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(Hansard)**

Thursday 12 March 2015

Jeudi 12 mars 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 12 March 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 12 mars 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 11, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When this item of business was last debated, we had completed questions and comments on the speech from the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. We're now into further debate.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise today as the representative of Windsor West and speak to Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act.

I want to thank all those who spoke before me on this bill, especially our immigration critic. I think she's doing an outstanding job on this portfolio as well as raising the concerns of her constituents from London–Fanshawe.

I'm thankful to have the opportunity to debate this bill today. I know this government has been making a bit of a habit of cutting debate time in this chamber, and I've waited patiently all week, hoping I would have the opportunity to speak to this bill today.

Given recent actions by this government to stifle important debate, I know we all get excited when they allow us the opportunity to speak to important and, in many cases, life-altering legislation in this chamber without cutting off our ability to debate things democratically and passionately in this chamber.

After 10 years without a comprehensive immigration policy for this province, I'm glad we are here debating this bill. Broadly speaking, this bill, as several of my colleagues have indicated, provides the authority for Ontario to establish and govern immigrant selection programs. If passed, the bill would empower the province to set target levels of the number of persons chosen by selection pro-

grams and give consideration to Ontario's labour market needs. It would also allow the minister to pursue regulations that can set up registries for both employers and recruiters interested in participating in Ontario's selection programs under the act.

This, of course, is not an exhaustive list of what the bill hopes to accomplish, but I think that what I've outlined is sufficient, given that my time is limited this morning.

To add some context to this debate, I would like to bring up a few points that were already raised, but I think they are worth bringing up again. Immigration in this province would need to be more than two and a half times greater than it is today in order to offset the decline in Ontario's labour force being caused by our aging population.

Let's unpack this for a minute. Besides the productivity losses that we may face, we need to consider all of the knowledge that will be lost if we don't effectively pass it along to our next generation of workers, which includes Ontario immigrants as well as young people. I'm thinking specifically of auto workers and the tool and die makers that are foundational to the success of Windsor and Essex county. These are craftspeople. They employ skills that cannot be learned overnight and, a lot of the time, require extensive on-the-job training. Utilizing the skills of our current workforce to train those who will take over for them is something we need to think seriously about. If the people that will take over these jobs have not even entered this province yet, we need to get them here and we need to set up on-the-job training programs so that Ontario shares its knowledge with the next generation of workers.

We also need to remember that a number of Ontario immigrants already have the skills they need to be employed in this province. Bill 49 speaks to recruiting and targeting highly trained and employable individuals in Ontario. This initiative is only as good as our ability to recognize their skills.

We've heard this before. It's not new, and the government has been aware of this trend for over a decade. Yet for over 10 years, we have not seen this government come forward and commit to an Ontario immigration plan. I'm glad that finally we are seeing something today.

I think that one thing that is not in this bill—and this issue was touched on by a number of my colleagues—is a focus on immigrants who do not fit into the economic class being discussed in this bill. Furthermore, adequate housing is not addressed in this bill.

All of the concerns I've raised thus far are concerns in my community. Windsor welcomes a large number of

new Ontarians every year. Unfortunately, over the past few years, we've also lost a number of Windsorites to the western provinces. I hope that we can build the economy required to welcome them back one day and reconnect families. Nevertheless, I'm glad to welcome new families to our great city every year.

We have people coming from all over the world to live in our community, and continue to develop the cultural institutions that allow people to enjoy their unique cultural practices and share them with others.

I would like to specifically highlight the excellent work done by the Somali Community of Windsor. This community organization services all residents, but specializes in offering social services targeted to at-risk, marginalized communities in the region, specifically residents originating from Somalia or those of Somali heritage. This is a not-for-profit organization of staff and volunteers that works tirelessly in my community.

Most recently, the Somali Community of Windsor informed me about a project to target Somali youth who have escalating problems of school discipline or are suffering from low self-esteem or delinquency. The program seeks to establish a mechanism for early forms of intervention to help at-risk youth succeed in the community. Programming includes workshop sessions on enhancing social skills and building linkages to provide youth with mentors and support networks.

I've met with this community several times since being elected, and they are motivated, organized and dedicated. I don't think I will ever forget the lessons I'm learning about community activism and engagement from this organization. I really hope this government is taking note of my remarks here, as the Somali Community's program is not yet implemented and is an excellent model to be implemented and duplicated elsewhere. I hope the government looks at these programs when they are designing the criteria of what would qualify for settlement services, and I hope they provide specifics very soon.

I brought up the Somali Community and their work on community programming today because I think it underscores a number of issues yet to be determined in the Ontario Immigration Act. While the goal of bringing more people into Ontario is admirable and needed, we need to look at what support networks we have for these people once they come to our province. We need to assess whether or not those that come here to work have access to affordable housing. We need to look at targeted programming for at-risk youth and how the need for this programming is intensified when we are talking about minority populations.

Rest assured that I can speak until adjournment and beyond about the ambitions and achievements of all of the cultural institutions in my riding and all of the culture we celebrate in Windsor and Essex county. But somehow I don't think you would allow me to do that, Mr. Speaker, even though I know all the members of this chamber would enjoy the discussion. Maybe indulge me one last time by allowing me to highlight one more group, and then I'll bring up the rest at a later date.

0910

I want to highlight the work being done by the Essex County Chinese Canadian Association. Chinese Canadians have a proud tradition in Windsor. I'm sure we all remember that there was a time in Canada when, if you were Chinese, you were not allowed to immigrate to the country. We can all recall the dark chapter of Canadian history that saw the Chinese Immigration Act in effect from 1923 to 1947.

The Essex County Chinese Canadian Association has held events in the past celebrating the repeal of this truly discriminatory legislation. I think that remembering how tragic immigration legislation was in the past helps ground us in how far we've come and how far we have yet to go when legislating immigration policy in Ontario. I thank the Essex County Chinese Canadian Association for reminding us of this.

I think my time is coming to an end, Speaker, and I would like to say that I enjoyed my time speaking to this bill today. While I'm glad to see that we're having a discussion focused on immigration policy for Ontario, I know I am not alone in thinking we should have had some sort of comprehensive immigration plan over a decade ago. Nevertheless, I hope that, moving forward, the government will reflect on my remarks.

First and foremost, I hope they look at the work being done by organizations in my riding that ease the transition for people new to Ontario, remind us of our past and work to build a more inclusive and thriving Ontario. And, Speaker, this bill is incredibly significant to my riding, as Windsor is a border town. In my riding alone there are two border crossings, whether it's through the tunnel into Detroit or across the bridge, and, hopefully, a new publicly owned bridge as well very soon.

More and more, I see that immigrants come across with incredible skills that are not transferable. We need to make sure they have supports in place so that when they come here those skills can be put to work right away and we're able to support their communities.

I mentioned the Somali Community in my speech. They're currently looking to relocate facilities, because they just don't have the funding in place to run their fantastic program. These are things we need to look at when we welcome people into the country and into Ontario, and make sure they have the supports in place specific to their cultural needs. And we need to make sure that the youth they bring with them are supported, so that when they grow up and go through our education system and move on to work, there are jobs out there for them and they have the skills they need in order to succeed.

I think that's just about it for my time, Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act. The intention of this bill is to recognize the long history of immigration within our province. Like many places in our province, my riding of York South-Weston has been

tremendously strengthened by the success of the communities and individuals who have come from other places to call Canada their home.

My community also has a significant presence of the Somali community and of the Filipino community. This bill would address establishing settlement integration programs that are targeted at them, and I think this would be very beneficial to them.

It would also establish, and asks the authority to govern, Ontario's immigration selection programs. I believe that's very important. We have communities such as the Italian community and the Portuguese community that, like my family, came much earlier compared to the Somali community and nowadays can't even come here. There's just no way that they're accepted. Even if they would make the selection, we're just not taking in people from countries that belong to communities that in a way helped to build Canada and helped to build cities like Toronto and the province of Ontario. Sometimes it's sad to think of it that way.

I think we do need to shake up the system. I know that every one of us who comes from another place in the world could tell a quite interesting immigration story about their family; there's no time. It's time, instead, to bring this bill forward and to get it to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks very much, Speaker. Good morning to you. It's nice to see you in the chair. I'm pleased to provide two minutes of questions and comments on the fine speech by the member for Windsor West. Her community, like mine in Leeds-Grenville, is a border community. We have two international bridges in our riding. Some of the issues that the member put on the table today are similar to issues that we have in our riding.

I would like to thank the government for bringing forward this motion to debate this bill this morning. I have to tell you that we're excited to join in the debate. Nine of our members have spoken to this bill so far, so we still have 19 members of our caucus who are eager and anxious to speak. In fact, other than Ms. Jones and I, every one of the members here in the chamber in our caucus has yet to speak to the bill. We're all ready and excited to put our comments from our ridings.

I'd just like to say that one of the events that I enjoy in my riding—and it has been going on for over 30 years—is the annual multicultural festival. I can't get over it; every year that I go there I meet new Canadians who have just come to Brockville, who have joined our community and who take great pride in attending that festival and showing the men and women in the city and in the riding as a whole their culture. This is a great event where you've got food and music. But most importantly, this group, this multicultural council, has worked for over three decades to help educate the community. I think they've done just a tremendous job. I know that they're very supportive, as our caucus is, of this legislation. We look forward to further debate this morning. Our Con-

servative caucus is eager and anxious to join in the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to you. I welcome the discussion on Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act. It's something that I've been actually bringing forward to certain ministers and ministries for the last couple of years.

Northern Ontario, as you know, was devastated by the downturn in the forest industry. Things are turning around. The mining industry is starting to pick up. There is such a need and an opportunity for employment, particularly in the northern part of my riding. We are looking for workers. Anybody who is looking to relocate to that area has an opportunity to come to beautiful communities such as White River, Chapleau and Wawa, which are looking to secure individuals to come to their area.

Having the discussion in regard to setting target levels based on the labour market needs—we've been crying and yelling about that for a very long time. Also, to conduct research, organize educational and training programs and have a registry list where both employers and recruiters can actually submit their names—we welcome that opportunity, and it's long overdue that we should be having this discussion. But—I need to say “but”—a lot of the discussion is failing in that we need to make sure that our federal cousins are on board with this as well. Without them, it's going to be difficult to move this forward.

On behalf of the vast communities that are across my riding, particularly in the northern boundaries of my riding, I welcome the opportunity to have the discussion. I will be listening very closely to the discussion and will be relaying this because I do know there are some individuals who will love to come and provide some comments and their views as to what they need, when they need it, the specialties that they need and how quickly they need it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning. It is my pleasure to speak on Bill 49. I had the privilege during the last session to work on Bill 161, which is similar legislation. Unfortunately, an election got in the way, but here we are today debating this bill. It's such an important bill because it really captures the spirit of who we are as Ontarians.

0920

You know, over the last few hundred years in this province, we've been able to build a province like Ontario because of our immigration. I always say that outside of our aboriginal population every single person in this province has an immigrant past. My father is from Grenada. I was born in England; my mother is from England. We all have an immigrant past, and we need to continue to work on immigration to strengthen the way in which our immigration policies work federally to allow us to meet some of our needs here in the province of Ontario.

We know that over the next 10 years there will be 2.5 million job openings here in the province of Ontario. We do have a low birthrate and an aging population. It is important for us to continue to attract the best and the brightest from around the world so we can continue to build the type of province that we've been so fortunate to have over the many years.

I know the member from Windsor West talked about programs that we have and making sure we have the right type of programs. I'm so proud that our government has invested almost \$1 billion since 2003 into our settlement and retraining programs that work with new Canadians, our bridge training programs and our French- and English-as-a-second-language program, which we have 100,000 people currently in. Our bridge training programs are quite interesting because 50,000 people have successfully accelerated their foreign training credentials so they can work here in the province of Ontario. That's something I think we have gotten right in this province. I would say that Ontario—when it comes to our settlement services, we are the best in this country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Windsor West, you have two minutes.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the members from York South–Weston, Leeds–Grenville, my colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin and the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

In my community, because we are a border town, we have a high population of immigrants come in and out of Windsor. Some choose to stay in Windsor; some use it as a portal to move on to somewhere else in Ontario. Although the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport boasted of the investments in programs for immigrants, I will say that from what I'm hearing from my community, there is still a large gap that needs to be addressed, a large gap when it comes to training or being able to transfer their skills.

I can share a story—it seems like another lifetime ago. I was a dental assistant in an office in downtown Windsor, right in the heart of Windsor. We had two people that would come in to clean the office. We got talking about where they were from, how long they've been in Canada and why they chose Windsor to live in. I eventually asked what it was that they did back in the country that they had come from. It was interesting and kind of disheartening to find out that the lady who was cleaning our dental office is actually a trained and licensed dentist back in her own country where she came from. She chose to come to Canada, chose Ontario as her home and chose to stay in Windsor and yet her skills were not transferable. There was a great barrier for her to go back to school and get the credentials she needed in order to be able to practise here.

So I think there's still a lot of work to be done. This is a great step forward. I mentioned Somali Community. Again, the minister had mentioned all the money they've thrown into the system and the wonderful things they're doing, but we still have immigrants who are coming here who have to fund their own programs for their youth.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Thank you, Speaker. Good morning to you, sir. It's good to see you in the chair this morning. I am pleased to stand and add my comments on Bill 49.

It's interesting, and I'm sure you've heard these comments before, that we're all products of immigrants, in this country, who came to this country for a better life. My own ancestors came here about 200 years ago, back in the 1820s. There were about six of them who came over at one time. We've certainly done the historical—we've looked back in history to see who we're related to and what branch of the trees and whatever else. We've done a pretty good job of it. As they came and settled in the Ottawa area—actually, they settled in North Gower, which is a small community in the Ottawa area. That's where they settled, and they branched out from there.

My great-grandfather, I believe, ended up in Essex county, which was where I was born and raised. But they ended up going across to the United States and certainly across Canada.

I could just imagine, Speaker, when they got off the boat. I can just imagine that. They got off the boat; we don't know exactly where they got off. We believe it was somewhere around Montreal. But coming from Ireland, which was quite a different country, I suppose, than what Canada was back in the 1820s, I can just imagine what they were anticipating. I don't know what they were thinking of. I'm sure they were hoping for a better life and an opportunity to raise their families and continue on in this country, which they did. It was about the third generation of those original settlers that started to move across Canada and the United States and settle other regions of the province.

It's interesting, as you look back in history or look back in your own history at some events that happened back then that can be related to what I'm doing right now. If you go to Manotick, in Ottawa, you'll find a street that's named after us, and it was named for those first settlers who came to that area. There's also a road north of Rivers, Manitoba, that has our name on it. In fact, there used to be a town out there called Pettapiece at one point.

The individuals involved in how these things were named, if you read the history, had a lot to do with municipal politics, and they were quite well respected where they lived.

I'm going to fast-forward to now. There's a chap I met in Stratford. His name is Gezahn Wordofa. He's got quite an interesting history. He's worked for the United Nations, and he actually came here from Russia. He spent about eight or nine years in Russia. He met his wife, a Canadian girl, in Russia and came to Canada.

He started the Multicultural Association of Perth–Huron. It's one thing to get immigrants to come to this country—and a lot of them want to come here because they know that Canada is the land of opportunity, although Ontario is certainly having its issues right now

and we lose a lot of these immigrants, who go to the west because of job opportunities.

Gezahgn has started what they call the Multicultural Association of Perth-Huron. He got me involved. He's invited me to a couple of meetings, a couple of different functions they've had. One of the issues that immigrant people have in Canada, especially in rural areas, is a sense of inclusion in the community. If there are only one or two families of a certain group that come over, they sometimes have problems meeting their neighbours, for example, and things like that, and finding jobs and feeling comfortable in their situation.

So what Gezahgn has done is started this multicultural association. I was at a celebration they had last fall. There are about 250 members in this association right now. It's not just one group from one country; it's countries from all over the world that are involved. I didn't realize there were that many countries represented in Perth-Wellington because they tend to keep to themselves. They aren't in the communities as much as we would like them to be. This is not their fault, certainly; it's just a matter of getting to know who is around you and getting comfortable with who you're with.

So he started this association. What he does is, if you've been here for a while and you're having difficulty, say, finding a job, getting your records in order or whatever else, then he and his organization will help you out with these types of things, if you request it. It has grown so much that, actually, this organization is sponsored by the United Way and they've taken them under their wing to help them with the organizational part of it and also to get the word out as to what they are doing.

0930

We welcome these people into our communities. We're in an enviable position, I think, in Perth-Wellington, where our jobless rate is very low. We're probably under 4% in our unemployment rate. We are looking for people to fill jobs. In fact, some of the communities in the riding actually go into the larger cities and bus people into some of the places in Perth-Wellington to work for the day and then bus them home, which is quite unusual. But we have an underemployment problem where we are. We welcome these people or anybody who wants to come out into the rural areas because of this unemployment situation that we have.

Anyway, the multicultural association does exactly that. They will find these people work that they may be interested in. Unfortunately, some of them come here with an education that might not fit the bill; however, they want to work.

I was told by a Chinese girl at one of these occasions that her father has a degree in agriculture from China and cannot find the employment here that he's after. I think there's probably an issue with the language—that's probably one problem, but he's still continuing on. There are jobs for these people so at least they can get settled in Ontario and in our riding.

We are actively seeking people to come out to our riding because there are job opportunities out there. This

multicultural association helps people navigate the system. When we see that the province is trying to encourage this, we would ask that they not only encourage them to come to the cities but encourage them to come to rural Ontario, where I think these people can fit into our way of life and certainly be able to progress and have a good life.

Also, I would like to advise you, Speaker, that our housing costs are probably not as high as in some of the major cities. We do have housing in Perth-Wellington that would probably be affordable to anybody moving to this country as long as they wanted to work hard, and for most people who come to this country that's exactly what they want to do: work hard and raise their families with a decent income and certainly the security that this country offers.

Anyway, that's a little bit about the Huron-Perth multicultural association, which I will be working with on a number of things in the riding just because it's something that really interests me. Also, Mr. Wordofa, who is running this organization, likes to keep in contact with members of the Legislature, both federally and provincially, just to see if there are any programs coming down the pipeline that might help his organization. Certainly we do that; if he needs some help with something or any of the people involved in that, our phone lines are always open. We try to do as much as we can to make these people more comfortable and welcome in our community.

That's a little bit about what's going on in Perth-Wellington, and I welcome a bill that does encourage immigration. I thank you for your time, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, it's a privilege and a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin. I listened very closely to the comments that the member from Perth-Wellington brought forward.

Again, I wanted to touch on the impact of this, which I see as a discussion that we're going to be having in regard to how Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act, can actually identify particular labour market needs and how we could actually capitalize on those particular areas across this province.

Once again I'm going to toot my horn: Algoma-Manitoulin is in need of individuals who would fall under such of these discussions that we're looking at having, particularly conducted researches. There has been lots of research that has been done across the Algoma-Manitoulin area, particularly in the northern part, where AWIC has been working tirelessly in order to identify the shortages that they have in regard to support jobs, industry jobs and service jobs. These are the individuals and the skilled people that we need in that area. I've been asking the minister—I think we've been talking about this for a year or two since I've been up here, particularly in regard to my northern region—about why we need this discussion and why this is so important to securing that labour workforce to come up to northern Ontario.

There are a lot of parts of this province that are really struggling, but we are struggling even more greatly because it is so easy for an individual to leave those communities, because of the downturn in the forestry and mining sectors, that our skilled labour workforce has moved on. The others who were there in support positions are now into those skilled positions. We need a new, fresh influx of individuals to come to northern Ontario. This is something that I'm going to be working very closely with, along with many across Algoma-Manitoulin.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Chan: There's an urgency to pass this bill and to move it to committee. Bill 49 allows us to act on recommendations made by the Auditor General—I know that some members opposite mentioned the Auditor General's report a number of times.

As well, Bill 49 will position us to take full advantage of express entry, a new system introduced by the federal government this year, on January 1. In Ontario, we will be rolling out express entry in upcoming weeks.

Again, there's an urgency to hopefully pass the bill. I think the opposition party debate Bill 49 by continuing to put up speakers. I want to let you know, Speaker, that the bill has been debated for 10 hours now and that over 70 members of the Legislature have either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments. The government extended debate beyond the 6.5-hour threshold so some members could have an opportunity to speak to the bill. Listening, it has been clear that the majority of the members are in support of this bill. So it's really time to stop the debate and send it to committee when possible.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I was listening intently when my colleague from Perth-Wellington was speaking about the Ottawa area. I find it a little odd that the city of Perth doesn't seem to be in the riding of Perth-Wellington. I know Perth very well because I went to summer camp there and my kids go to summer camp there.

Perth is such an interesting community. I invite everybody to go visit it. It was settled by Scottish immigrants who were working on building the Rideau Canal. They have some really incredible historic buildings and bridges to go see there. You really get that feeling in that community of the Scottish immigrants—that they came here to work on the canal and weren't planning necessarily to stay but they decided to stay. Why did they decide to stay? Well, they had work, but that wasn't the only reason they decided to stay. They decided to stay because they felt comfortable in the area because they had a sense of community and because they had supports within that community.

I think that what this bill does address is part of what is needed to attract skilled immigrants, the best and the brightest, as the minister just said recently. We want to attract people, and we want them to be comfortable. We want them to be happy. We want them to be integrated and to stay and invest in our communities.

0940

We have to look at how we can go about that, and I think what we need to do is consult with those community groups. They're not necessarily asking for money, but they are asking to have a say in how best to welcome members of their communities to Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm glad to add a few minutes of debate to Bill 49, specifically one part of the bill that's called "Other Amendments" under the Regulated Health Professions Act. I can support the parts of the act that are there. They want to make the process more timely and they want to make the process more accessible through having to pay a fee to get information. But all of this is for naught if they cannot get training spots.

I'd like to give an example from my riding. We have this pediatrician who comes from Brazil. She married a Canadian who lives in my riding, who lives in Nickel Belt and works at the mine. She knew as she was finishing her training that she needed to get some Canadian experience, so she did part of her training in Alberta. She is a phenomenal pediatrician with skills that are needed all over. Sick Kids here in Toronto is quite willing to give her a job so that she can get her licence, but she lives in Nickel Belt. Her husband is in Nickel Belt. Her family is in Nickel Belt.

Why is it that people in the health professions in the Regulated Health Professions Act who want to continue their training cannot have those opportunities throughout Ontario? New immigrants to our province don't only want to be in Toronto—nothing against Toronto; a lot of them come and settle here. But more and more of them would like to be able to settle in the north. We certainly want the skills that they are bringing to the north, but if they are not able to complete the required training so that they are allowed to practise, then all is for naught. This family is going to move to Toronto, and Nickel Belt and Sudbury will continue to be underserved. This has to change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Perth-Wellington.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I listened intently to the comments from the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, the member from Thornhill and the member from Nickel Belt.

Especially when I listened to the member from Nickel Belt, she expressed some of the same issues that I raised in my comments about being underserved and people not coming to the rural areas, and there is work available. I think that's something that needs to be promoted by governments, that work is not just in the cities and not just in the GTA, although it's certainly here too.

When we get into situations where we have an under-employment problem in Perth-Wellington—like I say, we have people who are being bused in to work in some of our factories from the large centres—that should throw up a red flag, but it should also point to an opportunity

that we have. We can encourage people to move into some of the areas outside of the GTA and the London-Windsor corridor because there are good jobs and there are jobs available. We must encourage not only people who are new to this country; we must encourage people who are already here.

Again, I get back to the Huron-Perth multicultural association. This is what they do. They try to encourage people to come out. They try to make it easier for them to settle in Huron and Perth counties, because there are opportunities out in those areas.

I am sure anyone who has been to Perth-Wellington and has been to the theatre in Stratford would know that we are a multicultural society there and we have many opportunities that we believe new immigrants would cherish in Ontario.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to make a couple of points on this morning's debate on this legislation. As we said earlier in this debate, I think most Ontarians and pretty well everybody in this Legislature is in agreement that Ontario has to play a larger role when it comes to immigration policy in Ontario. If you take a look at the history of Canada, there are a number of provinces like Quebec that play a much larger role when it comes to dealing with the policies and dealing with the various issues having to do with how people immigrate and where they immigrate to. Certainly Ontario, being the province that traditionally gets the greater number of immigrants than any other province in Canada, should have a role, because we're in great need of people to immigrate to different parts of the province. I'll speak to that a little bit later.

