are really the lifeline for people to get to work, school, medical appointments, and they allow businesses to move products and get customers to their front door.

A bill that deals with road safety, whether you are looking at it from the perspective of a motorist or a cyclist or a pedestrian, is very important to the citizens of Leeds–Grenville. I think I'm being fair. There are some positive initiatives that I see in this legislation to make our roads safer. I'm going to get into those shortly in my address.

I do want to make one note before we get started, though. Although we have been back here at Queen's Park for just a week, this is the first opportunity that I've had to speak on a government bill—not that I've been

quiet in the Legislature. I've had plenty of things to say in question period about the shameful conduct of the Premier and her government in the unprecedented report that was tabled last Thursday by the Chief Electoral Officer.

Speaker, one of the centrepieces in Bill 31 is that it takes steps towards getting tough on distracted driving. We all know that when you're behind the wheel, you have to be focused on what's in front of you. I only wish that I could get some piece of legislation to penalize the Premier for distracted governing. That's what I'll call it. Like a distracted driver behind the wheel, the Premier, I think, is an accident waiting to happen. The problem is, she's taking the people of Ontario along for the ride. If I was going to give the Premier some demerit points for every scandal that came out of her office, I would have taken her licence away and thrown the keys aside a long, long time ago.

But, you know, Speaker, let me get back to Bill 31—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the member to return to Bill 31 and confine his remarks to the bill.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Leeds—Grenville has the floor.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased, Speaker, to go back. Bill 31 is a broad piece of legislation that's going to usher in a number of changes. As I said earlier, some of them are welcome and are already having good debate in the Legislature. I know that many of our municipal partners—mayors, councillors from all over rural Ontario are here in Toronto this week for the annual ROMA/OGRA conference, affectionately called Good Roads. I know many of them are interested in the bill, and that's because the legislation finally provides some help for those municipalities to collect on the millions of dollars—and some may suggest it's upwards of \$1 billion—in unpaid fines from delinquent drivers. It's something that they have been raising for years in meetings here at the Good Roads conference at the Royal York and also at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. So finally some of those municipalities can look at their colleagues and say that they're finally getting some action on that very important item.

Right now, if a motorist decides that they're going to toss away the ticket for a traffic or parking offence and ignore the fine, the municipalities—and in my riding that would be the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville—are really left in the lurch. They've got really no mechanism that's available to them to get that driver and force them to pay up. So Bill 31 does address this by ensuring that any driver in default on the payment of the fine can't renew their licence plate. I know there have been many other speakers that have addressed it.

I know that my warden of the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, David Gordon, and his colleagues on counties' council in Leeds and Grenville welcome the bill on that particular aspect regarding the fines.

When I speak to people back home, the item that they always mention about Bill 31 is certainly the distracted

driving component. It's a huge issue, especially for young people, new drivers on the road. We all know that cellphones and other hand-held devices have become so very prevalent in our society. I know that the member for Ottawa South, when he was speaking on that bill, could barely contain himself. He was holding his cellphone up. He gave a great example of why this component of the bill is so important, because many of our constituents are attached to their cellphones.

There have been many tragedies on the road, unfortunately, because of distracted driving. Some of the members have presented statistics. I heard a number of times the issue that back in 2013, 78 people lost their lives due to distracted driving claims. So there have been some unnecessary deaths.

I want to talk about an event that had some public awareness in my riding about a year ago. I was honoured to go to one of my local high schools, Brockville Collegiate Institute, for the launch of their Celebrate My Drive campaign. It was with the folks from the Brockville State Farm office. It was a really good event, and it was an even better event because the campaign that the school got involved in ended up getting them \$25,000. They were motivated with that program because they wanted to honour one of their late classmates, Aaron Stevenson. He was a beloved student at BCI who lost his life when he was struck by a vehicle while skateboarding. It was a horrific hit-and-run incident just weeks before the start of the school year. So this road safety aspect—the school won \$25,000. Part of the funds were used to encourage the use of reflective tape for skateboarders and to help defray the cost of driver education for students who really couldn't afford to pay for it. So even in this tragedy, the legacy that the classmates had for their friend Aaron and the lessons for students really turned their grief into a very, very powerful force for good. I wanted to tell that story on the record, Speaker.

I also want to get back to the distracted driving portion. As we all know, the bill increases the fine for using a hand-held device, up to \$300 to \$1,000 from the current \$60 to \$500, and I think that's a very good portion to start.

I know the minister has talked about bringing in a three-demerit-point penalty for distracted driving. I'm disappointed, though, that there's no mention of that in the legislation, nor has the minister used the authority he has to bring it forward in regulation. I am disappointed about that.

In his leadoff, though—I want to give credit to my colleague the member for Kitchener—Conestoga, our transportation critic, who touched on the fact so much of Bill 31 has been left to regulations. Certainly that's a concern, because it's never good to give this government a blank cheque. So I applaud him for putting those comments on the record. We all know that in a bill like this, the devil in the legislation is in the details. Many of them remain unknown. I've had a number of questions about the bill from my constituents. There is a number of them who are very concerned about sections of the legislation

dealing with the vehicle inspection centre system, and I can tell you, Speaker, you can add me to the list of skeptics.

I'm very worried about how the government will go about dealing with what are admittedly some very real concerns about unrepaired vehicles on our roads. We need to look no further than to the Drive Clean program, which continues to gouge motorists even after it has been shown that that program now does not deal with the emissions side. The last thing motorists need—besides a carbon tax—is a mandatory, costly vehicle inspection scheme. I'm troubled about that.

1430

Speaker, I've got some other things I want to get on the record in my final two minutes, and I want to thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to address this very important bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to speak for a few minutes to the remarks that were offered by the member for Leeds–Grenville. Before I do that, however, I would like to correct my record. In my earlier remarks I referred to the legislation as C-31; obviously it is G31, so if that correction could be made I would appreciate that.

The member for Leeds–Grenville raised some important issues. The issues that he highlighted from the bill were important to the people of this province. In particular, he talked about municipal fine collection and the estimated up to \$1 billion that is outstanding to municipalities in uncollected traffic fines. This is a concern because of the use that those dollars could be put to at the municipal level.

He also talked about the danger of legislation putting too much power in regulations, because that of course leaves it open-ended for the government to change regulations, without the fulsome debate that we are able to have here on the floor of this Legislature.

He emphasized the importance of taking action to reduce distracted driving. Those of us who have young people in our families know how addicted young people are to their devices, so the graduated licensing system, demerit points and increased fines will hopefully help to address that.

Finally, he also raised the red flag about outsourcing motor vehicle inspection, which is a concern I also share.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this very important and, indeed, life-saving bill.

For the last 13 years, Ontario has been ranked number one or number two of all North American jurisdictions when it comes to road safety. Of the 60-plus jurisdictions in North America, Ontario is right at the top, but that doesn't mean that we can be complacent. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't continue to improve road safety and, indeed, save lives.

This bill takes me back to my teenage years—way, way back to my teenage years—when drinking and driving was something that was pretty normal. That culture, of course, has changed tremendously. My kids would not dream of drinking and driving, or going in a car with someone who had been drinking. I think the issue of today is distracted driving, and I'm very, very pleased, as I think of people who I know personally who have been in near-death accidents as a result of distracted driving. I think increasing the fine significantly and adding demerit points for distracted driving is what we need to do.

The current fines range from \$60 to \$500. This legislation will increase that to from \$300 to \$1,000, which is a very substantial fine, but not just money; people will lose three demerit points. I think all drivers jealously protect our demerit points—we do not want to lose that licence.

This is important legislation. I am delighted that, from the sound of things, there is actually harmony in the House this afternoon as we all speak to why this is important and positive legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's an honour again to rise in this Legislature. I just want to talk to Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act.

I specifically want to talk to distracted driving. We see it everywhere, and I suspect there may be one or two legislators in this hallowed sanctuary who have on occasion been somewhat distracted, perhaps, by a cellphone call unless they have Bluetooth or something along that line.

The detachment will remain anonymous at this point in time, but I did go on a ride-along with a specific detachment. While we were cruising at about 115 kilometres an hour down the 401, suddenly he spots a licence that he decides he's going to key in. What is he going to do? Key into what? Into the onboard computer that he has, but it's not a voice-activated onboard computer. No, while he's driving he actually has to look at this computer and punch in the licence plate of the vehicle that he wants to inquire about. It made me a little bit nervous, to the point where I said, "May I help you with this, and do you mind showing me how you data-enter the licence plate so that I can do it for you while you keep both hands on the steering wheel?" Which he did.

As the community safety critic, recognizing that we need to keep our roads safe, I concur. But you know what? If I recall, the former Minister of Transportation in the last Parliament may have introduced something similar along these lines on distracted driving and introduced a fine of—I think it was up to \$500. Now the fines are going even higher. Was that to punish more, or was that because we are dealing with an extremely cash-strapped government that is looking for more ways to squeeze the taxpayers of Ontario?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's my pleasure to stand and speak to this Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act etc. I'm not going to read that because I don't want to take up my time reading the title.

In my previous life I was an insurance broker, and many, many times, this is a topic—auto insurance and tickets—that co-related. There were various examples where people had called and talked about—they've had a lot of speeding tickets, or the classification of a ticket can actually be very significant on your insurance record. The frequency of tickets can also be very significant on your insurance record.

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I see one of the members from the opposite party saying, "Yes, if you get three tickets." That's right: Three strikes and you're out. You could have three minor speeding tickets and you're going to be, perhaps, losing a discount, getting your driving record amended and that kind of thing.

Regardless of that, this is a good bill because we do need to have better laws and safer roads when it comes to how we deliver safety on our roads. We want to make sure, when we are travelling, that the person who has that distractive device gets that message: that when they're caught, it's going to be expensive. When you hit people in their pockets, they usually pay attention and they stop that behaviour.

It's a good thing that distracted driving is in there. It's something that has come full circle in this generation. We're all using devices. So it's something that needed to be addressed, and I'm glad to see that it is here and we're doing something about it. We're taking steps to make sure that our roads are safer, and people are going to stand up and pay attention that they shouldn't be using their devices when they're driving.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank all the honourable members for their words of encouragement and support for my address this afternoon.

I also want to put just a few final comments on the record. Aside from hydro bill complaints, probably the number two reason that people call my office is the current medical review system. From delays processing medical information to licences being needlessly taken away, my constituency staff are constantly dealing with frustrated residents of Leeds–Grenville on this matter. The minister really should have outlined how he plans to fix the current review system before taking steps to increase the number of drivers who will be caught in it.

1440

Just in closing, I want to give a shout-out to two of my colleagues here in the PC caucus who have made contributions to this bill. I'm pleased that the member for Simcoe North's "slow down, move over" private member's bill to protect tow truck drivers has made it to be part of Bill 31. They put their lives at risk when they stop to help a stranded motorist. It's important that they have

the same protection as other emergency responders when stopped on the roadside. The bill also adopts some of the bicycle safety provisions of our caucus's resident cycling advocate, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka. His bill would allow cyclists to ride on the paved shoulders of certain designated highways.

Both of these members have done a tremendous job with these private members' bills, and I really want to thank the minister for adopting their ideas as part of this bill. Frankly, adopting PMBs that we debate and pass on Thursdays into government legislation is something I'd personally like to see happen a lot more often in the House. We all have good ideas for legislation. These are two of them from our caucus. Again, I want to take the opportunity to thank Mr. Dunlop and Mr. Miller for those wonderful suggestions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for London—sorry, Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate that.

I rise today to speak to Bill 31, An Act to amend the Highway 407 East Act, 2012 and the Highway Traffic Act. Speaker, others have made comments already about some of the useful provisions that are in this act: the requirement of a one-metre distance between a vehicle and a bicycle—that improves road safety; action on drugged driving—that obviously is an advance and a plus that most people in Ontario can support. But I want to say as well that there are a variety of missed opportunities in this bill that I hope will be addressed at the committee stage. I have to say this bill doesn't deal with the fallout from privatization and the growing lack of accountability that comes with the privatization of motor vehicle administration or regulation. It undermines the ability of the public to hold authorities to account.

I want to speak about specific sections in this bill. First, with regard to motor vehicle inspection centres, currently the province licenses and oversees private motor vehicle inspection centres, which certify regular passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles. Fair enough, Speaker. I think that's something that should be done by government; I don't think it should be contracted out.

I note that in 2008, the Auditor General found serious flaws in the commercial vehicle inspection system, observing that "the ministry does not exercise adequate oversight of this process and has little effective control over the issuance of safety standard certificates to inspection stations. We therefore questioned whether the ministry has adequate assurance that this certification process ensures the mechanical safety of commercial vehicles."

Speaker, that's a very alarming and substantive statement. If we have motor vehicle inspection stations that are there to ensure that as we are travelling on a bus or driving down the road beside a truck, we are not going to be subjected to an accident because that vehicle that we're in or beside is unsafe, one would expect that the government would want to have, if not outright ownership, which I would recommend, much tighter control over this particular aspect of motor vehicle regulation.

But in fact the bill is going to enhance the distance between public accountability and control and these vehicle inspection stations. The bill repeals sections 86 and 88 to 100 of the Highway Traffic Act, and adds new sections enabling broad regulations to replace the current system with a completely new system under an unspecified model. The deputy minister has confirmed that a private, delegated administrative authority model is under consideration and that the spectrum of delegated models could include completely divested.

Speaker, people throughout this province, and legislators throughout this chamber, have had to deal with condominium problems, have had to deal with people whose interaction with Tarion, a regulator that has essentially been taken out of the control of this Legislature—they've had to deal with that agency when they've had problems with their condominiums.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that I have many new condo owners in my riding who are not happy with an agency they cannot access, and that runs itself for its own interest. If we were to follow that road, as it were, with this particular part of road safety regulation, we would be making a grave error.

The bill specifies that the administrator of the new vehicle inspection centre system is “not an agent of the crown,” and thus wouldn't be subject to normal oversight by the government agencies committee, the Ombudsman or the Auditor General, unless the service agreement with the ministry allows for such oversight.

If we have a situation in which we've had a history of problems, a history of failure of accountability, one doesn't go further into that particular problem; one doesn't deepen the problem. One tries to correct it. What the government is doing with this section of the bill is making it very difficult for us as legislators—for us as citizens—to actually correct problems that exist in motor vehicle inspections.

Why on earth that would be an object of this bill is beyond me. Has the government not learned from other privatization and deregulation experiences? Apparently not. This is an element that cries out to be dealt with when we get to committee. It needs to be amended.

I want to talk, as well, about Highway 407. For those who need a little background, the Highway 407 toll highway opened in 1997. In 1999, in order to address an \$11-billion deficit, the Conservative government leased the highway for 99 years to a private operator, in exchange for \$3.1 billion. In 2013, the 407 ETR reported revenues of \$801.2 million and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of \$664.8 million. It's a goldmine, a long, linear, wide goldmine.

In 2012, as part of the budget bill, the government enacted the Highway 407 East Act to govern the eastern extension of the 407 currently under construction. The new “public” 407 East toll highway will be a P3, operated and maintained for 30 years by mostly the same private companies that run the 407 ETR. Under the agreement between the government and the private operator of the 407 ETR, the registrar of motor vehicles

is required to deny licence plate renewals after being notified by the 407 that a driver has not paid their bills.

Collection tactics of the 407 have become quite ruthless. They've fought controversial court battles, seeking the right to collect 15-year-old invoices from drivers, including the legally bankrupt, while charging exorbitant compounded interest rates. In some cases, these drivers may have long since forgotten the invoice, assuming they even received it—and one can't be sure they received it—and are shocked when their licence plate renewal is suddenly denied by the government for failure to pay an old bill that may have ballooned to 30 times the amount of the original invoice after the interest is added on.

Under the legislation, the 407 may notify the registrar after a bill has been unpaid for 90 days, but is not obliged to. The 407 charges annual interest rates of over 25%—amazing. Over 25%. They could be running credit card companies.

A court has ruled that the statute of limitations for collecting unpaid toll bills applies only after the registrar has been notified, allowing the 407 the option of delaying notification while piling up interest charges. In some cases, toll charges were mistaken or were incurred by long-dead parents or ex-spouses.

1450

When the Highway 407 East Act was enacted in 2012 as part of the budget bill, the NDP demanded amendments that would require the registrar of motor vehicles to notify drivers via registered mail or bonded courier that their plate renewal was about to be denied. This was to guarantee proper notification in cases where the 407 invoice had gone to the wrong address or had somehow been diverted from the true private owner.

The bill before us, Bill 31, removes this notification requirement. Why would we do that? People can be stuck with bills on which the interest rate is 25%. The company is not required to deliver that invoice in a secure manner, thus opening people up to huge liability for bills that have compound interest set at 25%. It's extraordinary. It is extraordinary, Speaker.

Another element in this bill relates to Serco, the privatized company that does driver's licence examinations. They were on strike in 2009. At the time, I was the critic. I talked about how the contracting out of Serco had led to huge problems with the public, and it had. In November 2014, the Star reported that Serco's new contract allows it to self-police and self-report, and these reports are kept secret. The Star reported on loopholes that allowed unregulated licence mills to train truck drivers with no ministry oversight. That could have been corrected with this bill, and it has not been. That needs to be amended.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I've heard this bill complimented on so many occasions, I'm wondering why we're continuing to debate it and really believe we should get this to committee as quickly as possible.