I just want to pick up on the honourable minister across the way—minister for something, and I can't remember the riding, I'm sorry—who got up and said, "Oh, my God, we've been debating this bill now for 10 hours, and it's so important that we pass this bill." I think he used a word like "imperative" or "urgency." It was going to be like the end of the world.

I was sitting back here thinking, "Was it, what, about eight years ago, 10 years ago that the current Liberal government said it was going to do something to deal with foreign-trained doctors, foreign-trained electricians, foreign-trained engineers, foreign-trained all kinds of people that have been trained in Europe and different parts of the world who immigrate to Ontario and Canada and who can't get a job because their qualifications are not recognized here in Ontario?" If I'm an electrician or I'm a doctor or I'm an engineer from Europe or somewhere else in the world who has been trained, I still have the same problems that I had back in 2007, when the government said they were going to do something. There have been some small steps made, but by and large there has not been the type of change that the government promised would happen when it comes to allowing those people trained in foreign universities and colleges that provide qualifications comparable to Ontario's to be dealt with.

I still see people in this city on a daily basis—a lot of them driving taxis, and I'm a good booster of the taxi industry, using taxis almost every day—where I run across them and I say to them, "So what do you do?" They say, "Well, I'm an electrical engineer." "Oh, and you've not been able to get work?" "No, I can't get my qualifications recognized here in Ontario."

Since 2007, this government was supposed to do something, and we're now being told in this debate today: This bill has to be passed like yesterday so that we can deal with the issues that Ontario needs to deal with when it comes to immigration policy in the province. I'd like to believe the government, I truly would, and I think there's not a member in this House on either side of the aisle who would not want to believe that in fact passing this legislation three days ago, or this minute or two minutes from now is going to have an immediate change when it comes to immigration policy in this province. I just don't have confidence, quite frankly, in the government's ability to deliver, because far too often the government has come to this House—and this is not a prop; it's our order paper—and brought legislation forward that has a great title, that is accompanied by some of the best press releases I've ever seen written, that gives the citizens a sense that something is happening, but in fact, other than the title and the press release, minimal baby steps are being made to address the issue.

We just saw that with the passage of Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act, yesterday. It's a great idea. Everybody in the House voted for it. We think that expanding the whole idea of crop—what's the word I'm looking for?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Business risk management.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Risk management, thank you.

Expanding risk management is a great idea, but without money being tied to it, it means to say potentially that there will be more people needing to be insured with the same amount of money, which means to say it's a reduction. Yet the government says—great title, great press release, moving with Godspeed to do all kind of things. But we're actually possibly taking a step back.

So I want to believe the minister when he stands in this House and says there is such an urgency to pass this bill. I'm not filibustering; New Democrats are not filibustering this bill. I just want to put this on the record.

There are some legitimate concerns being raised by members of this House. We just heard from our member from Nickel Belt, who raised issues in regard to doctors in her community who can't stay because they aren't able to get their credentials recognized when it comes to the work that they do within the health field. I look at the case that I have in northeastern Ontario, as my good friend from Algoma-Manitoulin does, where we represent large industrial sectors such as mining, forestry and hydro development, and we have people who are trying to get work who are qualified and can't get jobs because their credentials are not recognized.

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Those people who live in Ontario who do these kinds of jobs are already working, so it's not as if we're dis-

placing people who want the job. The people who are able to do the job are working, but there's a whole bunch of people still needed above and beyond that, and we can't recognize their qualifications.

If I thought for one second that the minister was right, that, my God, if we pass this today, tomorrow our problem will at least start to be dealt with, I would have some confidence. But given the track record of this government, I have very little confidence that the government is actually going to move with any kind of speed on this.

Is this a step in the right direction? Absolutely. Is this something that is long overdue? Darn right it is. But I think the government should maybe take some of their own rhetoric a little bit more seriously and actually try to do something so that we're able to deal with the issue that has been plaguing us for so long, which is the ability for people trained outside of Ontario, in countries across the world that have education systems, qualifications and regulations that are comparable to Ontario, to be recognized much quicker than they are now.

Je veux aussi prendre l'occasion de parler de l'immigration francophone dans cette province. La province de l'Ontario et le gouvernement fédéral, dans ce cas-ci, dans mon opinion, ne font pas un très bon job quand ça vient à dire qu'il y a d'autres opportunités pour les immigrés francophones de s'établir dans la province, autrement que dans les villes de Toronto et Ottawa.

Ottawa est une très belle ville; mon frère reste là. La ville de Toronto—une très belle ville; il n'y a rien de mal avec elle. Mais il y a beaucoup d'autres places en Ontario où on est majoritairement francophones, où il y a l'opportunité pour des emplois qui sont très bien payés et où il y a un style de vie que moi, je dirais, est au-dessus de ceux d'Ottawa et de Toronto.

Je regarde la ville de Hearst. Je regarde la ville de Kapuskasing, la ville de Timmins et beaucoup d'autres communautés à travers le nord-est de l'Ontario, des communautés qui sont vives, qui ont des économies assez fortes, qui ont des emplois disponibles. On a besoin d'être capable de renforcer la communauté francophone dans ces places-là, parce que, comme on le sait, la réalité est que tous les citoyens de cette province, francophones ou anglophones, ont moins d'enfants aujourd'hui qu'ils en avaient dans les générations passées.

Moi, je pense à pèpère et mémère Lehoux sur le bord de ma mère; eux autres, ils ont eu neuf enfants. Sur le bord de mon père, mémère et pèpère Bisson ont eu 10 enfants. Si on regarde notre famille, les Bisson de ma génération, on est trois. Et là, moi, j'en ai eu deux et nos filles en ont eu deux. On a moins d'enfants aujourd'hui qu'on en avait dans le passé, et quoi qu'il arrive, ça fait une pression sur la communauté francophone où ça a un effet de réduire le nombre total.

Donc, oui, il y a un besoin, avec les politiques d'immigration dans cette province, de regarder comment on peut encourager les francophones qui viennent d'outre-mer de venir et de choisir des places comme Timmins, Hearst, Windsor, Sudbury ou d'autres communautés—Welland, par exemple, où il y a beaucoup

de francophones—où tu peux vivre en français et de trouver ta place dans cette province.

Donc, je dis, ce projet de loi, je n'ai pas grande confiance que ça va changer cette affaire-là à la vitesse que, moi, je serais satisfait avec. Mais je veux dire au gouvernement, si on regarde les expériences que le gouvernement a eues quand ça vient à reconnaître les qualifications d'outre-mer à travers les différents secteurs comme la santé, les métiers et autres, on se trouve, depuis 2007, à avoir fait des pas très minimes quand ça vient à être capable d'accepter ces qualifications d'outre-mer quand elles sont comparables à celles de l'Ontario.

Il est quasiment encore bien proche d'impossible pour ce monde-là de se qualifier. Donc, ils s'établissent où? Ils s'établissent ici à Toronto et ils s'établissent à Ottawa en attendant une bonne journée où ils vont être capables de travailler dans le métier ou la profession de leur choix.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister talking about the urgency of this bill and how important it is to be passed. I have no doubt that the government is going to try to invoke closure on this bill when they call the question in the next rotation. But let's not kid ourselves. The government, since 2007, has said, "We're going to do something to deal with foreign credentials." Since 2007, very few steps have been taken to deal with this issue. If anybody believes that the government is going to move at breakneck speed on immigration law for Ontario that deals with issues like foreign qualifications and where people are able to go and establish themselves once they immigrate, you've got another think coming.

This is a great title, tied to a great press release, but I think it'll have little in the way of action.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to speak this morning to Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act.

I think it's worthwhile to note the history of this bill. This bill was originally tabled prior to the 2014 election. There was, in fact, extensive debate on this bill back in the winter of 2014. Of course, then, an election intervened and it died on the order paper.

We've reintroduced the bill, and just since we've reintroduced this bill and started debate all over again—the bill has now been debated for 11 hours; over 72 members of the Legislature have already spoken to this bill, either with their speaking turn or in questions and comments, and we're well past the six-and-a-half-hour threshold.

Everybody seems to be pretty supportive of the bill, and, quite frankly, I think some of the members are getting bored with debating the bill. I couldn't help but notice that when the member from Nickel Belt spoke to the bill a few minutes ago, she totally devoted her remarks to the health practitioners act, which didn't seem to be terribly connected to the Ontario Immigration Act. So I would suggest—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Come on, you should know better than that.

Hon. Liz Sandals: That's not in the act. I think, Speaker, they're proving my point. They were speaking to a different act. They admit it.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. Order, please. Would the member from Timmins–James Bay come to order. The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Liz Sandals: So I think that what we really need to do is get on with looking at this act, which will formally recognize Ontario's role and give Ontario a much more active role in choosing immigrants to come to Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Gila Martow: J'ai entendu ce que le membre de Timmins–James Bay a dit au sujet de l'immigration. C'est vrai qu'on a une communauté francophone en Ontario très forte qui veut être un membre dans la discussion sur cette nouvelle loi sur l'immigration parce qu'on veut donner la chance aux immigrants des pays francophones autour du monde de venir au Canada et de choisir le Canada et l'Ontario pour être leur nouveau milieu d'emploi et d'éducation, pour y travailler et y jouer. J'espère qu'on peut avoir cette discussion avec toutes les communautés francophones en Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very large francophone community, as the member from Timmins–James Bay just said, that wants to welcome francophone immigration from across the world from francophone countries—and to choose Ontario. I think that the added bonus of targeting some francophone immigrants to Ontario isn't just for the obvious nature of making our francophone community strong. It's because many of these francophone communities are away from the urban centres, and that's kind of our target: to try to draw immigrants to Ontario but not necessarily to the large crowded urban centres like Toronto and Ottawa. Since many of these francophone communities are spread out across the province, by targeting francophones, perhaps we can attract people to those other communities.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I sort of take offence to the comments that were made by the Minister of Education. I am talking to the bill. I do my homework, Speaker. I read my bills before I come here—and I will read for her part VII of the bill that is called, "Other Amendments." The Regulated Health Professions Act, under subsection 38(1): "Subsection 43(1) of the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991"—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The Minister of Education has got to go back to school.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —"is amended by adding the following clauses:

"(h.0.1) requiring that decisions made under subsections 15 ... of the code be made within a reasonable time;"—I commented that I support this part of the bill.

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I'll continue to read: "(h.0.2) requiring that notices required under subsections 15 ... of the code and written reasons required under subsection 20(1) of the code be provided within a reasonable time;"—I said that I also supported that part of the bill.

Then I went on to talk about section 16 of the bill, that is amended as follows, and I will continue to read from the bill: "(3) The registrar shall establish a process for the purposes of dealing with an applicant's request under subsection (1)." They're allowed to charge a fee.

This is where I started to say that all of this is all good, but if on the ground they cannot get training in Nickel Belt, if on the ground they have to stay in Toronto in order to get their credentials recognized, then all of this is for nothing.

I think the Minister of Education owes me a bit of an apology. I stayed within the bill. I had read the bill; I supported part of the bill. I thought I was being a pretty fair person here, where I supported the bill and I put it on the record. Where I thought the bill needed some improvement, I stood up and said that for my constituents, this needs to be changed. Otherwise, we will still continue to have problems of access to physicians in Nickel Belt.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments—

Hon. Liz Sandals: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order: the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to apologize to the member from Nickel Belt.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order: the member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would also like to apologize to the minister, because I was hot under the collar when she made her comment.

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

Interjections.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Are you going to apologize or not?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, thank you so much. I'm not going to apologize, because I'm a bit disappointed with the third party and their expression that this bill has really no teeth and it's just a press release. I believe the member from Timmins–James Bay said that it's just about a hollow bill that goes out to a press release. I think this piece of legislation is so important for the province of Ontario.

The third party and the official opposition continue to delay great pieces of legislation that are so needed in this province right now, especially considering that the federal government has changed its immigration framework in Ontario and the country, and the express entry model is in play. We need to make sure that we can comply with that piece of legislation and actually benefit from it.

In the last session, prior to the NDP calling an election, technically, through not supporting our budget, we had seven hours of debate with Bill 161. Today, we have 11 hours of debate in this Legislature on this bill.

This is an important piece of legislation. Setting targets—5% of the immigration in the province of Ontario, and our target will be to attract francophones so we can support our small francophone communities in large cities, so we can continue to build a strong francophone presence here in the province of Ontario. These two parties are delaying this legislation.

We set targets to ensure that we can have control of our immigration process here in the province of Ontario and that we can get ahead of other provinces, to continue to attract the best and brightest from around the world. But it's the opposition and the third party that continue to delay this bill—almost 20 hours of debate in this Legislature, and they are not supporting it to this point.

We need their support. We need to move on. I hope that we can continue to build the type of province—

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order: the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: The minister is incorrect. This bill has not had 20 hours of debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Carry on, Minister. You have seven seconds.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Speaker. So, 11 in this session, and seven from the previous session on Bill 161: You do the math; it's close to 20.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Are we ready to proceed?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, I'll go, with questions and comments—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Okay, I'll get to you. I just want to make sure they're going to be quiet. I recognize the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Imagine that: There are people around the world who are dying to give their people the right to vote, the right to expression of ideas and a right to oppose governments when they think right; and we're being told, because this bill is 10 hours into debate, that somehow or other, the loyal opposition of Her Majesty's government is thwarting democracy in some way and the third party is doing the same.

The reality is that neither the Conservatives or New Democrats are filibustering this bill. The reality is that we are putting on the record some of our concerns.

My concern is that, when I look at the government and what they've done over the last 14 years, they never brought this bill forward until the last Parliament. Now we have a whole bunch of new members who were elected who were not party to the last debate, who have the right to both debate and to hear debate in this Legislature. For the government to say, "Oh, well, it had debate in the previous Parliament, so, therefore, we don't need a debate now," I think is really an affront to those members

who were elected in the last general election, who were not here for the previous debate.

I, for one, will always stand on the side of caution when it comes to trying to truncate debate or trying to, in some way, say that somebody who expresses their view, either by way of the media or by way of protest in this province or by way of words in this House, is somehow an affront to the government's authority to do what it has to do.

The British parliamentary system invented this system, and it's quite wise. The government gets to propose, the opposition and other government members get a chance to give opinion to that proposal, and at the end of the day, the government always gets its way, even in a minority Parliament.

I just say to you: Be careful what you say in this place, because people do take their jobs seriously. If we want to put our thoughts on the record, we have the right to do so. People died to give me this right, and I will not give it up.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on a very important bill. I do want to pick up on where the member from Timmins–James Bay left off, because I'm one of those people who had the great privilege of coming to this great country and this incredible province when I was 15 years old, about 26 years ago, because my parents did flee an oppressive regime. Many of you may know that my father spent nine months as a political prisoner. We were very fortunate to come into a free society, a free country like ours, where a kid like myself could get elected in the Legislature and stand here and debate—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And be the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —and become the government House leader, indeed. We are very lucky and privileged to have that, because immigration has been, and will continue to be, such an incredible source of economic prosperity and vitality for our country and for our province. Thanks to the First Nations of this country and this province, many have come in successive drives from different parts of the world to this great land and have built lives. We need to make sure that we continue to do so.

This bill very much is about that shared responsibility that we have the privilege of in making sure that we continue to play that role. That is especially true when a province like Ontario is the number one destination for newcomers. People line up around the world to come to Ontario and to build their lives in this province.

I'm very privileged to have some incredible settlement agencies in my riding of Ottawa Centre, organizations like the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, known as OCISO; the Catholic Centre for Immigrants; and Immigrant Women Services Ottawa. All of these organizations—and there are many more, Speaker—do a lot of incredible work in my community of Ottawa Centre in providing supports, jobs training and

settlement services so that newcomers, the immigrants, can build their lives in my hometown of Ottawa and be full members of our society.

But we need to continue to do more to make sure that we have a vibrant immigration system in our province. That's why this bill, Bill 49, is so important.

Our government believes that a strong partnership between the federal government and the province is essential to the successful integration of newcomers into our communities and our workforce. That's why we have moved forward with Bill 49, and that is to strengthen the province's role in immigrant selection.

Ontario needs to be well positioned so it can take full advantage of the express entry immigration model that the federal government introduced this year, in 2015. The new express entry system will oversee applications for permanent residents under several economic immigration programs. In simple terms, potential candidates will fill out an online profile, and the highest-ranking candidates will be invited to apply for permanent residence.

Ontario very much looks forward to working with the new express entry system when it is fully operational later this year. I think a lot of us can testify that we hear on a regular basis from people who have applied for immigration about how long that process takes and the uncertainty that comes with it, and this will help.

We need to move forward with this bill to be well positioned to take full advantage of this new immigration model. We welcome the opportunity through express entry to grow the number of nominees and position Ontario as a full partner on immigration with the federal government.

Speaker, we need to move forward with this bill and send it to committee. As you know, we introduced this important piece of legislation in November 2014. The bill was introduced and debated in the previous Parliament as well, where it was referred to as Bill 161, and it was debated for over seven hours then. We allowed the debate to continue when we reached six and a half hours of debate in this Parliament so that more members would have an opportunity to present their views on this bill that all members support. Further, speakers from the government side shared their 20-minute speaking segments among three or four members.

This bill, thus far, has seen 11 hours of debate in this Parliament and seven hours, as I mentioned earlier, in the previous Parliament. According to my count, there are about 73 members who have either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments. I really believe that there has been considerable debate on this bill and that we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. It is time that this bill is put to a vote for second reading and hopefully referred to committee, where the real work takes place.

Speaker, therefore, I move that this question be now put.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. Point of order, member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I've got members here—Mr. Arnot, Ms. Scott and Ms. Martow—all wanting to speak to this bill.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: The question should not be put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): That's not a point of order.

Mr. Naqvi moves that the question now be put. Taking into consideration the length of time this bill has been debated, the number of speakers and the historical range under which the question of closure has been allowed by previous Speakers, I will allow the question to be put.

Mr. Naqvi has moved that the question now be put. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be taken during deferred votes after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce somebody very special from Oakville today, and that's Sydney Clark. A few short years ago, SickKids hospital saved Sydney's life, and as a result of that, she decided she would make a career. Sydney Clark is here today from the SickKids Foundation.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Eglinton–Lawrence and certainly page Arlyne James, I'm pleased today to introduce her mother, Sheliagh Flynn James; her father, George James; her sister, Keelin James; and her brother, Conall James. They will be in the members' gallery this morning. Would members please welcome them.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I would like to welcome Tina Afridi and Reza Rizvi from my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East to the Legislature this morning. They are seated in the members' east gallery. They're the parents of page Ali Rizvi, and we're having lunch together in the dining room today. Welcome.

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, today is the last day at Queen's Park for our pages. I want to thank them for their hard work and wish them all the best in the future.

Today, the wonderful page from my riding, Victoria Soltau, is page captain. This is the second time she is the captain, so I'm promoting her to page general.

I would also like to welcome Victoria's family to the House: parents Tony and Karen, sister Melanie, and grandmother Gloria Richards. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I know we're going to debate this, but I cannot resist. I need to acknowledge someone who's here today, a former mem-

ber of this House and my former member, Mr. Phil McNeely, in the gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions that won't step on the Speaker's duties?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my privilege to welcome and introduce the family and loved ones of Adam Brunt, a firefighter hopeful who passed in February—Al Brunt, Christy Brunt, Ashlee Brunt and Dr. Jenna McNamee—and also to welcome the family of Gary Kendall, who passed five years ago in a pre-service training accident: Brenda Kendall, Paul Kendall and family friend Wes Mazur. They are here today, along with the president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Carmen Santoro, to join us in our press conference to call for a coroner's inquest into the deaths, and also to call for regulation of the private training industry.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It's my delight to introduce several guests from my riding of Kitchener Centre today. We have Sarah George and Catarina Costa. They are broadcasting students at Conestoga College. I just had a chat with them. Carolyn Longman is also here. She's an important team member in my constituency office.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not to miss my opportunity, in the east members' gallery, a former member from Ottawa-Orléans in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments: Mr. Phil McNeely.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got one check mark for you already.

In the Speaker's gallery, we have with us today a delegation from the Parliament of Romania. They are accompanied by the Romanian ambassador to Canada, Her Excellency Maria Ligor, and the Romanian consul general in Toronto, Mrs. Antonella Marinescu. We welcome them and thank them for joining us here in Ontario.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm back.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not for long.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a serious note, members will be aware that there appear on today's Orders and Notices paper two notices of an opposition day to be debated in the week following constituency week.

Under standing order 43(c), the Speaker is required to select one of these notices for consideration. I would like to advise the members that the motion by Ms. Horwath is the one that I have selected for debate.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On just as serious a note, it is our tradition to say thank you, as it is the last day for our pages. We want to thank them for the work that they've done.

Applause.

ORAL QUESTIONS

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, the Chief Electoral Officer's report into the Sudbury by-election states, "Summonses were issued requiring attendance at a designated time and place."

Acting Premier, did the Premier receive a summons from the Chief Electoral Officer or his investigators, and is that how she came to be interviewed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite knows that the Premier has repeatedly answered questions in this House about this issue. We know that she takes it very seriously and that she is co-operating fully with the investigation.

I must say that I don't think I'm the only one in this province who finds it very, very strange that the opposition has asked nothing but questions on the Sudbury by-election for the past several weeks, to the exclusion of all others. But I do know that the opposition party cares deeply about the economy of Ontario and I know that they would want to know about some very important information about our economy that was released just this morning. This is from RBC Economics—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —and I look forward to the supplementary because I know they care about the economy. I know they want a healthy economic future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Acting Premier: Acting Premier, you know that two thirds of Ontarians think this is a very serious issue. Two thirds of Ontarians want Pat Sorbara to step aside and don't believe she should continue with her paid duties in the Premier's office.

Pretty well all Ontarians by now who pay attention to this place know that the Premier is not answering questions about the bribery scandal; she's not co-operating with the police. It's been nine weeks since the investigation was reopened in Sudbury by the OPP, and she has yet to set a date, as far as we know, to meet with the OPP.

I'm going to ask you: Is the only reason she met with the Chief Electoral Officer's investigators in a timely manner because they had the power to summons her and throw her in jail, frankly, if she didn't show up? Is that the only reason? You know the OPP doesn't have that power. They have to wait for her to say yes to a meeting. Is the only reason she showed up the threat of a summons?

1040

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I find the innuendo underlying that question beneath the dignity of the interim leader of the opposition party. The member knows that the Premier takes this very seriously. He knows that she's co-operating fully with the investigation.

I do think it's important to think about a bigger issue, and that is the economy of this province. RBC reported

today that, "Ontario is expected to top provincial economic growth rankings in 2015, something that has not happened since 2000, according to the ... RBC Economics Provincial Outlook."

Listen to this. I know people want to hear this: "RBC forecasts real GDP growth for the province to accelerate from an estimated 2.5%"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please wrap up.

Hon. Deborah Matthews:—"to a five-year-best rate of 3.3% in 2015." That is great news for the people of this province, the people we all represent. This is great news. We should be applauding this news.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Acting Premier: It took six weeks for the Premier to meet with the Chief Electoral Officer's investigators into the bribery allegations. It has now been over nine weeks since the OPP reopened their investigation into the allegations. We know now that the only reason the Premier met in a somewhat timely manner with the Chief Electoral Officer's investigators is because she was subpoenaed, and we all know that the OPP doesn't have those powers. They can request an interview, and you have to voluntarily go for an interview.

Acting Premier, can you tell me what other citizen in the province of Ontario can just put the OPP off for over nine weeks, thumb their nose at investigators and then come into this place and pretend that they're co-operating with the investigation? That doesn't hold water. The people of Ontario see right through it.

Tell us: What's the real reason why the Premier is stalling her meeting with the OPP?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I completely reject the innuendo and the suggestion in that question. The Premier is co-operating fully, as she has said in this House several times. She's setting up that meeting with the OPP.

But let's talk about the economic growth in this province. "RBC notes that economic developments over the past several months have been overwhelmingly favourable for Ontario's economy.

"The plunge in oil prices, sliding value of the Canadian dollar, surprise interest rate cut by the Bank of Canada and mounting evidence of the US economy hitting its stride—these factors should all boost growth in Ontario"—that's great news, not for the government but for all of the people of this province—"said Craig Wright, senior vice-president and chief economist, RBC. "The positive effects from the drop in oil prices and related developments will coalesce at a time when the provincial economy is already displaying rising momentum."

They're not asking any other questions because there are no questions that are priorities for them.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: We're asking questions because we're trying to get to the bottom of scandal.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): For who, please?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today, I wrote to the Information and Privacy Commissioner to ask that he begin an immediate investigation to ensure that appropriate documentation retention procedures have been followed by the Premier's office in relation to the Sudbury by-election. It's pretty clear that your Premier intends to stand by Pat Sorbara while she is under active investigation.

Please explain: What steps have been taken to ensure emails, memos and all documentation regarding the Sudbury by-election have been preserved for the police investigation?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the Premier has said, the investigation is happening outside this House by people who are competent and trained to conduct such investigations. We're seeing a lot of amateur detection work here. The Premier is co-operating fully with the appropriate officials when it comes to this investigation.

Let's talk about the economy. What RBC said today is that "In 2014, there was clear evidence that activity picked up, particularly in the trade sector where merchandise exports grew by 8% in nominal terms." Congratulations to the minister responsible for trade. "Also encouraging, nearly all major export categories recorded gains, including consumer goods (up 14.4%) and motor vehicles and parts (up 8.5%)."

This is fantastic news for Ontario and it demonstrates we're focused on the important—

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

Before I move to the supplementary, I'm going to remind the member and anyone else answering that you relate it to the question.

Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The only reason you don't want us to ask any of these questions is because there is a stench surrounding the Sudbury by-election and we have a right to know the answers. I'm concerned that history is repeating itself right now because the Premier has refused to ask her deputy chief of staff to step down while the OPP investigations are ongoing.

It's beyond belief to think that absolutely no records exist: memos, like a list of the pros and cons of what the problems would be if you took on an NDP MP; the process of how you were going to eliminate your former candidate. Where are those records and are they being protected? Why should the people of Ontario believe that that documentation hasn't already been deleted?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We take our obligations very seriously when it comes to document retention. We are committed to being open, accountable and transparent. They can throw all the mud they want but we are committed to being open and transparent. We promised to open up government completely. We've done so to an unprecedented degree, certainly far more than when your party was in office.

In fact, it's not just me saying this. The Information and Privacy Commissioner credited our government with

improving record-keeping across government. A directive was sent to all political staff. Mandatory training programs are being implemented. Chiefs of staff are accountable for record-keeping. We're improving archiving requirements. The Premier's office worked with the Integrity Commissioner and the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

The accountability act prohibits the wilful deletion of records and creates—

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: If this is their idea of open and accountable, I would hate to see their definition of transparency.

Two OPP investigations have been launched into the actions of Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed Jr. While these investigations continue, both Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed remain in their jobs.

The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. Liberals have a history of deleting emails and changing their story when it came to the gas plant cancellation. Is that what we can expect with the Sudbury by-election debacle?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, you don't have to take my word for it. Let's listen to what the Information and Privacy Commissioner had to say. She said, "I have appreciated the co-operation I have received from Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Government Services.... the Premier issued a directive in accordance with the recommendations made in the report and committed the government to greater transparency and accountability.... In addition, political staff received in-depth training on their record retention responsibilities. I applaud these developments." Let me repeat: The Information and Privacy Commissioner said, "I applaud these developments."

I will listen more to the Information and Privacy Commissioner than I will to the member opposite.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. On February 17, the first day of this session, the Premier said, "My responsibility is to answer honestly.... Ontarians deserve to understand exactly what happened."

Four weeks later, instead of answering questions and explaining anything, the Premier has been hiding behind a police investigation, and she's too busy holding photo ops beside oversized birth certificates and giant porcupines to meet with OPP officials.

Yesterday, we suggested that the Premier take question period off in the morning. I just want to know if the Deputy Premier can confirm that the Premier is being interviewed by the OPP on her knowledge and role in the Sudbury by-election scandal at this very moment.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The leader of the NDP knows full well and first-hand that it's not appropriate to comment on a police investigation.

On December 11 last year, the leader of the NDP held a press conference at the Queen's Park media studio. She

was questioned on criminal allegations against an NDP candidate. Here's what the leader of the third party had to say: "Right now, this is a matter that's in front of the police.... I can't talk about details at this point because the police are investigating."

1050

She was asked over and over again and kept with the same answer. So I don't know why the leader of the third party thinks there are two standards: one for her and one for the Premier. When the police are investigating, we leave the investigation to the police.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, perhaps I can move the issue at hand along a little bit. I'm pretty sure that the Premier and the Deputy Premier have staff who watch question period every single day—perhaps even Pat Sorbara is watching question period—and they can write this down: 705-329-6111. You can call that number and you can ask for the corruption branch of the anti-rackets squad. You can tell them your name and the name of the Premier. They'll know who you are, however. After four investigations—trust me—they'll know who you are.

I'll give you the number again. That number is 705-329-6111. Will the Deputy Premier call the OPP? Will she have her Premier call the OPP at that number and schedule that interview before the end of the day?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, if the leader of the third party wants to hear some numbers, I've got some great numbers. Let me read again the RBC economic growth rankings, their provincial outlook that was released just this morning: "RBC forecasts real GDP growth"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. You can make all the gestures you want. I'll make the decision. You don't need to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And if you say one more word, you're out.

The answer is to come towards the question, please. Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me thank the leader of the third party for that phone number. Thank you for that number.

Let's talk about numbers that really matter, Speaker: "RBC forecasts real GDP growth for the province to accelerate from an estimated 2.5% in 2014"—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is the final supplementary, Speaker.

Yesterday, the Premier said she would answer substantially when the question is appropriate to the place. Is the Premier so arrogant that she thinks that just because a question is inconvenient, it's also inappropriate?

I disagree with that, Speaker. It shouldn't take the armed detectives in the corruption unit to get simple answers to simple questions. Can the Deputy Premier explain why the Premier—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —can avoid investigators for six weeks, while the average Ontarian—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry. While I'm asking him to come to order, he continues—the Minister of Economic Development.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Can the Deputy Premier explain why the Premier can avoid investigators for six weeks, when the average Ontarian involved in a criminal investigation is expected to co-operate fully and quickly with police investigations?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, let me repeat: The Premier is co-operating fully with the police investigation. It doesn't matter—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton, come to order—second time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —how many times they suggest that she is not. The truth is, she is.

That investigation is happening. It is happening outside this House, by people who are qualified to conduct such investigations. The Premier is co-operating fully.

Meanwhile, both opposition parties have neglected all of the issues that are important to their constituents, by focusing on throwing mud, muckraking and skulduggery. Speaker, I think it's time to talk about issues that are really important to the people of this province.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Given my particular moment right now, I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Withdraw.

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

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Deputy Premier. It's clearly not in the interests of the Liberal Party, the Premier or her government for the Premier to answer questions about the Sudbury bribery scandal. On the other hand, it is in the interests of the people of Ontario to get some answers about who offered bribes to Andrew Olivier and who gave the orders.

Will the Deputy Premier stop putting the Liberal Party ahead of Ontarians and start giving honest answers to honest questions like, "Who was pulling the strings in the bribery scandal that happened in Sudbury?"

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think anybody watching at home would like to know what this is all about, so let's just review a little bit of history.

In the last general election, the NDP won the seat of Sudbury. The member took his place. A few months later, he resigned, creating a by-election. The NDP federal MP made a very difficult but I think very wise decision, and that was to leave the New Democratic Party to join the Liberal Party, to leave the House of Commons to join the Ontario election. The people of Sudbury made a very clear and wise decision to send Glenn Thibeault to this House to be their representative.

I know that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know that it's very difficult when you lose a member of your party to another party—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Minister of the Environment said it was a great day in his life "when Premier Wynne told us who our candidate in Sudbury was going to be." Minister after minister went on the record yesterday arrogantly endorsing what the OPP and Elections Ontario have described as criminal activity.

Who in the cabinet and the caucus did the Premier share her plans with to offer Andrew Olivier jobs or appointments in exchange for stepping aside in order that Glenn Thibeault could run without any opposition?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I simply reject the allegations within that question. In the Ontario Liberal Party, in our constitution, which has been debated and passed by the membership of this party, the leader of the party has the right to appoint candidates. That does not happen in the New Democratic Party, but it does happen in the Liberal Party.

When the Premier met Mr. Thibeault, when he indicated to her that he was prepared to change parties and change the level of government, she was very pleased and she decided that he would be the candidate. There is nothing untoward about that. That is a decision that is the right of the leader. She made that decision, she exercised her right, and now we have Glenn Thibeault as a member of this House.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Since election day in Sudbury, Ontarians have learned that the corruption unit of the anti-rackets branch is investigating the Premier and her inner circle for bribery; that Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer believes Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed were offering bribes to get Andrew Olivier out of the way of Glenn Thibeault, something that is punishable with a jail term; and that, while evidence has come to light that shows bribery, the Premier can't show a single piece of evidence that backs her version of the story.

The Premier insisted that the bad old days were behind us, and yet here we are again, Speaker. Why do Liberals never, ever seem to change?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We just get stronger, and I'm very pleased that the Liberal Party is getting stronger.

If we're going to talk about how nomination races are run in this House, I think we do have to revisit what happened in Scarborough–Guildwood during the by-election in 2013. There was a long-standing party member named Amarjeet Kaur Chhabra, an extraordinary woman who was hoping to run as the candidate there. The party brought in Adam Giambone to make sure the process was fair, and then, as a surprise to everyone—I can't imagine anyone was more surprised than Amarjeet Kaur Chhabra—presto, Adam Giambone became the candidate.

If you want to call that a fair nomination process—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —I would like to disagree. I would like to know about the conversation that the leader of the third party had with Amarjeet. I'd like to know how she explained to—

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

1100

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last night, your party's official Twitter account retweeted Pat Sorbara. Her tweet read, "Happy to introduce @GlennThibeault to folks at @OntLiberal Heritage Dinner 2015. Hanging with friends, raising money." Attached was a photo of the two of them as she obviously paraded Mr. Thibeault around.

Deputy Premier, Pat Sorbara was found to be in apparent contravention of the Election Act. She is under investigation in two open OPP investigations. Does the arrogance of the Office of the Premier know no bounds?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am happy to say that we had a wonderful event last night. The Premier gave a wonderful speech. We had an outstanding number of people there and extraordinary support for the Premier's speech. In fact, I heard many people say it was the best political speech they had ever heard.

It was an extraordinary speech. She outlined her vision for the province. She talked about what it is we're doing to build Ontario up. It was an excellent evening. I will be happy to get you a copy of the speech because I think you would like to know what she was talking about.

Speaker, we're focused on growing the economy. We're delighted to see that RBC today said that our economy is growing faster than they had anticipated. That's great news.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Acting Premier: That answer and Pat Sorbara's tweet are a pure display of arrogance and utter disdain for the Chief Electoral Officer and the Ontario Provincial Police's open investigations.

As the Premier's office computers remain insecure and information vulnerable, we wait as the Premier continues to duck the OPP. We've waited over nine weeks

since I asked for this investigation to be reopened. That's a lot of time to make sure people's stories are aligned.

My question: Acting Premier, after the photo and the tweet went out, did Pat Sorbara and Glenn Thibeault get their stories straight?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I'm loath to say this, but as soon as I get quiet is not the time for you to take advantage.

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we had a great event last night. It was a very rousing speech. If the member opposite wants to spend his time analyzing Twitter accounts, that's fine with me, I guess.

But our focus is on a growing and stronger economy. We were very pleased this morning to see that RBC Economics is projecting continuing and accelerated growth for our economy. They're not the only ones. The latest forecast by TD Economics calls for Ontario to post the strongest growth in the country. Let's look at what the Conference Board of Canada says: Ontario's economy is projected to grow by 2.9% this year, bolstered by strong exports and consumer spending.

This is great news. I hope that the opposition does not consider this to be bad news, because this is fantastic news for your constituents and for our constituents.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The continuing bad news is the arrogance of this government.

My question is to the Deputy Premier. For five weeks now, the Ontario Provincial Police have been trying to get an appointment with your Premier in order to continue their investigation into the bribery scandal in Sudbury. We thought maybe, when we didn't see the Premier show up, that she was, in fact, meeting with them today. That not being—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member knows full well that you're not to mention anyone's attendance in this place. I would remind him: If he does it again, he'll lose his question.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I withdraw, Speaker, and you're completely right.

The Premier has an opportunity next week during constituency week; there's a whole week for her to be able to meet with the OPP. Is the Premier prepared to set up a meeting with the OPP in order to be investigated by the OPP?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the Premier has said repeatedly that that meeting is being set up.

I don't know why the opposition continues to squander their questions in question period on questions that have already been answered. There are many issues facing the people of this province, and we are not hearing those issues raised by the members of the opposition. We

are not hearing issues about homelessness. We are not hearing issues about poverty. We are not hearing issues about the environment or climate change. We haven't had one question on rail safety or Gogama.

These are important issues in the ridings represented by these members, and they are choosing to spend their time in question period, as is their right, on trying to destroy the reputation of the Premier. They're off base, Speaker, and they should focus on issues that matter to their constituents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Again to the Deputy Premier: What is really galling in this entire thing is that the Premier's office staff—Ms. Pat Sorbara and Mr. Lougheed—have been found in contravention of an apparent breach of the Election Act. They are being investigated by the OPP for breaking the Criminal Code when it comes to their actions in this bribery scandal, and you're not taking it seriously. You come into this House over and over again, we ask the questions, and you never answer. You're trying to stonewall what has to happen in this case.

So I ask you again: Is the Premier prepared to meet with the Ontario Provincial Police next week, during constituency week, to answer questions about the Sudbury bribery scandal?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, if the member opposite wants to apply to be the scheduling assistant to the Premier, I'm sure we can get the phone number where you can make that application. The Premier has said over and over again that she's co-operating fully, that she is setting up a meeting with the OPP. I don't think there's a vacancy there, but if the member from Timmins—James Bay wants to apply for that job, I'll hand-deliver that application.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Speaker, it's great to see my former colleague MPP Phil McNeely up in the audience. He was a great champion of climate change awareness. Welcome.

Climate change is real. It's one of the greatest challenges of our time and poses a threat to our infrastructure, our food supply, our drinking water and our economic competitiveness.

I'd like to thank the minister for joining me this morning as we talked about my motion at a press conference on climate change. My motion will be debated this afternoon, and I'm calling upon all members of this House to recognize that climate change affects all of us and requires immediate action.

Speaker, through you, could the minister please inform this House on the importance of raising the issue of climate change above partisan politics, and if he intends to support my motion?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It will be a great honour to support the member's motion. I also want to acknow-

ledge the former member, who continues to be an active voice in policy development. Thank you very much, Phil, and thank you, Grant.

We're very concerned about this. We've seen it around the world now. In the United Kingdom, all three parties, in open votes in the British Parliament, endorsed this. We saw this in New Zealand and, more recently, in Norway, where they have had open votes, asking all members of their Legislature to put it forward as a unanimous legislative position so that governments can act on solutions and not fight this.

Mr. Speaker, it is our hope that this opportunity this afternoon will see all 107 members in the House today. I think it would be a very powerful statement of unity if we could do that.

When you look at the results of what happened in Norway, what happened in the UK and what happened in New Zealand, it triggered a level of momentum behind it and gave confidence to industry to act—

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

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that response. It's great to hear that you'll be supporting my motion this afternoon.

It's unfortunate that the opposition aren't focused on the priorities of what matters to Ontarians. Climate change is a great challenge—the greatest challenge of our time. As I mentioned in my previous question, it's going to be affecting our food supply, our infrastructure, our drinking water, our agricultural community and our economic competitiveness.

I'd like to ask the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change about our government's actions to combat climate change here in Ontario. I know that in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, we have a lot of agricultural producers that have concerns about the changing temperatures and the impacts that they have on their crops, their livestock and their ability to continue with stable production.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he inform the House about what action the government is taking to combat climate change?

1110

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to again thank the member. The last five years have seen, globally, the highest level of GHG emissions. Later this year in Paris, the world will gather to try and yet again hammer out another agreement. After 20 years of agreements, we will probably see the next five years being at very high levels of emissions, because it would take five years to implement the Paris agreement, if we're successful in getting it.

This government is working with Quebec and British Columbia and California and some national governments around the world to broker meaningful reductions. Why is this important to Ontarians, Mr. Speaker? Part of it is, in 2012, we lost 80% of our apple crop. In the years since, we've lost as much as 60%.

When you think of something as basic to Ontario's food security and food supply and our economy as an

apple—when it’s hard to grow those, you know this is a problem.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I wasn’t going to go down there, but I’m being heckled. The member for Nepean–Carleton should read the Pentagon’s analysis of ISIS. That wasn’t me.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills—

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That’s it. New question.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier.

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: She must be at the OPP meeting. I guess it’s to the Acting Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That doesn’t make me happy at all. If it happens again, you’ll lose your question.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Sorry, Speaker.

The question is to the Acting Premier. Acting Premier, last night at your heritage dinner, the Premier is quoted as saying, “When people ask me when are you going to slow down, the simple answer is I am not.”

Acting Premier, why does this not apply to scheduling interviews with the police?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the Premier did say last night that she’s not slowing down. I tell you, we are all amazed at the energy of our Premier, and she gave a fantastic speech last night. She has been to more community events; she has met with more people. She is as energetic and committed a Premier as we could ever hope to find. So you’re right: She’s not slowing down.

Is she scheduling a meeting with the OPP? I think you’ve heard repeatedly that that is under way. Again, if you want to apply for the job as scheduling assistant to the Premier, I will hand-deliver your resumé as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, if I gave her my resumé, she’d probably delete it, with her staff.

Mr. Speaker, it has been nine weeks since the investigation was reopened. It has been over five weeks since we learned that the OPP requested an interview. Acting Premier, has the interview with the OPP been scheduled?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as the Premier has said over and over again, that meeting is being scheduled. I don’t think the OPP are complaining. Maybe you know they are; I don’t think they are.

What I can tell you, though, is that in this by-election—I understand why the PCs are unhappy with the outcome of the by-election.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It doesn’t happen very often that the opposition party loses its deposit. In fact, I believe they ran fourth in the by-election. So I think that if you’re going to be focusing on Sudbury, there might be other things you could be focusing on.

Let’s actually think about what happened. The Premier became aware that Glenn Thibeault, the sitting federal member, was interested in crossing to the Liberal Party and running provincially. We were delighted and thrilled that a man of this calibre wanted to make that change, to represent his constituents here, and that’s exactly what happened.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Attorney General. Criminal defence lawyers often caution their clients about making statements to the police. That’s because anything said can be used in a future prosecution. In fact, legal counsel often advises clients, if arrested, to exercise their right to remain silent.

Has the Attorney General advised the Premier to exercise her right to remain silent, and has the Attorney General cautioned her about making statements to the police?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Let me talk about the good news that happened in Sudbury after the election.

Hon. James J. Bradley: They’re sore losers.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Yes, because the Premier did an excellent job in exercising her right to choose this wonderful candidate of ours, Glenn Thibeault. Last week on Monday night, I had quite a few francophones who came to me and said, “Us, in Sudbury, we’re very happy to have Glenn Thibeault as our representative.”

So the Premier did an excellent job, and I want to congratulate her.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Perhaps the Attorney General can’t advise whether or not she has given that advice, but perhaps the Attorney General can advise whether the Premier sought independent counsel and if that independent counsel has provided advice to the Premier on whether or not she should exercise her right to remain silent, or whether or not this independent counsel perhaps has advised the Premier and cautioned her about making a statement to the police.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, like I said yesterday, I am not involved in the investigation. I’m not involved in anything related to the Sudbury election.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The deputy House leader is using somebody else’s mike, and he will come to order.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It was made very clear by the Chief Electoral Officer in a letter that was sent to their House leader, Gilles Bisson—a copy of the letter that I have here—about the process. I hope that he has informed all of his caucus about the process. If not, I will say that it’s about time that he informs his caucus about the process and how the Attorney General is left out of this exercise.

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is unfortunate that the opposition are neglecting to ask questions about government policies these days.

My question is to the Minister of Labour. Speaker, through you to the minister: Workers who live in my riding have been on strike from their jobs at Crown Metal Packaging for 18 months. They are concerned. It has been very hard for their families, since they have been on the picket line for all these months. We all know how cold it has been this winter, and despite this, Crown Metal workers continue to walk the picket line.

I'm not sure everyone is aware, but a group of these workers went out and looked for and found little Elijah Marsh, the three-year-old boy who tragically died in Toronto 10 days ago.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What can you tell the people of York South–Weston and neighbouring ridings about this situation?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I really do want to thank the member from York South–Weston for that very important question.

Crown Metal operates a beverage and food manufacturing plant in Weston. The Steelworkers represent 133 employees at that plant. They've had a strike at that facility since September 6. Under section 42 of the Labour Relations Act, my ministry conducted what's called the "last offer vote" on March 24 of last year. The employees voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer.

We've had a labour mediator in to assist both parties. He remains in touch but, as the member noted in her question, our government and all Ontarians are increasingly concerned that this dispute still is not being resolved. It's the responsibility of the employer and the union to reach an agreement, but I want to be very clear, Speaker: I'm, in the strongest possible terms, urging both parties to get back to that table and to reach a resolution to this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Back to the Minister of Labour, whom I would like to thank for the reply and for addressing this important issue before the House.

Just this week, we've heard of the extreme lengths that Crown Metal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Come to order, please.

I would like that the debates back and forth not take place during question and answer period unless you're putting the question or giving the answer. Please finish.

1120

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you.

Just this week I was saying, we've heard of the extreme lengths that Crown Metal employees are taking to be heard. The United Steelworkers issued a news release noting that they had been leafleting the homes and businesses of the crown's board of directors overseas.

Can the minister provide further details on how the Ontario Labour Relations Act governs disputes like this?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I thank the member again for raising this important issue, and we should all applaud her for standing up for her constituents in this regard.

The length of a strike or a lockout is far from business as usual in this province, Speaker. Last year, over 98% of contract negotiations were resolved without any—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Transportation, come to order. The member from Essex, come to order.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker.

In this case, however, the workers have been off the job for 18 months. It's not good for business; it's not good for the workers; it's not good for anybody in this province. The Labour Relations Act contains provisions and processes that assist the parties to reach a collective agreement. On the rare occasions where they don't work, special action may be required. That includes a section 42 final offer vote we already undertook. It includes other powers, though, which are used under only extraordinary circumstances.

It's essential to understand that the best deals are made at the table, but as strongly as I can, I'm urging those parties back to—

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

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Just last week the new member from Sudbury was promoted and became parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I can't help but note—

Interjections.

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

Please put your question.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I can't help but note that this means he will receive a 13% pay increase after a mere four weeks on the job. We know Pat Sorbara offered Mr. Olivier an appointment to step down as the candidate for Sudbury. But my question to you is this: Was the PA perk offered by Pat Sorbara to the member from Sudbury to cross the floor and step up as candidate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's the first question from my critic almost on an environment issue—almost.

You know, the position of the Conservatives has been that they'll take positions after they have a new leader, apparently. I guess we'll wait till then to find out when they ask a question.

But we have some real problems in your part of Ontario, where we lost 80% of our apple crop in 2012—we have a 60% loss.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member says it's north of her. I guess she doesn't care; if it's not in your backyard, you don't care about farmers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Please finish.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: She wants to bring, inappropriately, a police investigation into this House. She doesn't care about apple farmers because she doesn't represent apple farmers, apparently. She doesn't care about rural Ontario, apparently. That's really a problem. They don't care about climate change, because the member for Mississippi Mills says CO₂ is a positive gas.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Sadly, Speaker, there's a lot of hot air in this House.

But I want to go back to the Deputy Premier. Last night, we saw how close Mr. Thibeault and Pat Sorbara were. According to Twitter, she was responsible for parading him around your fundraiser like a show horse. She wasn't letting him too far off the harness. And just today, Mr. Thibeault confirmed in an exchange with one of my colleagues that he has been asked to meet with the OPP.