But I did want to touch on one aspect of the previous member's discussion about Highway 407. It seems to

me—and I'll have to go back and look this up—that the path to privatization of 407 actually began with the NDP. There was something the NDP did in this regard. I'll go back and look at what it was. I remember I was questioning it at the time, surprised that the NDP would do it.

But they didn't sell it. I'm glad the member mentioned in his speech the sale of Highway 407, essentially a fire sale, as he will recall, because they wanted to show a balanced budget. This is what happens when governments fall over themselves trying to find a way to artificially balance a budget. In 1999, going into the election, they wanted to show that they could balance a budget, so they had a fire sale. A European country bought it and has been making money hand over fist ever since. The member was correct when he said that: They've been making money hand over fist ever since.

I always wanted to see an investigation of this, because I always hear about government records. I think what happened was that all the records about this sale went into the shredder when the previous Harris government left office. You will remember this, Mr. Speaker. The shredding machines were going—they were burning out outside the building. So we don't have any record of it, except people do know that the Conservative government sold Highway 407 for a song.

Now the money from the tolls on the extension is going back to the taxpayer and will be able to provide services, instead of going to some foreign company.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Speaker, I wasn't going to go there, but being as the Chair of Cabinet opened it up, if there was a song that went along to this and the Liberals were singing it, it's probably Who's Sorry Now. But anyway, I was surprised when he brought up deletions. Now you do deletions; maybe in the old days it was something about shredders. But I'm surprised that the minister would go there and talk about that. I think that would be what we would talk about: that if it was a song, it would be Who's Sorry Now, and it would be the Liberals who would be singing that.

Interjection: Ontario taxpayers, for the most part.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, the Ontario taxpayers are the ones who are sorry now, if you were to ask them. They've got buyer's remorse. Being as we're on that subject, they probably have buyer's remorse, and if they had the opportunity, they would probably go back and say that. The Chair of Cabinet, the minister, brought it up, so I'm glad he opened that door.

One of the issues that's in there that I see is demerit points. The devil is in the details, and we're concerned that leaving a lot of this to regulations, there could be things that fall through the cracks. We're worried—and I know the minister would certainly understand this—that this could be just another Drive Clean 2.0. We're going there. It could just be another cash grab.

One thing we do like: I know back in Sarnia-Lambton, the part about collecting unpaid fines—I'd like to know more about that. That's certainly an issue. Back in my

municipality, I know there are a lot of unpaid fines, and I'm sure that across Ontario that would be an issue, so I wouldn't be against that.

I also support the introduction of licence suspension and impoundment of cars that have been found to have the driving ignition interlock disconnected. I think that's important. People who have had that impairment put against them because of drunk driving, drugs or whatever need to be obligated—I know people have had to exist with that and learn to live with it; most of them have learned their lesson, because it's very inconvenient.

Anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to the rest of the debate. Maybe the minister will bring up some more things and we can talk about the past.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate the member from Toronto-Danforth on his remarks. He asked a very important question: Has this government learned nothing from the experience of privatization and deregulation? Certainly we saw the Liberals follow right in the path of the PCs in terms of privatizing, deregulating and outsourcing, and we know that the most recent Auditor General's report said that there was an \$8-billion cost to taxpayers from the Liberals' commitment to moving forward with privatization and P3s.

The member from Toronto-Danforth raised some really legitimate and important concerns about the implications of outsourcing motor vehicle inspection. The Auditor General had noted earlier that the ministry does not practise adequate oversight of the process of commercial vehicle inspection, and now they're talking about transferring this responsibility to a private sector operator, which will only reduce accountability and transparency for the citizens of this province.

We also know from the experience of Serco, who operate the driver's licensing system, that there are huge safety risks that are associated. Serco was not testing tractor-trailer drivers on highways. As a result, there were unregulated licence mills that were springing up, with truck drivers offered licences with no ministry oversight. This is a risk that we cannot afford to take.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, monsieur le Président. It's a great pleasure to talk to you today about Bill 31. Obviously we're engaged with the process of supporting this bill, and I fully do support this bill. I would like to focus on some of the intended outcomes of the bill, such as impaired driving; distracted driving; medically unfit drivers; truck, vehicle and bus safety; pedestrian safety and cyclist safety.

We do have some persistent challenges in Ontario that this bill addresses. Some 45% of drivers who have been killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system. These statistics are dreadful. Drinking-and-driving fatalities account for nearly one quarter of all road fatalities in 2011. From

2008 to 2012, 14% of convicted alcohol-impaired drivers were repeat offenders.

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Furthermore, on the issue of distracted driving: Everybody is busy these days. Nobody takes the time to just be responsible in a vehicle and focus on one thing, and that is driving. When we're behind the wheel, we're behind roughly 2,000 to 2,500 pounds of steel. That makes a big difference when you're distracted. We have to do better than we are doing now. Legislated fines are increasing from \$60 to \$500, which will be a necessary deterrent.

We cannot afford to leave safety to chance. I support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments, I believe. We now return to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the members for St. Catharines, Sarnia–Lambton, London West, and Kingston and the Islands for their comments.

Of course, I must go to the member for St. Catharines first, because I think he's right: He saw the smoke coming out of the building when the Conservative shredders were trying to destroy all the records. And the Liberals did take a lesson from that. They went to computers so that they could delete without actually having to physically set fire to records anymore.

I understand the efficiency of that, Speaker. I actually had the opportunity in the justice committee to question Liberal staffers who assured me that on a regular basis they destroyed all the records they had in their possession. I would say that the Liberals have taken a step beyond the Conservatives. They don't mess around like those guys did. They don't wait a few years to shred or destroy. They do it on the spot, as they go along. I recognize the innovation that is noted there.

The member for Sarnia–Lambton talked about unpaid fines and the impact that has on municipalities. I think this bill does address that, in part, and that is actually an advantage. Cities and municipalities need money to actually deliver the services we all depend on. That's a step forward.

I appreciate the comments from my colleague the member for London West. It does not appear that the Liberals have learned from the mistakes and the costs of privatization. The Auditor General noted the \$8-billion extra cost tied to infrastructure projects that were set up with a P3—public-private partnership—structure. Eight billion dollars is hard to ignore. This is a province that is dealing with very large negative numbers in its budgets, and yet has not set aside that approach in this bill, is not taking advantage of the opportunity to stop deepening privatization. Thank you.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today and add to the debate on Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act or, in short form, Making Ontario's Roads Safer, 2015.

As I begin my remarks, I would like to share a surprising statistic for those of you who are watching at home and even for those who are watching right here in this Legislature. Distracted driving has now passed both speeding and impaired driving as the leading cause of death on provincial highways. I don't want to just take away from distracted driving for a moment, but I might add that there's a certain leader of the Liberal Party at the federal level who is talking about legalizing marijuana. That's only going to perhaps increase impaired driving on our highways, but you see, he's actually working for his Liberal cousins: With the increased fines, he's helping them do something about this tremendous debt they have us in right now.

Back on the element of distracted driving, penalties for using handheld devices while behind the wheel will be raised from between \$300 and \$1,000 from the current fine range of \$60 to \$500. We welcome these changes. Distracted drivers put countless others at risk every day in communities across our province, and more must be done to tackle this issue.

However, many critics are left wondering why, after numerous indications that upcoming legislation would introduce demerit points, there's no mention whatsoever of demerit points in this particular bill. "Let's up the fine, but oh, don't worry about the demerit points." Instead, the minister can bring in—yes, here we go—regulations to perhaps implement demerit points at a later date.

Our October 22 BlackburnNews in London published an article with the title "Distracted Driving Changes Not Enough." In the article, Bill 31's curious lack of distracted driving demerit points was, in fact, questioned: "As the province pushes to increase fines and add demerit points to the record of those convicted of distracted driving, local police do not think it will deter people from texting and driving.

"As of right now, there are only two provinces in the country that do not have demerit points attached to a distracted driving offence, and"—by the way, Speaker, coincidentally—"Ontario is one of them."

That's something that police forces, safety advocates and citizens are calling for. The opposition has indicated support on this as well, so let's get it done.

Bill 31 does not simply look at regulations around automobiles, either; it also looks at bicycle safety laws. Some may think that bicycle safety is only a big-city issue, but it is a concern for all cities of all sizes as well as rural towns. My riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex is, in fact, no stranger to tragic bike accidents. Leamington residents remember the summer evening Kyle Peters, only 15 years old, was struck and hit by a car. That is a parents' worst nightmare. No matter how safely a child operates their bike, one distracted driver is all it takes. As a legislator and parent, and now grandparent, I cannot stress enough the importance of wearing a helmet and installing lights on your bicycle if you plan to ride in darkened conditions.

Bill 31 would see the repeal of a \$20 fine for failing to have lights on before dawn or dusk. I would suggest,

then, that anyone watching or listening today take that \$20 and go out and purchase a set of lights for your bike. Your safety is paramount. You can save your life with less than \$20. I think everyone can agree that that's a great investment.

With more and more distractions at the hands of drivers, you can never know if the car that is coming up behind you is aware that you are there. Please, make yourself as noticeable as possible and practise caution. My wife and I go out at night and we bike, and we make sure our lights are in working condition and they're on for our own safety as well as letting oncoming traffic know we're around.

Speaker, I'd like to highlight an area of the bill that I feel my constituents would be interested in. If Bill 31 is passed, it would require all drivers to move into another lane when approaching stopped emergency vehicles and tow trucks with flashing lights. Each week, I drive between Chatham and Toronto along the 401 and I pass countless emergency vehicles and tow trucks. I've seen far too many close calls where drivers pass these cars at a high rate of speed only a few feet away. I would like to commend my colleague the member for Simcoe North who brought this issue to the government's attention with his "slow down, move over" private member's bill. Good ideas are non-partisan. It's a welcome sign that this government is listening to some of the good ideas that the opposition has been suggesting, and I hope that they continue to listen.

Both pedestrians and drivers will be responsible for safety at crosswalks. Pedestrians must not enter a crosswalk if a car does not have time to stop, making both the driver and pedestrian lawfully responsible for the safety of pedestrians. I don't know how many times I've seen pedestrian crosswalk lights flashing as someone is about to cross, and I see an oncoming vehicle and it appears to me that they're not going to stop and I honk my horn and point up at those lights. This has happened several times, where I've tried to bring it to the attention of the oncoming drivers. But if you get hit by a car, it would be a small consolation that you may or may not have had the right of way. So, pedestrians, be careful out there.

New subsection 7(12.0.1) of the act provides that if a pedestrian is in default of a payment of a fine imposed for a traffic or parking offence, no permit held by that person shall be validated and no permit shall be issued to that person until that fine is paid. What this means is that municipalities would be given the power to withhold licence renewal until unpaid fines are paid. For too long municipalities have been forced to wait for these powers to be granted by the province while watching millions and millions of fines go uncollected.

So if you get a speeding ticket, the province is able to deny your licence plate renewal if you do not pay the fine. This has been the case for many years. It only seems fair to grant a similar ability to municipalities, especially since they've been calling for this for some time.

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The municipality of Chatham-Kent in my riding has been facing a multi-million dollar infrastructure deficit for years now. Roads and bridges that desperately need maintenance are left alone because there's simply not enough funding in the municipality. Increased fine collection revenue will help, but on its own it will not be enough to tackle the growing infrastructure deficit.

Even with a slight tax increase in their new budget, council is unable to keep up with our community's infrastructure repair costs. Our tax base has been absolutely devastated during the reign of this Liberal government, as we've lost over 10,000 jobs in the last decade. Manufacturing is almost a thing of the past in the tremendous riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

You can have all the safety regulation in the world, but if the roads themselves are unsafe, the drivers of this province will, in fact, be put in danger. Cyclists and pedestrians will, in fact, be put in danger as well.

For Ontario's roads to be truly safe, much more must be done. Perhaps this government could consider allowing rural municipalities to use proceeds from the gas tax to fix their aging roads and bridges. That's right: all municipalities.

Interjection: John Yakabuski raised that.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: That's right. Our tremendous representative from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke had a bill that he brought forward saying that all municipalities should have a right to that gas tax.

Again, government should, perhaps, consider allowing rural municipalities to use proceeds from the gas tax to fix their aging roads and bridges, but right now, municipalities can only spend gas tax on public transit.

I know that in that great municipality within Chatham-Kent-Essex, in Leamington, they do not have public transit, and people are suffering. The roads in that area, the bridges in that area are suffering as well, but they don't get any money from this government because they don't have a public transit system. What good does that do for a Highgate resident, as an example, who can only get to and from work by car and is forced to use the roads that they need?

I'm a little bit frustrated with the fact that this government has done what they have done. I'll give you an example. Last November, a stretch of the QEW in Oakville and Mississauga wasn't plowed or salted, even ahead of rush hour. It put thousands of drivers in jeopardy. Snowplows got onto the road an hour late. They didn't even have enough trucks spreading salt; they didn't use enough salt to maintain the safety of an incredibly busy stretch of highway.

You know what, Speaker? We all have the shared responsibility of keeping our roads safe. With that, I will close for now, but I will be back in my two-minute wrap-up, soon to follow.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad to comment on this bill because the member left off talking about road conditions. Mississauga and—what was the stretch?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Oakville.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oakville.

We're kind of spoiled in the city. We expect our roads to be clear and the conditions to be the best they can be so that we don't have issues with driving in the winter-time, but we seem to forget our northern partners and how important travel is to northerners. In the city, we can perhaps get on a bus or take a cab. Imagine if you had to get a cab up north to go somewhere and it was miles and miles away—how costly that would be. Maybe the cab couldn't even get on the road because the conditions of the road weren't sufficient.

We always have to keep that in mind. When we talk about road safety, we have to think about people in the north.

I also want to chat about this part of the bill, how there are some extensions into the consciousness of safety in it. One of the things that I'm glad to see in the bill is that they're going to incorporate tow trucks as one of the vehicles that you have to slow down for. When there's an emergency vehicle on the side of the road, we all know that we can't use that passing lane because there's a chance of another accident happening. They're going to incorporate tow trucks into that. That's good.

One of the things that it's kind of surprising in today's day and age that we have to write into legislation—but it's obviously necessary—is the towing of skateboarders and rollerbladers behind vehicles. That's an extremely dangerous practice among youth. We have to make sure that, if somebody is doing that, they realize that it's not just a warning anymore; there are going to be fines attached to it. It's definitely something that we need to address. It's a stunt, it's a prank, but in the end it can be a life-threatening situation, so it's good to see that in there as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's important to be a part of this discussion, because the one thing that we have to remind ourselves of is that there are four bills that are private members' bills that are incorporated in this legislation. I know the member from Parkdale–High Park had her bill about the one-metre rule, which makes a lot of sense.

Then there's the paved-shoulder bill by the member from Muskoka, another opposition bill. Until we started bringing up that bill by the member from Muskoka—to this day, it's illegal to ride your bike on the shoulder of a highway. This bill deals with paving the shoulders in rural Ontario as we retrofit and rebuild our roads. It makes a lot of sense for safety, not only for the person on the bicycle or vehicle on the paved shoulder, but also for the motorists around these highways.

Then we have the bill from the member from Simcoe, Garfield Dunlop, about moving over for tow truck drivers, which is very, very important in terms of road safety.

Those are three bills from the opposition that are in this bill, incorporated because they're good ideas.

Then there's the member from Scarborough–Rouge River. Bas Balkissoon has a bill here about impaired driving and distracted driving.

There are four good ideas from individual MPPs that are in this bill—which is a critical thing, to get the best ideas, because no one has all the answers to road safety.

Road safety and highway safety really come from a local perspective, whether you're in a city, small town or a rural area, whether you're in the north or in southwestern Ontario. We have to get the best ideas, and there are a lot of good ideas here in this bill that need to be passed to protect our citizens as they go about their daily work, going to school, going to work and going shopping. It's a good bill. Let's get it done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to bring comments on the thoughts my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex brings to the table. I'd like to start off by complimenting him on taking some health and safety initiative. He's lost over 30 pounds coming back between the Christmas break and now. He's half the guy he used to be, but still always there for his constituents.

Mr. Robert Bailey: What are you going to say about me?

Mr. Bill Walker: We'll go there later, Mr. Bailey.

He always brings a lot of thought, particularly to health and safety, and particularly about our highways. He introduced a PMB in the last session in regard to automatic arms and school bus safety, so I think he's always focused on the safety of his residents in Chatham–Kent–Essex. I think they're lucky to have him as their member here.

He brought up a couple of very good points. I'm going to talk about them later on today, as well, but I'll just touch on them now. One was in regard to distracted driving. I think that's something we all have to be mindful of, especially now that there are more and more things that can distract us—cellphones and those types of things—in people's cars. I'm pleased to see that they're actually paying attention to it.

What I find a little baffling is that there was a lot of talk from the minister before it was introduced about demerit points and that punitive side of things, but I don't see anything in the details. That's something that always worries me with this government, when they put something in without details, because usually we have to retract and change things back, and that's not efficient, nor good for the people who we're trying to serve. I'm a little remiss that they did do that.