My question is this: When are the Premier and Mr. Thibeault going to meet with the OPP?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Actually, I'm sure that the new parliamentary assistant—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I am sure that Mr. Thibeault will meet with whoever wants to meet with Mr. Thibeault. As a matter of fact, he doesn't wait: Mr. Thibeault went up to Gogama to be on the ground, taking pictures, sharing information. We're working together right now, because we just got the results of the surface water studies and water supply studies for Timmins and for Gogama. We would like to talk about that in the House, but they're not asking questions about basic things like the safety of the water supply.

But then, the Tories have a long history on the safety of the water supply. We thought that they had learned that water supply and protecting the water supply was important. Surely, the member from Huron—Bruce would know better than any other member in the House how important it is for the opposition to hold the government to account for safe water. We just had one of the worst spills ever, Mr. Speaker. We haven't had a question from the member for Huron—Bruce, from Walkerton—

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

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Pat Sorbara is facing a criminal investigation for her role in Glenn Thibeault's nomination. Instead of showing any contrition, last night, Ms. Sorbara tweeted a photo of herself with Glenn Thibeault at a Liberal fundraiser. This is Liberal arrogance at its best. Pat Sorbara

thinks she's above the law. She thinks she's above contrition, just like the rest of the Liberal members.

Does the Deputy Premier think it's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would appreciate very much not elevating this debate in the way it has just been done, particularly those people who are trying to tell me that the other side needs reprimanding any more than the other side does.

Please put your question.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Speaker. Does the Deputy Premier think it's appropriate for Ms. Sorbara to be that arrogant when she's facing two police investigations connected to Mr. Thibeault's nomination?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, the NDP's line of questioning on this, I think, reveals—I don't know quite how to say it, and any word I use you will ask me to withdraw. So what I will say is that the NDP knows full well and first-hand that it is inappropriate to comment on police investigations.

Let me remind you: On December 11 last year, the leader of the NDP held a press conference in the media studio. She was questioned on criminal allegations against an NDP candidate. Allow me to read to you what the leader of the third party said during the press conference. She said, "Right now, this is a matter that's in front of the police." She said, "I can't talk about the details at this point because the police are investigating."

The member was asked time and time again. After 14 times, she said, "I'm not going to talk about this" anymore.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Back to the Deputy Premier: The OPP and Elections Ontario say Pat Sorbara offered bribes to Andrew Olivier to get out of the Premier's way, so she wouldn't have to appoint Glenn Thibeault.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Government Services.

Miss Monique Taylor: Instead of stepping down, Pat Sorbara is throwing it in the face of Ontarians. She's saying that she doesn't care about two police investigations; she doesn't care about the integrity of the Premier's office. Because she's a Liberal, she thinks she knows better than the police, better than Elections Ontario and better than Ontarians.

This is about what is good for the people of this province. Does the Deputy Premier really think that this is appropriate?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I recall fondly the days when the member opposite asked questions about children. As the critic of children and youth services, she asked questions about children. I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services was always prepared to answer those questions. But for four solid weeks, we have had no questions—

Interjections.

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

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I say, I remember fondly the days when we actually got questions—I would have expected questions on Hydro One. I would have expected questions on conversion therapy today, but we didn't get them.

Let's review again what happened: In the 2014 general election, the NDP won the seat for Sudbury, Speaker. Fewer than five months later, the NDP's brand new MPP resigned his seat, and that forced—

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, I have an important question for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure on government business that is of high concern to my constituents, unlike the questions from the opposition, which aren't even focused on government business that matters to Ontarians.

I would like to thank the minister for recently updating this House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If this persists, I will continue to allow the clock to finish.

1130

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Our government's position on federal Bill C-40, An Act respecting the Rouge National Park, which is part of my riding: The minister clearly stated that the federal bill, as it stood, failed to provide the necessary protection for the Rouge's environmental integrity. As a result of the federal government's inability to put forward legislation with strong ecological requirements, our government, in good faith, could not transfer provincially owned lands.

Mr. Speaker, would the minister please update this House on the developments?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for the question and I want to thank him for his passion for ensuring that we do what we need to do to protect the Rouge Valley lands.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to collaborate very closely with our environmental stakeholders and to consult very intimately with our farming community in the Rouge Valley, and we were able to draft up proposed amendments and submit them to the Clerk of the Senate committee that's looking into the proposed Rouge park. Those amendments struck a fair balance between protecting the ecological future of the park while promoting its vibrant farming community.

I'm extremely disappointed at this point in time that the federal government seems bent on ignoring these very constructive opportunities, I think, for us to work together. This was a constructive attempt to provide an opportunity for the federal government to strengthen their legislation up to the level of the provincial legislation. Thus far, that attempt has been rejected by the federal government. It's a sad day for the environment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I would like to thank the minister for that update and also his tireless work to protect these lands. Embodied in these proposed legislative amendments were key improvements that would have truly enhanced the park while bringing all partners to the table. It was short-sighted for the federal Conservatives not to adopt these proposed amendments that would significantly strengthen the piece of legislation.

I understand that this morning, in fact, the Senate committee examining this bill started its clause-by-clause review. Senator Eggleton, a strong advocate for the Rouge, brought forward the minister's proposed amendments. Would the minister please update the House on the committee's response to his proposed amendments brought forward by Senator Eggleton?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member again for the supplementary, and I want to thank Senator Eggleton for putting forward these very constructive amendments. Unfortunately, again, the federal Conservatives have rejected a fair compromise in rejecting these amendments this morning.

The federal government's mixed agenda on the environment and their obstinate behaviour in working with our government and the stakeholder community has blown an opportunity for the Rouge. This government and I will not turn our backs on those who have dedicated their lives to protect these lands. We will not let the federal government weaken these important protections, because they are important protections not just for us today, but for future generations. We will not sell out our commitment to the ecological future of these lands. We have the support of the opposition parties, so that makes me confident that there will be a Rouge national park. It may not be this government that delivers it, but we will get what we want. But we'll make sure it's done in the right way to protect farming and to protect—

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

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, everyone knows the history of record retention in the Liberal Premier's office. The old tradition was to designate a staff member to double-delete and wipe the hard drives.

But this Premier said she is different. Acting Premier, has the Premier designated a staff member to preserve all documents, records and emails that would assist the OPP in their bribery investigation?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. David Orazietti: I appreciate the question. I think the member knows full well the steps that have been taken by our government with respect to record retention, the training that has gone on with staff and the comments that have been made by the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

I want to congratulate Brian Beamish on being the new privacy commissioner for the province of Ontario. I

think he's going to be fantastic at this particular position and has conducted himself quite well with respect to his acting role.

Our government has taken a number of steps, including expanding disclosure around freedom-of-information requests and also record retention. We've made it an offence to be deleting or not providing information—up to \$5,000. I think the members know quite well, because, they, as government members in the past, have conducted themselves with respect to the freedom-of-information requests in a similar manner to all governments over the years, and that information—

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Again, back to the Deputy Premier: I'm truly hoping that you have all of the emails and documents regarding the Sudbury by-election safe and secure.

Since the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The Deputy House leader is warned.

Please finish.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Since the Premier keeps telling everyone here that she is co-operating with the authorities, I ask you this, Madam Deputy Premier: Will it require a warrant or will the Premier's office voluntarily turn any records relating to the Sudbury scandal over to the OPP?

Hon. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to talk about the government's record with respect to record retention. Here's what the Information and Privacy Commissioner said: "I am pleased to report that the Premier and the government have made significant progress" in this area. I appreciate "the co-operation I have received from Premier Kathleen Wynne" in regard to this matter.

I say to the opposition—it's been said, the Premier has indicated this—you will have the full co-operation of the government with respect to all investigation matters. The opposition continues to insist that we try this matter in the Legislature. It's an OPP investigation. Let the OPP do their job.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Deputy Premier. I just don't understand. It's been four weeks of questions; zero answers. Why can't the Premier answer just a simple question? Those are questions that people across my riding in northern Ontario and this province are asking. Instead, the Premier dips, dodges, dives—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Michael Mantha: —dunks and then pitches the ball and—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. You will come to order.

Please finish.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The Premier dips, dodges, dives and ducks, then pitches the ball and pulls a Dalton, and hides behind her House leader.

Will the Deputy Premier tell Ontarians who the other people are that the Premier has called to step out of the way, and were they offered bribes as well?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the member opposite, who is the critic for northern development and mines, wants to ask about Gogama. I know he desperately wants to ask that question about his hometown. I know he is being prevented from asking that question by the party leadership.

But I do think we have to really think about what Glenn Thibeault, as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Climate Change, has done in the short time that he has been in this House. He was there, on-site in Gogama. I'm sure he would have information that this House would like to hear about. He was there, in his capacity as PA to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. He met with first responders. He met with residents. He met with community leaders to directly assess the impacts of this disaster in this community and to the environment.

The member opposite is asking a political question that really doesn't have anything to do with his true interests in his heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm extremely proud of the work of our colleague from Nickel Belt and our federal member from Nickel Belt, who were actually on the ground in Gogama and did the work that was required, not in the air.

The problem with the Liberal story is that there isn't any evidence for the Premier's story. But according to the OPP and Elections Ontario, there is evidence of bribery. Let me repeat that: There is evidence of bribery.

Can the Deputy Premier provide any evidence that the Premier's version of her story is actually factual?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: While it certainly seems obvious that this member actually does care about Gogama, that he actually does want to have a discussion in this House about the response to Gogama, I just wish the questions in question period were about those issues.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence of the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. DiNovo assumes ballot item number 40 and Mr. Singh assumes ballot item number 74.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd ask the House to join me in welcoming page Dhairya Bhatt's mother, Mamta Bhatt, who is in the public gallery this morning.

DEFERRED VOTES

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

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

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

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 14, 2014, Mr. Chan moved second reading of Bill 49, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991. Mr. Naqvi has moved that the question now be put.

All those in favour of Mr. Naqvi's motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Bailey, Robert	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Clark, Steve	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy	Yurek, Jeff
Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie	
MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 69; the nays are 16.

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

Mr. Chan has moved second reading of Bill 49. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall we move second reading?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: You already did that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh yes, okay.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Minister?

Hon. Michael Chan: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

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

Before we dismiss, I would like to offer to all of you a healthy break, a chance to be with family and to recoup at your constituency, and be safe. Thank you for the work that you're doing.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

JARED KESO

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Today, I'm pleased to recognize the accomplishments of Jared Keeso. Jared grew up in Listowel, Ontario. He is now a well-recognized actor. Many of you may know him from playing Don Cherry in the Don Cherry Story. Last week, Jared earned a Canadian Screen Award for his work on 19-2, a Canadian cop drama. I would like to congratulate him on this win.

In his acceptance speech, Jared gave a shout-out to his former schools, Listowel Central Public School and Listowel District Secondary School. That's the sign of a gracious young man, and we in Perth-Wellington are so happy to support him.

On Thursday, Jared got even more good news. Bell Media's on-demand streaming service has commissioned its first original Canadian series: his comedy show Letterkenney. Jared will be featured in the show and will also serve as its creator, executive producer and co-writer.

Again, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to Jared Keeso on all his excellent work. He's gone from a kid playing hockey in Listowel to an accomplished national actor. I would also like to recognize the entire Keeso family, who have helped Jared accomplish his dreams.

SALLY HOOKE

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today I would like to highlight an outstanding woman from my riding. Sally Hooke is from St. Joseph Island, and everyone knows Sally. A

combination of life struggles and her passion for recycling began a most interesting story that is to be part of Canadian history. This is what makes this story great: One person chose to do something.

Years ago, she was going through the landfill site looking for items to be removed and recycled. She found nine timber wolf skins sewn together into what she thought was a blanket. For many years Sally took care of this blanket, thinking that it was a wonderful treasure and that she'd keep it for her own.

The blanket was recognized as a shaman's robe. The DNA testing on the shaman's robe revealed sweetgrass DNA that could be historically traced back to the Wolf Clan, who once lived on the island, 200 years ago. Sally has given the shaman's robe to the St. Joseph Island Museum so that all can enjoy this wonderful piece of Canadian history.

But there's more, Mr. Speaker. Sally has also made a tremendous impact in the community by operating the Jocelyn mall share shed. This entire idea came from Sally saving items in a box to a beautiful storage building provided by the Jocelyn township, supporting Sally's desire to help residents purchase the items, and the proceeds are donated to the local area food bank, raising over \$33,000.

Sally's compassion, big heart and desire is always looking to help those less fortunate. You can find Sally shopping down at the Jocelyn mall on beautiful St. Joseph Island, giving her time and her energy to building a stronger, healthier community.

Thank you, Sally, from me and many in need. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You're an angel.

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD
COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to recognize Sir John A. MacDonald Collegiate, a high school in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, for their leadership in wetland conservation.

Partnering with Ducks Unlimited, they have created the Wetland Centre of Excellence, providing students the opportunity to engage in conservation efforts in their own backyard.

Throughout the Wetland Centre of Excellence, Mac students participate in cleaning up trails, building boardwalks and identifying wildlife. Last spring, they led their first wetland trip for local grade 4 students, taking them through a variety of educational games and nature walks. Now the students are gearing up to lead their second field trip at the end of April.

Ducks Unlimited's visit to Queen's Park last week reminds all of us just how important these programs are in our community. After speaking with the students who participate in these programs, it is very clear that they are knowledgeable on conservation and have become advocates for Ontario's wetlands.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the teacher, Matthew Sheehan, and his students from Sir

John A. MacDonald Collegiate, as well the principal, Mr. Rick Tarasuk, for their leadership in wetland conservation and, more importantly, for being great champions of Ontario's wetlands.

POLICE

Mr. Ted Arnott: I stand in the House today to acknowledge and thank our police officers in Wellington–Halton Hills. Our riding is well served by two exceptional police forces: the Wellington OPP and the Halton Regional Police. In addition to keeping our streets safe, both police forces work hard to give back to the communities they serve.

Each year, the Wellington OPP organize a fundraiser to support the Guelph Wish Fund for Children, which gives a child facing a serious illness a wish that comes true. Our OPP also participate in the Canadian Blood Services' Partners for Life program to encourage blood donation.

Our Halton Regional Police run an annual Toys for Tots campaign to bring the joy of Christmas to needy children. Over the past four years, they've raised over a million dollars in toys, gift cards, cash and food donations. The Halton Regional Police also run a Children's Safety Village, which is a miniature town complete with buildings, paved roads and traffic signals. The village is visited by about 10,000 children per year, teaching them important safety lessons.

I want to thank all our police officers in Wellington–Halton Hills.

While we're talking about justice, I want to again raise the need for a new courthouse in Halton. The existing courthouse is aging, overcrowded, inadequate and unsafe. Today, I learned that a water leak recently disabled courtroom 3, generally used for Family Court proceedings, causing a great deal of inconvenience and disruption. Again, this underscores how decrepit the existing court facilities have become.

I know that the Attorney General is aware of the problem and all Halton area MPPs are supportive. I urge the Minister of Finance in his upcoming budget to announce the government's approval for a new courthouse for Halton.

JUNO AWARDS

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, my home city may be best known for its long heritage in steelmaking and sport, but today I rise to welcome the Juno Awards to Hamilton this weekend. This will be the sixth time that Hamilton has hosted the Junos, but the first since 2001.

We've had events all week in the buildup to the awards, with concerts taking place at venues large and small across our city. Tomorrow evening's Music Crawl is free. This Friday and Saturday, JunoFest is better than an outdoor festival. JunoFest will feature an incredible 133 artists playing at 17 venues. It's a great weekend to live in Hamilton or come to Hamilton.

You oughta know that at this year's Junos, Alanis Morissette will be inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame. Congratulations to Ontario's true international star.

Hamilton's own Arkells will be playing live at the awards. They have been nominated for Group of the Year and Rock Album of the Year.

Hamilton has a strong team of nominees this year, including Steve Strongman, Diane Panton, Elliott Brood, Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, Caribou and Daniel Lanois. Good luck to them all. We have a terrific musical community in Hamilton that we're proud of.

I hope that my colleagues and other Canadians heading to the Junos this weekend will stay around for a while to enjoy the best that Hamilton has to offer; I know some good tour guides. And if you like the Juno weekend, you'll love the Supercrawl this September. Hamilton is a great city, and if you haven't already been, there is no better time to visit us than now.

JOHNNY SETO

Mr. Granville Anderson: I rise in this House to pay tribute to one of the icons of our community, who passed away a few weeks ago. I would like to pay tribute to a one-of-a-kind Durham resident who recently passed away.

Johnny Seto was a long-time Bowmanville resident, and was perhaps best known as owner of the popular Coronation Restaurant. Johnny came from China, via Vancouver, to Whitby more than half a century ago. He used to tell stories of arriving in Whitby by train. Within a few hours of his arrival there, after a good meal, Johnny found himself working washing dishes at a family-owned restaurant. To learn English, he hired a teacher from the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby. He would practise his English in the alleyway outside where he lived at 5:30 in the morning so he didn't disturb his sleeping family members.

Mr. Seto soon made the move to Bowmanville, where he opened a restaurant, the Coronation, which affectionately became known as "Johnny's place." Before long, everyone knew Johnny. He was well respected and well loved, and he gave much to the community. So well respected was he that in his later years, when he no longer wished to rise early to open his restaurant, he was able to entrust the key to a group of his regulars. They would come in and start the coffee, sitting at their special table. Johnny would come in later and join them.

1310

Johnny and his wife, MeiMei, raised a lovely family in Bowmanville. His children remain in my riding, carrying on Johnny's tradition of being active in the community. They are a wonderful legacy to him, and my thoughts are very much with them at this time.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to tell you a little bit about Johnny Seto, a Durham resident who will surely be missed and who was a great honour to our community.

COLONEL FITZGERALD BRANCH 233

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to recognize members of the Colonel Fitzgerald Branch 233 in Orangeville as they celebrate their 80th anniversary.

The Orangeville Legion has played an integral role in our community since its inception. Veterans, their families and many others are benefactors of Legion programs, outreach and support. Where there is a need in our community, our Legion and its army of volunteers are often first there to help.

Legion members in Orangeville have been very busy in recent years working with local high school students to restore, repair and preserve the weathered and worn grave markers of veterans at the Forest Lawn Cemetery. This project is especially important because it ensures that the names of our fallen comrades will not be forgotten.

Every time I attend a Remembrance Day service or an event at the Orangeville Legion, I'm reminded of the branch's distinguished record and outreach, especially with our students. Veterans visit local schools to discuss their experiences and to participate in remembrance services, as well as sponsoring many students through bursaries. Annually, our Legion holds a very popular speech competition for students.

Members of the Colonel Fitzgerald Branch 233 have much to be proud of after eight decades of community service, but their outreach to our younger generation is particularly significant. By that outreach, our veterans are helping to preserve their stories by passing along their experiences and shared memories.

Congratulations to all members, associates and volunteers of Colonel Fitzgerald Branch 233 on your significant anniversary, and thank you for your service. Lest we forget.

CONNECT SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

Mr. Han Dong: I rise today to recognize and celebrate the achievement of the Connect School of Languages. This school is a unique, innovative and award-winning English-as-a-second-language school that is located in my riding of Trinity-Spadina. Recently, the Connect School of Languages won a very prestigious award at the 2015 Digital Book Awards.

Their innovative Study It textbook series was selected as the 2015 best digital textbook in the reference/academic category at the Digital Book Awards gala. The Study It textbook series is a customized set of interactive English-language multi-touch books which are designed for use with iPads and other tablets.

The Connect School of Languages has published over 50 different digital textbooks available for students and teachers. There are eight levels of grammar, eight levels of conversation, a listening series and a business English series. As a former English-as-second-language learner, I find great value in teaching and learning tools like the Study It textbook series. These language tools facilitate

the use of a richer English language and culture for everyone. Delivering ESL curriculum to students in a new and innovative way is also something to be celebrated and recognized.

I, along with the rest of my riding, am extremely proud of the Connect School of Languages for their hard work and commitment to creativity. I stand today inviting all Ontarians to celebrate this tremendous achievement.

NEIL YOUNG

Mr. Arthur Potts: Today I rise in honour and in memory of the former member of Parliament for Beaches–Woodbine, Mr. Neil Young.

Neil died this past Saturday, March 7 at Toronto East General Hospital, a facility that he represented and championed. He was surrounded by his family, and he was 78 years of age.

Mr. Young was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, coincidentally the ancestral home of my own family. He immigrated to Canada in the 1950s and he worked as a machinist in the electrical industry, and later became an organizer for the United Electrical Workers Union.

In 1980, as a member of the New Democratic Party, Mr. Young was elected to represent the people of Beaches–Woodbine, a precursor to the current riding of Beaches–East York. He would go on to serve the riding for nearly 14 years.

Maria Minna, who succeeded him, remembers Neil as a great gentleman and as a dedicated advocate for the issues he championed. Throughout his tenure as an MP, he represented several portfolios, including pensions and veteran’s affairs, but most notable was the work he did for people with disabilities. Throughout his retirement, he continued to serve as a consultant regarding these very important matters.

Neil was an avid golfer, and while he continued his good work in his retirement, he was able to find time to hit the links every day that he could. Apparently, he was staying true to his Scottish roots; he would play rain or shine.

My sincere condolences go out to Neil’s wife of 52 years, Vivien, and their children Neil, Leslie, Moira and Fraser. I did not know Neil, but I knew of him and that he served his community well and will be missed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HELPING VOLUNTEERS GIVE BACK ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 VISANT À AIDER LES BÉNÉVOLES À CONTRIBUER

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 79, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers / Projet de loi 79, Loi concernant les vérifications du casier judiciaire des bénévoles.

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.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. The bill may seem familiar to you, because it is a reintroduction of a bill that I’ve introduced in previous sessions. I feel strongly that anything that we can do as legislators to encourage volunteerism within our communities is a help to all of us collectively. Basically, my bill will allow one police record check to be used annually for multiple organizations, so I’m just simplifying the process.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

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

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.”

I totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the desk with Andrew.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: It’s with great honour and privilege that I stand here today and read a petition on behalf of Mrs. Barbara Marcotte, who provided these many hundreds of signatures to the petition on gas prices. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

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

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition and present it to page Victoria to take it to the Clerks.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“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

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“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 number one 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 wholeheartedly endorse the petition and leave it with Dhairya.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Reginald and Claudette Carrière, from my riding, in Chelmsford. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Liberal government of Ontario is currently reviewing proposals to sell off a significant amount of our shared public assets such as Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Hydro One, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); and

“Whereas our shared public assets provide more affordable hydro, develop environmentally friendly energy, create thousands of good Ontario jobs, and are accountable to all Ontarians;

“Whereas our shared public assets put money in the public bank account so we can invest in hospitals, roads and schools;

“Whereas this Liberal government is more interested in helping out wealthy shareholders and investors than they are in the hard-working Ontarians who are building this province;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Stop the selling-off of our shared public assets. Keep our public assets in public hands.”

I fully support this petition, Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask page Morgan to bring it to the Clerk.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas the community of Windsor–Essex county has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada resulting in stressful lives and financial inadequacies for many of its residents and businesses; and

“Whereas recently the Ford Motor Company was considering Windsor, Ontario, as a potential site for a new global engine that would create 1,000 new jobs (and as many as 7,000 spinoff jobs) for our community; and

“Whereas partnership with government was critical to secure this investment from Ford; and

“Whereas the inability of Ford and Ontario to come to an agreement for partnership contributed to the loss of this project;

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

“To insist that the Ontario government exhaust all available opportunities to reopen the discussions around the Ford investment in Windsor and to develop a national auto strategy and review current policy meant to attract investment in the auto sector.”

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

PROBATION AND PAROLE SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Auditor General’s report (2014) on adult community corrections, (MCSCS probation and parole) identified that Ontario has the highest caseloads in Canada. And with a 60% rate of recidivism, the Ontario Liberal government spends the second least amount of money, compared to the other provinces, on the supervision and rehabilitation of our offenders at a mere \$5.81/day per offender; and

“Whereas the Auditor General has also criticized probation and parole services for not conducting adequate offender compliance checks to monitor adherence with court ordered conditions; and

“Whereas the approximately eight hundred and fifty (850) dedicated and professional probation and parole officers in Ontario responsible for the supervision of over

50,000 adult offenders each year take great pride in providing offenders with the appropriate monitoring, rehabilitation programs and public safety services but are struggling due to chronic understaffing;

“We, the undersigned probation and parole employees, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario Liberal government shall implement an offender supervision caseload cap within the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services in order to guarantee Ontario communities that probation and parole services will have the necessary staffing resources to deliver on its mandate of providing both effective offender services and ensuring public safety.”

I fully support this petition, will gladly sign my name to it and give it to Dhairya.

STUDENT SAFETY

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

“Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

“Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

“Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

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

“To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition. I affix my name and give it to page Fardin.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from Erika Graham from my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas over 2,400 students and 450 Everest staff are impacted by the 14 college location closures across Ontario...; and

“Whereas students have the right to finish their programs” and “avoid unnecessary delays...; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has been aware of the financial and legal difficulties facing Everest” for quite a few months; and

“Whereas students cannot afford to put their life on hold...;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“To act in a prompt manner” so that the interests of the Sudbury Everest students are protected so they can complete their programs without delay.

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Dhairya to bring it to the Clerk.

WATER FLUORIDATION

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

“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 number one 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 support the petition, affix my name and give it to page Muntder to bring it forward.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Wayne Gates: A petition: Ontario is not for sale.

“Whereas the Liberal government of Ontario is currently reviewing proposals to sell off a significant amount of our shared public assets such as Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Hydro One, and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO); and

“Whereas our shared public assets provide more affordable hydro, develop environmentally friendly energy, create thousands of” good-paying “jobs, and are accountable to all Ontarians; and

“Whereas our shared public assets put money in the public bank account so we can invest in hospitals, roads and schools; and

“Whereas this Liberal government is more interested in helping out wealthy shareholders and investors than they are in the hard-working Ontarians who are building this province; and

“Whereas Ontario is stronger when there is shared prosperity;

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

"Stop the selling-off of our shared public assets. Keep our public assets in public hands."

I'll sign my name to the petition and send it with Natalie.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislature:

"Whereas the community of Windsor–Essex county has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada resulting in stressful lives and financial inadequacies for many of its residents and businesses; and

"Whereas recently the Ford Motor Company was considering Windsor, Ontario, as a potential site for a new global engine that would create 1,000 new jobs (and as many as 7,000 spinoff jobs) for our community; and

"Whereas partnership with government was critical to secure this investment from Ford; and

"Whereas the inability of Ford and Ontario to come to an agreement for partnership contributed to the loss of this project;

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

"To insist that the Ontario government exhaust all available opportunities to reopen the discussions around the Ford investment in Windsor and to develop a national auto strategy and review current policy meant to attract investment in the auto sector."

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Inaya.

LYME DISEASE

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

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but the scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with Eileen.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This comes from many across my riding, from Hayden to Goulais River and Batchawana. The petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as 'delivery fees';

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to the page Dhairya to bring it down to the Clerks.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to revert back to motions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader seeks unanimous consent to revert back to motions. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF BILL 56

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 56, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader seeks unanimous consent on a motion to put forward regarding Bill 56, the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act. Agreed? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the order of the House dated February 26, 2015, referring Bill 56, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement

Pension Plan, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged and the bill be referred instead to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy shall meet during its regular meeting times on March 23, 24, 30 and 31 for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 56:

Notice of public hearings be posted on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the committee's website and Canada NewsWire;

That the committee Clerk provide the members of the subcommittee with a list of requests to appear as of 12 noon on Thursday, March 19, 2015; and

That the subcommittee prioritize and return the list of requests to appear by 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2015; and

That the clerk schedule witnesses from the prioritized lists.

Each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members.

The deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the last day of public hearings.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Are the members of the House familiar with the motion?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Agreed? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

MICROBEAD ELIMINATION AND MONITORING ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉLIMINATION ET LE CONTRÔLE DES MICROBILLES

Mrs. Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act with respect to microbeads / Projet de loi 75, Loi concernant les microbilles.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm honoured to rise today to speak to Bill 75, An Act with respect to microbeads, the Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act.

Before I speak to the bill, I would like to recognize and thank all those who have come to support the issue today. I have here in the House former MPP Phil McNeely, Nancy Goucher and Fe de Leon, who have done a great job supporting and championing this bill.

I also would like to add a special thank you to Christine Eamer and Kyle Reaburn, who have helped me with this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I am passionate about protecting our environment and the well-being of our population, for my constituents, for my family and for the coming generation. As we move forward, it is important that we reduce the impact that we are having on our environment, and this act will help accomplish this goal.

We are blessed here in Canada with 20% of the world's freshwater supply. However, less than half of this water is renewable, and it is our responsibility to do everything we can to sustain it.

En Ontario, plus de 80 % de notre eau potable provient des Grands Lacs. Comme il est observé dans la majorité des provinces et territoires au Canada, la qualité de notre eau est également de moins en moins bonne. Nous devons nous positionner comme chefs de file dans le domaine de la protection de l'eau potable au Canada, et ainsi, donner l'exemple au reste du monde.

Ontario's government is committed to protecting and improving the Great Lakes ecosystem and the quality of the water in the lakes. The bill, therefore, complements initiatives taken by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

Microplastics are an emerging issue in the Great Lakes, and in recent years, even smaller plastic granules which are less than one millimetre in diameter have been found in bodies of water all over the world. Many of these plastic granules have been identified as synthetic plastic microbeads that are added to personal care products; for example, to help exfoliate skin or clean our teeth. After these shampoos, soaps and toothpastes are washed down the drain, they will make their way into our lakes, rivers and oceans simply because they are too small for our drainage system to catch, and they will be staying there. Microbeads are causing growing environmental concern because of the various marine organisms that are ingesting them. The beads are roughly the same size as sediment, plankton or fish eggs, and are easily mistaken as food.

A recent study has even concluded that microbeads can be breathed into gills. This ingestion can cause intestinal blockages, internal abrasion and even acts as a magnet to accumulate a high level of toxic chemicals.

It is clear that this has an impact on the whole food chain, as higher organisms consume microplastics through the fish they eat as prey.

Malgré le nombre d'études qui ont été faites au sujet des microplastiques, nous avons encore un long chemin à faire. Au printemps dernier, le ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique a mené une étude pour recueillir et analyser des échantillons prélevés de l'eau et d'effluents de diverses usines municipales de traitement des eaux usées.

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Le ministère travaille aussi avec l'université Western en leur fournissant des échantillons de sédiments pour les

aider avec leurs investigations de la présence de microplastique dans le lac Ontario et le lac Érié.

In 2012 and 2013, scientific studies from the State University of New York and the 5 Gyres Institute were conducted to record the plastics content of Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Superior. It was found that microplastics are in greater concentrations in Lake Erie than any other body of water on earth. Results such as these, of course, demand action.

The Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act has two main functions, as the name suggests. The strength of the bill is that it outright prohibits the manufacturing and addition of microbeads to cosmetics, soaps or similar products. Those who contravene this law will be found guilty of an offence and fined up to \$10,000.

The second part of the bill is that it requires the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to ensure that water supplies from the Great Lakes are analyzed in accordance with the regulations for the presence of microbeads. These results will be published online for the public.

If we were to pass this bill, we would be the first jurisdiction in Canada to have specific legislation tackling the problem of microbeads in our water. We need to take a look to the south and follow the example of Illinois and Ohio, which have passed similar legislation banning the use of microbeads in the manufacturing of personal care products. If we're all to succeed, these states will become our partners in the mission of protecting the Great Lakes.

Though it is easy to point fingers at personal care product manufacturers, it is important to acknowledge that industry leaders have taken the initiative to stop or have made a pledge to stop using microbeads. Some of these cutting-edge companies include the Body Shop, Colgate-Palmolive, L'Oréal, Johnson and Johnson, and Procter and Gamble.

Applause.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, thank you.

Ikea also made a difference by deciding to stop purchasing products containing microplastics and never again including them in any of their offerings.

It is through this kind of pledge that we will see an improvement in the ecosystem of our Great Lakes. We applaud these multinational corporations, which have a global presence, for their commitment to help save the planet.

As public awareness increases, so will the demand for microbead-free products. Informed and responsible consumers will actively search for personal care products that have natural alternatives such as ground hazelnut, oatmeal, sea salt or crushed apricot seeds.

Souignons que la campagne Beat the Microbead est une initiative mondiale mise de l'avant et supportée par 62 organisations non gouvernementales de 31 différents pays. Cette campagne a deux objectifs : informer la population de l'existence des microbilles dans certains produits et en promouvoir l'élimination.

North Sea Foundation and Plastic Soup Foundation, deux organisations néerlandaises, ont créé une

application à télécharger sur les téléphones intelligents. L'application de Beat the Microbead, Warning : Plastics Inside!, permet aux gens de vérifier facilement si un produit contient des microbilles. Il vous suffit de scanner le code barres avec votre cellulaire pour que le produit cosmétique soit analysé et vous pouvez y lire le résultat de l'évaluation indiquant s'il y a présence ou pas de microbilles. Si la classification est rouge, c'est-à-dire que le produit contient des microbilles. La qualification jaune est pour les compagnies qui se sont engagées à remplacer les microbilles, et le vert indique qu'il n'y a aucune microbille.

J'encourage chacun et chacune à télécharger cette application pour commencer à être des consommateurs mieux informés.

This bill has received the support of experts in the field of water quality and environmental protection. Among them are Mark Mattson of Lake Ontario Waterkeeper, Mayor Keith Hobbs of Thunder Bay, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and Meredith Brown of Ottawa Riverkeeper. Nancy Goucher of Environmental Defence, who is here today, has led quite a campaign in support of Bill 75. Again, thank you very much for this initiative.

Thanks to advocacy, I'm happy to share that in Ontario, since the introduction of the bill on Monday, our offices have received over 4,000 letters of support to ban microbeads. It is evident to me that the people of Ontario care about the quality of our drinking water and the health of their families. We must do right by our constituents and protect our natural assets. So let's make Bill 75 a reality and put Ontario on the map.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 75, the Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act. I'll be sharing my time with my friends and colleagues from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry and Thornhill.

I would like to start off by saying that eliminating microbeads is something that has been happening for years within the industry. It is unfortunate that the member from Ottawa-Orléans would not know this because she consulted with next to no industry at all. In speaking to the Canadian Cosmetic, Toiletry and Fragrance Association, who represent over 150 companies, I'm sad to say that they were not consulted on this piece of important legislation that will impact their industry. In fact, the companies that they work with have already committed to eliminating microbeads by 2018, with elimination of the products on the shelf by 2019.

I'm pleased to share with you, Speaker, that the PC caucus agrees with the objective and principle of Bill 75, but as we move forward with this bill, I hope we can work together to make it stronger. To my friend from Ottawa-Orléans, I would like to go as far as to offer to set up a meeting with yourself, myself, our friend from the NDP caucus and industry stakeholders so that even before it gets to committee we can make this initiative stronger.

We have to work with stakeholders to make sure all legislation gets it right. We all care about our Great Lakes, we care about the environment and we want what's best for Ontarians, but we cannot put through weak legislation that does nothing to fix the problem.

I have a number of issues. First off, consumer products and the regulation of consumer products is something that should be done federally, for a number of reasons. These products that contain microbeads are often produced for international markets and exported across many boundaries. They are almost never just manufactured for use in Ontario.

There's no mention of how this legislation will deal with counterfeit and non-name brand products coming from offshore and being distributed through discount stores. How will we keep these out? This bill doesn't address that issue. Who will regulate this legislation? The products with microbeads will come through Canada Border Services, which is managed through trade agreements made in Canada. It is not something necessarily the province should be regulating when really the province has no means to regulate it. So unless we're talking about creating an enforcement body, which would cost money and therefore question this particular PMB, then I'm not sure how this bill could actually work.

It has been suggested this action could best be undertaken by the federal government. In late 2014, Canada and Ontario signed an agreement on the Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health in which each jurisdiction can nominate candidate chemicals for consideration as chemicals of concern under this annex. This is part of what the Ontario-Canada commitment is doing in terms of reducing harmful pollutants to the Great Lakes.

Another concern I have brings me to Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act, introduced just weeks prior to this. Surely, I trust the member from Ottawa-Orléans would have known Bill 66 was coming forth. If it was an important issue, Speaker, why did she not work with her colleague to include this issue in Bill 66? Look, it's quite clear what's happening here: It's a media hit for a newly elected backbench MPP. But the issue of microbeads is so much more than a media hit. I'm truly concerned that this bill is for show rather than tangible results.

Another concern of mine is the way this bill is written and its definitions. It states, "The bill prohibits the manufacture of microbeads and the addition of microbeads to cosmetics, soaps or similar products." The problem is that many of these products are not manufactured here in Ontario but rather shipped from other countries. Therefore, this legislation truly isn't prohibiting anything.

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Another concern is the lack of definitions in the bill. Consider the definition of a cosmetic by the Food and Drug Administration, where the term "cosmetic" means "articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, or sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body or any part thereof for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering ... appearance." That being said, if producers want to get around

this, they could, because the terms used in this bill are not clearly defined.

Another concern on definition with regard to microbeads is the specs, defined at one millimetre or smaller. However, when speaking to stakeholders, they're using a definition based on the Illinois model, which is proving to be held as a standard worldwide, where you see microbeads being defined as five millimetres or under. Really, industry is being more progressive than this Liberal bill.

I would like to suggest that we need to work together prior to this bill going to committee and get this thing right, because we know that your government hasn't gotten it right in the past: green energy, gas plants etc. If we can work together, then we can have a good chance at ensuring that the strongest piece of legislation is produced to protect the Great Lakes while also ensuring that industry is on side and has realistic deadlines.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I have to say, first of all and foremost, that we are going to support your bill and we're going to vote for it.

I listened intently to both your words, member from Ottawa-Orléans and also the member from Huron-Bruce. I have to say that although I heard her criticisms and there is a modicum of truth to them, once you take that to heart, still, I want to praise any new member who stands in this place and brings forward their passion—it's not an easy thing to do—and who does the organizing necessary to see a bill here and get stakeholders involved. This is important. This is what changes lives and changes laws. I hope the Minister of the Environment is listening as well, because quite frankly he's the one—and the cabinet are the ones—who should be making this law. And they should make it law.

I want to give a shout-out to someone from our own quarter, and that is Windsor West MP Brian Masse, who has shown incredible leadership on this issue by bringing it forward federally. To go back to the member from Huron-Bruce, of course there is a federal component, and we have to work together with them to give this some teeth.

I want to segue from this to say that it's also educational. This is the first time I have actually been introduced to the topic. I'm not the environment critic, although I—like most Ontarians, I think—care very deeply about the environment and climate change. I want to urge the member, because that's her passion, to bring forward some of the issues that are the passion of folk from my riding as well. It's not just about microbeads; it's also about, for example, environmental assessments for Line 9. If you drive or walk through my riding, you will see a number of signs on front lawns. You won't see any for microbeads, but you will see them for Line 9. "Stop Line 9," they say. This is not a federal issue only, although it is. We can do an environmental assessment here. We're demanding that in Parkdale-High Park.

We're also demanding "NoJets TO." You'll see those signs on the front lawns of my residents. Again, the

provincial government has a role to play in stopping that. Again, that's something we can do an environmental assessment around.

I know that some of my northern members might want to talk about environmental assessments on the rail traffic that's going through their districts, but in my district, the rail traffic that's about to go through is tier 4 diesel trains. Just like microbeads, I have to say that there is no clean diesel. These trains will be running every 15 minutes. There is an article in the Sun today that talks about how two people can take a cab door to door from Pearson to anywhere in Toronto cheaper than they can ride the UP Express—and cleaner, I might add; cleaner, too—because those trains that we're going to subsidize with more and more tax dollars, because they're not going to be filled, that could be modes of transportation, that could have stops and that could transport people, will, in fact, be running through the backyards of people in Liberty Village, York South–Weston, Trinity–Spadina, Davenport and Parkdale–High Park. They will be running through their backyards, through school territories, and they will be destroying the air quality of the communities they run through.

They will not be providing transportation to those communities because they're too expensive. They're not a relief line. And they won't be providing adequate transportation for those who get off at Pearson and just want to get downtown, even for the Pan Am Games, because you can do it cheaper with a cab.

Those are the three issues that are most pertinent, environmentally, to those in downtown Toronto and to my riding. I would just advise the member, with her passion for the environment, please keep on being passionate. I'm looking at the member from Burlington, too—and I'm sad that I missed the all-party cycle breakfast this morning, I couldn't help it, but my heart was there.

Again, there's so much more we could do to get people out of their cars and onto their bikes in downtown Toronto, and we don't do it. There's a portion of that that is a provincial responsibility. You can't just say everything is federal; you can't just say everything is city. We need to do what we can in this chamber.

Suffice to say, I applaud the member for bringing her passion here: Do not be deterred. I can tell you that trying to get legislation through this place is a little like swimming through Jell-O, you know? It's difficult, but you keep swimming, and eventually you get there. I remember the member from Nepean–Carleton once quoted Winston Churchill—I love this quote—and it very much pertains to this place: “If you find yourself going through hell, keep on going,” because my friend, welcome to the Legislature; welcome to tabling your first private member's bill. You will find yourself swimming through Jell-O and going through hell, but keep on going, because it requires all of us in this chamber to keep on keeping on if we're going to make a difference.

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's certainly a delight for me to speak today on my wonderful colleague from Ottawa–Orléans, a new member. What a delight to have such a wonderful, worthwhile bill, that should be non-partisan, coming forward from a new member. So I would like to congratulate her.

Many Ontarians may be surprised to learn that they're causing harm to fish and wildlife by using personal care products that contain microbeads. Since they are too small to be filtered out by waste water treatment plants, they make their way into the world's waterways and oceans. Recent research has shown them in alarming abundance in Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River sediments.

Microbeads are a serious concern to the environment and human health because they absorb persistent organic pollutants, including carcinogens and hormone disruptors, which, when ingested by fish and other wildlife, can bioaccumulate up the food chain. Organisms that have ingested microplastics experience compromised immune function and higher mortality. Over 250 species have been impacted.

Professor Sherri Mason from the State University of New York conducted the first study that found microbeads floating in the Great Lakes. As one would expect, she found that concentrations increased downstream, with the highest numbers in Lake Ontario.

Last year, McGill University researchers collected sediment from 10 locations along a 320-kilometre stretch of the St. Lawrence River to Quebec City. At some locations, they measured over 1,000 microbeads per litre of sediment, a magnitude that rivals the world's most contaminated ocean sediments. These important findings prove that rivers can act as a sink for this form of pollution.

As with all cross-border multi-source environmental issues, we need to address microbead pollution collectively, as the other members have stated. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a coalition of US and Canadian mayors and other local officials, including my hometown of Kingston and the Islands, has been instrumental in raising awareness and calling for action on microbead pollution.

We're taking an important step today. If the act is passed, which I hope it will be, Ontario will join Illinois, the first jurisdiction in the world to ban microbeads. Our purchasing decisions have a strong influence on manufacturers. So regardless of where those products come from, we have the ability to make a difference.

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Apps such as Beat the Microbead have made it easier to identify products containing microbeads by simply scanning the bar code. Microbead ingredients are listed as polyethylene or polypropylene.

There are now more than 2,000 products on the market using microbeads in North America. I urge all manufacturers to join the industry leaders like the ones that have already been mentioned and add to those Unilever, Aveda and Lush, who have already phased out their use.

In closing, microbeads are of great concern for the well-being of fish and wildlife, and pose a threat to human health. They are unnecessary and, as we've already heard, natural alternatives are possible to purchase. They must be eliminated as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the members of this House to show leadership in the environmental stewardship of our Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River by supporting this bill.

I will be sharing my time today with my colleague. Merci. Meegwetch. Thank you.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm pleased to rise to speak on Bill 75, An Act with respect to microbeads. With legislation like this, it's important that we look at it and consider what we're doing before we jump into it. I commend the goal of what we're doing, but again, it's the way it's being done that causes a lot of grief, and not only to the industry. We don't achieve what, really, our goal is.

In this case here, we've seen that there has been no consultation with the industry, even though the industry has been working hard to make changes, as my colleague said before, involving over 100 different businesses. They're taking steps. They're working internationally. I think that if we really want to get benefits, we have to work not only with industry and our stakeholders but internationally, so that we get meaningful change.

It's important if we really want to—especially in the environment. The environment doesn't know borders, and if we want to see change, we have to work collaboratively. The industry has been working with governments around the world to ensure that there's a common approach to the regulatory and legislative approach that they're taking. This is important if you really want to get change.

Bill 75 does not take into account efforts that are currently under way in different jurisdictions; for instance, the Council of State Governments, which includes our neighbouring states and our neighbouring provinces, as well as Ontario. They're taking steps, looking at what needs to be done on a lot of common issues. I had the benefit of joining their conference last summer and seeing some of the good work they're looking at. They're looking at issues, whether it be climate control or legislation that would benefit both countries, and this is just another example. We have to make sure we don't go at it alone.

We look at the record of this government. We look at the failed Green Energy Act. Again, it was a novel idea. I think maybe it was more of an effort in public relations, because it really didn't get any appreciable benefits. Sure, we closed five or so coal plants, but in the world, at the same time, over 1,200 were opened. So if you look at that impact, what did we do? By not talking to our neighbours around the world—a huge negative impact, and we took the hit. All we've done, really, is chase business and manufacturing out of this province and left

ourselves less able to have resources to actually have a meaningful impact on the future.

I know my time is up. I think we need to work with our partners. I think this is a good opportunity. It didn't make it into the Great Lakes Protection Act, which one would have thought it would have, but I think we have to work with the two amendments. We'll be supporting it at second reading.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in this House, especially on Thursdays, when we have private members' bills, because it's a time when people bring things that are close to their heart, the things that they believe would make this province better. I think the member from Ottawa—Orléans has done that, in the spirit of this bill, and she has put forward something that she truly believes in and that our party believes in.

I don't profess to be an expert on microbeads, but I can remember watching TV commercials where it was advertised that some products had microbeads in them and the reason you should have bought them was because they had microbeads. It was something that was better than the other products. I remember I was coming home to my riding from Toronto a few weeks ago, and there was a documentary about them. That's the first time I realized that microbeads were plastic.

Once again, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if you put very small pieces of plastic in products that end up in the water system and in the environment, they're going to stay in the environment.

Is taking them out of products a good idea? Definitely. You always have to look at the positives and negatives and the ramifications of doing A or B. But if you look at the balance of things, I don't think that there are any really bad ramifications of taking them out of the system. They can be replaced. You can replace microbeads with natural material, like corn husks. So it's not that you would be disadvantaging anyone.

Should this bill proceed? Yes. It's a good thing. One of the reasons people put private members' bills forward is not only that they want their bill to proceed, but they are trying to influence the direction of the government. In the case of a private member's bill from the governing side, we're hoping that this truly does influence the direction of the government.

As we all know, on the opposition side, in a majority government, there's not a lot of hope of getting a private member's bill through. It takes a lot of work, perseverance and sometimes many tries. But on the government side, it shouldn't be quite as tough. If the government was truly supportive, it should come forward as part of the government's program. With this bill, hopefully, that is the case—that this is the first iteration brought forward by the member to influence the government to work on this.

There are companies already—as has been mentioned, states in the United States, like Ohio and Illinois, have already moved. So it's not that no one else has moved.

Many of the bigger manufacturers who use these products have already made it very apparent that they are planning on removing them from the system. There are some smaller manufacturers who have never used them.

I don't use any of these products; I'm not going to be an advertisement.

This is a bill and this is an issue where you actually could move very quickly. On the governing side, you don't really have to worry about the machinations of how private members' bills work. If it's a good idea, you can take it.

An example that the government should move on: the tip-out bill of the former member from Beaches–East York, Michael Prue. That was taken as a private member's bill. It should be a government bill and just be done.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, like the side-by-sides.

Mr. John Vanthof: Like the side-by-side legislation. It was a motion to change a regulation by a government member. There have been—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Two.

Mr. John Vanthof: —two bills since.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. One was mine, and one was the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka's. That's the type of bill—those bills, along with the regulation—that the government should move. There has been enough identification of that issue. The government should move.

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On this bill, the microbead bill, this is the start of the process. Other states have already moved. Everyone else in this House has made really good arguments on the reason they shouldn't be here, because they are bad for the environment; they're bad for animals. There are just not very many good attributes to microbeads, so why don't we just move? We pass this bill, the government takes their cue, and takes them out of the system in Ontario.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Maybe the minister is going to get up and announce that in his speech.