He talked a little bit about the fines for municipalities that we can collect from those people who have had infractions and haven't paid. That would certainly help some of those municipalities with their ability to provide services.

He talked about infrastructure and the gas tax. Our colleague John Yakabuski has introduced at least six

times in this House a bill to be able to have all municipalities share in that gas tax, which would, again, help with the safety of things like our bridges and roads, which would overall increase the safety of all people on all roads, as opposed to current legislation which only gives those to urban places with public transportation.

1520

I'd like to commend the honourable member and my colleague, the half of him that's still here, for all that he does in this House. I look forward to watching how he continues to perform in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: As my colleague just did, I rise to comment on the remarks made by the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex. He was quite right in his remarks. Distracted driving is deadly. It's a problem that does have to be dealt with.

This legislation takes one step further in doing that. It's my hope that this part of the legislation actually does get through in committee, that it is enforced. Unfortunately, unlike parts of this bill where enforcement of regulation is going to be watered down and undermined by allowing motor vehicle inspection centres to effectively regulate themselves, or it looks like that's what the door is being opened to—if we're going to have regulation that's effective, we can't have regulation that's far away from public hands.

I had an opportunity in the past to talk about the TSSA. People remember the explosion at Sunrise Propane here in Toronto. A few years before that, there was an explosion of a propane centre east along the 401, I think near Bowmanville, that had propane tanks raining down on the 401. Luckily no one was hurt. After Sunrise, when the bill was brought back for amendment, I asked: "How many times do we have to have propane fuelling centres blow up before control over this regulation is brought back into the hands of the government? Why is it being allowed to reside in private hands?" Well, I guess we'll have to have another explosion before we have an answer to that.

In this bill, we have the opportunity to assert public control over motor vehicle inspection and over driver testing. It would be a mistake to lose that opportunity. I hope it's not lost at committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex has the floor.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I'd like to thank my colleagues the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, the outstanding member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and, of course, my colleague from Toronto–Danforth. Thank you for your comments.

As my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has indicated, I may only be half the man I used to be, but I pack twice the punch.

There are a number of comments and things that we could, in fact, say with regard to this particular bill, but I

wanted to touch on something that I was speaking on during my 10-minute speech, and that was that, last November—I talked earlier about the QEW in Oakville and Mississauga, which wasn't plowed or salted ahead of the evening rush hour. Of course, that put thousands of drivers at risk and put them in jeopardy. Snowplows eventually got on the road an hour late, and they just didn't have enough trucks spreading salt. I mentioned that earlier. Of course, they didn't use enough salt to maintain the safety of this incredibly busy stretch of highway. I guess the point I'd like to make on that is that if this government is, in fact, willing to hike the fines paid by Ontarians who fail to drive safely and make the roads more dangerous for drivers, will the government consider any punishment for the Minister of Transportation, whose ultimate failure to get the roads clear and ice-free perhaps led to dangerous driving conditions for thousands of drivers? With this recent case in Oakville and Mississauga, the MTO was quick to pass the blame to contractors, but at the end of the day the ministry is, in fact, accountable to the people of this province.

Again, we all have a shared responsibility to keep our roads safe. Drivers, pedestrians and cyclists all must share the road and pay attention to keep themselves and their fellow Ontarians safe. Safety must always be paramount. For that reason, I will be supporting Bill 31 at second reading.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise and speak about this bill. I think we've all said pretty clearly on the opposition benches that we're generally supportive of this bill, with some major concerns. I just want to hearken back to my friend from Toronto–Danforth, who talks about the race to privatization and to P3s generally. We've seen, because of the Auditor General's report, the danger in that, the \$8.2 billion worth of danger in that.

Actually, just a week ago, there was a huge demonstration out in the front from our brothers and sisters in OPSEU about just where you end up when you begin to privatize. It hasn't worked. It doesn't work. It won't work, and Highway 407 is a perfect example of why it doesn't work. That money could be flowing into our coffers.

I also heard from the member from London West about the concerns over the delays and the time it takes to get your licence reinstated. This is something all of our constituency offices face. We've all had those calls. People need their cars in order to work. They need their cars for mobility. Cars are not a luxury for many people; they need them. So four to six weeks without one is a problem, and that has to be addressed.

I also, as the urban transportation critic, have asked the Minister of Transportation for a very simple set of facts. I asked back in the summer—I first met him back in June. I asked, for MoveOntario 2020, when are the projects rolling out? How much will the projects cost? Where will the projects be? I have yet to receive an answer. I think that's a problem. MoveOntario 2020 was

decided under the era of Dalton McGuinty here, and we still don't have facts about the rollout of the projects. We need those facts. I need those facts, as an urban transit critic, and I think Ontarians need those facts. They need to know where all that money is going—where it's coming from and what it's going on. So that's important too.

I, of course, am thrilled, and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence mentioned this, that the one-metre rule is finally in place in this bill. I have to say it goes to the Premier, who was then transportation minister, who at the time that that bill was tabled said, “It wasn't well thought out.” It's nice to know that she has changed her mind and that she admits she made a mistake, that in fact not only was a bill well thought out, but it's now incorporated into the government bill. So that's good.

The problems, of course, are in the details. But before I get to that, I want to start with the big picture, because I am the urban transit critic for the New Democratic Party, and I want to talk about what a city would look like with safe roads. We have examples. We're not speaking about utopia here. If you go to Scandinavia, if you go to most European capitals, you will find something you won't find in Toronto. You will find designated cycle paths. I know my friend from Burlington, who used to be with Share the Road, and Cycle TO have called for designated cycle paths. Now, we're not talking about lines on the street. The number one reason people do not bike in Toronto is because they don't feel safe, and quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they're not safe. They are not safe; hence the one-metre rule. There's a little bit of wiggle language around that, which I'll get into in a minute, which I'd like to change and which needs to be amended. But a healthy city, a safe city for transportation, is a city where people can cycle safely. That's number one.

Number two: It's a city that has a transportation system that is well funded. We have the worst-funded transportation system, talking about other levels of government, in all of North America. We used to pay 50% of the operating costs of the Toronto Transit Commission right here in the provincial government. That's back in the days when the NDP was in government. Then, of course, the Conservatives came in, and the Liberals continued the tradition of downloading the costs of running the transportation system.

We can see the result of that. The result is people waiting for the bus in minus-23-degree temperatures. We see people who can't afford to get on the bus because the fares are high. We see the problems, the problems of not putting money into infrastructure in Toronto for a long, long time. Two levels of government are guilty of that: this one under the Liberals and, of course, Ottawa under the Conservatives—both levels of government. We need a national transit strategy and, my goodness, we seem to need a provincial one too, because we haven't seen that strategy rolled out.

1530

A healthy, safe city, where transportation is concerned, is a city with transportation where you don't need

to take your car. You don't need to take your car to drive around Toronto.

I know TTCriders—I want to give them a shout-out—and all of those good people, and the Ontario Clean Train Coalition, all of those folk who are working—because that's the other thing that this government is doing: They're going to be running a Union Pearson Express that's going to be diesel. Only Bangladesh is buying diesel equipment. That's the only city in the world, outside of us, that is investing in diesel right now. It will be running past my constituents' backyards, the member from York South–Weston's backyards, the member from Trinity–Spadina's backyards, and others, and schools, polluting the air, and will not provide transportation. Here's a multi-million dollar operation that could provide transportation if it was electrified, if it had multiple stops and if it tied in to the Toronto transit system, coming from Union all the way up to Pearson. That could be transportation. It won't be transportation. Again, we have a safety problem. We have a safety problem, and the safety problem is also environmental safety, which hasn't been mentioned, I think, too often. Environmental safety means keeping cars off the road when you can and where you can.

I've only got a few minutes. Into the nitty-gritty: Although I was happy to see the one-metre rule—my bill; our bill—finally put into action here, sadly, the language they use is “as may be practicable” instead of the language used elsewhere in the act: “unless the driver first ascertains that it can be done safely.” Why not use clear language?

Here's a bill that fines a cyclist \$500 if they don't have a light, but \$500 is what the fine is if you kill a pedestrian. Where is the justice and the logic there? It's \$500 for not having a light on your bike, which I agree you need—no doubt—but \$500 for a fine for killing a pedestrian in a car? Something is wrong there. Clearly, amendments are needed.

Privatization: We need amendments. This is a privatizing bill. We need to change that. We need to change the language.

Another thing we need to do—this killed a cyclist who taught at Swansea Public School, and I will dedicate this to that memory—and which MP Olivia Chow brought in, is to mandate truck side guards. This was Olivia's federal bill—could have been done here; needs to be done here. This is the one opportunity when it could be done—yet another amendment that needs to happen.

Just to conclude—my goodness, 10 minutes goes fast—shout-outs to Cycle Toronto, shout-outs to Share the Road, shout-outs to TTCriders, shout-outs to the Ontario Clean Train Coalition; shout-outs to all of those people who try to make our roads safer.

Yes, while we will support this bill, my goodness, it needs amendments. It needs amendments in the language, it needs amendments in the fines structure, and it needs huge amendments, as the member from Toronto–Danforth pointed out, to the drastic privatization. This is kind of Drive Clean on steroids; that's what this bill is.

For anybody who has heard about the Drive Clean mess-up, you'll know that this isn't going to correct it.

Do we really want more 407s in our future? No, we don't, so we need to amend that part of this bill too.

Of course we need and want safer driving conditions, and higher fines for those who text or drink or drug while driving. That's important. Demerit points: important.

That's what this Legislature is for. Let's please, around this Legislature, come together to put forward amendments, treat them seriously, take them seriously, to pass them. Then we'll have a really good piece of legislation. That's what I think we should all be aiming for, and that's what I know, in the New Democratic Party, we're hoping for.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's now time for questions and comments. I recognize the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Speaker. I almost said, "Thank you, Coach," but the team hasn't played a game yet. We have to resolve that.

It's always a pleasure to follow my colleague and friend from Parkdale–High Park as she spoke on Bill 31, an act to keep Ontario's roads safe.

Now, I have paid attention to the debate, not merely today but on previous occasions when we've been talking about it. More than half of the members here have already spoken to the bill in one form another, be it in debate or in questions and comments, which is their privilege. But there seem to be a couple of recurring themes here. The members are all saying the same thing. As well, I've stopped really hearing anything new, and I also gather that everybody is going to support the bill. If everybody is going to support it, and we're more or less saying the same thing, rather eloquently summed up by my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, why don't we get this bill to committee where we can actually make the changes that the members have been asking about?

We've all agreed that perhaps some tweaking and some testing by bringing it out and having people come in and talk to us about the bill would help. I happen to agree with that. I think the place where we should now take this bill for further consideration isn't in the Legislature, where we're going to continue to hear versions of much the same thing—we're well into the law of diminishing returns—but let's get it to committee, where people can come in and give us some serious proposals on it, and where we can perhaps make any amendments that may be needed.

Speaker, let's sum it all up: We all agree we're going to support it. Let's get it out of the legislative chamber. Let's get it into committee. It's time for a vote.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to provide a comment to my colleague from Parkdale–High Park. One of the things that really hit me is that she was talking about paved shoulders. Certainly, in an area like the Bruce Peninsula, we have a lot of cyclists and we have a lot of opportunity for tourism with those types of things. I

certainly have tried, since I've been here for my three years, to lobby that any stretch of road going in new should allow that extension so we can have that safety for our cyclists, to accommodate them and to encourage tourism in areas like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I certainly hope this government will continue to do that.

It brings up the issue, though, that I had a private member's transportation resolution on here over a year ago that all three parties unanimously supported and this government hasn't brought anything out with it. My concern is that that would be one. The gas tax was talked about earlier—my colleague John Yakabuski raised that—and again, unanimous support and there was nothing done with that to ensure that that money would be shared across all municipalities.

I want to go back to the paved shoulders a little bit. I believe that my colleague Norm Miller, from Parry Sound–Muskoka, brought that in. It's good to see that at least that piece of his private member's bill is going to be brought into this bill so that we can actually see it happen in the future. He's going to be bringing a bill here this Thursday, I believe, Bill 58, and it's going to extend the definition of ATVs. It's good, again, that these things are being brought.

What is relevant here is that there's a small little piece of this bill that is going to remove the low-pressure tire requirement. I can't understand why any government would have put that in there in the past—why you would ever get that down into the weeds. But the good news is that that's going to be brought out. I think Norm is going to bring a really good bill. ATVs, again, are a great form of transportation. It needs to be something in areas like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound so that people can get from one piece of property to another. They need to be able to go on the highways and allow those people to do as they need for both recreational and work purposes.

It's all about safety at the end of the day. There are lots of amendments I'd still like to make. Mr. Delaney wants us to get this to committee, but we've taken things to committee before and we couldn't even get the speakers, like Laura Miller and Peter Faist, to come to some of those committees. So we'd like to get it there and make some amendments when we have the ability.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to remind members that when referencing, please do not use the member's first or last name. Please refer to them by riding.

Further comments and questions?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'll start off by thanking the member from Parkdale–High Park for her great work on this file. It certainly is a complex issue.

When I read the bill, I had some concerns about the lack of education. In my short tenure in Toronto for the last few years, I've had the pleasure of driving on the streets of Toronto, and I can tell you right now that the cyclists and some pedestrians—not all cyclists—are not following the rules of the road and neither are some of the drivers. I'll tell you that I've been in a car on some of the main streets in Toronto when a cyclist will go up the

middle between two rows of cars and wonder why they get hit, or they'll sit at the stoplight in front of you when they want to take off at a slow rate, causing further possible vehicle collisions. They will turn right on a red light without stopping. They will go through a red light. So the education of the cyclists—and, mind you, there are a lot of good cyclists who follow the rules, but there are a lot of bad ones, just as there are bad drivers and good drivers.

1540

But the problem in Toronto is enforcement. The police should be giving these people tickets for running red lights on bicycles, because they're going to get killed, or they're going to cause an accident. The thing—what's it called?

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: Dooring. That's a bit of a joke. What if you stop to let a person out of your car in front of a store? Isn't it the responsibility of the cyclist to watch for the door, too, when they open—

Interjections.

Mr. Paul Miller: No, of course not. We're supposed to watch for them with eyes in the back of our heads when a passenger doesn't have a mirror to look out of, and the mirror is always adjusted for the driver, not for the passenger. So when the passenger opens the door, and a cyclist gets hit, maybe the cyclists are travelling too fast when they come to an intersection. Maybe they should slow down and watch for us elderly people who open these doors to get out to go to an appointment or something, or stop in a store. Maybe that would be good.

The bottom line here is it's about safety; it's about enforcement. I don't see a lot of that in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I understand we have one last question or comment. I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection: Bob says he's already heard enough, and he doesn't want to hear any more.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm happy to rise to add my voice to this debate, despite the fact that there may be some who may not want to hear what I have to say.

I think we've heard a great deal on this bill. It is intended to help improve road safety. It's intended to enhance the collection of defaulted Provincial Offences Act fines. It's going to improve the Highway 407 East Act, and it's going to address outstanding housekeeping proposals.

We've also heard that, according to recent stats, over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs, or a combination of drugs and alcohol, in their system—we need to be very concerned about this—and that drinking-and-driving fatalities represented nearly one quarter of all fatalities in 2011.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this to you: I agree with the member from Mississauga–Streetsville that we seem to be extending the debate on this bill by continuing to put up speakers. So far, we have debated this for over 10 hours. We've heard from 57 members of the Legisla-

ture—they've either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments. Listening to the debate, it's clear that the majority of members do support the bill, so that would signal that there really is no true desire to have further meaningful debate on this bill. So is the goal to delay?

I'm calling on the opposition parties to please stop stalling, and let's move forward on this very important piece of legislation so that we can use our time effectively to debate other bills.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I believe that's our final question and comment. I now return to the member for Parkdale–High Park for her reply.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I thank all the members for their input. I want to address a concern from the Liberal benches about the process of debate. This is what this place is for; we are here to debate. Even if we agree with the substance of a bill, if we have concerns or questions, this is the Legislature where debate happens.

Are the members across the aisle seriously suggesting that if we agree with the majority of the bill that we not debate? Really. I think there's a word for that. It's called an oligarchy, or worse—come on. A bill comes before us. We're following parliamentary procedure. We're raising issues. That is what our constituents sent us here to do. That's number one.

Number two: I didn't quite get the chance to speak about some of the other issues in the bill, and I wanted to point out that one of the problems is collecting on convictions. In fact, \$36 million was outstanding in Toronto courts in 2009, which was the same as the shortfall for the Toronto Transit Commission.

On a very personal note, I want to say that there's work to be done there, particularly—I hope they're watching—the white van parked in front of my house from some state—I will not mention the state, because there are many good citizens there; this one is not one of them—in the blind spot that has been ticketed every single day. We see this on Toronto streets, Mr. Speaker. Every single day, he drives away, he comes back, he parks overnight. Come on. He knows that these tickets will never be enforced. He knows that he will not be towed for a parking ticket. These are the kinds of violations.

So another amendment at committee: Let's strengthen the ability to collect; our municipalities need that and they've asked for that. That's one of their major demands.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always a pleasure to debate—what the place is for.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to add my voice on behalf of my constituents in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

There are a number of things in this bill that I do like, actually, and I'm going to talk about a few of those, but there are some I also have some challenges and concerns with.

To my colleague from High Park who just spoke, this is the place we're supposed to bring our debate. This is where we're supposed to bring our thoughts and interests

from our residents and our constituents whom we have the privilege of representing. I find it interesting that when it's convenient, they don't want to have any discussion in here. They wanted to have something like the transparency and accountability act time-allocated and yet here they just want to rush through and get everything out of debate again. We're going to talk about a few of those.

The first one that I find very interesting is distracted driving. I do agree that it's becoming more and more of a concern. There are stats out there that show—I believe the Ontario Provincial Police cite distracted driving as a causal factor in 30% to 50% of traffic collisions in Ontario. So it is something that we need to all be aware of. We need to be finding ways that we can limit that. In this case, what they're suggesting is that distracted drivers on cellphones will face maximum fines of \$1,000 and three demerit points. I certainly support the fines. It is something where people are endangering other people's lives as well as their own. They're putting people on our highways at risk, so there have to be some teeth to the law.

I want to recognize my colleague and former MPP John O'Toole for actually pioneering distracted driving legislation over 10 years ago. Johnny was always ahead of the curve, and in this case he was yet again. He brought in his private member's bill to talk about distracted driving back then. It's sad that it has taken 10 years for it to finally be implemented, but this seems to be the way with a lot of things with this government. If it's not related to spending and going into debt or deficit, they really don't speed things along. He was certainly the first to recognize that using a cellphone while driving had become a common practice and it needed to stop.

The concern I have with the bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it talks about demerit points in here, but there's nothing really in the legislation in a detailed manner that suggests what's going to happen or what the penalty for those will be, and they talk about doing that through regulation. It just worries me, with this government, when they won't bring things in this House for all of us, all 107 democratically elected people, to have those discussions, that they want to hide it back in regulation, which means they really have a blank cheque. I think my colleague Michael Harris from Kitchener-Conestoga, the critic for transportation for our PC caucus, said in his opening remarks that he's concerned about the devil in the details. We don't always see those, and we know what has happened in certain cases when that's happened before. Then we spend onerous amounts of time, energy and resources to actually try to fight after they've enacted it into law.

The Green Energy Act would be one of those things that they steamrolled across the province. They placed them in places where nobody really wants them and now we're fighting tooth and nail to try to restrict them and to claw back, which is very challenging.

I would like to see more detail. Certainly I would like to understand what that demerit point is. Everyone, I think, has concluded that demerits are a good way for people to be cognizant; there is a concern there are teeth

to the law and we need to look at that a little bit more closely to ensure that there are going to be demerit points included in this and what that detail is.

Another piece of the legislation that I find positive is emergency vehicles and tow trucks. All drivers must slow down and move over when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle with flashing lights. Earlier this afternoon, I talked about rural Ontario, where we have volunteer fire department personnel that actually have a green flashing light in their window. Again, we want to ensure that that is the case. Garfield Dunlop brought up his private member's bill to try to help with that as well. We certainly support enshrining the safety precautions of this piece of the legislation.

One thing that has come up in my riding, though, and I brought it to this House before, is that snowplow operators, in a case where there are closed roads, aren't covered by insurance, and in fact, they can't go on those travelled roads. So it's a little flaw in the legislation there. How do they get out to plow the roads to make them passable and safe for others if there's legislation that prevents that from happening? I think that's one that we want to ensure we can actually bring to fruition again. It could have perhaps been included in this bill, had the minister listened to my concerns seriously, so these snowplow operators won't be forced to break the law by driving on closed roads to get to their plows during a storm and then get home again afterwards. They are the first people out. I'm going to continue to push the minister to take a look at that. Perhaps that can be something I can at least get through at the committee level to enhance and improve that piece of legislation. It is something I hope the minister will look at.

1550

Municipal powers: Right after I got elected, I had one of my constituencies, one of the regional governments in my area, county government, call me and ask about unpaid fines. In 2011, over \$1 million—I believe my colleague from Sarnia, Bob Bailey, said that in his riding there is about \$1 million in unpaid fines. I trust that's the way across the province. A lot of us have the ability to collect those fines, which could be put into things like roads, bridges, any municipal infrastructure we all need more money for. This legislation should hopefully be able to help that.

It looks like what they're going to do is finally listen. Again, this was from at least as far back as 2011. About one third of these unpaid fines in municipalities are related to the Highway Traffic Act, according to a study published by the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. It would be a good way to allow municipalities to recover that. I think what they're suggesting is that you will not be able to renew, for example, your driver's licence sticker if you have unpaid fines left there.

There's a lot of time and energy spent on these things. You would think, with today's technology, that that would be something pretty easy to record and very simple to implement; and if you don't pay your unpaid fine, you don't get your driver's licence. That would be

something that certainly makes sense and is a realistic way to move forward.

Medical reports: In this case, what they're suggesting is that it will require more medical professionals to report a driver's health condition to the province. The concern I have here is the impact on people in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and, of course, those across the province, where the car is the only means of transportation, especially if the condition is misdiagnosed or information is miscommunicated. Losing your licence in a place like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is the most punitive measure, because that is your ability to get to jobs, to get your family to medical appointments, to get yourself to those types of medical appointments.

The concern that we have, particularly in the case where it's been misdiagnosed or there's misinformation, is going through all that rigmarole to try to get that licence back, and the cost, the lost wages, the impact to that family—not just the driver being impacted, but the family—and their ability to provide income for their family.

I said here briefly a little bit earlier, in one of my feedback sessions, that about a year and a half ago, I introduced a private member's resolution for public transportation for rural and northern Ontario. Many of our areas do not have public transportation. That private member's resolution was passed unanimously in this House in November 2013, yet I've never heard anything from the government in power, the Liberal government, actually talking to me about how we move forward with that, how we enact it, how we at least have a discussion about it to try to find ways that would help the transportation concerns and needs of those in a rural area or in northern Ontario. Certainly, it's something that I'm concerned about.

The anti-poverty task force came out very strongly in support of my resolution because they saw the detrimental impact not having public transportation can have in an area like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound—people not being able to get to work, not being able to get to volunteer opportunities, not being able to get to medical appointments. I think there are some areas there that we need to look at. We just need to make sure we're not creating bureaucracies of administration that will unduly—or even unacknowledged situations where people will be deprived of that transportation ability.

Unintended consequence I guess is what I'm saying, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes they put these punitive types of things in that are not really designed for the person who has been misdiagnosed. It's an awful battle. I know my constituency staff do a wonderful job working with constituents to try to move through when that type of thing happens, but it's a long, arduous process, and those people are going without jobs, without that ability to get there the whole time.

The vehicle inspection centres: Some are already calling this Drive Clean 2, the sequel. They're introducing a new mandatory inspection and fee program. The concern is that this could just be a government that's in trouble financially trying to find yet another revenue tool,

as they like to call it—rather than a tax, which is what it is—to actually help them find ways to fund the things they've made so many promises for.

I heard one of the more senior members in the House today saying, “Spend, spend, spend.” I'm not certain if he was paying attention to the debate or whether it just naturally comes out, but it is sadly something that is almost part of their DNA on that side of the House: spend, spend, spend. We'd just like them to actually live within their means, to spend what they have, not put us in double the debt like they have in their 10 years, not to double the deficit and spend all of that money servicing the debt payment. The \$12 billion a year right now that this government spends on interest payments alone could be going to the front lines and could be going to help transportation safety, Mr. Speaker—to ensure that I stay on topic. I want to make sure I do that so I never get on your wrong side, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that that is the case. It is concerning that they're going to have these illegal taxes on a system like that.

Overall, I think that health and safety, obviously, is something I stand up and speak proudly about in this House every day. I think there are some good pieces of this bill. I do believe that there are other pieces in here that we need to look at. Certainly, that demerit point, as I mentioned before, is one of those that I want to take a secondary look at. I want to ensure we have true teeth so that people can do it.

Those unpaid fines—I think it's great to see that we can finally help our municipalities collect those revenues that they so rightly deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have to give credit to my colleague the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. He's able to squeeze in a lot of content in all his speeches. He has a gift for words where he can say so much in a short period of time. I have to commend him on that. Thank you so much. I listened—

Interjection: He's a talker.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: He's a talker, eh, the Walker?

Interjection: He's an auctioneer.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Is he really? That makes so much sense. Wow.

One of the points he talked about is that there are certain things that are great with this bill and certain things that we have to take credit for as members of the New Democratic Party. We're proud that some of those things are included in this bill. They're certainly great additions.

But there are certain problems. The member talked about the vehicle inspection centre being a potential problem, and I wholeheartedly agree. I want to spend some time talking about it. We know the direction this government is taking when it comes to various areas of outsourcing services that should be done by the province but they're outsourced to a separate entity. One of the primary problems that comes up when you outsource is the lack of accountability. We've seen that with respect

to Serco and the privatized driver licensing system. There have been colossal problems with that system. It's an unaccountable system and there are certainly problems. We know that that exists, so why would we then commence down a path to create more problems? These vehicle inspection centres are another example of a potential whole other suite of problems because there is no accountability.

We know another very clear example where we have a lack of accountability and a lack of transparency, which is certainly damaging people in Ontario, and that's Tarion. Tarion is an arm's-length entity that is absolutely not providing the care, not providing the protection and the service that Ontarians require and deserve. In fact, Tarion is working against home owners time and time again. We need to improve from our mistakes instead of repeating them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to add my two cents' worth to this bill. I wish to thank the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for his comments and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton for comments toward this bill.

The opposition parties are needlessly extending the debate on Bill 31 by continuing to put forward speakers. This bill has been debated for over 11 hours. Over 60 members of the Legislature have either spoken to this bill or participated in debate during questions and comments. Listening to the debate, it has been clear that the majority of members support this bill. If you support this bill—you've been in this House for a number of years longer than I have—you know that to make changes to this bill, that's done in committee; that's not done in the House. So it's not really a productive use of time in this House to prolong debate on this bill when there are a number of other bills of similar importance that are waiting in the docket to move forward.

Listening to the debate, it has been clear that the majority of members in this House support this bill. The signals are there. There is no true desire to have any further meaningful debate on this bill. Their only goal is to delay this bill.

1600

Let's move forward and move this bill to committee where the real work will begin to make amendments to this bill. I'm sure we're open to amendments, but that's where the amendments will take place. I am calling on the opposition parties to stop stalling and help us move this bill forward, so that once again we can move forward on important legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure today to address and share some comments on my neighbour and friend's review of this particular bill.

It was interesting, Speaker, that just a few seconds ago we heard from the government side of the House that the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound did not bring

anything new to this debate. I beg to differ. Because you know what? We all have different perspectives. From an emergency operator perspective, the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound very astutely recognized that, right now, it's against the law for snowplow operators to get to their snowplows. This is something that is absolutely relevant in rural Ontario, which perhaps the other side of the House never gets. The fact of the matter is that just last week again, roads were closed. We need people out there, and to respect what it really takes to get those emergency vehicles going and make sure the roads are open in a safe format.

Another thing the member raised was that he brought forward a resolution in 2013 to try to find ways to address transportation issues in rural Ontario. In terms of poverty reduction, it's a huge issue. People move out to small-town Ontario, and they don't have the infrastructure. They don't have the supports in place. So there are many different aspects that we need to be considering when we're talking about not only safe roads but safe transportation in Ontario.

When we talk specifically about safe roads, again, it's interesting. This particular bill shows what this Liberal government is all about. It always comes back to lack of context and content. The fact of the matter is that the details are always riddled with devilish little ways to prop up their own agendas. I appreciate the comments and the member's bringing our attention to that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. He did touch on a number of issues that, quite honestly, I found to be very salient to this debate. I have no sympathy, though, for the members opposite complaining about this debate. I'm sorry that this democracy is so inconvenient for you, but this is an important part of the process.

The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound touched on the distracted driving piece, which does need to be strengthened. I will say that I commend the government for bringing it and containing it within the legislation, but there are serious ways we can actually address distracted driving.

Based on the stats, because policies should be informed by data—if you want to serve the people best, then you should actually have good data and good information. Quite honestly, the data on distracted driving, which I don't think the member got a chance to talk about—distracted driving charges are up 30% in my area of Waterloo region. Motor vehicle collisions because of distracted driving are up 11%. Our local police chief, Bryan Larkin, says that officers are still encountering a large number of drivers who are still using smartphones and other mobile devices while behind the wheel.

There have been education campaigns which, in some respects, have been successful, as the member mentioned. But you need proper oversight, and you need officers on the ground. People need to understand how serious the issue of distracted driving is. As we commute,

a lot of us spend a lot of time in cars. You can see people who consider their cars to be their offices because they're stuck in their cars for so long because we have such terrible gridlock in the province of Ontario. So we're looking forward to actually addressing the safety component of this legislation when it does get to committee, but I'm looking forward to the debate here in the House this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments this round, and I return to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for his reply.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to thank my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. I'll try to get in as many words as I can here in my auctioneer chant, just for him. He brought up vehicle inspection centres and accountability, and I think it's a prime example after we spent the morning in this House talking about accountability in regard to the Sudbury by-election and a Premier who continues to stand beside people who have alleged convictions coming toward them. Accountability is a big piece of this bill, and one of the key tenets that we see with this Liberal government is their lack of accountability.

The member from Durham made the comment in here that we need to just pass this and get it to committee, where the real work gets done. Well, again, I'd like to ask that member why he's not in favour of bringing Laura Miller and Peter Faist back in front of a real committee to get real work done, so that we can get the real truth about such an issue.

My colleague, neighbour and friend from Huron–Bruce brought up a very important matter that, again, I have raised in this House, that being the emergency operator situation that we find our snowplow operators in. There's legislation that actually forces them to break the law by driving on closed roads, even though their job is to get out to get those roads open. I brought it to the attention of the minister, it was a unanimous resolution supported in this House by all three parties, and yet there's not one word of it in this transportation safety act upgrade. I'm disappointed to see that that wasn't in there.

The other one in there is my private member's resolution about transportation for rural and northern Ontario, which again is something that was passed by all members of this Legislature and agreed with, and yet not a word was breathed of it in this legislation—a little concerning.

My colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo—I think she brought up a very poignant comment there, on the inconvenient democracy of the ability to debate in this chamber. This is what we are elected to do. This is what our government, and our government's structure, is formed on. I find it disingenuous that members on that side don't want to allow people to have debate in this House. That's what we're sent here to do. If we do a good debate, we have good legislation which serves the people of Ontario, and that's what we're intended to do.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I heard “disingenuous.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes. I have to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Bill Walker: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. Further debate? The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Speaker—

Hon. James J. Bradley: He'll have a good speech.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Minister.

Bill 31, the Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act, 2014, is unfortunately another omnibus bill. It is an amalgamation of two bills introduced in the previous Parliament, as well as some additional measures. Regardless of whether I support the substance of the bill or not, I am dismayed by the continuing use of omnibus bills by this government. In this, as in too many matters, they seem to be taking cues from the government in Ottawa. Omnibus bills are nothing but a means to minimize the scrutiny that my colleagues and I provide to this House.

Having said that, I would like to talk positively and constructively about Bill 31. New Democrats are supportive of the bill and its objective to make Ontario roads safer. Of course, we do have reservations about certain aspects of the projected legislation, but on the whole it is a positive and welcome development from this government. By the way, I would also like to make it clear that nobody has offered me a job for not opposing this bill.

I don't have time to talk comprehensively about the legislation, so I'll address just a couple of aspects of it. This bill is especially relevant in my home city of Hamilton. Unfortunately, Hamilton pedestrians and cyclists are at a higher risk of getting hit by cars than the provincial average. There were 18 traffic fatalities in Hamilton last year, so the provisions in this bill that will enhance pedestrians', cyclists' and drivers' safety are extremely important to my constituents.

Hamilton pedestrians are 42% more likely to be injured than the provincial rate. The risk to cyclists is up to 81% higher than the Ontario average. The Social Planning and Research Council found that Hamilton is second only to Windsor for the number of pedestrians who die while walking. I do not believe that Hamilton drivers are any less careful than drivers in the rest of Ontario; instead, we most likely have a problem of poor engineering and design of our roads.

Gridlock is a big part of the problem. It creates a situation where motorists spend half their commute crawling at a snail's pace and the other half driving at high speed in order to make up the time they have lost. We could have safer roads if drivers were instead able to maintain a consistent and moderate speed during their journeys. Highway speeds are not appropriate or safe where pedestrians or cyclists are right next to the traffic.

1610

Under this bill, drivers must allow a distance of one metre “as may be practicable” when overtaking a cyclist. This sensible and potentially life-saving measure has

been championed for years by my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Most significantly, this bill ramps up the fines for dooring to a minimum of \$300 up to a maximum of \$1,000. Frankly, I don't think that's enough. Being hit by a car door is one of the greatest dangers that cyclists on our streets face. However, the cyclists have to have a responsibility in how they ride their bicycles, too, and a lot of them don't. We do not have good data on this in Ontario, but in Chicago an ambulance was called in 50% of doorings, compared to 30% of other cycling accidents. Dooring is one of the most dangerous forms of collision, but it also is a most preventable type of bicycle-car collision.