Mr. John Vanthof: It would be a great day to do that. It would be a great day because, unlike other issues—there are some issues that need a lot of consultation because there are big ramifications for both sides. But with this issue, there are replacements for microbeads that are perfectly natural, so there is no reason not to move ahead and ban them tout de suite.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's my pleasure to stand in this House today and speak to Bill 75, and to congratulate and thank my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans for her leadership. I join, in speaking today, with the members from Kingston and the Islands, Parkdale–High Park, Huron–Bruce, Timiskaming–Cochrane, and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Thank you to all these members for their input and their conversations.

When we are confronted with evidence that clearly shows a product or one of its ingredients is directly harming wildlife or the environment, it is our duty as

legislators to minimize or eliminate the threat and damage it causes. When it comes to our environment and our fish, our human health and our wildlife, these are endeavours that should be non-partisan, and as such I think we should focus on criticizing ideas and not the person. Earlier comments in the House did not follow that line, and I regret them.

I'd like to thank the member from Parkdale–High Park for her encouragement. As new members, that's exactly the kind of leadership we look to across this House and around this House from people who have been here for a while. We look to them as mentors and for encouragement, not for discouragement, because when you're a new member, that's exactly the kind of support that you look to, and that's what Ontarians want. They want us to work together; they want us to work in concert. They want us to be critical in a constructive way of each other, but not in a negative way. So I thank the member for her comments.

Les microbilles sont un des éléments qui posent clairement un danger pour nos lacs et rivières et pour tout ce qui vit à l'intérieur d'eux ou à proximité. On trouve ces petites particules de plastique dans pratiquement toutes les parties du réseau des Grands Lacs et dans de nombreux plans d'eau. Des études ont montré que ces particules sont présentes dans de nombreuses espèces de poissons dans tout l'Ontario, ce qui constitue une menace non seulement pour la santé globale de ces espèces, mais aussi pour la santé de ceux qui se nourrissent d'elles, dont nous faisons partie.

Microbeads can be ingested by fish or other aquatic species, or inhaled through their gills, causing blockages and abrasions. Once deposited internally, these plastics never break down, the long-term effects of which we do not yet know.

My riding of Burlington is situated on Lake Ontario and, as such, it is one that is directly affected by the potential harm of microbeads. Cootes to Escarpment, adjacent to Hamilton harbour, which Burlington borders, contains the largest number of endangered species in Canada. Any threat to the well-being of this ecosystem is one that I know my constituents take very seriously, as do I.

D'autres instances en Amérique du Nord, y compris au Québec et dans certains états du nord des États-Unis, ont déjà déposé ou prévoient de déposer des lois qui interdiraient l'utilisation des microbilles dans des produits cosmétiques. L'Ontario a l'occasion d'être, de nouveau, un chef de file en matière de protection de l'environnement, ce qu'il est régulièrement. Il s'agit d'un rôle auquel nous devrions aspirer en tant que province.

Manufacturers, I'm happy to say, are also committing themselves to protecting the environment, and many are looking at ways to solve the problem of microbeads. Johnson and Johnson is one such manufacturer, voluntarily removing microbeads from their products with the intention of having all of their products microbead-free by 2018. Why do we know this? Because we consulted with them. I have a constituent who works with Johnson

and Johnson. I consulted him, and he I, on this legislation. He shared this information with me, and then I shared it with my colleague the member for Ottawa–Orléans, as part of our consultation with industry. In fact, J&J have already stopped developing new products containing microbeads and have been conducting environmental safety assessments of other alternative ingredients. Their goal is to complete the first phase of reformulations by the end of this year, which represents about half of the products sold that contain microbeads. This, together with the other stakeholders that my colleague mentioned, represents a spirit of collaboration that industry is bringing to the conversation.

Notre gouvernement s'est engagé à protéger l'environnement de l'Ontario et à veiller à ce que la santé et le bien-être des générations futures soient préservés dans toute la mesure du possible. Ce projet de loi offre un outil de réglementation important pour lutter contre l'introduction d'un polluant nuisible dans nos rivières et lacs.

Mr. Speaker, it's been my pleasure to share my time with my colleagues on this important piece of legislation.

J'espère que tous les députés soutiendront ce projet de loi. Je vous remercie, monsieur le Président.

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

M^{me} Gila Martow: Je suis vraiment heureuse que je peux parler de ce projet de loi 75 sur l'élimination des microbilles. Comme la membre d'Ottawa–Orléans a expliqué, on a des produits naturels qu'on peut utiliser, comme les abricots écrasés.

I'm very happy to speak on Bill 75, the Microbead Elimination and Monitoring Act, which was presented by the member from Ottawa–Orléans. As she explained, there are natural products that could be implemented, such as crushed apricots.

I think that more could have been done to consult stakeholders. It was explained that some stakeholders were consulted, but others like Unilever weren't.

In terms of moving forward—and obviously, with bills such as this, we're all concerned, and we understand that it's not something where we necessarily have borders. Whenever it's something environmental, that's the challenge. If we try to work on a project at a municipal level, we're told it has to be provincial. If we try to work on a provincial project to have better and cleaner air and water, we're told it should be federal. If we work on federal, we're told it should be international. It is challenging, but I think that we can do better. We can work together.

The member from Huron–Bruce, when she was talking, and being criticized for being partisan—I think it would have been a very simple matter to reach out to the critics from the other parties. If you want to put forward an initiative that is non-partisan, all you have to do is contact them and have a meeting with them. She's very happy to sit down—she's very passionate—and to work together before the bill is even presented. Maybe we can all learn from that, moving forward.

As somebody who has been to Israel many times—I'd like to mention that, here in the Legislature—I think they're renowned for their environmental efforts. I think there's a lot we can learn, not just from elimination of microbeads but in terms of recycling, in terms of clean air and clean water and innovation techniques in farming, using less water.

The Dead Sea is famous for its mud baths and its natural Dead Sea products. I look forward to meeting with some people I know who are involved in importing those products, and finding out what they're doing in terms of the environment and microbead elimination.

It's unnecessary. We've all heard of places—even in Montreal, I believe, there are places where people are doing pedicures using tiny fish that eat the dead skin off the feet.

Interjections.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Right. This is something that's being done all over the world. I don't know how they can keep the water clean. I hope that it's safe for the fish. It seems kind of a little bit—if I can use the word—gross here. It is a little bit creepy. But I think there's something between maybe putting your feet in a bath of fish, and doing something harmful to the environment.

We can do better; we will do better. Thank you very much to everybody for their comments. Take care.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to wrap up the last few minutes.

I want to tell you how thrilled I am with the new members we have in this House from all parties. I think we've been getting a lot of energy and some bright new ideas, and I think private members' public business is one of the best opportunities to do that.

I also just wanted to address the comments that were raised by others about the importance of building private members' bills into legislation.

I have had five ministries in three years. I can't keep a job. I'm proud that I've worked with many of you. We have five opposition private members' bills that either have gone through the House or are currently part of government bills, fully credited to those people, and many of you know who you are. And there's more. I mean, there have been good things that have gone on. I always say to my friends in opposition, "I'm not the Liberal environment and climate change minister; I'm Ontario's. I'm yours as much as that." But I say that in a serious way, because—

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Interjection: Hey, Glenn, it's yours to discover.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It is mine to discover, and yours as well, my friend—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. And I'd ask the minister to speak through the Chair.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I actually like—I think we're privileged to live in a democracy with 107 remarkably committed MPPs. I think we always exceed our expectations as Ontarians when we can actually work

together, and our one chance to do it—to be MPPs before we're Liberals, Conservatives or New Democrats, and be Ontarians first and people on this planet first—is this afternoon. I always enjoy when I'm listening to my colleagues speak to this.

Microbeads are a terrible problem. We know from recent research that there's up to 1.7 million of them—they are pouring out. I want to give a big shout-out to Unilever. We did talk to them. They've eliminated them. They're the first company and we give them a big round of applause. When I was waiting for my EpiPen the other day, I went and took pictures of all the products. Do you know that Unilever is one of the only folks that have completely eliminated them? They're a highly profitable company. The other companies, if you look, still have polyethylene in all of the toothpaste I looked at, almost all of the scrub—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, sorry. They do. L'Oréal is doing it, but they've done it completely, so Unilever, I can tell you, is not bothered by this. I just think they kind of like the edge that they have over their competition.

I just want to say one thing in closing, in the last minute I have, because plastics and polyethylene aren't just about microbeads. Twenty years ago, we didn't have plastic water bottles. Today they choke our waste streams; they're driving the cost of recycling up.

We have perfectly durable municipal water systems. Do you know that a plastic water bottle, if you take a 500-millilitre glass of water—it uses 2,000 times more energy to drink water out of a plastic bottle—2,000 times. You would have to fill a 500-millilitre plastic water bottle 40% full of oil or fossil fuels—that's how much oil or fossil fuels is there. So we have to work together, but to do these things, to take on those big interests, it's going to take all of us closing ranks together, beyond partisan lines.

So I hope today—my friend from Ottawa–Orléans not only has introduced a good bill, but she has raised the issue of plastics because we have a lot more work to do here. I hope that it can be a multi-partisan effort to ban plastics from our oceans and to start using the good, durable materials and the great municipal water systems we have.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa–Orléans, you have two minutes for a response.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: First, I would like to say thank you to all the members, the member from Kingston and the Islands, the member for Burlington, and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I know two of my colleagues had prepared to speak, the members for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and Etobicoke Centre, who didn't have a chance to speak. I'm apologizing about this. Thank you to members from the opposition—Huron–Bruce, Parkdale–High Park, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Timiskaming–Cochrane, and Thornhill—for their valuable, valuable input on this important issue. I want to say thank you very much to the

members of the third party for their insight and their support of my bill. Thank you very much.

I want to conclude by noting that we need to move on the issue and stop plastic pollution in the Great Lakes. This challenge is not for us alone. We want to work with industry, as we consulted with them and I consulted several times with environmental stakeholders, of which we have 4,000 and some change of good feedback from our people at home and in Ontario and everyone in this House.

We can all take action today by having more informed decisions about the products that we buy. I encourage every member of this House to download the microbeads app, which allows you to scan products' bar codes to ensure products do not contain microbeads.

I want to encourage this House to pass this bill so that Ontario can continue to be a world leader on the environment and the climate change issue, something that I know that my constituents and the people of Ontario deeply care about and this government actually cares about.

So I'll end with saying let's beat the beads and pass Bill 75.

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

VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: On a point of order, Speaker: If I could, with your indulgence, introduce to the House three senior staff members who have just joined us from the Ontario Arts Council: Kirsten Gunter, the director of communications; Randi Apple, the executive coordinator; and Shoshana Wasser, the communications coordinator.

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

We will take the vote on the last item at the end of regular business.

POET LAUREATE OF ONTARIO ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE POÈTE OFFICIEL DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Hatfield moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario / Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à créer la charge de poète officiel de l'Ontario.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Sometimes great steps are taken in this House, decisions are made and then, for a variety of reasons, nothing much happens. A committee doesn't meet. A report gets shelved. Priorities change. A Parliament gets prorogued. An election is called. Some mo-

tions and bills never get implemented. This is what happened back in October 2009, when the member for York Centre, Mr. Kwinter, introduced a motion to create the position of an Ontario Poet Laureate.

I didn't know that when I decided to introduce this private member's bill. All I knew was that we didn't have a poet laureate in Ontario. Canada does. Other provinces do: PEI, Saskatchewan, the Yukon.

I was a member of city council in Windsor when we named Marty Gervais as our first poet laureate four years ago. Toronto has one, as does London, Barrie, Brantford, Cobourg, Cobalt, Owen Sound, Kingston, Sudbury—and there are probably other poets laureate in our province as well, Speaker.

Let me try this:

I think it's appropriate this winter
That we're discussing an issue once raised by Monte
Kwinter.
He sits in the front bench, unfazed.
He'll turn 84 in the next 10 days.
At times he appears to have the energy of a young
stallion.
But he needs nine more years to match the municipal
record of Hazel McCallion.

Speaker, the pen is mightier than the sword. Think about it: A hundred years ago, Major John McCrae wrote *In Flanders Fields*. Who among us is not aware of that great poem, written in 1915?

Poetry lives forever. Poetry is everywhere, Speaker. It just needs to be tapped. The doors just need to be opened.

Windsor, the city of roses, has a host of great poets. Windsor is known for many things. We're home to Hiram Walker and Wiser's, where great whiskey is distilled. We're home to the automotive industry. We can't hide from the fact that prevailing winds from America blow air pollution our way, but we have great sunsets because of that.

Let me quote the final seven lines from Anne Baldo's poem *Finally Sweet*:

Windsor is, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder,"
A love swollen by want and distance,
Finally sweet as you recede.
"God save the Big Three" on billboards at the bar.
Salt on the street and wet, grey springs.
Windsor is the city of roses under a whiskey sour sky.

Wow. What imagery, Speaker: "the city of roses under a whiskey sour sky."

We all know that Windsor played a major role in the Underground Railroad. Here's a poem by Mary Ann Mulhern called *Freedom's Rail*:

When her people asked,
"Who will lead us through forests
"Where teeth and bullets tear flesh from bone
"Across a river pulling us into the nets cast for bounty?"

Harriet Tubman answered,
"Like Moses before me,
"I will find a path,
"Lead you north on black winter nights,
"Search for manna in the snow,
"Bring you over on hidden lines
"Running to Canada's sanctuary,
"Where men are not linked with chains,
"Where women wear rings on hands without ropes,
"Where children play in cotton washed clean of blood,
"And the fields you plant
"Yield harvests of promise:
"America's flower opening."

1430

Mary Ann Mulhern convinced my former ward mate in Windsor, Jo-Anne Gignac, to start the process that led to Marty Gervais becoming our first poet laureate in Windsor. That was four years ago. A year later, Marty brought five other poets laureate—four from Ontario and one from Prince Edward Island—to historic Willistead Manor in old Walkerville for an evening of verse and stories. It was standing room only, and it proved to me that we need to do more to promote literacy, poetry and publishing in Ontario.

My love for poetry probably began in about grade 11, in Newfoundland. We had to memorize the final 15 lines or so of Lord Tennyson's *Ulysses*:

Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Speaker, I think that was written in 1833. It may surprise some of my Liberal friends to know that those lines were often quoted by former Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. That was his favourite poem.

Here is one by Marty Gervais, called *My Son and Samuel Beckett*:

My son put a CCM hockey helmet
Over a bust of Samuel Beckett
On top of the TV
And tells me every once in a while
He doesn't know who this Beckett guy is
And doesn't really want to know.
It's better that way.
The lined face, the quizzical eyes.

He calls him the old man of hockey,
 A kind of silent Don Cherry,
 And thinks maybe
 It brings good luck to the games—his own—
 For just as he runs out the door
 With his hockey bag,
 He reaches for the helmet
 And kind of looks at Beckett's face
 And gives him the thumbs-up.

Black Moss Press published a book of poems by Dorothy Mahoney, back in 2001. Here's one called *Sunday Drives*:

We left early morning or afternoon
 On the ritual drive of Sunday,
 Each holding our secret destinations close,
 Each slumped in our own corner of the car,
 Hoping that the first gas station
 Might see ice cream or chocolate bars,
 That we might run up and down
 The grassy trenches at Fort Malden
 And later eat a pastry swan,
 Wings coated with icing sugar,
 Whipped cream moustaches defining upper lips,
 That we might feed the geese at Jack Miner's
 And find a peacock feather or two.
 If the drive was longer,
 Parents debating between cottage or boat,
 We'd stop and eat at a diner,
 The menu a paradise of choices,
 Though my mother always ordered liver
 And we poured too much ketchup on our fries.
 Then we might stop at Point Pelee,
 Seeking smooth stones and shells,
 Each keeping only one in the pocket
 For the ride home,
 Rubbing the surface with a wish,
 Never remembering what for.

Windsor is also home to Biblioasis, a bookstore and publishing house. Eleven years ago, they published *Straight Razor and Other Poems*, by Salvatore Ala. That's where I found this poem, *Sweeping the Barber Shop Floor*. It was dedicated to his brothers:

They never forget they are brooms,
 Barbers' sons grown into men.
 The advantages of being a broom:
 It teaches you a broom's humility.
 At the end of the day when you sweep the last of the
 hair away,
 You do not feel inferior to those whose hair you take
 out to the trash.

Speaker, I've asked the Ontario Arts Council to name the panel of judges who would select our poet laureate; that takes the politics out of the equation.

As I've mentioned, we've been joined this afternoon by three senior administrative staff at the Arts Council: Kirsten Gunter, Randi Apple and Shoshana Wasser. They're here because they're interested in taking part in this.

I hope this bill is seen as a non-partisan attempt to promote literacy, to focus attention on our amazing poets and to give new focus to the arts community in Ontario. It's not a perfect bill by any means. It can be improved in committee. I ask my colleagues on all sides of the House to support me in this endeavour—that if it does get to committee, that we all work together and try to improve it, because it can be improved.

I guess the bottom line of it is, I believe that we need a poet laureate in Ontario; we should have had one years ago. We have an opportunity now to make it happen. We have the support of the Arts Council; they would pick the first one—and if it was a two-year term, after that, two members of the Arts Council and the outgoing poet laureate would choose the incoming poet laureate.

I'll leave you with a very short poem by Irving Layton:

I dreamt that I was Satan
 Being warmed by molten stones
 And critics who had scorned me
 Had to memorize my poems.

I look forward to the questions and comments, Speaker. Thank you for your time, and thank you to the members of the Ontario Arts Council for coming in this afternoon and taking part in our discussion.

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'm very happy to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge to speak to private members' bill, Bill 71, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario.

Arts and culture have been of utmost importance to our province and to our country for many years. As a past president of Heritage Cambridge, now known as ACO Cambridge—it's the Cambridge branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario—I really do understand the need to preserve and protect culture in this province. At Heritage Cambridge, we work to do just that: to preserve culture in order to enrich my riding of Cambridge.

Bill 71 aims to promote literacy in the arts in Ontario, which is a very noble cause. We must understand that encouraging the public to immerse themselves in the written word contributes to a richer and more inquisitive society. I would say to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh that his quotes today certainly enriched the debate in this House this afternoon.

Our government certainly understands how important this is. Our government has worked diligently to support and enhance arts and culture in Ontario. In 2007, the Status of Ontario's Artists Act was passed. It indicated a commitment to the recognition of contributions that artists make to Ontario through enhancing our culture,

brightening communities and fostering citizen involvement in arts and culture. This legislation marked a momentous occasion for the province and truly exemplified how dedicated we are as a society to our artists and creative folks. The dedication is long-standing.

Since 2003, the government of Ontario has invested \$6.6 billion in the sector of arts and culture. This investment has shown incredible payoff: the culture sector contributes around \$22 billion to our economy each year, and this number continues to grow annually. Arts and culture also enhance our society in an incalculable way, and we're all better off for this growing area.

1440

The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the member from Kingston and the Islands have done a wonderful job during this session of promoting arts and culture in our province. I'd like to thank them for their invaluable work in furthering the legacy of this government.

There are many factors of this bill that I support. The commitment to the literary arts is important. It was first presented by the member from York Centre in 2009 when he introduced a similar motion proposing that the Legislative Assembly introduce a poet laureate of Ontario to help promote the arts and literacy.

Bill 71 would introduce a poet laureate of Ontario as an officer of the Legislative Assembly. She or he would write poetry, visit schools, advise the legislative library and generally contribute to literacy and the literary arts in this province.

I do thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for drawing attention to the arts, but there are several important issues with the bill that I want to bring up.

Firstly, the establishment of a poet laureate as an officer of the Legislative Assembly would contradict the typical role of parliamentary officers in Ontario. In general, officers carry out duties that the Legislative Assembly may do, but in a way that is independent of government. There is currently no officer similar to the one proposed by Bill 71.

I also have some concerns about the potential for financial implications in Bill 71. Across Canada, poet laureates often receive stipends for their duties. The federal poet laureate, for example, receives a stipend of \$20,000 per year. The bill states that the costs related to the appointment of the poet laureate of Ontario may be placed upon the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Private members' bills may not call for the allocation of funds, so this might be an inappropriate stipulation.

Finally, the Ontario Arts Council has been consulted and has some apprehension with the particulars of Bill 71. The OAC would prefer to see a better system of peer assessment in candidate selection for the poet laureate.

I certainly thank the member from across the aisle for introducing this bill and shedding light on the important role of the literary arts in this province. I, too, look forward to the ongoing conversation on Bill 71.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to speak in favour of Bill 71, Poet Laureate of Ontario Act, 2015, put forward by my good friend and the most eloquent member from Windsor–Tecumseh, Percy Hatfield. I also want to welcome the Ontario Arts Council members here today who are in the gallery.

This bill establishes the poet laureate of Ontario. I think we sound like we're all in favour so far, Percy, so it seems very good. As critic for tourism and culture, I'm certainly very pleased to see this come forward again.

The Lieutenant Governor would appoint a poet laureate, responsible for promoting art and literacy, celebrating Ontario and its people, and raising the profile of Ontario poets. The official appointment is done by government or a conferring institution.

They are often expected to compose poems for special events and occasions. I know that some members—I think the former member from Halton would often have his member's statements in poem fashion, so maybe they will look to him, Mr. Ted Chudleigh.

Visiting schools, presenting or arranging poetry readings, and assisting with writing workshops or other activities would be part of the poet laureate's job description, we can say, as well as advising the legislative library regarding the collection of the library and acquisitions that may enrich its cultural holdings, and performing other duties as requested by the Speaker—maybe not the Speaker in the chair at the moment, but the Speaker of the assembly—the Lieutenant Governor, or the legislative library in relation to this act, which is a wonderful resource for us as members. But they would be influential, and I think that's a fabulous idea. They would be a literary ambassador.

Culture is one of the fastest-growing sectors and contributes more than \$22.6 billion annually to Ontario's economy. Having this poet laureate would just add to that.

At the time of the debate in the 39th Parliament when we discussed that, it was certainly supported by all three parties in the Legislature.

Federally, on January 7, 2014, the Speaker of the Senate, the Honourable Noël Kinsella, and the House of Commons Speaker, the Honourable Andrew Scheer, announced the appointment of Michel Pleau as Canada's next Parliamentary Poet Laureate.

We have spoken about municipalities that have poet laureates and provinces that have poet laureates, so I guess it's time for Ontario to have its own poet laureate. I'm pleased to support the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's bill here today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I am so pleased to join the debate started by my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh about bringing a poet laureate to this Legislative Assembly.

When John Rodriguez was mayor of Sudbury, he brought one to the city of Sudbury, and it changed things for the better. Whenever the city was having a special

celebration—the first poet laureate was Roger Nash—he would set the tone.

Well, you saw what it did today, Speaker, when he read a few lines of poetry. It just changes the mood for the better.

We have some incredibly talented people. They can take words and make them say things at four and five different levels all at the same time. They are masters in their craft, in their profession, and I think it's an excellent idea to bring them to Queen's Park and give everybody in Ontario an opportunity to read and hear what they have to say. This is something that is worth doing.

On Monday, I was at the Speaker's Book Award, and I was really pleased to see one of my ex-constituents, who used to live in my riding with his parents, who have moved to Ottawa. Daniel Groleau Landry's *Rêver au réel*, which is a book of poetry, was selected and made it to the final list. I will tell you a little bit about what it is. *Rêver au réel* is a collection of poems that explore four states of being: "Each ponders physical closeness, the emptiness that follows fleeting, fiery moments, and fetuses that continue to spin themselves into constellations, in rhyme and alliteration that reveal the sinuous thoughts of the poet. Landry manipulates sonorities to evoke images that grip our subconscious, that push the magical toward reality. His words blend body and spirit, mingle beauty and madness, and walk the line between dreams and wakefulness, truths and untruths." This is certainly a book I would recommend to all of you if you have a chance to read it.

April is the celebration of National Poetry Month. April is coming next month, Speaker. What a great gift to this Legislative Assembly if we could all agree that, during poetry month, this Legislative Assembly would agree to put into motion whatever steps need to happen so that we select our first poet laureate. I would add a little parenthesis, a favour that I ask of all my colleagues: that when—and I know that we will; I don't know when it will happen, but it will happen—once we decide to have a poet laureate here at Queen's Park, that we make sure we recognize that we have some very good Franco-Ontarian poets as well; and to make sure that through the rotation, there is a system in place so that they, too, have an opportunity to be heard.