This increase in the fine could save lives, we hope, but alongside greater responsibilities for drivers, cyclists on our roads need to take responsibility for their actions as well. Sometimes I and many members, I'm sure, shake our heads at the lack of awareness of certain cyclists. I've seen cyclists on their phone; I've seen them eating sandwiches; I've seen them turning right on a red light without stopping; I've seen them driving up between two lanes of traffic and parking in front of the intersection, and giving us a gesture while they're doing it. I've seen cyclists weaving through traffic right and left trying to speed past the right-hand side of a car that's making a right turn. Well, I guess you're asking for it if you do stuff like that.

We need more understanding, more accommodation and less hostility between cyclists and drivers. It's a two-way street, no pun intended. We need better education and training for cyclists as well as drivers. Last week, I saw a driver with a sandwich in one hand and a text in the other. I think the thing was on autopilot; I'm not sure. But the car certainly was weaving a bit, to say the least.

Maybe the right place for this would start in the high schools or maybe grade 8, to let people know about the responsibility of taking to the roads.

Now, let me tell you a little bit about a bad law. Right now, and this is quite bizarre, cyclists are not allowed to have a flashing red light. This will probably come as quite a surprise to more safety-conscious cyclists on our roads, many of whom are wise enough to know that a flashing red light is the best way to make themselves visible to drivers at night. This is a bad law. One small commendable provision of this bill is that it now permits cyclists to use a flashing red bicycle light. That's good.

At the same time as encouraging good, responsible cyclists, this bill will also punish irresponsible ones who bike at night without lights. A lot of them wear dark clothing and are almost impossible to see, especially in bad weather. If you are on the road at night in a car or truck or on a bicycle and you have no lights, you're putting yourself and everyone around you in danger. That's unacceptable. This bill proposes higher fines for cycling without lights—not to where I'd like to see it, but it improves it.

We also need better enforcement by our police officers. If you run a red light on a bicycle, you should pay

the same fine and lose your privilege like car drivers do after losing 15 demerit points. We should examine the whole scale of fines proposed in this bill to ensure that they correctly reflect the scale of seriousness of offences. I've said before that fines should be proportionate, fair and backed by evidence. I hope this is addressed at committee level.

In an accident involving a car versus a bike, or a car versus a pedestrian, it doesn't take a PhD to figure out who is going to come off worse almost every time. So while we need to improve the education of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians alike, we must pass legislation that minimizes collisions between motor vehicles and either pedestrians or cyclists.

Legislation and education will not be enough, of course. As I alluded to earlier, a legacy of poor road design and engineering will need to be addressed in order to reduce the structural reasons for these collisions. Bad crosswalk designs, a lack of good sidewalks and a failure to separate high-speed vehicles from slow bicycle traffic are just a few examples of poor design that increases the rate of accidents.

People make mistakes. We can't engineer human error away completely but we can certainly improve it. Pedestrians will walk out without checking the signal. Cyclists will turn left without looking in each direction. Drivers will try to take a right turn without checking their blind side. We can't engineer these mistakes away completely, but what we can do is engineer roads, crosswalks and intersections where the consequences of a mistake are much less serious, where human error is better understood and where if collisions do happen, they are at much lower speeds.

Here in this chamber, we only have a limited and indirect influence over these things, but we can do something else. If we can't reduce the physical consequences of collisions, we can increase the financial and legal consequences. This bill seeks to do that, and by doing so it should make our roads a little bit safer.

A good friend of mine, the vice-president of my local union, was walking out of a shopping mall into the parking lot just a couple of months ago, when he was hit by a high-speed car. He suffered serious, life-threatening injuries and a lot of broken bones. He's slowly on the mend and has just started to walk again. That's how bad it was. A distracted driver hit him in the parking lot of the mall and drove him 25 feet.

People should not be driving at high speed in a parking lot. You should not be driving in a parking lot at a speed that doesn't give you time to react. Distracted driving is a plague in this province and quite frankly becomes a plague worldwide.

We've created a society and a culture in which you always have to be available. It's the expectation you immediately pick up the phone or answer a text, and if you don't there's something wrong with you. Well, last time I looked they do have technology that's called hands-free. If you want to talk on the phone so much, either pull over or use hands-free equipment.

Once you breed the expectation into people, they respond accordingly. That beep is an annoying sound anywhere. It's almost a call to nature. Speaking of which, I've heard far too many men in this building answering their BlackBerry in the washroom while going about their business—

Mr. Mike Colle: Name names.

Mr. Paul Miller: No one hears that, but there could be accidents.

Let's be honest, if you can't resist your BlackBerry in there, it's a good bet that you can't resist it when you're driving your car. When it starts buzzing or bleeping on the highway, you look at it. Even if you don't answer it and even if you don't have any intention of answering, you probably still look at it, and for those two seconds, your eyes aren't on the road. That's distracted driving.

If you absolutely must answer a call, you have two options: (1), Bluetooth hands-free or, (2)—and even better—pull over to the side of the road or a parking lot and deal with the matter.

Speaker, I've been in this House for almost eight years now and in all that time there's never once been a call that was so urgent I couldn't wait two minutes to answer. Too many people in this building haven't learned that lesson yet. I'll make an exception for the Premier's communication staff at the moment. I don't envy their jobs.

In conclusion: This is generally a good bill. It should help to improve the safety on our roads. It should help to reduce the needless loss of life on our roads, and we're happy to support Bill 31.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It appears that this debate has gone to the dump, if you will.

The opposition parties are needlessly extending the debate on Bill 31 by continuing to put up speakers. This bill has now been debated for over 11 hours. That's right. Over 62 members of the Legislature have either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate and comments.

Listening to the debate that's been going on here this afternoon, it is quite clear that the majority of members are in support of this bill. In fact, it has incorporated private members' bills from members across this House. I'm sure they want to see this bill going on to the next phase, and all we're seeing is further debate that really is unnecessary for us to achieve what we want here, which is to get this bill to go on to the next level. Their only goal has been to delay.

So I'm calling on the opposition parties to stop stalling and help us move forward this important piece of legislation so we can continue to debate other bills, like the pension bill and the Ontario Immigration Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Lanark—sorry, the member for Perth—Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. I'm sorry to confuse you there, but we were confused, I guess.

Anyway, I listened to what the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek said—very good, very good,

especially the last part I thought was very good and very amusing.

That's something that the member from Davenport certainly has a problem with. This is what we're here for, for Pete's sake. If you don't want to extend this debate, don't get up. That's the way it works. Sit down there, instead of getting up and criticizing us for doing what we're supposed to be doing. That's why we were elected to be here.

1620

I think there's something I would like to bring up, if I can get a chance to talk about it. I'm sure the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek knows that truck traffic is an issue, certainly around Hamilton and around some of the major cities. Nobody has talked about the last section here about extending the lengths of B-trains in Ontario. I've asked the member from Cambridge to look into that as she is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation. They're only targeting B-trains, and that's fine, but there are more trailer systems in Ontario than just B-trains, so I don't understand why they're just extending the B-trains. I do know, having experience with driving a truck, that if you can take those tractors and hook them on to other trailers—are they going to be illegal if you do that? Anyway, I've asked the member from Cambridge to look into that and she said she would. I certainly look forward to that.

But I think people on this side are really getting tired of those people sitting over there wanting to shut down the debate. That's ridiculous, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed an honour to stand on behalf of my constituents in Windsor–Tecumseh and make comments on my colleague, the stand-up comic, from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek who was very entertaining this afternoon.

But first if I could address the members opposite: the members from Mississauga–Streetsville, Kitchener Centre, Durham, Davenport, and I believe the Chair of Cabinet when they say, "Sit down and shut up. We've heard enough." What you're saying is, "We don't want to hear from you guys anymore because we've had our turn. We don't want to hear from you."

We are 107 equal voices in this Legislature. We are all governed by the same rules, the same regulations, the same time constraints, and we over here don't stand up and say, "We've heard enough from you. Please get out of here," and that's what you're saying to us. You are showing great disrespect for the Legislature, for the people who elected us and sent us here to have our voices heard, and we wish to be heard. We wish to represent the various voices from across this great province of Ontario. We don't need you to tell us that you don't want to hear from us anymore. Our job is to stand in this House and let you know what our constituents feel about any proposed legislation that you bring forward. That's why we're here today and that's why you will listen or you

will leave the room, because we are not going to stop speaking.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek talked about dooring, when cars are driving down and someone opens the door and hits a cyclist. I feel I've been doored by the Liberals today. They're trying to elbow us out of the way because they've had their turn and they don't want us to be heard. Guess what? It's not going to happen. Get over it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise and add my comments to the speech from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. The speech was very entertaining, I must say.

I also want to add my voice to what our colleagues have been saying. This is not about shutting anybody down. The people that we all represent expect us to get work done, expect us to change things and to improve things in the province of Ontario, so when we speak on a bill, we all speak in rotation. We're making comments on the speech from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, so we all get a turn. It's not that we've spoken to the bill and you haven't. We're all speaking to this equally.

All we are trying to say is that after a certain number of hours, in this case over 11 hours of debate, perhaps, since we are in consensus—we're agreeing with the principle of the bill; we're highlighting the benefits that this bill would bring to the people that we represent—if we were not in agreement, it would be different, but since we are, let's move it forward and let's make the changes that the people we represent expect us to make. We are here to improve the quality of life for everyday Ontarians, and we have to keep that in mind with every debate and every word that we add to a bill. This is why I am encouraging my colleagues to move it forward to the next step. This is all I and my colleagues on this side of the House are asking for. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to reply.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the members who commented on my points. A couple of them were a little dismayed. It's bad enough it's so serious in here. A little bit of humour doesn't hurt all of us.

I listened to the member from, I believe, Durham and, I think, the member from Kitchener Centre—I'm not sure. They said this omnibus bill should move through quickly; we shouldn't debate for long periods of time because it's their bill. Well, I hate to say this, but we have some very good bills on the books from the official opposition and the third party, who sit at committee, that don't get brought forward unless it's either stolen by the Liberals to use it as their own or stalled till they feel like bringing it to the order paper.

If you want to talk about stalling, I've got a bill in there that all parties agreed upon, the bill to protect child

actors. They all agree on it and all of them say it's a great bill and it's wonderful and it's fantastic. Does it get to third reading? Does it get to royal assent? No, but they all love it. I don't know what happens; they try to blame other House leaders. The bottom line is that if you really are honest about things and you want to get things done and you really care about bills that help all Ontarians—that help us all, that protect kids—then you should be bringing those types of bills forward too, and you don't.

My question to the ruling party is that if you want to speed bills through that suit your agenda—if you want to do that—that's fine. But let's not leave out the other parties who have a major contribution to make, who are totally ignored in this House 99% of the time. That's the problem with a majority government. They do whatever they want. They laugh at you, they dismiss you, they don't do anything that's good for the people of Ontario. When you people stand up and start doing things that are good for the people of Ontario from all of us, not just you, you'll get my respect.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I thought your speech was good, Paul.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Jim.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It generally is a pleasure to join this debate on Bill 31, the making the roads safer act, because there are a number of things that have yet to be mentioned, and I feel it's very important to go on record so that this debate reflects the constituents in my riding. I think it's absolutely shameful that the government, on the opposite side of the House, is trying to shut down debate today. Speaker, the last time I checked, democracy was about allowing everyone an opportunity to make a difference in decision-making, and this government cannot railroad us off to the side.

To that end, in terms of railroading, I want to pick up specifically on B-trains. As the member from Perth–Wellington mentioned, not a lot of people have spoken about B-trains at this stage of the game. There's one thing in particular: We're looking at extending trailer combinations. When I was general manager of the Ontario Dairy Goat Co-operative, we had tandem trucks with pups, we had 26,000-litre trailers. It takes a lot of horsepower to pull that type of vehicle and trailer behind.

Looking at extending trailer combinations, we have to also address the potential impacts resulting from transports increased in size inappropriately travelling on our rural and local roadways. For instance, in our business, when we're hauling milk during winter, especially when the frost was coming out on the roads, you can only haul two thirds of your normal weight. So now they're taking a look at extending trailer combinations. Ladies and gentlemen, that's going to have an impact on exactly the efficiencies of these combinations, and moreover, the

impact of the weight that's being hauled on our local roadways.

1630

I bring this up specifically because right now in Toronto, Good Roads and the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association are hosting their annual conference. The biggest concern over and over and over again is that this Liberal government has cut back infrastructure dollars. Rural municipalities have been struck by decreased OMPF funding, and they're being absolutely stonewalled when it comes to applying for infrastructure dollars.

Ladies and gentlemen of this House, we just had a member opposite talk about "spend, spend, spend." Well, let me tell you, if you stopped, stopped, stopped your wastefulness on scandals and hiding all the absolutely dishonest things that you're doing, maybe we'd have a little bit of money left over to appropriately invest in all of Ontario. But, no. Instead, we're wasting dollars on Liberal scandals, which is absolutely shameful.

Again, if we have a bill that's talking about extending trailer combinations, we need to think about all of the impacts. In this particular instance, the extended length of B-trains—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry to interrupt the member, but I believe she made an unparliamentary remark, and I would ask her to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My goodness. I withdraw.

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I don't know what I said. Thank you, Speaker.

When I talk and represent our rural ridings in Ontario, I do get incensed, and it is not right that we have people trying to shut down debates when we should be able to voice concerns. Again, I have to underscore the importance of the lack of infrastructure dollars coming out to all rural Ontarians.

As has been mentioned before, we have the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and he actually tried six times to have a private member's initiative whereby gas tax could be shared across this province so municipalities actually have a chance to have dollars to invest. But, unfortunately, this government voted all of them down as well. They shut down opposition opportunities every chance they get.

Another thing that I'd like to talk about specifically, in terms of making the roads safer act is pedestrian safety. There's one element in this bill that reads that both pedestrians and drivers will be responsible for safety at crosswalks.

It's interesting that in the last few months that we've been experiencing some proactiveness in the city of Toronto with the new mayor, it has been brought to our attention that pedestrians need to be mindful of their Ps and Qs as well. For instance, when that number comes up at the crosswalk, it means that you don't have 10 to 15 seconds to race across and hold up traffic; it means that when that hand goes up, you need to stop at the sidewalk.

It's interesting, because, as some of you may know, I live on a farm. Last week, I had to bring the truck into

work here in Toronto. It's a little bit bigger than most of the cars that typically use streets in downtown Toronto. The looks that I got from pedestrians because I had a Ford F-150 trying to make a left-hand turn—it was as if I was the person in the wrong. It's very aggravating when pedestrians do not observe the rules of the road. So I think we have to, in the spirit of the making-the-roads-safer act—we need to ensure that pedestrians are held accountable for their part in making the roads safer as well.

Another element of this bill that I want to draw attention to that hasn't really been touched on in detail is medical reports. Time and time again, I have constituents coming to both my offices in my riding, in Kincardine and Blyth, concerned because it's taking an extraordinary amount of time to get their licence back. Again, we have to be taking a look at efficiencies in terms of transparency and accountability. This Liberal government needs to make sure that they're accountable to efficiencies within the system, because they're lacking every which way you look at it. So I encourage, in terms of the making-the-roads-safer act and getting people back in a mobile position, in rural Ontario specifically—we need to take a look at facilitating and processing medical reports in a more efficient way.

Another thing I'd like to talk about is paved shoulders. The honourable member from Parry Sound–Muskoka introduced his private member's initiative to get shoulders paved once and for all, and we credit him for doing that. But the fact of the matter is, again, if we're sharing the roads, everyone must adhere to the rules of the road.

I need to make mention that in my riding, we have a situation whereby people do not respect farm implements on the road. In the spring and fall there is heavy traffic, and cottagers racing to the lakeshore or people in a hurry, trying to operate their office out of their vehicles, turn in disgust when they get held up by farm implements that have every right to be on the road. The farmers are observing the rules of the road. I think we need to make sure that when this bill finally makes it to committee, we work with our farm organizations to make sure their concerns are heard with regard to ensuring everyone is doing their part in making roads safer, because they feel they're at risk when people do not respect their right to be on that road as well.

There's a whole host of things that we could talk about with regard to this bill. Recognizing that my time has quickly ticked away here, I want to touch a little bit on bicycling. As the official opposition critic for the environment and climate change, I support bicycling wherever it's possible. It encourages active, healthy living and it reduces emissions and gridlock on our roads.

Living in rural Ontario, I'm a driver, as are most of my constituents. But when I come to the city, I am actually taken aback by the number of cyclists who do not obey and respect the rules of the road. They are on sidewalks. They're in bicycle lanes. They're on your right side. They're on your left side. They're very, very inconsistent. While we need to be mindful of enabling more

cyclists to use the road, I think we have to advocate for further education and awareness. That education and awareness points to the fact that everyone on the road is responsible for safety, both cyclists and drivers.

In terms of dooring, bicyclists on the one hand must be aware of the vehicle's blind spots; and on the other, drivers must be aware of the potential hazards when opening a vehicle.