Ça me fait extrêmement plaisir d'appuyer le projet de loi. J'espère que tout le monde va se rallier pour avoir un poète lauréat ici à Queen's Park et que, lorsqu'il sera en place, un mécanisme soit mis en place pour s'assurer que des poètes franco-ontariens ont également la chance d'être choisis. C'est une bonne idée. Let's move on with it.

1450

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm very happy to be able to speak to private member's Bill 71, presented by the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. Before I speak to the bill, I would like to offer that I would be happy to introduce a motion or private member's bill directing that

the member for Windsor–Tecumseh become the official raconteur of the Legislature. I think it would be a very welcome respite for many of us, perhaps, to listen to him read poetry for half an hour or so every Thursday afternoon, or maybe during question period; that might be even better.

Seriously, Mr. Speaker, I do congratulate the member for his proposal. It's unfortunate that the previous attempt from the member for York Centre did not come to fruition. Many assemblies have poets laureate. These are people who are able to speak the stories of their countries, their provinces, their regions or their municipalities, and that adds a great deal. The ability they have to share those stories, especially with young people, and strengthen literacy and strengthen the importance of the written and spoken word, is very important. I think this is an initiative that we should all support, and I look forward to it coming into reality.

I believe that honouring and highlighting the achievements of our artists, and particularly our Ontario poets, is a very important part of our service to the province. Poets are extraordinary components of our literary world. I'm pleased that in 2007 the government of Ontario passed a historic piece of legislation, the Status of Ontario's Artists Act, which committed the government to recognize the fact that artists make significant contributions to Ontario's economy and quality of life. I know that both Minister Coteau and MPP Kiwala are working very hard to celebrate and highlight the profile of artists in Ontario.

The bill proposed by the member for Windsor–Tecumseh will only serve to underscore the government's commitment to the literary arts and to culture more generally. Speaking of literary culture, there is a very vibrant and lively arts community in my own riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore. There are a number of organizations that promote not only visual arts but the written word and poetry. There's the Arts Etobicoke organization, which has been established since 1973, and it has over 55 member groups, many of which are involved in poetry and the written word. I have the Lakeshore Arts organization in my community, which sponsors literary readings and other cultural events. I also have a very extraordinary school in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the Etobicoke School of the Arts, which attracts some of the most talented young people from across the city of Toronto in their pursuit of artistic excellence, and many of them are poets. So this is something that in my community would be greatly valued and embraced.

I'm very pleased with the proposal from the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, notwithstanding a few concerns that we have on this side of the House about how the private member's bill has been written: the nature of the office that he's proposing and the financial commitment that he's trying to impose. But those aside, I think it's a very laudable goal and one that I certainly will be supporting.

I'm looking forward to the rest of the debate. I understand that we might have some prose coming later on this afternoon as well, so I look forward to that.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to stand and speak on this initiative, Bill 71, to have a poet laureate of our own here in Ontario. As we know, many jurisdictions have a poet laureate. I always admire the member from Windsor–Tecumseh's poetry. As the member from Huron–Bruce mentioned, we'd love to hear what he writes on Valentine's Day, and that he should share it with us every year because we're sure it's something very romantic and beautiful.

I recently attended at the York Entrepreneurship Development Institute, commonly known as YEDI. They had a venture fair at the city of Vaughan's new city hall. It was really great to see so many young people, and some maybe not so young, with their initiatives specifically in the non-profit sector—very innovative.

There was one presentation about a group of actors who do dinner theatre. They do corporate dinner theatre. They're professional actors, and they incorporate people—maybe it's something we can do here for some bonding exercises. They incorporate people to participate in the plays. It's very interactive, and it's wildly successful.

People do want culture in their lives, and they want it to be something that's part of different aspects of their lives; not just something they share within their family but maybe with their colleagues at work, their neighbours and just on the street.

Not too far from Queen's Park, we have a coffee shop called Snakes and Lattes. You can go in there and play board games. They don't charge very much. I hear they have thousands and thousands of board games, including Snakes and Ladders, of course. There's no alcohol there, and it's busy. People like to interact, to have fun. There are other places where people are sharing their music and their poetry.

I want to tell you a little bit about an experience I had when I went to Ireland. We all know there are musical pub crawls. But in Dublin, my husband, my eldest son and I participated in a literary pub crawl. Three actors accompanied us. I have to say that I'm not a big beer drinker, so I wasn't there for the beer. But it was an eclectic group of people who signed up for this. The three actors who accompanied us stayed in their roles. One specifically was Oscar Wilde. They took us through the grounds of Trinity College. They told us stories of their time at Trinity College and their experiences in the neighbourhood.

The highlight of the whole evening was Oscar Wilde; I'm going to call him Oscar Wilde because as far as I was concerned, he was Oscar Wilde. He told us a tale about being invited to bring a little culture to the miners in Colorado. He was invited by a sort of church group, I guess, of women who wanted to get those miners to be a little bit more broad in their culture. Oscar Wilde was having some difficulties back home, something about the son of an aristocrat and some legal issues—I won't get

into that. He decided that maybe he would take this group of women up on their wonderful offer to visit Colorado and bring some culture to the miners.

They have preserved the letters he wrote back home to his friends. One of the letters was about how he got up on a stage in a little community hall. He told his friends back home, "Well, I wore my purple velvet suit. You know the one; it fits me so well. I put my biggest silver buckles on my shoes. I got up in front of the miners, who didn't seem overly impressed with my outfit, and I was feeling a little nervous. They had their arms crossed and their suspenders were bursting and their flannel shirts were bursting at the buttons." The actor was very eloquent in his description; we could all picture it quite clearly. He said that he told his best salon stories and regaled them with all sorts of interesting literary soliloquies, and the miners barely cracked a smile and didn't seem terribly interested.

But as soon as he got off the stage, they swarmed him. He thought, "Well, maybe I did get through to them." No, no. They swarmed him and they took him: "We want to show you our life. We want to show you the mines." They loaded him into a basket and pulled the ropes and lowered him down into the mine. He didn't feel he had a choice. I guess there were no OPP officers in those days to help him out.

He went along. He went down in the mine, and immediately they pulled out bottles of whisky. They passed around the first bottle and then the second bottle. At the end of the evening, as he reports, Oscar Wilde had to put the miners in the basket and load them up the ropes because, as he put it, "You're not going to drink an Irishman under the table."

1500

It was such a great experience. I think that we want to bring tourists to Toronto, and not just that: We want them to come back again and again. The way to do that isn't just with restaurants, and it isn't with casinos; it's with bringing something meaningful to their lives, something they experience, something outdoors, something unusual, some kind of activity that they can really enjoy across different generations, across different cultures. That's our challenge: how to make Toronto a first-rate city in terms of culture as well as so many other things.

We all have visitors who come from out of town, and I think we all scratch our heads sometimes about what we can do with these visitors that isn't going to cost us a week's salary. It's so nice that we do often have the fairs. I attended the Ashkenaz Festival, and I think it's really well planned. At Harbourfront, I've been to milk festivals. We have Exhibition Place, and we used to have interesting things going on in different areas downtown. We have Luminato and Nuit Blanche. We have so many great things that it's really up to us to help promote and to participate in. That's what we can do as legislators and as members of our own communities and oftentimes as people with large Twitter followings and Facebook followings. When we promote an event, it's very helpful

to the organizers of the event to have us help promote it and bring people out.

So I'm looking forward to not just having a poet laureate here in Ontario—I think it's not just about the poet laureate; it's about what it says about moving forward, what we can do to make this a destination not just where you have to go to the art gallery to see art, but where we can have art that moves around, art that's interactive.

We have long winters; this winter was quite brutal for a lot of people. So what can we do to bring local artists to the community centres, to the city halls, to the schools and, yes, to our seniors? We all know it's not enough just to hire caregivers for our seniors. They want a good quality of life. They don't want to be taken care of by a troupe of babysitters marching in and out. They want to be participating in the arts and in the culture, and I think that there's so much more we can do.

I'm looking forward to hearing from all the creative people, both inside and outside this House, as to what we can do to bring Ontario to be recognized as a place to visit that's fun and educational and has that higher level of culture and history that I know we could achieve.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I thought the member from Thornhill was going to quote one of Oscar Wilde's sayings, "Work is the bane of drinking class," when she was telling that story. I love Oscar Wilde, and I'll end with a quote of his as well.

I want to welcome the Ontario Arts Council and suggest just before—I of course support the member's bill, I think it's a wonderful one, but wouldn't it be nice to also have status-of-the-artist legislation in this place, one of the very first bills I introduced nine years ago? Things like income averaging, things like housing, things like a bill brought forward by the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to protect child actors are all parts of the status-of-the-artist legislation that we would really love to have.

But I want to focus on a group from my riding. They're slightly different kinds of poets. They're called the Toronto Street Writers, formally the Parkdale Street Writers. These are kids, mostly homeless kids, who live rough, as we say downtown, and who have diagnoses, sometimes drug and alcohol issues. I used to be a street kid, so my heart goes out to them. I want to talk about that organization, because it's a wonderful one, and also quote a couple of poems from them.

Here's a piece by Dizia Raposo-Ferreira, Everyone Needs Help in Parkdale:

Parkdale has a heart and it beats heavy with suffering, but the passersby would never take the time to notice. When the sun goes down, it's like being behind curtains: the rich aren't supposed to see the chaos. Every woman and man, even people with no hands, needs help in Parkdale.

Or, Anger, by Nyasha Muntasi:

To be held hostage by one's own mind,
Mind: imprisoned by walls of thoughts.
Thoughts: blackmailed by perceptions.
Perceptions: reinforcing one's identity.
Identity: collected from experiences.
Experiences: esteemed by egos of self.
Self: assured by a collection of ego minds.
But you forget all the above are CHOSEN.
Change but one and the cycle breaks.

Along with passing this bill, I would suggest that the committee that chooses the poet laureate not only choose a poet, but a poet who represents the diversity of our communities across Ontario and, most importantly, a poet who really needs the job because, my goodness, Mr. Speaker, we need jobs in Ontario and certainly in the arts. So find somebody who really needs the money, really needs the job and really represents diversity.

I'll close with another Oscar Wilde quote, inspired by the member from Thornhill. Oscar said, in his inimitable way: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars."

I believe the member from Windsor–Tecumseh is looking at the stars. Let's all do that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and might I say

That you're doing an excellent job in spite of the daily fray.

My colleague the member for Windsor–Tecumseh,
A gentleman who is very orderly,
In his good judgment brought before this House
A private member's bill I hope we will not douse.

The member and I have an unusual connection:
Many years ago for a roommate he made the selection
A fellow broadcaster in Pembroke named Buck,
Who, later and for many years, worked as my CTV cameraman, as would be my luck.
The member moved on to Windsor to an illustrious career as a radio host
Before he decided to seek elected office in this legislative post.

Now he has presented before us a bill
That would create a position of Poet Laureate that he wants us to fill.
In the tradition of Byron, Browning, Shakespeare and Poe
We want to make certain we select a candidate who won't crow.
In this House we explore the richness of the English language every day
And so let us celebrate our expression of wordplay, I say.

Mr. Speaker, culture is one of our fastest-growing sectors
 And I think of our language we should be protectors.
 Did you know that our culture sector contributes \$22 billion to our economy?
 That kind of financial stimulation certainly gives us autonomy.
 Of course, our province's broader creative industries support over 300,000 jobs
 And I know, when it comes to recognizing culture, that my New Democratic colleague is certainly not a snob.

Our government, in 2007, passed the historic Status of Ontario's Artists Act
 That, recognizing artists make a contribution to Ontario, we all backed.
 Artists make our communities more livable and vibrant
 Like a well of fresh ideas flowing from a hydrant.

I have read the MPP's vision for this position
 And know that he's ready to start the auditions.
 So, Mr. Speaker, is Bill 71 to be or not to be?
 I encourage all legislators on this private member's bill to agree.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's my pleasure to rise as the member for London West to congratulate the member for Windsor–Tecumseh on his private member's bill, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario. Like the member for Nickel Belt, I wanted to share with MPPs in the House some of the experience of my community and how having a poet laureate for the city of London has really enriched Londoners. It has challenged us to think bigger than ourselves and it has certainly brought us closer together as a community.

1510

A poet laureate was first recommended in 2005 for London in the report of the Creative City Task Force, and that task force really identified the importance of a dynamic and thriving cultural sector in supporting economic growth, but also enhancing the livability of our city. Certainly we know that the arts and culture sector does not only generate jobs for arts and culture workers, but it also attracts the kind of young talent that our city is looking for to help foster economic growth across the economy.

Throughout history and across cultures, poetry has played an important role in bringing people together throughout every significant rite of passage, through marriage, birth, love and death. It speaks to both the individual and the universal. In that way, it really connects us much more closely to each other.

London's first poet laureate was Penn Kemp. She served from 2010 to 2012. She's a shining example of how poetry can be used to change the world. She's used her gifts to raise awareness of climate change and en-

vironmental issues; she advocates for peace and social justice. She calls herself a poetry activist; sometimes she calls herself an eco-poet. She uses her gifts and her talents to advance human rights and to make social change.

It's no coincidence that during her tenure as poet laureate, we've seen a number of other things in London really take off. The London Poetry Slam, which is an incredibly stimulating and energizing experience, is particularly appealing to young people. Half the people who attend the poetry slam are under the age of 21. It's really brought our community together. We also have WordsFest, a literary and creative arts festival that was just launched last year. Again, all of this has promoted our sense of identity as Londoners. It's connected us and it's really done great things for our community.

I urge all MPPs to support this bill.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm honoured that in our riding we have northern Ontario's first poet laureate. She is also from the smallest town that has a poet laureate. Her name is Ann Margetson. She has brought hope and health to our community because poetry has a unique way, in few words, of describing a community that in other ways you can't.

I would like to close this debate by reading one of her poems:

There are many tales and legends about Cobalt Town
 Some will make you laugh and others cause a frown.
 It is full of history and beauty all mixed together as one.
 Why not stop by and stay a while and see what was done.

The silver trail with its shafts and mills now in ruins
 lie,
 But you can with some imagination feel people go by
 Who loved and loved and struggled through much strife
 To bring silver out of the earth and give it precious life.

Seams of almost solid ore many feet thick and deep
 Now making crevices in which as we walk we can peep
 And marvel at the ore that must be still buried there
 Or even on the surface maybe or lying open and bare.

Maybe hidden under the wild flowers that grow everywhere
 In the many core samples that can be found here and there
 But the best part of the trail are the unspoken words you feel
 As you look at the tortured land now really beginning to heal.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now recognize the member for Windsor–Tecumseh on the last verse.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. If I could, I would like to thank my colleagues who spoke to this bill: the members from Cambridge, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, Nickel Belt, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Thornhill, Parkdale–High Park, Kitchener Centre, London West and Timiskaming–Cochrane. Thank you very much for your support.

All raised very great points. As I said, the bill can be improved in committee. I hope it gets to committee and people work on it and actually improve it.

They brought out that arts and culture is a \$22-billion industry in Ontario. I know one member mentioned a stipend of \$20,000—I think you said \$20,000 versus \$22 billion. But I didn't call for a stipend. I said the minister "may" in the future offer an honorarium. I knew I couldn't say the minister "will." But we should look at that.

The minister, or the member from Nickel Belt—a future minister—said April is poetry month. If we do this in a hurry, we can get it done. We can have a poet laureate in April. That same poet laureate, when we have the Pan/Parapan Games coming up this summer, could take an active role in the opening and closing ceremonies as well, all part of the same ministry.

There are so many things going on. I know the Ontario Arts Council suggested a peer assessment. If they did it under their umbrella, if they brought everybody together, we could have the peer assessment of poets make that decision on the first one and take over eventually.

This is the nuts and bolts of the bill, if you will. It puts it into place. It gets us talking about it. Isn't it fantastic that—well, not an hour—for almost an hour this afternoon, all we talked about in this House was arts and culture, the Ontario Arts Council, the promotion of arts and culture in Ontario? That is a good thing. Sometimes we get lost in our bubble up here when we talk about other matters. But this afternoon, we talked about arts and culture, and that makes it a success in itself.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of regular business.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Grant Crack: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Ontario Legislative Assembly recognizes that scientists agree that climate change is caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions and poses a serious threat to Ontario's environment, businesses, communities and economy, that scientists and leaders of G8 countries—including Canada—have recognized the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with a goal of avoiding more than two degrees of warming, and affirm that this House must take necessary action to reduce emissions, transition to a low-carbon economy and combat the effects of climate change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Crack has moved private members' notice of motion number 41. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Grant Crack: It's certainly an honour and a pleasure to be able to stand here. I'd like to acknowledge the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who is here with us this afternoon.

"Science has spoken. There is no ambiguity in the message. Leaders must act. Time is not on our side." That's a quote from Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change recently launched a report emphasizing that immediate action on climate change is needed to avoid irreparable damage. Thousands of scientists helped develop the report, which is the first since 2007, to bring together all aspects of tackling climate change.

I want to take this opportunity right now for another quote, Mr. Speaker, from a very honourable individual, an environmental expert, Mr. David Suzuki. This is taken from his website:

"The overwhelming majority of scientists who study climate change agree that human activity is responsible for changing the climate. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ... is one of the largest bodies of international scientists ever assembled to study a scientific issue, involving more than 2,500 scientists from more than 130 countries. The IPCC has concluded that most of the warming observed during the past 50 years is attributable to human activities. Its findings have been publicly endorsed by the national academies of science of all G8 nations, as well as those of China, India and Brazil."

Speaker, this is also from David Suzuki's website. He states, "The debate is over about whether or not climate change is real. Irrefutable evidence from around the world—including extreme weather events, record temperatures, retreating glaciers and rising sea levels—all point to the fact that climate change is happening now and at rates much faster than previously thought."

Additionally, I want to read an excerpt from a recent National Geographic edition, which kind of outlines some of the doubt that is being cast on whether or not climate change is real. It's the same edition that talks about the Anti-Evolution League. The deputy House leader has a copy himself. I congratulate him on that, for taking the time to peruse that.

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The Anti-Evolution League is discussed in there. Of course, we all know that they were the force behind the monkey trial, where John T. Scopes was teaching evolution in Tennessee in 1925. Of course, we all know that he was convicted—and we all have different opinions, perhaps, on that.

It also discussed the flat-earthers, who believe that the earth was flat—Columbus actually proved that it wasn't; he was able to go right around the world—and also those who believe that the moon landing was in fact not real.

I want to bring some comments from that particular National Geographic edition:

“Last fall the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which consists of hundreds of scientists operating under the auspices of the United Nations, released its fifth report in the past 25 years. This one repeated louder and clearer than ever the consensus of the world’s scientists: The planet’s surface temperature has risen by about 1.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the past 130 years, and human actions, including the burning of fossil fuels, are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the warming since the mid-20th century. Many people in the United States—a far greater percentage than in other countries—retain doubts about that consensus or believe that climate activists are using the threat of global warming to attack the free market and industrial society generally. Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma, one of the most powerful Republican voices on environmental matters, has long declared global warming a hoax.

“The idea that hundreds of scientists from all over the world would collaborate on such a vast hoax is laughable—scientists love to debunk one another.”

I want to quote the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills from last November 13. He is quoted in the Renfrew Mercury: “CO₂ is a positive gas. We need CO₂. There is a positive side to that.”

The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington also stated, at an all-candidates meeting in June 2014, “I’m very skeptical of climate change.... We have problems today. We can’t worry about what may happen in 50 years. We need to address the problems that are now and factual.”

Let’s talk a little bit more about some facts. From 1900 to 2015, we saw a 1.3-degree Celsius increase in Ontario’s average temperature. Scientists are predicting a 7.7% increase by the year 2100. As far as precipitation goes, there has been an 11.8% increase in precipitation in the last 100 years, but they’re forecasting 16.7% in the next 100 years.

The points I’m trying to make now are that global warming is real, climate change is real, and we need to be taking action.

Before I go any further, I want to talk about a tweet I received this morning after a press conference that I had the privilege of doing with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. It says, from the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, “@GrantCrack constituents should be ashamed of him using his PMB slot to play politics instead of advancing important local issue.”

That’s mind-boggling, Speaker, because my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is primarily agricultural, and global warming is going to be affecting our agricultural industry to extents that I don’t think most of us comprehend at this point.

The reason I bring this up is because I had the opportunity to speak to one of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change’s scientists. He provided a lot of insight on how the province is going to transform and what’s going to be needed as far as adjustments in our

agricultural industry. With a two-degree increase in the temperature, lots of things are going to change agriculturally. I could go on on those particular aspects. We’re going to have longer growing seasons. We’re going to experience earlier planting. We’re going to experience what the Minister of Environment and Climate Change spoke about earlier in the House, how the apple industry was devastated two years ago in 2012: an early thaw, the trees budded, another frost. The impact that that had on the supply of apples and the actual costs in our local grocery stores was quite substantial. That’s just one example.

Agriculture—I talked about that. But what about irrigation, Speaker? Irrigation, the watering of our crops, the water required for our livestock: These are all important issues that I think we have to start having a discussion about today. That’s why I brought forward this particular private member’s bill.

Global warming is causing extreme weather events. I can recall, back in my hometown of Alexandria, in the great riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, in July 2012 a hailstorm damaged both my vehicles extensively. As well, local wheat fields were completely devastated; they were flattened. That’s one. We’ve had record temperatures. That’s another reason why I brought this private member’s bill forward: because we just experienced the coldest February in the history of the province. There’s a reason for that. We’re going to be seeing more of these events, whether it’s snow in Buffalo, which is just next door; an ice storm in 2013, just before Christmas, right here; or constant flooding. The costs to the province of Ontario and insurance companies—that’s going to be quite an impact. So I think it’s important that we highlight that today as we debate this motion.

I’m a qualified golf course construction supervisor and superintendent by trade. I’m concerned about the impact on our golf industry. We’re going to see an earlier season to golf in the spring and in the fall, but in the middle of summer, we’re going to experience longer periods of heat, which are going to affect revenues, because people are not going to go out and golf when those revenues are expected. I know that the Minister of Municipal Affairs is a huge golfer, and I look forward to golfing with him this summer.

Ski hills: They’re going to have to be innovative because there are going to be ski hills across this province where in 50 years there’s going to be very limited snow, so there are going to be extra costs and demand on water to produce that snow. What about the jobs? They’re going to have to diversify as we continue to move forward.

I really congratulate the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for his passion on making the public more aware of what is going to be happening. I’m concerned for my children and my grandchildren, who are between three and seven. I’m concerned about the impacts that this is going to have on their lives as they move forward. I think it’s a responsible thing for us to do, to take action now, take it in a serious and thoughtful

manner as well, and also to take the lead, which we already have on a number of issues that I'm sure the minister is going to talk about, whether it's closing the coal-fired plants that have generated electricity for decades in this province.

As we continue to move forward, I'm concerned about the impact these extreme weather events are going to have on the north, with drier seasons and forest fires. I'm concerned about the Great Lakes. That's why we're putting forward the Great Lakes Protection Act. So we have a number of initiatives here.

I'm proud to stand today. I hope to have the support of all members of this House so that we can come together and work on those initiatives to protect the environment.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to speak today for this motion.

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You're welcome.

There is no doubt that the earth's climate is changing. In Canada, we are already seeing changes in temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns and increases in certain types of hazardous weather, such as heat waves.

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In the Arctic, rising temperatures are thawing permafrost and shrinking the ocean's ice cover. Internationally, the scientific community has accepted that many of these aspects that contribute to climate change have been caused by the buildup of greenhouse gases in our atmosphere. We must acknowledge that human activities are the source of these greenhouse gases, be it through the burning of fossil fuels or the conversion of land once used for forestry and agriculture.

Though carbon dioxide is the main cause of human-induced climate change, it's far too simplistic to suggest that greenhouse gases are solely responsible for climate change. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell fails to acknowledge in this motion natural factors such as changes in volcanic activity, solar output and the earth's orbit around the sun, which can all contribute to the climate change around the world. Climate change is a complex issue, and it's not just one factor that contributes to it.

Climate changes affect us, not just here in Ontario but all across Canada and the globe. The government of Canada agrees that we need sustained action to build a low-carbon economy and make Canada a world leader in clean electricity generation. The federal government has committed to a number of initiatives to do just this, one being working to implement the Copenhagen Accord, the first international agreement to include all major emitting countries, including all the G8 countries, as the motion suggests.

The Copenhagen Accord committed Canada to invest \$400 million for international climate change efforts to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 17% below 2005 levels by 2020. In fact, Canada boasts one of the cleanest electricity systems in the G7 and in the world with 79% of our electricity supply emitting no GHGs.

The real issues with climate change go beyond our partisan politics. It's something that affects everyone around the globe, and I do believe we need to do our part to reduce emissions. I consider protecting our environment an important part of government's responsibilities. But I have to be clear in stating that implementing a carbon tax does not achieve this. We can help our environment without hurting our economy and industry here in Ontario, and there are ways to accomplish this.

To be honest, I have to highlight the cheap political games that were being played earlier today by the Liberal government. Climate change is too important of an issue and we cannot play games with it. It is absolutely shameful this morning that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change and the MPP from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell held a press conference to try and pose that the PCs wouldn't support this motion. However, that is not the case at all.

The PCs will, in fact, be supporting this motion and we are happy to do it. The minister and Mr. Crack need to stop playing games with important issues. We care about our environment and we want what is best for Ontario, but I want to be abundantly clear, Speaker, that this does not mean we need to implement a carbon tax.

My first suggestion with this government would be to take your time. Take your time, do your homework. I fear this cash-strapped government will rush into a carbon tax to fund their mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

It doesn't have to be this way, but knowing this government's track record, I don't trust them. Again, I don't trust this government to manage this file. They will quickly implement a devastating tax to Ontarians and hope that the people of Ontario forget about it by 2018.

But you know what, Speaker? People will not forget. They will not forget when they go to the gas pumps and realize that gas prices have increased 7% to 10% per litre. They will not forget when they're getting their dinner for their families and their grocery bills have increased. They will not forget what this government has done when they're paying for their heating and hydro bills at the end of the month.

Under the federal Liberal plan, in 2008 it was estimated that a family using roughly 1,800 litres of heating oil per year would see their costs jump by \$50 per year in the first year of the plan, increasing to \$2,003 in the fourth year.

The introduction of a carbon tax to Ontarians will be devastating. This will be nothing more than a cash grab to fund more Liberal wasteful spending and mismanagement. Ontario families and Ontario businesses cannot afford another tax.

Let me be clear: I am not against cutting greenhouse gases. What I am against is irresponsible taxation. We don't have to raise the cost of everything, shut down certain industries and kill thousands of jobs in the manufacturing sector in order to be good environmental stewards. Industry on its own wants to be a good steward, and they are. In fact, in the last decade, Stats Canada reports that 26% of Canadian industries adopted new

systems or equipment to reduce GHG emissions. Of these industries, 50% indicated that the improvements had a moderate or large impact in that reduction of GHG emissions.

The forest industry is one example where they are directly and indirectly responsible for significant greenhouse gas emissions, from harvesting activities, manufacturing, transportation and product disposal. At the same time, forests, soils, biomass and forest products all have the potential to store carbon for varying degrees of time. Activities aimed at reducing emissions, increasing carbon storage and reducing the reliance on fossil fuels can positively influence the amount of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Industry is doing their part. I spoke just this week to a chemical industry that has reduced their emissions by 20% in the last 15 years, a goal they set entirely on their own. The car industry, as well, is adapting. By 2025, passenger vehicles and light trucks will emit about half as many GHGs as 2008 models. In 2025, vehicles will also consume up to 50% less fuel than 2008 vehicles. GHG emissions from the 2018 heavy-duty vehicle models will be reduced by up to 23%. Again, I stress that industry is already doing their part. They want to help, but reckless policy, like adding a carbon tax, will not help them.

Liberal history shows that we can't believe the Liberal carbon tax will accomplish any objective other than picking everyone's pockets. For example, they brought in a costly health premium tax; however, we see health services being cut across Ontario. They spent \$2 billion on smart meters that didn't result in conserving energy. A Liberal carbon tax will be nothing more than a cash grab, sold as an environmental measure by a government that's desperate for money due to their incompetent management of Ontario's finances.

It is a shame that the members opposite decided this morning to play games with this important issue. The Ontario PC Party cares about the environment and it always has.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention a former Huron county girl and former PC colleague, Elizabeth Witmer, for her work in closing down the first coal-fired plant in Ontario. Years later, the Liberals like to claim this fame; however, it was never truly a priority for them. Now they go on about how they closed the last coal-fired plant, but we cannot pretend that this was a priority—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It took 11 years, Speaker, to fulfill their promise. It was in 2003 that the Liberals promised—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Stop the clock. It was rolling along nice and smooth, and I'd like to keep it that way. If we could have a little bit of quiet, we'll finish the debate.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Transportation. Thank you.

Carry on.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The Liberals would like to go on about how they closed the last coal-fired plant, but we cannot pretend that this was a priority for them when it took 11 years to fulfill their promise. It was in 2003 that the Liberals promised to close all coal-fired plants in Ontario by 2007. Lo and behold, the Liberals changed their story and re-promised to close them all by 2009, two years overdue. Then they decided to re-promise again and commit them to being closed in 2012, five years overdue. Then, finally in 2014, they closed the last coal plant—seven years after the initial deadline. We see this time and time again, Speaker, and that is why I don't buy how committed the Liberals claim to be to the health of the environment. If this government was truly committed, they would make promises that they could keep and these types of commitments would be priorities. I find it hard to believe how seriously the Liberals are now taking this motion.

Let us remember, last June, during the election, there was no mention of the carbon tax. In fact, the Premier actually ruled it out, and that was only a mere nine months ago. If the Liberals saw this as a main priority and issue, then why did they not run on it in 2014 during the provincial election?

Speaker, my friend from Thornhill would like to speak about this as well, but I need to talk about what we need to do. To address climate change, we need to find a balance. We do not need to sacrifice our economy to protect the environment. We can have both. There's no shortage of solutions to reduce emissions. We need to move towards things such as the reduction of gridlock and ensuring the government stays true to its commitments. There's so much more we can do, and I look forward to discussing it in more detail, and hearing from my friend from Thornhill.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just wanted to mention to the House that my father was a meteorologist. People weren't terribly impressed when I told them that my father was a meteorologist, until he came to speak to my class in grade 5. What people really got out of that was that they cannot forecast the weather just for one city. In fact, they can't forecast the weather just for one province or just for one country. You have to either forecast the weather for the entire world or forget it, because it just keeps going on and on.

What he did with my classmates, which was quite impressive to me at the time, of course, was explain about the power of weather and the energy that is held within weather systems. I'll never forget how he explained about warm air and warm fronts meeting cold air and cold fronts. He showed us a really interesting video that was probably filmed in the black-and-white days. It really showed the energy that comes from storms and what creates thunder and what creates lightning.

We all know that the people of Ontario—in fact, everybody in the world, every parent in the world—want

to pass on clean air and clean water to the next generation. We all know that climate change is multi-faceted and mankind has to do its part to reduce its negative impact on our earth and all the creatures. We spoke today about the elimination of microbeads in some personal care products. So we have to do more. We have to work, though, with other jurisdictions. Just like the weather can't be done just in Ontario, climate change can't be addressed just in Ontario.

What I would put to this government is, what are we doing to work with the stakeholders in every other country? It's not enough to close coal plants here if 100 are opened up in China for every one we close here.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to hearing a lot more on this topic.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: What is very clear now is that the overwhelming number of credible scientists in this world believe we have a problem with global warming and climate change. Only a few fringe people—I mean really fringe people in the scientific field—are deniers. I thought the March 2015 National Geographic articles dealing with the war on science were very revealing, in the fact that the propagandists for those who don't want to accept the fact that we have a problem with global warming and climate change have been successful in convincing a lot of people that it is not a threat.

I think that most people in Ontario and in Canada recognize that it is. In fact, the government has chosen to have a Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to place the emphasis on that. Certainly, the new minister is extremely committed to that.

Even those you might expect would not be accepting this—Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey, for instance, would not normally be a person you'd expect to be talking about climate change, except that his state was devastated by some weather conditions that were very detrimental to New Jersey, and he has now accepted the fact that climate change does exist.

The single thing it has done the most, in this regard, to deal with it to this point in time has been the closing of the coal-fired plants. That was fought. There were many people who didn't want to hear about closing those plants: It was going to cause job losses and other great problems out there, and it would be more costly to produce electricity. But I think there's a pretty good consensus. In fact, John Baird, when he was the federal minister, used to extol the virtues of closing coal-fired plants. That was in the province of Ontario, and he gave it as Canada's good record in that regard.

The melting of the ice caps that we see—you see the ice caps in the north and the south, and the alarming state of melting taking place in Greenland and other places—would certainly provoke worry in all of us. The impact on homes and businesses is rather dramatic. We now see more flooding of homes and businesses taking place.

That reminds me, it's why we have conservation authorities that have—or used to have, in many cases—

scientific and environmental people who advise on how to avoid this. It's not good when we see, in some parts of the province, those environmental and scientific people being replaced with political cronies on things such as conservation authorities, because they have to take some strong stands about where people can build in order to ensure there is not a very significant problem arising there.

There are many other people, I think, who want to make a presentation on this, but the last thing I'll mention is insurance. If you wonder why insurance rates are going to go up, insurance rates are going to go up because the insurance companies are looking to say, "It is very difficult to cover this now. We're going to have big losses."

So I think all of us—business, labour, people in a variety of fields, farmers and others—have a concern about this. I compliment the member for bringing forward his resolution.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to rise in this House to discuss this matter. This is a fairly straightforward motion. Effectively, the member is asking us to vote on whether or not we believe the earth is round, and I think there's a general consensus. So, in my mind, it's fairly clear that this motion is being put forward as a way of making Conservatives look bad on climate change. I have to say, they don't really need any help from you; they can do that on their own. I'll leave it at that.

I want to talk briefly about the substantive risk that we're facing, and everyone will raise those issues as they rise.

In 2006, Lord Nicholas Stern presented a report to the British government that they had commissioned. Lord Stern was the former chief economist at the World Bank—no flake—a guy who had actually looked at the numbers, looked at the science. He talked about the necessity of action.

He said this in 2006: "The investment that takes place in the next 10-20 years will have a profound effect on the climate in the second half of this century and in the next. Our actions now and over the coming decades could create risks of major disruption to economic and social activity, on a scale similar to those associated with the great wars and the economic depression of the first half of the 20th century."

We are talking about disruption of human society at that scale. In detail, he was talking about a loss of gross domestic product globally of anywhere from 5% to 20%. And those who have talked to parents or grandparents or who individually went through those events know what that means in human terms. We're dealing with a very high-stakes matter.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I heard the Minister of the Environment there say "bigger." Frankly, there are studies showing more profound upheaval. But let's just say that a former head of economic studies for the World Bank

gave a figure that conservatively puts us in very deep water.

I have no doubt that many in the Liberal leadership know all this and have known this for a long time, have known this since the negotiations in Kyoto in 1997. You have to ask, if you know that a society is facing profound upheaval and you do not do what is necessary to avert those risks, to avert that upheaval, then what is your moral authority in this matter? Has Ontario, has the Liberal government since 2003, undertaken what is necessary to dramatically change the trajectory of emissions in this province? You have to say that that has not been the case.

The Liberals did take action on phasing out the burning of coal to make electricity. All three parties in this Legislature supported the idea of phasing out coal-burning to make electricity, and it was a substantial step. But beyond that, their climate plans have been ineffective, at the margins. If you look at the graph that was in the consultation paper put out by the Ministry of the Environment, you can see that the steep reductions in emissions came in 2008 and 2009, like a cliff. The reduction of coal-burning obviously contributed to a reduction in emissions, but it was the recession—the grinding out, the pulverization, of our industrial base—that made the grand changes. Take a look at the numbers. It was the recession that made the difference, not the Liberal policies.

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Frankly, their plans do not take us to the targets for reductions that we have to have by 2020. If we're going to actually make a difference and transform our economy, we can't just say that we made a substantial step. No, there are multiple substantial steps that have to be taken to ensure that you have continuity in employment, continuity in prosperity and continuity in emissions reductions. We don't want to get to a resolution of the climate problem by eliminating employment in Ontario. That's not the choice we have to make. But right now, we don't have plans in place that are independent of that downturn.

If someone is drowning a kilometre from shore and you drag them in 200 metres, they're still in deep water; they're still drowning. Two hundred metres is a substantial step, but it is not enough to solve the problem.

Today, instead of introducing measures that we need to take to actually transform our economy, to transform one of the pillars of our society—our energy system—what we have—and I have to be very direct with the member—is a motion meant to go after the Conservative Party. It's an interesting wedge issue, but frankly, Speaker, that isn't what we need.

This government will make statements about the effectiveness of their policies. I'm going to go back to the comments of the Environmental Commissioner, the 2012 report from the Environmental Commissioner. "Ontario Government Retreats on Climate Change." That was the headline of their media release. He talked about the recent government decisions to roll back programs, to not

complete commitments, and said, "Where are we going? We thought we were moving forward on climate change. This government is retreating on climate change."

In 2013, the title of the study: "Failing Our Future."

"Ontario's Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, says the government's long-term energy policy could wipe out some of the gains that have been made in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions."

He said, "There has been little progress to report this year."

I have to tell you, Speaker, that everyone on those benches who knows about climate change knew about it in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013. They didn't find out this week; they've known for a while. Yet the Environmental Commissioner has been saying regularly that you guys are failing. You're retreating. You're not doing what has to be done.

In 2014, the headline in the media release: "Ontario Failing in Fight Against Climate Change."

Miller said, "It's not going to meet its 2020 target because it has taken very little additional action to implement the climate change action plan it released seven years ago."

We have a resolution talking about how dire the situation is, and we have a litany of reports by our independent officer, the Environmental Commissioner, showing that this government has dragged its feet; gone backwards; failed to act. If you know that someone is going to be harmed and you don't take action to prevent that harm, what is your moral standing?

Speaker, one of the Liberals who spoke earlier mentioned flooding. In that 2014 report from the Environmental Commissioner, he talked about the failure of this government to adapt to climate change—a profound crisis our society is facing that it is fully aware of. It cannot claim ignorance on this subject.

He noted in his report that Ontario's flood plain maps urgently need updating because, frankly, they're old—they're decades old. They aren't getting updated. The insurance industry is worried that smaller towns will not have the political muscle to push back against developers who want to build on flood plains.

Speaker, talk to people who lived through the floods in High River, who had to deal with the mass disruption in their lives, and ask, is the government being responsible if it's not actually putting adaptation in place?

A last commentary from the Environmental Commissioner: "Conservation First needs more work." In talking about the Conservation First program brought forward by the government, this is what the Environmental Commissioner had to say: "The vast majority of local electricity distribution utilities will miss their target for peak reduction. About half are expected to miss their target for reducing overall consumption."

"The government has eliminated all of the interim electricity conservation targets that were used to measure the progress towards meeting its overall goals." So the target that's left is the one—I think it was 2030 or 2032.

This government knows what's happening, could act, has been in a position to act for over a decade and is not

doing what Ontarians need. I look forward to debating substantive legislation. I think if you want to wedge an issue, you can do it with substantive legislation. This motion—really, Speaker, do we need to vote on the earth being round? Seriously?

Anyway, I'll leave it at that—a few moments for my colleague to comment.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'll take the few extra minutes.

I want to salute my colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his leadership on this issue and thank our Minister of Environment and Climate Change. He's a friend and a long-time committed advocate for some of the issues that are near and dear to my heart, including cycling, as the House will know. This morning, in fact, we had the first meeting of our all-party cycling caucus. It was extremely successful, I think, and very well done. It was the kind of non-partisan co-operation that issues like climate change demand.

There's little doubt that climate change threatens the future of our way of life and economy, our health and our natural environment. There's also little doubt that greenhouse emissions from human activity are already contributing to an increase in extreme weather events, loss of life around the world and dangerously high levels of CO₂ that are already being reached. To delay will be more costly than tackling it now.

Cycling as a contribution to this is a highly efficient transportation form. Indeed, before cars came along, it was already a highly efficient form of transportation. It remains today, in a growing number of cities, a primary mode of transportation, increasing in popularity because of its contribution to lowering greenhouse gas emissions as part of the climate change conversation. Carbon-intensive travel contributes about 24% of emissions in greenhouse gases. It's worth noting that cycling, which our government supported—the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, along with myself, launched a cycling strategy, the first in 20 years, in September 2013. I stood shoulder to shoulder with him then, and I stand shoulder to shoulder with him now.

Of course, cycling is also the simplest choice that individuals can make to reduce their carbon footprint. Very easy to do, it has huge benefits for your health, your wallet. It has great benefits for neighbourhoods. It decreases greenhouse gases from transportation, as I mentioned. Encouraging cycling as a zero-carbon option will make an important contribution to climate change.

I'm very proud on a local basis of my local chamber. Why? Because at the national chamber of commerce meeting, they had a policy resolution that was passed at the Ontario chamber. It went to the national chamber meeting, and it passed. What did it call for? It called for the federal government to enact a climate change adaptation strategy for Canada. This resolution was debated and adopted by delegates from across Ontario and from across the country. It calls on the Canadian government

to develop and implement a national strategy on climate change that is based on scientific and socio-economic research.

So to think that business isn't interested in this conversation—you bet they are. They're worried about it. People in my riding are worried about it. Businesses in my riding are showing leadership at the national level.

I think we can all agree, Speaker. I've enjoyed being part of the debate today, and I really hope that members in this House can see fit to support my colleague's motion.

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

Last call for further debate.

1600

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping for something more hopeful from my friends in the third party. So if the Tories feel they're being picked on, let me start there.

I want to say to the member from Toronto–Danforth that I've always felt that we were sort of spiritual fellow travelers, both very frustrated with the lack of political action by centre and centre-left parties in this country on climate change. I think we can all agree that the right has just abandoned this issue.

But if we want to look at records, let us just wonder why we're looking to the NDP to support this motion today. When the first effort at putting a price on carbon started in Canada, it started in British Columbia, under Gordon Campbell. What party nearly crushed out the first, most important climate change agenda at the provincial level and the first attempt to get a price on carbon? It was the BC New Democrats, who famously led a vicious attack on the government and nearly undermined it. And what happened when that price came on carbon? BC saw its highest per capita GDP growth. So tragic was it that the best environmentalist in BC, the former mayor of Vancouver and the former BC Premier, who was one of the great green activists in the tradition that you and I like to respect, tore up his NDP card over this complete nonsense and left the party.

Second of all, when I was mayor of Winnipeg, Al Duerr and I worked with Jack Layton to try to broker a national climate change strategy. Who was our friend in the west? Gord Campbell. Did Gary Doer take a meeting with us? No. Did Gary Doer support it? No. Now we know why. The former NDP Premier is now the voice of Stephen Harper, attacking the Obama administration and trying to enable the XL pipeline. So maybe we have a few questions for the NDP.

If my party carries baggage because we didn't do enough, in your mind, through the recession, you are going to need a train full of porters to carry the baggage the NDP has.

Yes, this is a serious problem. I loved it when you talked. We just had a briefing from Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner, who says that since Premier Wynne has come into this government—he went through the list of all the things that we were doing and said how

remarkably impressed he was with this very reinvigorated commitment to do that. So you can quote two- or three-year-old statements from the Environmental Commissioner.

My friends in the Conservatives: We searched. I tried to find a single, unsolicited statement by any member of the Conservative Party on climate change. Do you know how many there are? None. Zero. The only comments you've made are anti-ones.

My critic is saying, "Just slow down. Don't rush. Don't do this." We've had 20 years of climate negotiations. The last five years have seen the highest GHG emissions. We are one of only about five jurisdictions in the Americas that are below our 1990 levels.

Mr. Speaker, we all went through the recession. If the major driver of the recession was the reductions, why are Quebec, Ontario, BC and California the only ones that are now significantly below 1990 levels? We're the only jurisdiction that had—

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Really? That's very patriarchal, my dear friend, coming from you.

It is really, really challenging when you see that we're one of the few jurisdictions who actually will likely see our 1990 target. If you actually read the research, you're completely correct: It was certainly a significant factor and an unwelcome one. But it was also part of the reason other measures were slowed down. You might have noticed that revenues for governments in all these jurisdictions kind of collapsed. Now that we're getting back, we have reinvigorated. We were hoping that this would be a bit of a New Zealand, Norwegian or British commitment to actually elevate this above partisan politics—but clearly we're not. So this government is quite happy to take the other tack.

This is the seventh time I've stood in this House to ask for non-partisan co-operation on this issue—not even any positive response. My favourite is when I met with my critic in the Conservatives, who said, "Well, we really don't know what we're doing. Wait till May 9 and you can talk to our leader." I have waited patiently for Ms. Elliott, for any of my colleagues in the opposition to say the word during the leadership bid. This hasn't even been discussed—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The minister protests a bit too much, I must say. He tries to argue that this is a non-partisan approach to a real problem. I agree, and I think even the Conservatives agree, that there's a real problem when it comes to greenhouse gas and the warming of the planet.

But this is a purely partisan motion. This is a motion that doesn't do a lot. Imagine how worked up our friend the member from Toronto Centre would get if his government actually did something. He would be spinning from the chandeliers. But he wakes up in the House and he gets all excited on a motion that's essentially crafted in order to play politics with this issue, to try to make this out to be an issue of left versus right.

I've just got to say, most people don't buy that. A lot of issues have nothing to do with left and right; they have to do with right and wrong. When you see Liberals playing with issues like this for crass political reasons, I say that's wrong.

Now, I disagree with my Conservative friends a lot of times, and I'm sure they disagree with me, but we're all in this House trying to do the same thing. I would only say this—unfortunately, I don't have enough time so I might not get to say it—I really find it a little bit difficult to take, because I've been watching the Liberal government over the past number of years and they're out-flanking the Tories on the right. I'm really sad that the Liberals have become such a right-wing, righteous party—

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

Interjections.

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

I now turn to the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. You have two minutes.

Mr. Grant Crack: I'd like to thank the member from Huron–Bruce, the member from Thornhill, the deputy government House leader, the passionate remarks from the member from Toronto–Danforth, the member from Burlington, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

I was kind of surprised to hear some of the comments from both parties as far as this being a political issue, playing politics, that type of thing, because I know there are no politics played in this chamber; there never has been and there never will be—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Dufferin–Caledon, come to order.

Mr. Grant Crack: —according to them.

This is a very serious issue to me. I'm quite passionate about it. I brought this forward because I feel strongly about leaving a planet, a stronger Ontario, a healthier Ontario to my grandchildren and to the grandchildren or children of all the members here.

I'm worried. It was put forward because I would like to see our government introduce more measures to deal with climate change in the future. I'm going to be supportive of that. I'm going to be with the minister as often as I can to support him in his endeavours in protecting the environment and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across this province.

We have to start somewhere. The debate today is exactly what I wanted out of this particular motion. It's got everybody talking, for different reasons, perhaps, but the goal was to bring a very important issue to the forefront. Let's talk about it more. I know they want to talk about one issue. They've talked about that issue for four straight weeks, Speaker. I hope over the March break that they can change the tune. It's going to be warmer at the end of March when we return. Let's start talking about climate change.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

MICROBEAD ELIMINATION
AND MONITORING ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ÉLIMINATION
ET LE CONTRÔLE DES MICROBILLES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Madame Lalonde.

Madame Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 75, An Act with respect to microbeads.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), this bill is being referred to—Madame Lalonde?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to refer my bill to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be sent to finance and economic affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

POET LAUREATE
OF ONTARIO ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 SUR LE POÈTE OFFICIEL
DE L'ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Hatfield has moved second reading of Bill 71, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the member for Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, I would refer the bill to the committee on regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member requests that it be sent to the committee on private bills and regulations. Agreed? Agreed.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Crack has moved private member's notice of motion

number 41. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order. Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1611 to 1616.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would members please take their seats.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted
Anderson, Granville	Forster, Cindy	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Arnott, Ted	French, Jennifer K.	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Bradley, James J.	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Taylor, Monique
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please stand and remain standing.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, much as I do not want to—I would like to go on with a bill—I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed?

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you a happy March break. We'll see you back on March 23 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1620.

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)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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

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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 McDonell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
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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
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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
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**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

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