I'd like to conclude by reflecting on comments that were shared by my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh. The pushback we're getting as we debate really does feel like a dooring. We can't allow the government to push us aside when I, in this particular debate, have raised local issues. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to get up and speak after the member from Huron–Bruce. You know, I lived in Huron–Bruce for two years as a United Church clergy person. It was my first posting. I have to say that it's way easier to drive around the city of Toronto than it is to drive in winter on the roads in Huron–Bruce, so you definitely have a vested interest in this bill. I saw complete whiteout conditions; I had to be towed out of ditches there. It was quite something. Even the rain in Huron–Bruce—a beautiful, beautiful place, fabulous people, but oh, my goodness, I'm glad I'm driving, taking the TTC or walking in TO and not out there.

What she went over and what many of us have gone over are a couple of issues. Number one, clearly from the notes given out across the aisle—listen: We are here in this place to debate, and we are here to debate for a reason. I wish, as the government says, everything could be taken care of in committee, but we know the simple reality is that when these bills go to committee, the government does not take amendments put forward by the opposition seriously and does not pass amendments put forward by the opposition very often. So this is the only chance the opposition has to raise critical issues. We raise them more than once because we hope that we effect change across the aisle, we hope that they listen and we hope that they then move on the amendments, many of which have been very positive that have been suggested over here.

That's the point of debate: to make better legislation. That's why. Because no matter who you are, the first iteration of a bill is not necessarily the best one, not to mention, of course, that it is the democratic way. That's why we debate and that's why it's important.

Number two, there are issues with this bill that need to be looked at. Again, we hope that we've effected some change, that people are listening and that they take note.

1640

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to begin by saying that I've listened to debate in the House about this bill, and it's very clear that this bill is about public safety. Each member I've heard speak has spoken in support of the bill.

Now, we heard the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek say it's an omnibus bill. I don't think it's an omnibus bill, but it's certainly a bill that's pulled together a lot of different ideas, like the private member's bill from the member from Parkdale–High Park on cycling, that's there, and the bill that was put forward by the member from Scarborough–Rouge River and actually the member from Nepean–Carleton put together for that bill on distracted driving, which I think all members of this House have spoken passionately about. I know that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka had a bill as well that had to do with paved shoulders—a very important bill. There are more ideas than that that have been incorporated in this bill. That's why it's important to move forward.

I respect the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's comments that we all have a voice, but I also think that public safety is something that is imperative for us in this House. We've all spoken about it. We have all been supportive of it. Many of us have put forward bills in support of those public safety measures. So we can debate about debate, and that's great, but what we need to do is make sure that these public safety measures get moving forward. Let's get them to committee. Let's get them done, and then we can have another chance to debate debate somewhere further on down the road.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today and contribute in some small way to the debate. I'd like to acknowledge the member from Huron–Bruce. She covered a number of areas that I haven't heard today. I've been here all day, either in here or in the salon next door, listening as well, and I don't think anybody talked about trailer combinations or the aspect that she spoke about, which is very important to the industries that she was involved with, as well as other industry in Ontario. It takes that kind of background that everybody brings to this House from different backgrounds before they were elected to this august chamber. So it's important that people have that opportunity to stand in their place, as they're elected to do by their colleagues and their voters back home—sent to this place to contribute to debate and contribute to overall legislation.

There's a number of things that we talk about in there. I agree with demerit points, but the devil's in the details there, as I said a little earlier. Another one that we're concerned with is that this could be another Drive Clean 2.0 as they bring this in.

I do agree with the gathering of unpaid fines. I know that's a big problem in all of Ontario. It's a big issue in my riding, so I certainly support that aspect. I'm sure there are other aspects of it as well that go forward.

It's the other jurisdictions that members have spoken to, and I think it's important that members bring their background and their ideas here. The government doesn't always get it right. The government even admits that sometimes, that it's through debate in here in the clear light of day and in committee that improvements are

made to different bills, and initial iterations aren't always the final arbiter of the debate.

I think it's great that we have this debate. We're here today, and that's what we're paid to do, and so I'm glad to rise. I commend the member from Huron–Bruce on her remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The member from Huron–Bruce always brings the perspective of her riding to this place, and as it relates to Bill 31, I think she brings a unique perspective actually. Rural, somewhat isolated communities see this legislation through a different lens, and that's what's important about this debate, that we are charged, as elected officials, to bring forward those voices to this place, and I think she did a very good job in that regard.

OGRA/ROMA is obviously going on right now, as is OGRA—the Ontario Good Roads Association and ROMA. We met with them this morning, and they actually articulated some of the concerns that the member from Huron–Bruce brought forward as well, certainly around the revenue streams that municipalities need so desperately. They have been asking this government for so long to at least be able to have extended powers around collecting on OPP fines, because rural communities like Huron–Bruce continue to be shortchanged on the infrastructure file. They have identified this through what I think is quite an amazing system of asset management and inventory around the bridge system across rural communities. They have actually been leading the charge in this regard, and in some respects the government is trying to catch up somewhat.

But they need that revenue stream. There's a motion on the table—it's long-standing—that they put in some conditions of transparency and accountability with regard to those revenue streams, specifically for infrastructure. Why not give the municipalities the power to collect on those OPP fines? This piece of legislation is one step in the right direction in that regard, but it's our responsibility to make sure that this government follows through, because those communities deserve that revenue stream as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member from Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, it's always a privilege to stand in this House and voice concerns on behalf of the constituents of my riding. I appreciate very much the comments from the member from Parkdale–High Park. She fully gets the amazing opportunity to live in a rural riding like Huron–Bruce, and I appreciate that very much.

To the member from Sarnia–Lambton: Thank you very much for recognizing that it's extremely important that debate happens in this House and doesn't get shut down, because we all do indeed bring different experiences that can impact and make a difference in legislation as it evolves through the debate process to final reading.

To the member from Kitchener–Waterloo: Thank you very much for recognizing that, when it comes to making roads safer, we need to make sure that all 444 of our municipalities do indeed have the ability, and the dollars behind them, to ensure that they are doing their part and investing in infrastructure.

I saved, last but not least, the member from Ottawa South, because sadly I have to say that there was nothing in his comments that addressed specifically what I was saying. It shows a continual disconnect between rural Ontario and some members across the floor, and that's disappointing, because this is an opportunity to raise awareness. Hopefully it's a two-way conversation, a two-way road that can enhance an opportunity to make legislation better.

Again, when I think about this particular act and making roads safer, at the end of the day we need to make sure that all 444 municipalities across Ontario have the revenue and the capacity to make our roads safer.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I wasn't really prepared to say much this afternoon, but I've been encouraged by members from the government to stand up and say a few words. Perhaps out of my 10 minutes you'll find something in there that you hadn't heard before, as I did from the member from Huron–Bruce when she talked about the load limits on roads and the extent of the trailers.

When you represent regions of the province, rural areas, that the Liberal government doesn't represent—I'm the member closest to the city of London, all the way down—you know, there are no government members until you get to London. We represent parts of the province that your party doesn't have a voice in, so I think it's important to listen, and perhaps to learn a little bit more about what people in other parts of the province are saying.

I know that in Windsor–Tecumseh we take our jobs seriously. We have a high unemployment rate, so when we get a job, we pay particular attention to it.

1650

I want to argue on behalf of the New Democratic Party of Ontario on the need to make our roads and streets in our province safe for motorists, pedestrians and those who ride or operate bicycles. We in the NDP caucus favour much of what the bill has to offer. Let's be upfront about that. But there are bits and pieces of it that we would like to see improved.

For example, the minister wants to take away the public's right to be heard—actually, to be consulted; a stronger word, I believe. What do you think, Speaker? Would you rather be heard or consulted? Right, consulted. You would rather be consulted, I would imagine, as I would. However, the minister's priority—and I stress the word “priority” because the very first thing the minister addresses in this bill, in the very first paragraph on page i, the explanatory note to the bill, is that the minister is going to “remove the requirement that the Minister of Transportation conduct an annual review, including pub-

lic consultation, on the amount of the toll for the following year” on Highway 407.

Well, isn't that a kick in the teeth. So much for openness, so much for fairness and transparency, and so much for representing the best interests of all the taxpayers in Ontario, many of whom would like to have a say, as they've had, in any increase that the private operators of the 407 say they are entitled to each and every year.

The minister used to have a policy that just in case there was a problem in the mailing of the billing, just in case it slipped your mind or the dog ate your homework and the bill that came from the 407, you were always given a second chance, a second written notice that you failed to pay a toll when you drove on the 407. But this toll to the minister's friends—now they are going to take these draconian steps to deny you the right to get a new registration sticker for your plate without giving you a second notice.

Now, I don't know about you guys, but I've heard time and time again, long before I ever came here, about people getting bills for being on the 407 when their car or their truck was parked in the driveway in Windsor or Waterloo or Wawa. They weren't anywhere near the 407, but they got a bill because those plate-readers are not always accurate. They make mistakes. The numbers get jumbled. There might be some snow on the plate, some mud on the plate. So people get a bill and the first thing they do: “Well, it doesn't apply to me. I'll throw it away.” Well, now, if they throw it away, there's no second notice saying, “You know, if you don't pay this, you're not going to get your sticker.” Right?

No second notice: Why are they doing that? Why is the government taking away the second notice billing? I'm just guessing. Maybe, if indeed at some point in the future our friends in the government want to install some kind of a billing system for the commuter toll roads in Ontario—if they are going to do that, then maybe they won't send out a second notice that you're late in a payment either. So they'll set the precedent on the 407. Why else would you deny the public's right to a consultation on a fee and why would you take away the second notice? I don't get it. I just don't get it.

Speaker, I have to tell you—it shouldn't come as any surprise, I'm sure—that we in the New Democratic Party believe there should be a public consultation on highway tolls on the 407, and we believe you should have a second notice before you lose your right to renew your sticker because you didn't get the bill or you forgot about it or you lost it or it went somewhere else.

When we were starting this debate last week, the Tuesday we came back, I remember the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the member from Peterborough, was saying that when the Conservatives sold the 407, it was the biggest scandal of the 20th century. I believe the minister without portfolio, the Chair of Cabinet, agreed. Well, if that was a scandal then, this is as much of a scandal now: taking away the public's right to be consulted on any toll increase on the 407 and stripping

away the public's opportunity for a second bill just in case that first never gets through.

There are other things in the bill, I must say, that we will support. They make sense, are overdue and deserve to be supported because I would hope we all want to keep Ontario safe.

I believe we in Ontario have a good reputation when it comes to highway safety. I read somewhere that Ontario roadways are the safest in North America, yet every 18 hours someone is killed in a highway accident on Ontario roads.

Distracted and impaired drivers are responsible for most of those fatalities. You can be impaired by alcohol or drugs or a combination of both. You might be on your cellphone; you might be on your cellphone on alcohol; on your cellphone on alcohol and on drugs; and you're asking for trouble.

I'm all for making Ontario roads safer, and there is much to be done. For one thing, we can strip it down to the fundamentals and get involved when we talk about the design of Ontario roads, especially on the 400 series of highways. I know when you enter Ontario from Michigan in Windsor—say you come across the bridge or the tunnel and get on the 401—we have a divided highway, a cement median barrier that separates the eastbound and the westbound lanes. It's like that all the way through Essex county right into Chatham-Kent. That is where a problem comes in.

During the summer election last year I was in my campaign office when I had a visit from the parents of a young girl, a 13-year-old girl, who was in a car driven by her 35-year-old uncle. They were on their way to London for a family vacation. The driver of a transport truck coming towards Windsor in the westbound lane lost control, came over the centre—there was no cement barrier—and collided head-on. So 35-year-old Marc Lafontaine and 13-year-old Alyssa Smulders both lost their lives. The girl's parents, Jason Smulders and Denise Lafontaine, agonized over it. They came to see me. I said, “I can't make this an election issue; I can't make you any promises.” The only commitment I can make, Speaker, was to promise to arrange for a meeting with ministry officials after the election was over, if I was re-elected. We would talk to them about highway design and whether, in fact, the ministry felt that if there was a cement barrier, those Jersey-type barriers, that would have prevented the accident.

In October I did arrange for the meeting. The ministry officials came down from London. It was a very stressful meeting. The parents were still very upset, and I can understand that. But at the end of the day I have to commend the ministry for sending those officials down and talking to the parents, because they wanted to be heard. They wanted to voice their opinion on the design of 400-series highways. That meeting did take place. I'd just like to say they were given no assurances that designs would change, but at least they have the feeling now that the government did listen, their member did listen, and a meeting was held.

I thank you for your time. I'm sorry I ran out of time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I am pleased to speak on Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer act. Mr. Speaker, safety of the roads is paramount for our government, and Ontario's roads are among the safest ones in North America. Guess under whose watch? Under this government's watch.

The opposition parties are needlessly extending this debate on Bill 31. The bill has now been debated for 12 hours, and over 63 members of this Legislature have either spoken to this bill or participated in debate during questions and comments.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh said that he's in favour of the bill. Listening to the debate, it has been clear that the majority of members are in support of this bill. Let's pass this bill as soon as possible so it goes to committee and in the committee we hear from the public. We need to hear from them. We need their input.

1700

So I'm calling on the opposition parties to stop stalling and help us move this important piece of legislation forward so we can continue to debate other bills. We are wasting the time and money of the taxpayers, which is not the right thing to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, it was a pleasure listening to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh raise some new subject matter that we hadn't heard this afternoon and that added tremendously to the debate. I will mention this: As I was listening to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, I was looking at the Liberal benches. There were 13 members in this Legislature, and only one, the member from Ottawa South, was actually listening to the debate. One member was listening to the debate.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to say to the member that you can't make reference to the absence of members, individually or as a group. You've got the floor for—

Mr. Randy Hillier: That was not my intention, Speaker. I was just making reference to the count that I see here. But then I hear the member from Mississauga–Brampton South, who was not listening at all, who then stands up in her place and says that this is needless discussion. She has heedless ears that are not working.

This debate is important. The member for Windsor–Tecumseh added tremendous value—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to ask the Chair of Cabinet to withdraw his remark.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Withdrawn.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see that the government member is doing the appropriate thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think it's very important that we all add our voice to this debate. Many of the members have spoken about this. I think it's absolutely important that we recognize that everyone in this House has an equal opportunity and an equal responsibility to share the concerns of their riding and their constituents. I think that's something we should encourage instead of discourage.

When it comes to this bill, I think I have to agree with my colleague from Windsor. At the beginning of his speech he said, "I'm hopeful there is some content of my speech that will provide you with some insight that you hadn't had before." I think he absolutely accomplished that when he spoke about the 407.

It's very curious to me why this government is taking away that second notice. That's troubling, particularly given the fact that we all know that the 407 in general has been an entire debacle in terms of the deal that was struck and how that has severely impacted our province. In fact, the Liberal Party has been openly critical of the Conservatives, but you're now making that problem, that mistake, even worse by making it more unfair.

There was already a problem with respect to the way that deal was struck and the way that Ontario did not get its fair share. People have already complained about the fact that they're receiving bills in an unfair manner and bills that sometimes are given to the wrong person. There was at least one mechanism that provided some—maybe small, but at least some—form of accountability, some form of redress, perhaps some form of double-check, and that was getting the second notice. By removing that, you're making a situation that's unfair more unfair, and really there's no reason to do so. I think that was a great point raised by the member from Windsor.

In fact, there are a number of points, but I really don't have enough time to address them all because my time is up. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to speak to Bill 31 as well.

As you've all gotten to know me over time you know that I'm a great team player in all aspects of the things that our government does, but I want to tell you, on this one point that has been raised recently, I do appreciate all the additional debate that goes on in this House. I think this debate would have been much poorer if not for the scatological humour of the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

I really do have to agree with the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh did raise some interesting new points here. That agreement and that praise of the member raising that aspect just sort of got lost with the subsequent verbatim issues that he started to address.

But it is very important that you raise some of the issues around the 407 just to show that we were listening,

because that is our nature, to listen and pick up on some of the good ideas coming forward. You do, of course, know you would only make the mistake once of ignoring that letter, if it resulted in a plate denial. You're going to learn from those experiences. It makes it a lot more efficient of a system; you don't need to be constantly reminded and reminded, paper after paper. You should know that if you are charged with a violation or charged for the 407 use, you should pay for it. And if you weren't there, you're going to have to go and make that case. But you also know that when it comes to consultations, we do listen. The government does want to be consulted with.

You'll know, Mr. Speaker, that the 407 is currently on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry for comments from all members of this House, but all constituents and people of Ontario can go to the registry and make comments right now on issues around the 407, and we encourage you to do it.

The rates associated with the 407 are of course tied to inflation. It's another efficiency in the system so that we don't have to have it opened up for consultation every single time and waste taxpayers' time and money. It is tied to inflation.

So go to the registry, make your comments, encourage your constituents, and let's carry on this excellent debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Windsor-Tecumseh has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to comment on the comments that were made by the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and the member from Beaches-East York.

It does pain me to say that if indeed you were listening, on the other side of the House, you might choose to ignore your speaking notes for a moment when a member of the opposition relates a very sad and tragic tale about two lives lost, including a 13-year-old girl, and the member from Mississauga-Brampton South says, from her speaking notes, "You're wasting our time. It's a waste of time here today, this should go to committee." Now that was a disgusting comment. That comment had no place in this debate this afternoon.

I realize we all have speaking notes. We all refer to them from time to time. But when a member gets up and tells you about a tragic fatality, and has met with the parents of a young daughter, and all they're doing is trying to improve something—improve the design of the 401—and my job is to bring that to the floor, and I'm told by the member from Mississauga-Brampton South, "What a waste of time"—seriously folks, you're losing perspective here.

I know the speaking notes say, "Shut them down, send it to committee," but when you pull crap like that you hurt your dignity. You hurt whatever integrity you thought you had. It only goes back on you; it doesn't come to us. We're doing our job. We're raising the points that we feel we've been elected to do, and when you pull stunts like that you diminish this chamber, you diminish the debate and you diminish democracy—shame on you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

1710

Mr. Randy Hillier: You did that so smoothly, Speaker. It's as if you had just been there recently.

It's my pleasure to speak about Bill 31. Before I speak about the merits of the bill, I want to first speak to the priority that has been placed on this bill: where it ranks in the Liberal agenda.

We know—it has been mentioned briefly by some members this afternoon—that Ontario has the safest roads in, indeed, all of Confederation and quite possibly all of North America. The safety of our roads is excellent by any measure. By the hundreds of thousands of kilometres driven, by the hundreds of thousands of licensed drivers or by population, Ontario has safe roads, and we should commend everybody for that.

But what we don't have is short waiting times in our hospitals. What we don't have is a reduced unemployment level in this province. What we don't have is a wealth of prosperity. We have economic stagnation; high unemployment; we have extended wait times in our health care system—but we have a bill in front of the House to address a whole myriad of concerns and problems with what we're doing well in this province. Just remember: By any measure, we have safe roads—the safest roads in the country.

Then you look through some of the merits of the bill. I have to draw the members' attention to page iii of Bill 31. It's in the fourth paragraph from the bottom. I read this: "Pedestrians (which includes persons in wheelchairs) must not enter a crossover and into the path of a vehicle or streetcar that is so close that the driver cannot stop"—must not be allowed to enter the path of an oncoming vehicle that is so close, it cannot stop. Clearly, by deduction, we understand that that is an injury; that's a collision. There's going to be somebody injured, quite possibly fatally. What is this bill going to do to prevent that from happening? We're going to also fine the person who has just been injured in that collision.

Is that really important? Do you think that is going to prevent somebody from doing that after they've been injured, maybe very tragically injured, that you're now also going to fine them? My God. What sort of thinking is in that?

Really, it's important to recognize—just as I mentioned earlier about the level of people listening to this debate, I think it also applies to the number of people who have actually read the legislation, not just your talking points.

Further on page iii, the last paragraph: Every person who goes to a physician or an optometrist or a number of regulated health care professionals—if they have an injury or an illness or a condition, that health care professional must report that condition to the MTO. I have that case in my office. One of my staff members has MS. She's about 40 years of age. She has never driven, never plans on driving, will never get a driver's licence, but

every time she goes to the physician, her physician has to report her to the MTO.

What sort of needless bureaucracy is that, making physicians and health care professionals engage in the administration and reporting of people's driving abilities who don't drive? Is that the world of Liberalese or weasel-ese? I'm not sure.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You can't say that.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I'm also going to—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I will have to ask the member to withdraw that remark.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Absolutely. "Liberalese"? Oh, "weasel"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Say "I withdraw."

Mr. Randy Hillier: I withdraw.

Speaker, now we can go to page iv, third paragraph down. I'm just saying what the explanatory note is. I know nobody's read the clauses, so I'm just going to speak about the explanatory note and hopefully draw their attention to this.

The minister "may establish a program" for the inspection of vehicles and the issuance of certificates and stickers and blah, blah, blah, and "appoint a director of vehicle inspection standards" and stickers and blah, blah, blah. Okay? A new director.

I've not heard anything from the Liberal benches as to what this will cost. How big a bureaucracy are they going to create with the new director of stickers? It's an important question. We are in a deficit position. We have a significant debt, and now we're going to have a director general of stickers. I'd like to know how much the stickers and the director of the stickers are going to cost us. I hope it doesn't infringe or impede upon the minister's fantasy world of reducing the budget and eliminating the deficit by 2018, but we don't know because we just don't know how much the bloody stickers are going to cost us.

We can go on and on through this bill. I'm sorry, to all the members on the Liberal benches, for having somewhat of a dissident position on their marvellous Bill 31, but it does cause me concern when I read through bills that are not well thought out and not well drafted. That's part of the debate as well.

I want to also say that I've been in this chamber now for near eight years. I've seen legislation after legislation after legislation, all brought forward to remedy the ills of our province—remedy all the ills. All of these bills have been well intended, they tell me, and they are all there to address a problem and create a remedy. You would think now, after this period of time, we would be living in Eden or Shangri-La or Utopia with all the legislation that has been brought forward to remedy the ills of our province. But then you see this bill where we're actually maybe creating some new ailments with the new director of vehicles and stickers, or creating needless additional paperwork for our health care professionals to report about a driver who doesn't drive but may have a condi-

tion that may affect their driving when they're not driving.

I would ask the Liberal members to ponder that for a moment. Why have we not got Utopia here yet with all the legislation? We should be on the Big Rock Candy Mountain or something if their legislation was indeed effective and good. But more often than not, it's window dressing. Much like the distracted driver, it's distracted legislators on the Liberal bench who read from talking points, who don't read the legislation, and who don't understand the consequences of it.

I put this as the final token: If all this legislation provided the remedies that it was intended to, why are all our offices continually inundated with calls from constituents who are feeling the injustice and the unfairness of the administration of government?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

1720

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington for his well-thought-out comments.

Speaker, one of the biggest problems this government has—or any government, for that matter—is enforcement. For many years, I've dealt with the environment. For many years, I've dealt with labour issues with the Ministry of Labour. What we don't have is enough inspectors; we don't have enough enforcement. The fines are minimal at best, even when there is a fatality. It's actually just a spinning of the wheels when the government comes out with these great bills that they think are going to be effective. But enforcement is the problem. They are not enforced. Until you can enforce your own rules, then you're kind of waving in the wind.

I've seen a lot of things over the years where wonderful legislation goes unheard of, coming from the opposition bench or the third party. The government is in a real rush to get this to committee, because they think it's going to get them political points, and that's fine. But the bottom line is, when we contribute something, the process slows down. It goes to committee. It dies on the order paper, because either it's not their idea, or they want to slow it down and take the idea, or they want to soften it or change some of the amendments to suit the people who lobby them.

Speaker, I've seen this from day one. It happens in all Parliaments, unfortunately, when people stand up and say, "Let's expedite this bill; let's get it through," because it's a government bill. But when it comes to good bills on this side, they drag their feet. Nothing gets done until they feel like they should bring it forward, with changes under their name.

It's unfortunate. They are doing a disservice to the people of this province and have been since I've been here. The people of Ontario are getting shortchanged, no pun intended.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Monsieur le Président, c'est avec—

M. Shafiq Qadri: Plaisir.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Plaisir—merci, mon ami—

M. Shafiq Qadri: D'accord.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: —d'être ici et de mentionner ce qu'on essaie de faire en Chambre et ce qu'on essaie de suggérer à nos membres de l'opposition. Le projet de loi 31 nous parle de la sécurité publique. La sécurité publique, ce que ça veut dire et ce que ça comporte, c'est vraiment de favoriser et de s'engager à protéger nos enfants sur la route à tous les jours. Après 13 heures—et je répète, 13 heures, 13 hours—de débat en Chambre, je crois qu'il est—

M^{me} Cristina Martins: Ça suffit.

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: —suffisant—merci, Cristina—de montrer notre engagement à la population de l'Ontario, aux gens de l'Ontario, et de faire avancer ce projet de loi en comité.

Donc, merci beaucoup, et j'espère que j'ai fait mon point. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a few moments of comments on my good friend and colleague the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

I appreciate the previous comments by the member for Ottawa–Orléans. I listened to her comments with translation. It really doesn't matter whether it's said in English or in French; democracy is going to continue in this place.

I've checked with the table. Earlier today, I spoke for 10 minutes. I probably could have spoken for longer. In fact, because I missed so many points, I'm going to ask for unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for an extra 10 minutes, so that I can get all of my comments on the record. Will we deal with that motion first, and I'll continue with my questions and comments?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Leeds–Grenville is seeking unanimous consent of the House to continue his remarks on Bill 31.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I have to advise the member that he can't even make that request. He can't make the request during questions and comments, and I apologize. You still have the floor for your questions and comments.

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate your ruling, and I will respect it. However—

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would have said yes.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm sure you would have.

I just want to put on the record that there are members who haven't been heard—for example, the member for Simcoe North, who sponsored his private member's bill regarding tow truck operators. It's section 48 of the bill. He worked very long and hard. He first introduced that bill. I've got a press release from Mr. Dunlop and the CAA back on March 5, 2012. He has worked for many

years to have this bill put forward in legislation the government has added.

There are members of our side who still have not been heard and who have new information that they'd like to put on the table. I've placed it on the record, but I want to thank my colleague. He made some wonderful comments. I'd like to know some more information about the director of stickers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and indeed, thank you to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for his comments this afternoon.

If I could, I want to go back. I ran out of time during my 10 minutes. I was going to tell you a story about the meeting that I had with ministry officials and the parents of the young girl who had died. When the ministry officials came to my office, one of them was from St. Catharines, or formerly lived in St. Catharines—with the ministry. During the course of our dialogue prior to the meeting, I mentioned that I was a former chair of the conservation authority and planted tons and tons of trees. She said, "Let me tell you a story. Back in St. Catharines, when I worked there, Jim Bradley was the member."

Jim was known not only for going to every sporting event in the St. Catharines/Toronto/Buffalo area, he also really liked to get out with the students and mix it up with them. If they had a tree-planting, he wanted to be there. He wanted to take part. The kids all knew that, but one day I guess he was held up in the terrible traffic backlog between here and St. Catharines—and the Niagara area, where there should be a Via train or GO train. The principal and the teachers wanted to move this tree-planting ceremony along—"Jim's not going to get here; we'll just do it anyway"—and when the kids found out about it, there was a student protest. They said, "No. We want Jim! We want Jim!"

I tell you that story because the ministry people who came travel the province and get to know a bunch of people, but they spoke very highly of the Chair of Cabinet and minister without portfolio. I just wanted to mention that. I'm sorry I ran out of time earlier during my 10-minute presentation—not that we want Jim anymore this afternoon, but they wanted him back then.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. I return to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thanks to the members for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Ottawa–Orléans, Leeds–Grenville and Windsor–Tecumseh. I will just reiterate what the member for Leeds–Grenville said. It doesn't matter which language the member from Ottawa–Orléans speaks in when she is trying to shut down debate; it's understandable in all languages, and I would really suggest, instead of just reading talking points, maybe actually reading the legislation as well.

But that leads me to this: As I'm reading through this bill and seeing about this new director of stickers, liquors and whatnot, the real thrust behind this bill is that the

Liberal government will have another patronage appointment to offer to Andrew Olivier or someone else such as that when another by-election comes up, because we're not seeing what the cost is or what the purpose is, but the director of liquors—or stickers—would really, truly be a high point for any Liberal member, I'm sure, or any Liberal candidate.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is indeed a pleasure to stand up and add a few comments on Bill 31. I'll try to mix it up a little bit, so that people stay interested and don't complain about being repetitive. There are a couple of issues that haven't been raised yet in this House, and I look forward to bringing them to your attention.

Obviously, Bill 31 rolls various other pieces of legislation into one, so there are actually many provisions to discuss in detail. I'm just going to highlight a few of them.

I did want to raise one thing, though, that was brought to our attention earlier today at the OGRA/ROMA conference. They are looking for revenue streams. Municipalities are desperate for some dedicated infrastructure funding. They've been playing this game right now with the ministry around who gets the money. One councillor—actually, it was a mayor—called it the wheel of fortune: how to get funding, here in Ontario, for those communities. They are really pushing for the ability to collect those OPP fines. This is a long-standing ask. It's very rational; it's very organized. It's something that obviously would benefit communities across the province, and they're quite serious about it.

1730

Now, they did raise one issue—and this will lead to my next point—that in order for that to be a successful endeavour for municipalities, it would need the computer systems in the Ministry of Transportation to be able to communicate with the computer systems in the Attorney General's office. I think we can all acknowledge, or we should acknowledge, that this government does not have the best record on computer systems and technology, if you look at SAMS, if you look at eHealth, if you look at the five-year delay for Children and Youth Services with the CAS system to consolidate one central database that keeps track of vulnerable children in the province of Ontario—you've pushed that date to 2020. I think those city councillors and those mayors who are down at the Royal York right now raise a really good point that if that moves forward, and when we get to committee with this, you need to be sure that whomever you employ to design the system has the knowledge to do so. I would suggest, respectfully, that you not outsource this; that you actually rely on the very good people who work here in the Ontario public service for the province of Ontario, unlike what you did with the SAMS program, where you've now hired another specialist to investigate yourselves in some regard.

I told the mayors that I would bring that point here to this Legislature. They're anticipating that Bill 31 can

address this issue. Of course, I think that at one point we were actually all in agreement that this should move forward.

I think the issue that really resonates quite strongly with us in this House is the 407 comments. My colleagues have raised some of the concerns around the lack of consultation and the debate about being heard and being consulted on 407 tolls. I think it actually warrants some attention; that has been long-standing.

Just to remind you, obviously the 407 highway opened in 1997. In 1999, in order to address an \$11-billion deficit, the PC government leased the highway for 99 years to a private operator in exchange for \$3.1 billion. Even in 1999 dollars, that was a really big deal—"deal" as in a bargain. In 2013, the 407 ETR reported revenues of \$801 million and earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization of \$664.8 million, so it was really a fairly strong revenue generator for the province, which they gave up.

Recently, in 2012, as part of the budget bill, the government enacted the Highway 407 East Act to govern the eastern extension of the 407. Currently under construction, the new "public" 407 East toll highway will be a P3, operated and maintained for 30 years by mostly the same private companies that run the 407 ETR.

Now, under the agreement between the government and the private operator of the 407 ETR, the registrar of motor vehicles is required to deny licence plate renewals after being notified by the 407 ETR that a driver has not paid their bill. Obviously, the second notice billing process comes into play in this regard.

At issue here right now is the issue of consumer rights. In this instance, the consumers are the people of this province, the citizens of this province who pay for the infrastructure. Of course, I think it also warrants a second look, in that the Auditor General's report that came out just before Christmas—I know that some people would like it to go away; they would like to ignore it. But we shouldn't, because the infrastructure deficit, which is a very strong theme down at the OGRA/ROMA conference, is growing. Infrastructure in the province of Ontario is obviously an economic issue. It's a driver of the economy. She raised some very good concerns that should be paid attention to. This privatization enamour continues to—this government continues to go down that road, which we obviously have raised concerns about for many years. It is not in the best interests of the people of this province.

With this whole expansion around trying to improve safety: great. There are some good things in this bill; we fully support them. But the expansion and the acceleration of privatization around our infrastructure in this province should be a huge red flag for the people.

I'm going to read quickly from the Globe and Mail, from Barrie McKenna. He said, "Revelations that cash-strapped Ontario may have squandered as much as \$8 billion on dozens of infrastructure projects is shocking...."

“But the real stunner for taxpayers is that the province, and governments across the country, risk repeating the same costly mistakes on hundreds of future projects.”

You can see, through the legislation, that this government is continuing to go down this path of outsourcing and privatizing, even though we now have so many well-documented examples. We have the data, and yet this government refuses to take a second look at this practice.

Governments in Canada have become seduced by the wonders of private-public partnerships, so-called P3s, and blind to their potentially costly flaws. This is not a government that can afford to continue to waste money. In a typical P3 project, the government pays a private sector group to build, finance and operate, as explained here around the 407, everything from transit lines to hospitals, sometimes over decades.

These projects almost always cost significantly more than if governments just put up the money themselves and hired the contractors to build the same infrastructure under the conventional contracts. As the Auditor General has found—

Applause.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thanks.

Think of the money that could be freed up if the province went forward instead of continuing down this—pardon the pun—highway of privatization and had a second look at the way that Infrastructure Ontario is actually conducting themselves, at the direction of the government. There are a lot of good people down at Infrastructure Ontario. They have the knowledge, they have the know-how. Governments can borrow money at a much more competitive rate.

The entire direction that this government continues to go down, especially around the consultation or the lack thereof on 407 tolls, and not giving citizens of this province the ability to get a second notice around billing is obviously alarming for us.

Now, I don't want to debate about the debate, but before a Liberal gets up and says, “You know, there's enough debate,” I need to tell you that this is our only chance to raise these issues. Because what happens in this new culture of this majority government, which actually is a significant shift from past majority governments, is that our voices do get shut down in committee. We bring forward very progressive amendments, well-researched amendments, and this government time and time again refuses to take those into consideration.

In speaking to some of the people who have been here for a long time and give some historical perspective, this is a shift. It's a shift in attitude, it's a shift in culture that stems from a very emboldened majority government. Quite honestly, if this is our only chance to raise our concerns, then it's our responsibility to do so.

When it gets to committee and you shut us down, like you have done on almost every single piece of legislation, I'll remind you that this was our only chance to raise these issues, it's our job to communicate our concerns and, if you listened, legislation would be stronger.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I've heard throughout the afternoon a lot of interesting debate that has taken place on this bill and some good suggestions have been forthcoming. It's somewhat of a consensus, although not entirely, of a number of bills which have come forward from members on all sides the House.

The bill itself certainly gives us an opportunity to make some significant changes in legislation, which would help to make our roads safer, and I'm very pleased to see that happening at this time.

1740

There have been some suggestions as to how the bill can be improved. I think what will be beneficial is that, when in committee, there are representations made by the public. Often you will have people such as the CAA—people representing them—the Ontario Safety League and others who have a specific interest in the legislation. I can think of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, for instance, who may have some suggestions about this. So I look forward with anticipation to hearing what they have to say and then amendments coming forward. Some of the amendments will flow from the debate which has taken place in this House this afternoon, and there have been some good ideas coming from members from all sides.

In terms of the change in atmosphere and so on, the member has not been in this House a while. I can assure her that I have watched governments over the years, including the one of her stripe which brought in some of the most draconian changes in rules of this House that ever happened; I think about 1993 that happened.

Governments try to accommodate, as much as possible, the debate. There has been considerable debate. When they asked, “Should the debate continue?” at the six-hour mark, the government certainly said that would be the case.

I hope members will continue, at all stages of the bill, to bring forward their ideas to make it an even better bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's a pleasure to be able to offer a couple of comments to the remarks made by the member for Kitchener-Waterloo. I think that she took from the many facets of this bill a particularly interesting one to explore further, and that is the issue around infrastructure and the payment for infrastructure.

Certainly, when we look at the fiscal position of this province and the kind of debt load that it has amassed over the last decade or so, I'm reminded of the comments made by the Auditor General most recently on the issue of the debt, and that is that each person in Ontario, every one of us, owes \$23,000—every person in Ontario—for the debt.

The reason that I make this connection with the infrastructure is the fact that over time infrastructure has always been recognized as a driver of the economy. So when you start to see infrastructure that is crumbling,

infrastructure projects that never get off the ground, what you are doing is condemning the economy of the province or the region in which that investment should be made. So when we look at something such as those points that the member has raised, I think it's an opportunity for us to remember that infrastructure investment is absolutely critical to the economy of the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm impressed, of course, as always, by the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and her eloquence.

Just a couple of points: The Auditor General—this is not in dispute—said that this government has wasted over \$8 billion on privatization. That \$8 billion could have built a lot of housing, could have provided child care in the province of Ontario, could have almost eradicated poverty. This is a significant amount of money, and that's what they've wasted. She addressed that and the fact that this government is running pell-mell down the highway, to use that metaphor, of privatization. They want to privatize as much as possible. It's very, very clear.

Number two: The Chair of the Cabinet who spoke about the Rae government—of course, he is their uncle now. He's not our uncle, Bob Rae. I remember Peter Kormos, the member from Welland, said very eloquently, "We hope that Bob Rae does for the Liberal Party federally what he did for the provincial NDP." And guess what? He did. We'll just leave that as it is.

The Chair of the Cabinet talked about the Rae government. The reality was that even with Bob Rae as its head, the Rae government brought in 16 private members' bills of the opposition in a majority government. How many private members' bills has the Liberal government brought in from the opposition? Zero, as a majority government. That's how seriously they take suggestions from the opposition.

When we get to committee, I can tell you—I'm asking, actually: Will they actually bring in any amendments brought forward by the opposition? There's a challenge, because their tradition has been to bring in no amendments from the opposition. So let's hope for a change.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, I'd like to repeat again, in terms of this bill, about private members' bills—everybody has their own reality, but there are four private members' bills incorporated into this bill. So I just find the rhetoric here really unsubstantiated—four private members' bills that the opposition wanted are in here. We're saying, "Get it done. Make our roads safer."

This is the most comprehensive attempt to deal with cycling safety in modern Ontario history. No party—Liberal, Conservative or NDP—ever dealt with this comprehensive approach to cycling safety. Some of the cycling safety measures come from the opposition. We're

saying, "Here, we're doing it for you," and they say, "No, it comes from the government; we don't want it."

The reality is that this is not about ideological agendas. This is about road safety. It's about safety for motorists, for pedestrians and for cyclists. We have to have a culture change in this province and get rid of this conflict between road users.

I heard one member of the NDP talking about cyclists and all the awful things they do. That rant about cyclists doesn't get us anywhere. I think we're all guilty of not taking safety into account, whether we're a pedestrian when we cross the road, whether we're a cyclist and we don't obey the rules, or whether we're a motorist. Motorists break the rules; they actually speed. God forbid. Motorists speed in this province, and motorists drive when they're distracted. That is a very key safety component of this legislation.

So we're saying, "Here's your own medicine you prescribed. Why are you against it? Let's get it done. Let's make our roads safe and stop talking. Let's do something."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Kitchener–Waterloo has two minutes to reply.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank those who made comments: the minister without portfolio and the members from York–Simcoe, Parkdale–High Park and Eglinton–Lawrence.

It's not about any piece of legislation being perfect. It's true that there are some private members' bills that are incorporated into this piece of legislation, but there are some gaps in it. As has been the tradition, which has been already pointed out, when we get to committee those gaps are not addressed even though we have raised them and even though we have stakeholders.

As the minister without portfolio has mentioned, the CAA has been a long-standing advocate around cycling safety. I was part of the all-party caucus on cycling safety with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. Some—not all—really good ideas are incorporated in this.

This is the issue with the way that legislation is crafted in this place. Why not create and craft legislation right the first time? There's criticism of us standing up in this House and raising these issues. Quite honestly, democracy can be inconvenient, but this process can make legislation stronger. I'm sorry that it's so inconvenient for some people in this House.

Bringing up the history and the changed culture of this place—it's true that not too many people have been here as long as the minister without portfolio, but when I was speaking with some of the PC caucus members—they used to travel bills. They used to be truly consultative. They used to actually take pieces of legislation to the people up north, into the east, into the west and into rural communities. While it was inconvenient, who's to say that that wasn't a very good process?

It's hard not to be cynical in this environment when you have three OPP investigations ongoing—

Mr. Steve Clark: Four.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Four. I stand corrected: four OPP investigations.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

1750

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I didn't think I'd get a chance to speak this afternoon. I'm sure there might have been a few here who wished that was true, but I'm going to get my speech in.

I have heard no one today—and I was out for a little while from this afternoon's proceedings—talking about issues to do with trucks in this bill and some of the rules that they want to place with trucks.

Until last November, I held a valid trucker's licence. I had an AZ licence. I've had that licence since 1978, when they first brought them in. I drove part-time most of the time. When I needed a bit of extra cash for the farm, I'd go out and do some trucking. Mostly it was in the livestock business that I had my experience with trucks, although I drove trains and hauled grains, soybeans and stuff like that—mostly agriculture commodities and fertilizer. So that's what my trucking experience was.

I might add that if you see a livestock trailer—and we call them pots most times because they had the pot-belly down, and they're hauling cattle—I would suggest that you don't park beside them at a stoplight. There is a reason for that. You'll see these pots have holes in them, to let ventilation go through for the animals. If they decide to relieve themselves, it generally comes out of those holes. I've had occasion to see them deposit what they have gotten rid of on top of cars at different stoplights. It's actually quite amusing when it happens to me, but certainly not to the vehicle that is being dirtied; we'll put it that way.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You learn something new every day.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: You learn something new every day.

Anyway, one of the issues to do with this that I see here is it says the bill will require the driver of a motor vehicle—which includes a truck—passing a bicycle to maintain a distance of at least one metre between the vehicle and the bicycle. I suppose that's a good idea. But if a truck is just one metre away, I would suggest that bicycle may get sucked into that truck. There is quite a bit of turbulence along the side of a truck as they're going along, and you'll see it especially with the snowy weather we've had. You can see these little tornadoes at the back of the truck.

I would suggest that it may be a good idea that truckers especially need to take extra care when they're passing bicycles, because they will suck them right under these trailers. If they're going at speed, certainly they only have to be a metre away, and that's what this says. So I think there's an issue with that.

One of the other things I found in this piece of legislation is that it says, "Currently ... the act allows certain prescribed combinations of vehicles to have a maximum length of 25 metres. This is amended to allow a maximum

length of 27.5 metres." That's interesting because when you look at the back of the bill, it says, "Extended length of B-trains."

I don't know whether everybody here knows what a B-train is. It's certainly something that I've had experience with. A B-train is two trailers, and if you look at them, the one trailer sits on a wheel here and the front trailer sits on this wheel—

Mr. Arthur Potts: An articulated—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Pardon me? So you may know what a B-train is. What I'm saying is it only affects B-trains.

I don't understand that because there are two other types of trains. There are A-trains and C-trains. The B-train is in the middle.

You will still see A-trains being driven down the highway; not so much C-trains because they're kind of obsolete, although you do see them once in a while. But the B-trains and A-trains seem to be the most common. So why does this not affect an A-train? The trailers are very similar in length. Why is it affecting B-trains?

I asked the question to the member from Cambridge, who happens to be the transportation minister's right-hand person.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Parliamentary assistant. That's the word. Thank you, sir.

Certainly I wasn't expecting an answer from her, unless she knew it right away, and I'm certain she's going to find that out for me.

But if you're reading this legislation, all it says is we're going to lengthen the B-train combinations. The OTA is advocating for an extension of B-train trailer combinations to accommodate more comfortable sleeping berths for drivers. Most of the trucks I drove had sleeping berths on them; some were nicer than others. But I still don't understand why it only affects B-trains. It's not explained in this legislation. Certainly it is nice to have a big sleeper on these trucks. In some of the sleepers that I had, the width of the bed is the size of a good—

Interjection: You're skinny.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Pardon me? Yes, I'm skinny.

They were the size of a good single bed. Some were bigger than that. In fact, some of the more extravagant ones would tip down and you'd get a queen-size bed to fold down, and they were nice.

But the issue I have with this, Speaker—and again, I hope they're able to explain this because I don't understand what's going on here. The more you lengthen these sleepers out, the more you have to extend your frame because you still have to keep the back of the sleeper ahead of the trailer you're pulling in order to turn. You just can't lengthen a sleeper out; you're going to hit that trailer. Many new owners of fifth-wheel trailers pulling along a pickup truck have found out just how they can crush the back of a truck in when they turn too short.

Again, I get back to the A-trains, which is a different system. Why aren't they affecting that? Because you

lengthen a truck out for a B-train, it doesn't mean that's all he's going to be pulling. He may have to unhook that tractor and go under another set of trains or another trailer. If the distances aren't correct, if the pin location isn't correct on the other trailers, he may have an issue turning.

Like I say, I'm sure the Ontario Trucking Association has figured that out, but when you read this, it doesn't say that. It just says that anything having to do with the B-train, we're going to let them lengthen the tractor's frame so that they can put more comfortable sleeping berths in for drivers.

Some of those sleepers, if you've ever been in them, would have a chest of drawers. They've got microwaves and televisions. You could stay there for a long time. In fact, sometimes when I had been driving for a few days, that was what I would do because they're comfortable and they're very nice to stay in. As you may be aware, a trucker can only drive so many hours a day and so many hours a week.

Another thing it says is that, at the same time, we are looking at extending trailer combinations. We must also address the potential impact resulting from transports inappropriately travelling on our rural and local roadways because these roads have not been built to withstand the weights some of these vehicles have.

Speaker, in these B-trains you could gross about 64,000 kilograms. That's your gross weight. That's heavy. That's really heavy. Now, if you're hauling grain out of a farm that's on country back roads, those roads were not built to handle 64,000 kilos of gross weight. I think most truckers try to be very careful with that. They try to get some of the grain out to waiting trailers that are out on the highway.

I think that's an issue that I've heard from municipalities since I've been here, and even when I was a councillor for the municipality of North Perth: These weights that are being allowed with these trucks are getting just too much for our infrastructure in rural Ontario. I would suggest that's something that has to be looked at.

To me, the trucking issue here has more questions than answers to it. Like I say, I do hope the member from Cambridge can find me some answers because, to me, it doesn't make a lot of sense and I hope that what she brings back will help me out.

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
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)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / 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**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
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 / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Randy Hillier
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Continued from back cover

Winter road maintenance	
Mr. Norm Miller	2256
Ice yachting championships	
Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	2256
Family skating event	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	2256

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Raise a Glass to Ontario Act, 2015, Bill 67, Mr. Smith / Loi de 2015 pour porter un toast à l'Ontario, projet de loi 67, M. Smith	
First reading agreed to.....	2256
Mr. Todd Smith.....	2257
Municipal Elections Amendment Act (Voting Hours Extension), 2015, Bill 68, Mr. Berardinetti / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales (prolongation des heures de scrutin), projet de loi 68, M. Berardinetti	
First reading agreed to.....	2257
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti	2257

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	
Hon. James J. Bradley.....	2257
Motion agreed to	2257

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Winter road maintenance	
Mr. Norm Miller	2257
First responders	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2257
Credit unions	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	2258
Health care	
Mr. Bill Walker	2258
Employment standards	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2258
Distracted driving	
Ms. Soo Wong.....	2258
Off-road vehicles	
Mr. Steve Clark	2259
Hospital parking fees	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	2259

Hispanic Heritage Month	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	2259
Alzheimer's disease	
Mr. Bill Walker	2259
Office of the Ombudsman	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	2260
Water fluoridation	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	2260
Taxation	
Mr. Toby Barrett	2260

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Transportation Statute Law Amendment Act (Making Ontario's Roads Safer), 2015, Bill 31, Mr. Del Duca / Loi de 2015 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne le transport (accroître la sécurité routière en Ontario), projet de loi 31, M. Del Duca	
Mr. Toby Barrett	2261
Miss Monique Taylor	2262
Hon. Liz Sandals	2262
Mr. Bill Walker	2262
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2263
Mr. Toby Barrett	2263
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2263
Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	2265
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	2265
Miss Monique Taylor	2265
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	2266
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2266
Mr. Steve Clark	2266
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2268
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2268
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2268
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	2269
Mr. Steve Clark	2269
Mr. Peter Tabuns	2269
Hon. James J. Bradley	2270
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	2271
Ms. Peggy Sattler	2271
Ms. Sophie Kiwala	2271
Mr. Peter Tabuns	2272
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2272
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	2274
Mr. Mike Colle.....	2274
Mr. Bill Walker	2274
Mr. Peter Tabuns	2275
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2275

Ms. Cheri DiNovo	2275
Mr. Bob Delaney	2277
Mr. Bill Walker.....	2277
Mr. Paul Miller	2277
Ms. Daiene Vernile.....	2278
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	2278
Mr. Bill Walker.....	2278
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	2280
Mr. Granville Anderson.....	2281
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	2281
Ms. Catherine Fife	2281
Mr. Bill Walker.....	2282
Mr. Paul Miller	2282
Mrs. Cristina Martins.....	2284
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	2284
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2284
Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	2285
Mr. Paul Miller	2285
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	2285
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	2287
Mr. John Fraser.....	2287
Mr. Robert Bailey	2287
Ms. Catherine Fife	2288
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	2288
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2288
Mrs. Amrit Mangat	2290
Mr. Randy Hillier	2290
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	2290
Mr. Arthur Potts.....	2290
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2291
Mr. Randy Hillier	2291
Mr. Paul Miller	2292
Mme Marie-France Lalonde	2293
Mr. Steve Clark.....	2293
Mr. Percy Hatfield	2293
Mr. Randy Hillier	2293
Ms. Catherine Fife	2294
Hon. James J. Bradley	2295
Mrs. Julia Munro	2295
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	2296
Mr. Mike Colle	2296
Ms. Catherine Fife	2296
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	2297
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	2298

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 23 February 2015 / Lundi 23 février 2015

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Todd Smith	2243
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2243
Hon. David Zimmer	2243
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	2243
Mrs. Cristina Martins	2243
Mr. Randy Hillier	2243
Hon. Liz Sandals	2243
Mr. Norm Miller	2243
Hon. Michael Coteau	2243
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	2243
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	2243
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	2243

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Jim Wilson	2243
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2243

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Steve Clark	2244
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2244

By-election in Sudbury

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2245
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2245

By-election in Sudbury

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2246
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2246

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. John Yakabuski	2247
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2247

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Gilles Bisson	2247
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2247
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2248

Pension plans

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	2248
Hon. Mitzie Hunter	2248

By-election in Sudbury

Ms. Sylvia Jones	2249
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	2249

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2249
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2249

Employment practices

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri.....	2249
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2250

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Randy Hillier	2250
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2250

By-election in Sudbury

Mme France Gélinas	2251
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2251

Aboriginal economic development

Mrs. Cristina Martins	2251
Hon. David Zimmer	2252

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2252
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2252

By-election in Sudbury

Mr. John Vanthof	2253
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2253

Immigrants

Ms. Daiene Vernile	2253
Hon. Michael Chan	2253

Visitors

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2254
-------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Leo Jordan

Mr. Randy Hillier	2254
-------------------------	------

Heritage conservation

Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	2254
-------------------------	------

Community Recognition Awards

Mr. Yvan Baker.....	2254
---------------------	------

Off-road vehicles

Mr. Michael Harris.....	2255
-------------------------	------

By-election in Sudbury

Mme France Gélinas	2255
--------------------------	------

Elijah Marsh

Mr. Mike Colle.....	2255
---------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover