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Monday 30 March 2015

Lundi 30 mars 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 March 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 mars 2015

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome Mark Milunsky from Thornhill, vice-president of the very infamous Beverley Glen Ratepayers Association. Welcome.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome some of my guests in the east gallery: my good friend Mano Kanagamany, and he's accompanied by a visitor from south India, Mr. P.V. Raghavendran, a photojournalist and well-known cinematographer.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce the grandparents of page captain Cameron Johnson, David and Joyce Johnson. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome some folks from the Public Affairs Association of Canada. Board members who are sitting in the members' galleries today include President John Capobianco, Events Co-Chair Rick Hall and Membership Chair Harvey Cooper. I encourage all MPPs to attend this evening's reception, to be held in room 228 from 5:30 to 7:30. Welcome.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Aiden Campbell, our page from Simcoe-Grey, has his family here again today: his mom, LeAnne Campbell; his dad, Trent Campbell; grandfather Bob Campbell; grandmother Betty Campbell; and his brother, Nolan Campbell. Welcome. I'm looking forward to having lunch with them.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Page Jessie Meanwell, from Hamilton Centre, is actually the page captain today. Her family is with us today in the gallery. I want to welcome them on behalf of the Legislative Assembly: mother Frances Cockburn; father Charles Meanwell; grandmother Elizabeth Cockburn; sister Caitlin Meanwell; and cousin Gavin Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's my honour to welcome the family of page captain Ian Harvey—who's from my riding of Etobicoke Centre—here today: his mother, Janice Harvey; father Bill Harvey; grandmother Mary Kray; grandfather Stan Kray; his aunt, Laura Latimer; his uncle, Paul Latimer; and family friend, Tracy Bowie. They're in the members' gallery this morning, and I ask us all to welcome them.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Dufferin-Caledon is well represented in the Speaker's gallery today. Page captain Ranen has invited his mother, Tanja Oomen; his father, Joe

Danckert; his brother, Kiefer; his grandmother, Johanna; and his aunt, Ingrid. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like welcome Tim McKinnon, who's the chairperson of the General Motors plant in Niagara.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to welcome the grandparents of our page Alycia Berg to Queen's Park this morning: Barbara and Lloyd Berg.

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to recognize Rosemary Shiller and Ed Shiller, who are here in the gallery with us. They're the proud parents of Jennifer Shiller, who works in our office.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to welcome Greg Moffatt, chairperson of Oshawa Unifor Local 222, and Ron Svajlenko, president of Local 222, here today.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I would like to recognize Robin Singh. His daughter is a page in this session. He actually worked for ServiceOntario; I'm not sure where he's based now, but I really want to welcome him.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I would like to welcome Jerry Dias, who's the president of Unifor. He was here today holding a press conference.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Today in the Speaker's gallery we have with us the interns from the Manitoba legislative internship program, who are here to meet with our legislative interns. We're glad you're here. A welcome for Manitoba.

Also joining us today in the Speaker's gallery is a former Premier, the sixth Premier of Newfoundland, serving from 1996 to 2000. Mr. Brian Tobin is here with us.

We also have in the Speaker's gallery today visiting us the British consul general in Toronto, Mr. Kevin McGurgan. Please join us in welcoming our consul general.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: A point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, when you were introducing the former Premier from Newfoundland and Labrador, you forgot to mention that he now lives in the great riding of Ottawa Centre. I have the great honour of working for him every single day. Welcome to Queen's Park, Premier Tobin.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure he'll want his sidewalks fixed.

Today—not to make excuses, but I'm partially under the weather and my voice might not be heard.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): But that's not the point. My patience will be thinner.

It's now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Premier, your government has recently been holding consultations on Ontario's climate change strategy, which is really just a cover for your upcoming carbon tax. A price on carbon will increase the cost of everything from gas to groceries. Premier, we already have received over 13,000 signatures on the PC "Stop the Carbon Tax" petition.

Premier, my question for you is this: Will you listen to the people of Ontario and say no to a carbon tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is going to want to weigh in on this, but I'm going to take a crack at it to start out with. I think that it is not underestimating the issue to say that climate change is a defining issue of our time. There is probably no issue that is more important for all of us to tackle.

I would go further to suggest that this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that is going to affect all of us, that is going to affect our children and our grandchildren, and we have done a lot in Ontario. By shutting down the coal-fired plants, we have made an enormous, enormous step forward.

But the fact is that there is more to be done. There is more that we have to do if we're going to be responsible to generations to come, and we are going to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Back to the Premier: Speaker, I heard the Premier say there's no issue they want to tackle—I think she meant to say "tax," because really and truly Ontarians already have some of the highest energy costs in North America and a carbon tax will only further drive jobs out of this province.

Premier, it is unacceptable that your Minister of Energy has nonchalantly stated, "Businesses ... come and go." But, Premier, we definitely don't want a carbon tax to speed up that process, driving jobs out of this province, especially when other jurisdictions such as BC saw a carbon tax increase the cost to farmers an extra \$4,300. And in Australia it raised energy by 9%.

Premier, will you heed the advice of the PC Party of Ontario and commit to not implementing a carbon tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the member opposite might look at other jurisdictions, even in this country. She might look at BC; she might look at Quebec; she might look at Alberta, and see that there are other jurisdictions in this country that have moved forward responsibly.

She then might look at other jurisdictions internationally. She might look at Sweden. She might look at where the opportunities have been increased because there has been a regime of carbon pricing.

But apart from all of that, the fact is that we cannot sit idle. We cannot pretend that this is not an issue. I can tell you that there are people in every one of our ridings who

are concerned about the fact that they're seeing changing weather patterns. They know that they don't have a federal government that is moving—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. I'm getting order so she can finish and I can hear.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, they know that they don't have a federal government that is putting in place a framework and that it is up to the provincial governments to work together to make sure that we take responsible steps for future generations.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Back to the Premier: Ontarians are concerned about the cost of living and the cost of doing business going through the roof. In last year's election, the only thing you said to the people of Ontario about a carbon tax is that you won't implement one.

Premier, as the second of our five budget asks, will you stick by what you said to the people of Ontario and commit, in your 2015 budget, that you will not put another burden on taxpayers' shoulders by levying a carbon tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, Alberta—I want to say it really slowly—Alberta has a price on carbon introduced by the same party she's affiliated with. British Columbia, which has seen some of the most dynamic per capita GDP growth in Canada, has a price on carbon. Quebec has a price on carbon. California has a price on carbon. New York has a price on carbon. Massachusetts has a price on carbon. Mexico has a price on carbon. China has a price on carbon. Germany—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Could the member explain her party's position, how she reduces GHG emissions, and how she thinks that Ontario can be the only jurisdiction to reduce them without a price on carbon? Because that's fantasy.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. We're just coming off one of the coldest winters on record, and the consequences of your reckless hydro policies are more apparent than ever. Most Ontarians are struggling because the cost of energy is rising much faster than their ability to pay. This is because they're paying 14 cents a kilowatt hour plus all the extras you slap on, like the global adjustment, debt retirement charge and distribution costs for on-peak electricity. When your government took office, they were paying 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour.

Premier, the current chaos in the energy system is all on you. The only way to fix it is to change direction. Will

you turn away from your failed energy policies, which have damaged our economy and caused untold misery to ratepayers, and commit to making Ontario once again an energy-competitive jurisdiction?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say to the member opposite that the fact is, when we came into office, the electricity system in this province was degraded. It had been neglected. It was in no shape to deliver reliable power to people across this province.

Some 10,000 kilometres of transmission line have been rebuilt and repaired, because that party did not put the money into infrastructure that was needed. So we have done that work. We have made those investments. We are aware that there's a cost associated with that. I hope that the member opposite is very pleased at the plan that we announced last week—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order, as will the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —the Ontario Electricity Support Program, that in fact addresses the fact that people on low income are struggling in many cases, and they need a break, and that's what that program will provide.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakubuski: Back to the Premier: Premier, you know that the primary reason hydro bills are going up is because of your Green Energy Act and its intermittent, unreliable and expensive energy.

Your announcement last week about the stipend you'll be giving to low-income energy consumers is nothing more than a shell game. Almost every ratepayer is struggling to pay their bills, because under your watch, hydro bills have gone up and more than tripled since 2003.

People have no faith in your ability to administer this sliding-scale shell game. As the Ombudsman investigation clearly shows, your team can't even get a simple residential bill right, even though you've wasted \$2 billion on your smart-meter fiasco.

Premier, how much more bureaucracy will be needed to administer this new convoluted program, and how much more will that cost the energy ratepayers of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Ontario Electricity Support Program is designed specifically to help people who have the lowest income in the province and who are struggling. I think that is exactly the kind of support that needs to be put in place.

The fact is, we took a dirty electricity system and we shut down the coal-fired plants. We've rebuilt the system. We've made the investments that were needed, so we're dealing with a clean energy regime now in Ontario.

The other thing that we've done is we have renegotiated—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark will come to order. You're inches away; I can hear.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Jim, do something about that.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've renegotiated agreements like the Samsung agreement that will actually save \$3.7 billion. We've changed the domestic content rules. We are working with Quebec on an off-peak/on-peak agreement that will allow us to get clean power from Quebec at a time when we need it and send our power to them when they need it. So we've taken a system that was not reliable—

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

1050

Mr. John Yakubuski: Premier, you're always congratulating yourself on how egalitarian you are, but the hydro system you've created is anything but fair and equal. As revealed by the sunshine list, salaries for staff in the energy sector are rising sharply. Some 77% of Hydro One employees and 80% of OPG employees made over \$100,000 last year. At the same time, ratepayers have seen their salaries flatline, and 300,000 people in the manufacturing sector don't have a paycheque at all because of your economic mismanagement and Ontario's anemic growth since your party took power.

Premier, it is your duty to ensure that there is balance in the system between the remuneration of employees and the consumers' ability to pay. Ratepayers cannot afford to wait any longer. Will you live up to your own rhetoric, scrap the Green Energy Act and restore some semblance of balance to our energy system?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: For goodness' sake, Mr. Speaker, the people he's talking about are the very people who run our nuclear plants. Do you really think that that's where we should go in terms of reducing salaries? The people who run our nuclear plants? When we go to bed at night, we want to make sure that we have the best people in the world running our energy system.

Right now, when you look at people like Tom Mitchell, considered the best at doing the kind of work that he does in the world—we owe it to the people of this province to ensure that we have the best-quality people running organizations like OPG, to ensure that those nuclear plants are safe, for all Ontarians to be able to know that we have one of the best records in the world when it comes to nuclear. That is not the place to start when it comes to cutbacks. This government will not in any way sacrifice safety for the sake of anything with regard to cutting back like the member wants—

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

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Will the Premier be introducing a salary cap on public CEOs? And what will that cap be?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the member opposite knows, although she voted against the act, the accountability act will bring in hard caps for senior executives in the broader public sector. I think that the member opposite recognizes that.

In fact, my understanding is that she also understands that there would be some exceptions. In fact, an amendment that the NDP brought forward was this: "A compensation framework may provide that specified designated executive positions may receive compensation in excess of the limit...." So I think the member understands that having hard caps is very important and having a range of salaries at all of those levels is important, and I'm sure that she will work with us on making sure that those are put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Energy bills have tripled, and energy CEOs are turning into millionaires in this province. Students in Ontario pay the highest tuition in the country, and there are university presidents who are just shy of making a million dollars. The Premier is firing nurses, and there are hospital CEOs making over \$800,000 a year. Can the Premier justify those salaries to Ontarians who can't pay their hydro bills, to Ontarians paying student loans for decades after they finish their post-secondary studies or to Ontarians with a loved one who's stuck waiting for the care that they so desperately need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the leader of the third party understands that we have to tackle all of those challenges. It's absolutely imperative that we support people who need services in this province and we do that in the best way possible. I know she also knows that we agree that there need to be caps on CEO salaries. That's why we have moved on that. That's why we brought the accountability act into place. Those caps are going to be put in place, but there will be a range.

In terms of the expertise that is needed in particular sectors, we also have to understand that that's always going to be the case: There will be specific expertise that's needed in sectors. As the Minister of Economic Development was saying, in terms of running our nuclear plants, in terms of the technical expertise that's needed, we're going to have to make sure that we have the right people doing those jobs, and that we pay them adequately but not exorbitantly.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals have been promising to cap CEO salaries for over a decade in this province, but they have voted against capping CEO pay three times in this Legislature. When is the Premier going to put our money where her mouth is and tell the public sector CEOs that enough is enough?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I have to say I'm a bit mystified, because we actually have passed legislation that will take exactly those steps. The NDP did not support Bill 8. We passed Bill 8, and I'm very pleased that it received royal assent on December 11, 2014.

We are moving forward on executive compensation. We are being thoughtful about it and we are moving forward to collect the information, creating salary bands including hard caps. This work is under way now. We're well on our way, and I'm just a bit astonished the leader of the third party doesn't even know that we passed that legislation.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Nurses are being fired across Ontario. Health Quality Ontario says that more than half of Ontarians can't actually see their doctor when they get sick. But hospital CEOs are making over \$800,000 a year.

Putting health care first means making some tough choices and setting some priorities. Why is the Premier choosing hospital CEOs when she should be choosing patients?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we're not. The fact is that there are thousands more doctors in this province. I think 96% of people have access at this point to a primary care physician, and we've made a commitment to that being 100%. There are 24,000 more nurses in this province than when we came into office.

The health care system is undergoing a transformation. There's no doubt about that. More care is moving into the community. There's no doubt about that, and that is a transition.

But the fact is, we have put in place legislation that will cap salaries. That legislation has passed; the NDP did not support it, but nonetheless, that legislation is going forward and those caps will be put in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Our hydro bills are paying the CEO salaries of public hydro companies. Two executives particularly are making over \$1 million each. I think these priorities are backwards. The hydro system should be working for us, not the other way around, and as long as Ontarians own our hydro companies, we can say that enough is enough, even though this Liberal government seems to think that the status quo is fine.

If the Premier sells off Hydro One, Ontarians lose. We might not have any idea how much of our rates are going straight to the executive salaries. If Liberals sell it off, Ontarians can't say enough is enough to those executives. Privatizing Hydro One might be good for executives but it's bad for ratepayers. Will the Premier pull the plug on selling Hydro One so CEO salaries will stay transparent in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's be clear about what the leader of the third party is actually asking. She's saying stop the review of the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario. She's saying don't reinvest the money that we might be able to realize, the benefit we might be able to realize—don't reinvest that in infrastructure that's needed for the 21st century. And she's saying don't build transit and transportation infrastructure—roads and bridges that are needed across this province—because

she actually doesn't agree with making any change that would allow us to do that.

I say to the leader of the third party, that is not where we're going to go. We are going to make those investments. We ran on that plan. It is the right plan for the future of this province. It is the right plan for the economic development of communities across this province, and we're going to make those investments.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier is cutting health care, she's closing schools and she's selling off public hydro companies, all because she says the cupboard is bare. If the cupboard is bare, why are there millionaires on the sunshine list?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would ask the leader of the third party how she construes the building of 725 schools since we've been in office and repairs to 700 more as closing schools. The fact is, across this province we have invested in infrastructure, in hospitals, in schools—in the renovation and consolidation of schools that allow for programs to be delivered in a way that makes the best sense for kids in communities across Ontario. We've worked with local school boards in order to do that, and those decisions have been made.

They're not easy decisions. I understand that. Every time there's a change—I've been a school trustee. I know how difficult it is to make a change in the configuration of schools in a province. But the fact is, we have to do it in the most thoughtful way possible. We have to work to create hubs where we can, and we have to make sure that kids have access, from kindergarten right through post-secondary, to the best programs in the world.

1100

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, in 2009, your WSIB slush fund was first flagged as under-performing and returning little value. These suspicions were raised once again in 2012, concerning the value of this fund, and again last year, a KPMG audit recommended that the program be shut down, as it provides zero value for money.

Minister, last week you told this House that by 2016, these programs will be corrected. We know that the Premier's chief of staff, Tom Teahen, made almost \$350,000 at the WSIB last year. Is he the reason it takes seven years to shut down a slush fund in Liberal Ontario?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On this side of the House, we take worker health and safety very, very seriously. We bring a business practice to it that I think is something we can be proud of. This is a program that was brought in in 1990. It's been here for a long time, and funds several organizations. It funds the OFL. They help training on claims management for those people, those organizations, so that they can help the workers who

need to avail themselves of the system—the navigation skills or the assistance to get through that system.

In 2012, shortly after new leadership took over, we conducted an audit, like we should, on programs in government. We found that there were some improvements we could make. We implemented those improvements. We told the employers that this would be a transition year and we're implementing it in 2016.

We've handled this responsibly. The WSIB has handled it responsibly. I think that Ontarians should have confidence in this system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Back to the minister: Since questioning your WSIB slush fund to the Ontario Federation of Labour, I've received several letters from union leaders across the province. When I receive form letters from union leaders rather than real stories from injured workers, I have no doubt that this program is nothing more than a slush fund. Not one beneficiary of this program has contacted my office. Many union officials have, but not one single injured worker.

Minister, since I haven't received a single letter of support for the grant from injured workers, I ask you: Have you received any letters of support from injured workers, and if so, will you share them with me in this House?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, as I mentioned in the previous answer, this is a grants program that is managed by the WSIB. It funds those organizations in this province that assist us in dealing with the issues that surround injured workers who return to work or train for new employment.

When I hear about the Randy Hillier slush fund, that is not what this is. The Randy Hillier slush fund may be something else that I'm unaware of, but after the audit was conducted, we made changes to the system. It was obviously some changes that could be made to improve things for injured workers in the province of Ontario.

Since the Auditor General's report in 2009, we've seen a transformation at the WSIB. It's a good-news story that we share with the people of the province of Ontario, because we know that injured workers, employers and those employees are now getting the services they should under this plan.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Some of the repartee I've been hearing is getting dangerously close to getting extremely personal. The advice I've given since the beginning, and will adhere to today, is that you address individuals in this place by either their title or their riding. That tends to help.

The second part to that is that it's also getting dangerously close to making accusations that would be unparliamentary. Stay away from it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm not asking for any comments from anybody right at this moment.

New question.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. The Premier seems to think that if she buries her head in the sand and refuses to acknowledge that the bribery scandal in Sudbury exists, if she says over and over that what happened out there doesn't matter in here, if she wishes for it to go away hard enough, she will make it true—but ignoring an issue does not make it go away.

My question is quite simple: When did the Premier call, first, Mr. Gerry Lougheed, then Mrs. Pat Sorbara, in order for them to call Mr. Andrew Olivier to offer him a job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, what I have actually said, just to clarify to the member opposite, is that there is an investigation going on. That investigation is taking place outside of this House, Mr. Speaker. I've been very clear in my statements in public. I've been very clear in this House over and over again on the decisions that I made. We're very happy to have the current member for Sudbury with us on this side of the House. I will continue to work with the authorities in the investigation outside of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, Speaker, someone had to tell Mr. Gerry Lougheed to call Andrew Olivier on behalf of the Premier and offer him a job. I know Mr. Lougheed well enough to know that it is not his style to do that kind of call without strict directions.

Mr. Lougheed reported the results of his call to Mr. Olivier, then someone had to tell Mrs. Sorbara that she needed to follow up, which she did. She called Mr. Olivier and said, "You've now been directly asked by the leader and the Premier to make a decision to step aside to allow Glenn to have the opportunity, basically have the opportunity uncontested." The OPP said, these "references to the Premier's authority threatens the appearance of the government's integrity."

Mrs. Sorbara and Mr. Gerry Lougheed's actions call the integrity of the government into question. My question, Speaker: Why is the Premier letting that happen?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I remind the member opposite, as the Premier just did, that there is an active investigation that is going on outside this Legislature. The Premier, by no means, is avoiding the issue; what she's doing is respecting the process, a process that is independent from what happens in the Legislature or what the government does. I think, Speaker, we should all respect that process. The member opposite knows very well that the Premier or any member of the government cannot interfere or interject in the process. In fact even the Chief Electoral Officer said in his report, "I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone's guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges."

Speaker, as I said before, none of us here in this Legislature are prosecutors or judges. They are independent

roles. We should respect those roles and let those individuals do their job.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Minister, constituents in my riding of Sudbury are concerned about changes to Ontario's moose hunt that your ministry is proposing. An article in a local newspaper stated, "Ontario hunters are up in arms over a plan to shorten the moose season, which they argue goes far" above and "beyond what's necessary to sustain viable populations."

Speaker, moose hunting is a proud part of our heritage and an important part of Ontario's economy. In fact, recreational fishing and hunting provide more than \$4 billion to our economy each year. Many small businesses in our province, several of which are in my riding, rely on hunting and fishing tourism to support their economic viability.

Minister, my constituents are concerned about what impact these changes will have on their lives and their livelihoods. Through you, Mr. Speaker: Could the minister explain to my constituents why his ministry is proposing changes to the moose hunt?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question.

He's right, Speaker, there are a number of people and groups out there who are alarmed by what's coming forward, but I would say, in fact, that many of the people who are most affected by the changes we are bringing forward are the people who get it the most, who understand that the sustainability of this population is what's most important.

In fact, I would say that in my community of Thunder Bay there are people who are telling me absolutely to shut the hunt down. Speaker, it has taken years to get to this situation, and it is going to take us some time to fix it, but I'm not going to kick the can down the road. We need to make some decisions. We need to make sure that we get this absolutely right. What these groups and these people don't agree on is what steps need to be taken to fix this particular problem. But what these people and these groups agree on is that steps need to be taken.

I'm going to take those steps. New numbers are in; they continue to be not good. There's more coming forward, but we have to make some decisions. We have to fix a problem that's taken years to create, and we're going to get it right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I thank the minister for recognizing the important role that the moose hunt plays in our economy and in the north.

In the Sudbury area, tourist outfitters rely on their ability to provide a variety of hunting and fishing opportunities. Outfitters like Lang Lake Resort in nearby Espanola, for example, rely on moose-hunting tourism for their business. These outfitters bring tourists from all parts of the province into the Sudbury area and support our local economy.

1110

With these changes to moose season, businesses and members of my community want to know how these changes will impact them. Everyone agrees that we need to ensure our moose population is sustainable for future generations, but I'm hearing from some of my constituents that there may be other opinions about how to move forward with the moose hunt.

Hunters, tourist outfitters and the public all want to ensure that we are making the right changes to Ontario's moose hunt. Can the minister talk about how he's going to protect the economic interests of our moose population—

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

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member for the question. In the phase 1 consultation, most of the work that we did focused on the resident hunter and the tourist outfitter. The member is very correct in saying that. That's one of the criticisms that the ministry has historically received: We're only looking at the tag allocation for the resident hunter and for the tourist outfitter.

Phase 2 will change that. I've made a very clear commitment to the groups that are interested in this issue that the phase 2 consultations, that will begin very soon, will look at other opportunities to sustain this population that don't just manage the hunter.

In the phase 1 piece that we did, we worked very hard last year to ensure that tourist outfitters—those people who have made a private sector investment, whose livelihood depends on this to a large degree—weren't negatively affected. We kicked the numbers back a number of times to the ministry and said it wasn't good enough.

The flying has been done; we've invested in aerial moose inventories. The numbers are not good. There's more information coming soon. Phase 2 will take a broader look at how we're going to try to sustain this population.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. On April 15, 2014, the Premier filed a lawsuit against the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook and me for questioning her involvement in the cover-up of deleted emails in the gas plants scandal.

The next day, on April 16, 2014, the members for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Simcoe North referred to the suit as a SLAPP, or nuisance suit, during debate on the public participation act. That same day, the anti-SLAPP bill was also sent to die in committee.

At the time, the bill had a retroactivity clause. Former Attorney General John Gerretsen said that “the rule will apply to suits ... before the bill comes into force, thus allowing for dismissal of strategic litigation....”

Did the Premier kill the anti-SLAPP bill the day after she launched the lawsuit because it would affect her attempt to muzzle the opposition?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, we didn't, and I know the Attorney General is going to want to speak to this. I think the member opposite knows that retroactive rule-making is not something that is seen favourably by the courts. It's not something that we have engaged in.

To the issue of the suit that I brought, I have been very clear all along that I believe that debating substance is important. I think debating the truth is important. But allegations that are completely baseless, that are not based in any accurate assessment of a situation—I don't think that is right. I have said all along that I would always debate the truth, but untruth, I'm not interested in debating.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's quite a statement. It's also quite a coincidence that the lawsuit was launched on April 15. She decided to kill that bill off on the 16th. The previous two incarnations of the bill had the retroactivity clause until it didn't suit the Premier.

On December 1, 2014, the public participation act was reintroduced again, for the third time, without this clause. John Gerretsen says about this omission, “Obviously the bill is weaker,” and “it probably shouldn't be gone.”

The Premier must know how this looks. It appears that she killed her own law for her own political gain. This is on the heels of her role in the cancelled gas plants and, most recently, the Sudbury bribery scandal. She thinks she's above the law, and if the law doesn't suit her, she changes it. Is there any length this Premier of Ontario won't go, to cling to power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the member opposite that we are very committed to the anti-SLAPP legislation; we have been all along. The retroactivity, I think, was a concern.

In terms of the other issue, if the two members would just apologize, the whole thing would go away. That's all we're talking about. All I was concerned about was that there was a completely unfounded allegation. The accusations were made on the eve of an election. They were completely untrue; they were a complete fiction. All I'm saying is: Just apologize; retract those, and the whole thing goes away.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question to the Premier: Last week, we asked the Premier to provide a guarantee that hydro rates wouldn't go up as a result of her plan to privatize Hydro One. We didn't get an answer. In fact, the Minister of Energy said last week that he had no idea how Hydro One would be managed if it was privatized.

If the government has no idea how Hydro One would be managed, how can the government prevent costs from going up?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't have the transcript in front of me, but I think the Minister of Energy was probably saying that you didn't have any idea how Hydro One would be managed.

What I know is that this line of questioning intensified on the very day that we announced the Ontario Electricity

Support Program, which is a program to give some relief to the lowest-income citizens in this province, the lowest-income residents. I would have thought that the NDP would have been concerned and would have been supportive of such a program.

I know they're not supportive of making a change in our assets. I know they're not supportive of investing in transportation infrastructure, transit, roads and bridges across the province. I don't know why they're not supportive of that, but they're not supportive. But I would have thought that they would have been supportive of a program that would help the lowest-income residents in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Last week we learned that the CEO of Hydro One last year earned more than three and a half times as much money as the Premier herself. The government has done a poor job at controlling executive salaries, but if Hydro One is privatized, the government will have even less control over executive salaries and less control over hydro costs.

How can the government control executive salaries and hydro costs when it's giving up oversight and control with this misguided privatization scheme?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This whole gambit and this whole debate would be much more rational if the NDP actually had a plan for any of this, if they had a plan to build transit, if they had a plan for the electricity system. The National Post on March 5, 2014, talked about the so-called energy plan that the NDP put forward. The National Post said that the NDP's energy plan "veers straight into crazy talk."

The fact is that there is no consistency in terms of what the NDP is asking for. They haven't put forward a coherent plan, neither for an electricity system that would be reliable and affordable, nor for investments in transit that would give us the 21st-century infrastructure we need across the province. Until they have those plans, it's pretty hard to debate with any kind of credibility.

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question today is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, in my riding of Etobicoke Centre, we have one of the highest percentages of seniors of any riding in Canada. I've heard from many of those seniors, and they've expressed to me how important it is that they have access to home and community care as they age.

I've also spoken to many people in my riding who are not seniors but who are caring for seniors: people who are caring for their elderly parents but also caring for their children and raising a family, often with limited resources. They've asked us for help to ensure that they can access the home and community care they need to support their aging parents.

To address this challenge, it's obviously important that we continue to deliver high-quality home and community care for the people of Ontario. Minister, could you

specifically outline what work your ministry is doing to ensure access to high-quality community and home care in communities like Etobicoke Centre?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre for this very important question. I'm pleased to tell you how our government is improving health care for seniors with complex health conditions across Ontario. I was pleased to be at Toronto Rehab last week to make an announcement that our government is investing more than \$40 million in specialized rehabilitative care right across the province to help our seniors recover from illnesses and injuries so that they can continue to live independently at home. This is a program called assess and restore.

1120

Fortunately, most of Ontario's 1.9 million seniors are healthy and use the health care system only occasionally. But a small number of our seniors living in the community—about 150,000, or 8%, of them—have complex care needs, and this program is geared specifically towards them. We know that sometimes long hospital stays can result in debilitation, muscle loss or weakened bones; for too many seniors that means moving into a long-term care home prematurely. This program aims to allow them to continue living independently.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Strong community-based care is not only a preferred method of care for many seniors, as they can remain in their homes and out of hospitals, but it also obviously provides relief to families. It's also a much cheaper form of care than the hospital-based care that is often the alternative.

My constituents, particularly seniors, in Etobicoke Centre have also been asking me about physiotherapy. This is a service that is critical to many people in my community, and my understanding is that the government is working to improve services in a number of ways. I've heard about things such as one-on-one physiotherapy for long-term-care residents with an assessed need, enhanced access to exercise and fall prevention classes for seniors in community settings, and expanded in-home and clinic-based physiotherapy for seniors.

Services like this that are based in the community go a long way in helping families as they juggle that challenge I raised earlier of caring for aged loved ones while also raising a family. Minister, could you please tell the House more about the work that you are doing to strengthen physiotherapy access across Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member again. As part of my announcement last week, I was also able to say and announce that Ontario is expanding access to physiotherapy into primary health care settings across the province by investing more than \$4.2 million to add physiotherapy services across 25 more family health teams, nurse-practitioner-led clinics and community health centres. An estimated 71,000 people, including seniors, will now be able to access physiotherapy at the same place where they receive their primary care health services.

Improving health outcomes for seniors is also part of the government's plan to build a better Ontario through its Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care by providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information that they need to stay healthy and a health care system that's sustainable for generations to come. Providing seniors with more supports will allow them to live safely and independently at home and enjoy a better quality of life.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, last week you not only defended your broken social assistance computer program, you proclaimed it a success. You told the House, "At the end of the day, we have been extremely successful." Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the people waiting in line at social assistance offices and the front-line staff working overtime to clear the logjam would disagree. Minister, do you have any concern that your high-priced consultants will share your confidence about SAMS when they produce their preliminary report tomorrow?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Certainly we have been successful in terms of the fact that we have ensured that we've processed four successful pay runs for both ODSP and OW monthly payments, payments to some 570,000 families each month. This is our priority. We have made some 2.5 million payments to our most vulnerable families in total.

Of course, I want to thank all our staff who are working so very hard on the front lines to ensure that this is happening. I know that they have had a number of frustrations, but actually, the production of these cheques has been a wonderful step forward for all those vulnerable families who rely on these payments. We have accommodated them in the way that we have, with all this hard work and the number of improvements that we have made to date on SAMS.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Again to the minister: The fact is that this minister's testimony continues to be at critical odds with the facts. It's clear that if SAMS was working as intended, there would be no need to keep funnelling millions in to the system, nor to hire consultants to mitigate a mess so big that the government's entire IT department could not fix it.

Minister, the preliminary report is scheduled to come out tomorrow. Will you, in the spirit of government openness and transparency, make the report publicly available upon its release?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Yes, indeed, I'm looking forward to this report from our third-party technical adviser. PricewaterhouseCoopers, I understand, will be delivering this report this week. I'm looking forward to hearing those results. We will certainly be communicating the themes that we hear in that report. It is an interim report.

They have been engaging with stakeholders across the province. I attended a meeting with front-line workers and PricewaterhouseCoopers to ensure that the issues that were important to the people using the system were being fully communicated to PricewaterhouseCoopers. I look forward not only to this interim report but of course to the final report that I'm sure will have a far more fulsome response to the issues around SAMS.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. With the release of the sunshine list, Londoners were stunned to learn that the president of Western University made almost \$1 million last year—more than double his annual salary. He is the fourth-highest-paid public sector employee in the province because of a deal negotiated with Western's board of governors for twice his salary in lieu of administrative leave.

With the university cutting staff and increasing class sizes, this double payout is a slap in the face to Western students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community. Premier, will your government step in to prohibit university boards of governors from negotiating similar double payouts to university presidents?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Thank you to the member for that question. Our government is committed in investing in our young people. That's why we have been investing heavily in our universities and colleges over the past 11 or 12 years. In the meantime, we know that Ontarians have all the right to make sure that their tax dollars are spent properly. That's why we have brought in the accountability act, which has been passed last year and received royal assent in December.

In the meantime we have frozen the executive salaries, and we expect firmly that members of the broader public sector executives follow the freeze on salaries and wages which we have introduced.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: The president of Western is not the only senior university administrator among the top 10. The president and CEO of University of Toronto Asset Management Corp. is in third place at a time when the university claimed to be unable to pay teaching assistants more than poverty wages, forcing grad students and TAs to strike for fairness and recognition of their rights.

Ontario students are among the fastest-growing group of food bank users and are already paying the highest tuition in the country. They face planned, year-over-year increases in tuition to make up the chronic shortfall in post-secondary education funding.

Premier, how can your government justify hiking tuition fees and increasing reliance on contract faculty while allowing universities to negotiate these kinds of salaries to senior university administrators?

Hon. Reza Moridi: As I said earlier, we have invested heavily in our universities and colleges as well as in

our students. We have introduced a 30% discount on tuition fees for our students, which has been a great success. With regard to the specific question, the president of the University of Western Ontario opted not to take administrative leave. That's why his salary has been increased. That's our understanding.

In relation to the University of Toronto's vice-president for asset management, there was an article in his contract so that he can receive performance bonuses. So these are all the things which already existed in the contracts of those executives. But as I said earlier, we have introduced the accountability act. We are working very hard to make sure that executives in the broader public sector—that their salaries will be frozen and will be under a certain regime.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, digital technology has become a fundamental part of our daily lives. I know that even our youngest students in JK and SK use digital technology skillfully. Being able to connect with each other online has broken down borders and offered us an amazing wealth of information right at our fingertips, but it's critical that we always think about how we can leverage this technology to benefit all Ontario students and how we can improve their learning experience and make their education more flexible and affordable.

Minister, can you inform the House about our government's efforts to build a world-class post-secondary education system that is a leader in innovation and online learning?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member for that question. I am proud to say that Ontario has a strong foundation in online learning and digital learning. At the post-secondary level, we have the highest number of online learning course registrations across Canada.

1130

Earlier this year, our government announced an investment of \$42 million over three years to launch Ontario Online. Ontario Online is a new collaborative centre of excellence that will be available in time for the September 2015-16 school year. It will help students save money as well as time by avoiding needless duplication of courses and by helping to speed up the process for those wishing to fast-track their learning. We know that more accessible and user-friendly post-secondary education will help our young people to succeed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. I'm glad to hear that our government is committed to driving quality and innovation in Ontario's post-secondary system.

But I know that in the past, transferring post-secondary credits from one college or university to another has been a very long and difficult process for students. Many students in my riding of Barrie want the flexibility to

easily transfer relevant credits between different colleges and universities in this province.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister: Can you inform the members of the House how our government is improving credit transfer opportunities for Ontario students?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, thank you to the member for that question. Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to giving students more flexibility and choice when it comes to post-secondary education. We are doing this by increasing credit transfer opportunities for our students and introducing new tools to help students become more mobile.

Since launching the credit transfer initiatives in 2011, our government has partnered with our colleges and universities to triple the number of transfer credits available for our students. Just recently, Colleges Ontario and the Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer announced that business diploma students in Ontario colleges can simply transfer their courses from one college to another. We are also proud of supporting a website called ONTransfer.ca, which is a real-time guide for students to discover which credits they can transfer and which pathway is right for them.

Our government will continue to work with our partners in the university and college sector to make sure that our students have mobility across the province.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. This weekend the Globe and Mail published a story on the ROM's crystal project. The story highlighted a problem of accountability within the Royal Ontario Museum's board of governors. The organization, which is a separate entity from the museum, functions much like a hospital foundation and is supposed to manage fundraising and donor recognition.

In this case, however, the board, members of which are appointed by your ministry, was stacked with many of those whose donations were outstanding. This led to yet another secret bailout from this government.

Minister, what will it take for you step up and bring accountability to the public appointment process under your ministry? Will you admit that your lack of oversight has now forced yet another taxpayer bailout of a government agency?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to start by saying how proud I am of the work that the Royal Ontario Museum has been doing here in Ontario. They're a world-class museum, and they're recognized globally.

We have over a million people who come to Toronto each year to visit the Royal Ontario Museum. Our tourism sector here in the province of Ontario, which the Royal Ontario Museum is part of—because culture and tourism are what our museums are all about. We have contributed \$28 billion in Ontario to help build our economy, and the Royal Ontario Museum is a key part of that economy.

There is a loan that is outstanding with the Royal Ontario Museum. I'm fully convinced that the Royal Ontario Museum is on track to repay that loan, and I'll be able to give some more details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'll be looking forward to those details because we didn't get any in the first answer.

The problem with oversight is not just with the Royal Ontario Museum board of governors. Before the Christmas break, I asked about the outstanding annual reports for Ontario Place. I finally received a copy of the tabled 2011 annual report three weeks ago—four years late.

The Metro Toronto Convention Centre Corp. annual reports have been left outstanding for years at a time. Last Friday, it was revealed that four waiters are listed on the sunshine list, making over \$100,000 a year.

Do you have any idea of what's going on at these agencies? They're not watching our public dollars. When are you going to take your job seriously and provide proper oversight?

Hon. Michael Coteau: In regards to the annual reports, every single annual report from my agency has been signed by me. They're in process, and I'm quite confident they'll get to this Legislature as soon as possible.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll give you the fact that I was only halfway up, so that's good. I'll leave you alone on that one.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: In regards to the \$249-million loan, which we contributed to and the federal government contributed to, 70% of that loan has been repaid by the Royal Ontario Museum—70%. They are on track to pay that loan back.

The Royal Ontario Museum is an incredible institution here in the province of Ontario and I am proud of the work that they have done and their board has done.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Premier. This morning, Unifor released a report detailing the catastrophic impact that the possible closure of the GM plants in Oshawa would have on our economy, our community and the province as a whole. According to the report, Ontario would experience a loss of over 30,000 jobs and our GDP would decline by more than \$5 billion. In the meantime, this government continues to sit on its hands while our community lives with uncertainty and braces for impact.

Will the Premier help to put our community at ease and commit to doing everything in her power to ensure that this scenario does not become our reality?

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank Jim Stanford, Jerry Dias and Unifor for their leadership in bringing forward this report. Yes, indeed we know, and they are

confirming, that Oshawa really does mean tens of thousands of jobs, billions upon billions of dollars of economic development and an impact on our GDP. That's why we're working tirelessly in partnership with Unifor.

Our number one priority right now is to ensure that the future of the GM plant in Oshawa remains bright. We have every reason to be optimistic, and Jerry Dias would and did say the exact same thing this morning. We're working in partnership to make sure we do that.

My hope, though, is that that report makes sure that the NDP recognize how important this is and, rather than equivocating when we make these important investments, stand with us when we make these important investments for a change—

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: General Motors has been building cars in Oshawa for over a century, but in spite of our strong history the future remains uncertain.

Ontario was once a leader in the automotive industry, but under this government our share of production continues to decline. When the government had leverage as a shareholder, they opted not to use it. When they could have been strengthening our auto sector, they have turned their backs.

Will the government make a real commitment to the automotive industry in Ontario and implement a comprehensive automotive strategy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Unlike the NDP, we don't equivocate; we take action. This government has invested more in the auto sector than any government in any generation before us. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to make those investments, and I'll tell you why we'll make those investments: They're working.

We've seen \$4 billion of investment in Ontario's auto sector since November. That's a record amount of investment. In fact, that \$4 billion represents more than we've probably seen in many years. Things are going well in terms of our investments in the auto sector, but we're going to continue to work tirelessly to continue to land mandates. Oshawa is our number one concern, but even GM just recently invested \$560 million in Ingersoll—good news; Honda, \$857 million in Alliston; Chrysler, \$2 billion in Windsor.

We're going to keep working with the sector. We're going to keep building—

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

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. My riding of Beaches—East York is home to numerous forward-thinking small businesses. Constituents like Cal Bruner of CaseWare, a world-leading software company, are proud of the contributions they are making to Ontario's economy and to a stronger province as a whole.

1140

Minister of Government and Consumer Services, your mandate is to deliver effective procurement practices that ensure the best value for the money and the guarantee of transparent and accountable investments. I personally think that many of the businesses in my riding would form productive mutually beneficial agreements with our government.

Will the minister speak to opportunities that may exist for not only large businesses but small and medium-sized businesses to engage our government?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the member from Beaches–East York for the question and for raising this important issue. I certainly share my colleague’s confidence in Ontario businesses. Our government continues to provide them opportunities, whether it be building roads, developing software or providing maintenance equipment.

Participation in provincial procurement is open to all qualified vendors, regardless of size or location, through our Vendor of Record Program. In fact, the vast majority of businesses we deal with are small and medium-sized Ontario businesses. Our investment reflects both the quality and competitiveness of Ontario vendors. The 2013-14 stats reveal that 89% of all procurement payments were made to Ontario vendors.

It’s a great program, and I’m happy to follow up in our supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to the minister for informing us about these numerous opportunities for agreements with the Ontario government. I realize that these agreements serve multiple purposes: delivering efficient and effective services while providing excellent opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

It is equally important that taxpayers are assured that goods and services are procured through a fair, competitive and user-friendly process that benefits all Ontarians. I understand that the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services has worked to simplify bidding processes for interested vendors, making sure that all postings are visible and easy to access. These types of initiatives reduce the time and effort required for vendors to bid on procurement opportunities.

Will the Minister of Government and Community Services explain to the House how simplified bidding processes work effectively with vendors?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again to the member from Beaches–East York: Thank you for the question. Streamlining the application process is very important, and we have carefully ensured that our vendor perspectives are considered in this process. After consulting extensively, we’ve created shorter, simpler procurement documents that are standardized with appropriate conditions and have streamlined the process.

In fact, Ontario is the first government in Canada to move to a fully electronic tendering system. While vendors used to be charged for assessing procurement opportunities, they can now download these documents free of

charge. Using electronic tendering has received positive feedback from the vendor community. Our system improves notifications; that helps reduce the number of incomplete bids and eliminates the cost of printing and shipping materials. We’ve added form-based evaluations that allow officials to complete more procurement in less time.

Speaker, I’m certainly pleased with the progress with respect to procurement and our Vendor of Record Program.

WORKPLACE FATALITIES

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I seek unanimous consent to have a moment’s silence for the two construction workers who died on the job last week in Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to have a moment of silence in honour of the two construction workers killed in Toronto on-site. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members of the House to please rise for a moment of silence to pay our respects.

The House observed a moment’s silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you for that kind gesture.

VISITORS

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I just wanted to introduce today the grandparents of the page from Cambridge, Alycia Berg: Her grandparents Donna and Howard Famme join us this morning. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I’d like to take this opportunity to introduce to the Legislature Kevin Toda, who is visiting here from McGill University in Montreal. He’s a political science student who has come here today to listen to question period. Welcome.

MEMBERS’ ANNIVERSARIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to draw attention to the fact that today both Lisa MacLeod and Christine Elliott are celebrating their ninth anniversary of coming to Queen’s Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy anniversary.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1300.

MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS**FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT**

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to recognize the local support being shown for the Almaguin Fish

Improvement Association in Parry Sound–Muskoka. The AFIA is a community stewardship program that has been involved in conserving native pickerel populations in Lake Cecebe and Ahmic Lake for over 30 years. Their hatchery is run by volunteers and does not rely on any government funding. Yet the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry contests the AFIA's actions and is again attempting to shut down the operation.

My office has received resolutions of support for the AFIA from three municipalities to date. Last week, I tabled in this House a petition containing 263 signatures, and as I speak, support continues to pour in.

These individuals and municipalities are all calling for the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to take action to support the AFIA and to reinstate the community-operated hatchery. They emphasize that the biological integrity of these lakes is key to the area's economic stability, through tourism, and that their viability ought to be preserved for future generations. They also highlight the benefits of the education program run by the AFIA for local schools.

I support this local initiative, and I applaud these communities' efforts. I call on the minister and ministry to issue the required permits to allow the AFIA to continue their stocking program.

HOLY WEEK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I rise as a Reverend Doctor with the United Church of Canada to wish Christians around the world and in this chamber a very holy Holy Week and, of course, to pray for those Christians who are under attack around the world, including in the Middle East, and clear up some misconceptions about what Christianity is not. It is not LGBTQ-phobic. In fact, Jesus talked about loving your neighbour, no matter who your neighbour was, and wanting for your neighbour what you want for yourself. Also, the very first Christian convert was somebody seen as sexually unclean to the powers that be of that day.

Christianity is not anti-woman. In fact, women were the last to leave the cross and the very first to proclaim the resurrection, and they even changed Jesus's mind about theology.

Christianity is also not anti-science, and it is not anti-sexuality. In fact, some of the most erotic poetry is in Song of Solomon, and God gave us the gift of reason for a reason.

To all of those around the world who are celebrating Holy Week, are going to walk with Jesus to the cross beyond and through the Resurrection, I say have a very, very blessed Easter and Good Friday and, of course, Maundy Thursday. Take care.

ENGINEERS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I rise to acknowledge our province's world-class engineers. Recently, I was asked by the Professional Engineers Ontario, the PEO, to take part

in their Take Your MPP to Work Day. I would like to thank Darla Campbell and Hafiz Bashir, the government liaison chairs, for putting the event together.

The good work done by our diligent engineers largely takes place behind the scenes, but one major aspect of their work—safety—affects us all every day. I commend the PEO for their leadership in developing standards that prioritize the safety of Ontarians and, furthermore, I would like to recognize them for encouraging female participation in engineering.

We still have a ways to go, but with their strong support and with three of the last five presidents being women, including Annette Bergeron, from my riding of Kingston and the Islands, the PEO has established positive, inspiring female role models for the engineers of tomorrow.

Going to the front lines is a priority for me, so I was thrilled that my visit took me to Bombardier's state-of-the-art light-rail transit design, testing and manufacturing facility. Their 450-plus highly skilled employees are building rail transit for cities around the globe, for delivery to South Africa, Brazil, Kuala Lumpur and Vancouver.

At a time when governments are focusing on environmental stewardship and fiscal responsibility, it is very exciting that rail transit optimized to these requirements is being produced right here in Ontario.

Meegwetch. Merci. Thank you.

KRAFT HOCKEYVILLE 2015

Mr. Rick Nicholls: The two finalists for Kraft Hockeyville were announced during this past Saturday night's Hockey Night in Canada broadcast, and I'm very proud to say that my hometown of Chatham-Kent will face off against North Saanich, BC, in the final showdown for Kraft Hockeyville 2015. What an honour.

Both finalists will receive \$100,000 in arena upgrades, but the winner will host an NHL pre-season game. I can only hope it's between the Leafs and the Red Wings.

If Chatham-Kent wins, it will be a victory for the entire community, but it will mean just a little more to a special young person in the community, Chad Peterson. Chad has been an inspiration to us all. Chad has been the Chatham Maroons superfan. His love of hockey and life have inspired us all.

For months, he's been driving around Chatham-Kent in a Volkswagen Beetle with a Kraft Hockeyville logo on the side. This contest means that much to him. Why? Well, Speaker, Chad was born with a fine motor skills disability, but he has refused to give up on his dream. Recently, he was quoted in the newspaper saying, "We're going to have the best huge party at Memorial arena. Oh, yeah. We'll be live on Hockey Night in Canada—that will be totally amazing. We're going to rock Chatham-Kent."

So let's get behind Chad and the organizers who made this possible. We've come this far. Now let's bring

Hockeyville to Chatham-Kent. So go to www.KHV2015.ca to vote for Chatham-Kent today. The deadline is tonight, so vote now and vote often. If we win, I personally invite everyone to the biggest party on April 4 at Chatham Memorial Arena.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Far be it from me to interrupt a rant.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm proud to stand in this House and represent the people of Oshawa. Today, I'd like to say that General Motors has been building cars in Oshawa for over a century, but in spite of our strong history, the future remains uncertain.

This morning, Unifor released an independent study on the significance of General Motors to my community in Oshawa, and the impact the province would feel in the event of a closure. It was not a surprise to hear that the result would be devastating.

According to the report, Ontario would experience a loss of 30,000 jobs and our GDP would decline by more than \$5 billion. As the government scrambles to sell our public assets to pay for election promises, another \$1 billion would disappear from their revenue stream.

The Liberal government cannot continue to sit on its hands and wait. Ontario's automotive industry boasts state-of-the-art technology and innovation, and a skilled workforce that is rivalled by none. But it is the government's job to make sure these advantages are not overlooked. When the industry is considering where they want to build a new plant, we need to put ourselves in the best possible position to secure that investment.

In my riding, I've heard from auto workers concerned that their jobs are at risk, pensioners worried about their retirement security and small business owners afraid for the ripple effects in our local economy. I ask that the government take these concerns seriously and adopt a comprehensive automotive strategy to help put my community in Oshawa and others across Ontario at ease.

PLEIN AIR ENSEMBLE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would like to talk about a great event that I went to in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans last week. The event was one to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Plein Air Ensemble.

Twenty-five years ago, three artist friends, Pierrette Dulude-Bohay, Charles Spratt and Andrew Lyall, organized the first painting trip to teach students outdoor painting. Nobody would have guessed at that point that this small group would grow continuously. The group's aim is to capture the beauty of the landscape while fostering friendships among the artists.

Today, the group has about 75 members, with about 15 to 20 taking part in each trip. Most of the artists come from the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Each year, they plan a spring and a fall trip to different destinations.

During this exhibition in Orléans, 21 of the Plein Air Ensemble members showed works from different trips. The show highlighted the wonderful talent and diversity of this group of artists. I saw many fine artworks in oil, acrylic, watercolours and pastel.

I would like to recognize the event organizers, Kerstin Peters and Hélène Martin, for their outstanding work on the event and the many more to come.

1310

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to report the results of my recent newsletter survey. I want to thank the hundreds of people who took the time to respond and share their concerns. Mr. Speaker, one of the biggest concerns continues to be the proposal to locate a landfill on fractured bedrock near the Thames River, which would put our drinking water at risk.

One of the other major concerns is wind turbines. People are concerned about the impacts on their health and their community, and the safety at nearby airports. Ninety-three per cent of the people who responded said municipalities should have a say in where wind turbines are located.

When I read the responses, I'm always struck by the impact of this government's policies, and how difficult they are making it for people to make ends meet. Forty-nine per cent of the respondents said that their hydro bills had increased by 20% to 50% over the last 10 years, and 30% said their hydro bills had increased by more than 50%. People are doing everything they can to keep costs down, but the increases are staggering.

This government is now proposing to charge them for a pension plan. It's not that they don't want more retirement income; it's that they can't afford this government's proposal. Seventy-eight per cent of residents said they can't afford to pay 1.9% of their income into the proposed pension program. These are the numbers that government needs to consider before they push ahead.

Again, I want to thank everyone who took the time to respond so I can continue to raise their concerns here in the Legislature.

WATERLOO REGION COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Recently, I had the opportunity to drop in on Waterloo Region Community Legal Services. This is a non-profit agency under Legal Aid Ontario. Executive director Shannon Down told me that her mandate is to provide access to legal services for people and groups facing financial barriers when trying to seek legal counsel.

In my riding of Kitchener Centre, I often meet with constituents who have benefited from the legal clinic with issues such as social assistance and disability appeals, Landlord and Tenant Board cases, and workplace safety and insurance claims.

The clinic is especially important to new Canadians, who may not have a full grasp of our official languages. They're often vulnerable and lacking in understanding of our legal system. They don't always know their rights.

As part of our government's commitment to promoting fairness and accessibility in the justice system, regardless of income, we dedicated an additional \$30 million to Legal Aid Ontario in our 2014 budget. The result of this investment has meant greater capacity for the clinic to meet the demand they face.

After more than 25 years, our community legal clinic continues to provide vital access to the legal process for those who might otherwise be underserved or excluded.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated service providers of legal clinics across Ontario who fulfill this very important mission every day.

HOLI GALA FUNDRAISER

Ms. Harinder Malhi: On Friday, I had the pleasure of attending the William Osler Health System Foundation's second annual Holi Gala fundraiser. This spectacular community event took place to celebrate Holi, which is traditionally celebrated by members of the Hindu faith. The festival is known as the festival of colours and the festival of love. As such, the festival has grown to become popular among Indians and Canadians of all faiths and backgrounds.

On this evening, the Grand Empire convention centre was alight with colours, as over 700 guests, including members of all three levels of government, were in attendance to partake in an evening full of fun, food and dance. There were performances by magicians, dance teams and world-renowned singers Nindy Kaur and Manj Musik, as well as acting sensation Vinay Virmani.

Through sponsorships, donations, auctions and raffles, the organizers were able to raise a remarkable \$150,000 for redevelopment initiatives at all three Osler locations, as well as equipment needs at the Brampton Civic Hospital, which is in my riding.

As a direct result of the proceeds from this event, members of our community will have greater access to the services they require in their hospitals and health care facilities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organizers, volunteers, board members, doctors, nurses and all the staff, as well as William Osler's president and CEO, Matt Anderson, for all the work they continue to do for our community.

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

It is now time for introduction of bills. The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today is the second anniversary of the passing of MPP Peter Kormos. I thought, to think of Mr. Kormos a little bit, I would introduce a bill that he would introduce every time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (STRIKE AND LOCK-OUT INFORMATION), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LES GRÈVES ET LES LOCKOUTS)

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to information relating to strikes and lock-outs / Projet de loi 83, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui concerne les renseignements sur les grèves et les lockouts.

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, which is where she should have done her preamble.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sorry. I messed up a bit there. I'll try to make amends.

Peter Kormos passed two years ago. The anti-scab legislation is something that he would bring on the docket at every Parliament, so I thought I would continue with the bill to amend the Labour Relations Act to require employers to provide information regarding the use of replacement workers—or scabs, as Peter would call them—in the event of strikes or lockouts, to the minister. The minister is required to publish this information that he receives.

For the USW members on strike at Crown for the last 19 months, this is for you.

TRILLIUM GIFT OF LIFE NETWORK AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LE RÉSEAU TRILLIUM POUR LE DON DE VIE

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend the Trillium Gift of Life Network Act / Projet de loi 84, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur le Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie.

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.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today being the second anniversary of Peter Kormos's death, I thought I would introduce two bills that were dear to him. This one has to do with assumed consent. There wasn't a bigger cham-

pion in Ontario of organ donation than Peter Kormos. He tried for a long time to get this bill to go through. He would joke that he had tattooed on his stomach, and threatened to show me, which I didn't want to see, "Take these organs if need be."

Basically, what the bill does is, it brings assumed consent so that everybody would be assumed to be willing organ donors unless they made it clear that they are not.

This is something that I fully support, and this is something that Peter pushed for a long time.

PETITIONS

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support it and sign my name and send it with page Ian.

1320

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water," and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

"Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, 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'm pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Max.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Norm Miller: I have petitions that support improved winter road maintenance with another 250 signatures. I note that one is Tony Clement, the federal member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, who signed this as well. It reads:

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition and will give it to Jade.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGAL AID

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition entitled "Population-Based Legal Services Funding."

"Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid clients within a community of nearly 800,000 population; and

"Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

"Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

"That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner."

I agree with the petition, sign my name and leave it with page Ranen.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government has wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

All of these petitions were collected this weekend at the home show. I'm pleased to affix my name to it and give it to page Cameron to take to the table.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have this petition named "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 Ontario 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 couldn't agree with this more. I'm going to put my name on it and give it to page Emma to bring to the Clerk.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to read this petition 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 could not agree any more with this petition. I'm going to sign it and give it to page Alycia to bring to the table.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan to introduce a new carbon tax in 2015; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn't necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme increases the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;”

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

“To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature in support. I'll send it to the table with page Kari.

1330

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario keep the obstetrics unit open at Leamington District Memorial Hospital.”

I wholeheartedly support this petition, will sign my name to it and give it page Cynthia.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me pleasure to rise here once again this afternoon and read this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

I agree with this petition. I'm going to affix my name and send it to the table with page Luc.

TAXATION

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

“Whereas the government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn't necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and households are paying almost \$700 more annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

“To abandon the idea of introducing yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with page Max.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Madame Diane Huard from Val Caron, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“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 ... 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 fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Marin to bring it to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

I’ll sign this petition and give it to page Caleb.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That completes our time for petitions this afternoon.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR DES CHOIX PLUS SAINS

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la

santé publique par l’édiction de la Loi de 2015 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2015 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated Bill 45 at second reading, the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry had the floor. I recognize the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. My last discussion was talking about, of course, the healthy foods part of it and the need for calorie numbering, which I agree with. I had some discussion, really, about a failed policy with this government: how we’re not seeing the results we’re hoping for. I’ve been talking with a number of teachers—I’ve got three in my own family, and certainly with a number of neighbours and friends. Really, it has to be more of a package. If we’re really going to have an impact—and again, I urge the government to go back to the science—we need the addition of exercise to be part of this whole program. I hear many times about the need for exercise—so many minutes a day—but so far, I believe it’s only a required one course in a four-year program in high school now for physical education, and that includes health. So I think instead of concentrating on some of the glamorous titles and issues, it really gets back to basics. Part of it is how to eat, but the other part is how to really blend your diet with your exercise. I hope this government will look at that, and maybe we can make some changes.

Next up—while we’re talking on failed policies—is the cigarette policy. We aren’t seeing appreciable improvements with our smoking rates when it comes to our children. Of course, there couldn’t be any more information available as to the negative aspects of smoking. In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, we’re probably the hardest hit in this province when it comes to contraband cigarettes. A study done at a couple of local high schools showed that up to 90% of the cigarette butts—they pick up the butts and they review just where they’re from—are contraband. So I see that part of the practice is to go out and beat up our local grocery stores and convenience stores. Really, they’re beating up the wrong people. They should be going around beating up the criminals who are out there who are selling—this is important tax revenue that the government is missing. Instead of talking about a new carbon tax, we could look at trying to recoup some of the taxes we’re losing.

There are a couple of things that could certainly help, and one is—in my riding, I think most people think it’s illegal to smoke if you’re under 19, but of course, it’s not. I’m not sure why you would make it illegal to sell to minors but you wouldn’t make it illegal to smoke, as we do with alcohol. If you really want to have an impact, I think that would be a big part of it, instead of the current practice of sending our tobacco police out and seeing if they happen to step off the sidewalk in their approved smoking areas.

There was a case at one of the local high schools where they had a glass front. The smoking officer used to

sit inside the staff room, and if they noticed somebody step off the sidewalk—and you can imagine 20 students in an area on a four-foot sidewalk, and the fooling around that goes on—they ran out and they charged them with an offence: for smoking on school property. The whole idea that if it's bad for you—I think the public expects that it is illegal at that age. Really, if you're going to have some impact, I think that's the other part of it.

I just want to recount a conversation I had with one of the local high school principals. He was talking about when they used to allow them to smoke on school property. He said, "I used to be able to go out and monitor who was actually there in the group." Now he says, "They're out on private property. I see people out there buying illegal cigarettes. I see them buying drugs. I go out there and I try to use my influence to shoo the bad guys off. But they can just say, 'No, it's private property. Buzz off.'"

That's what we're seeing. We're giving this illegal drug trade, the illegal contraband trade, a place to actually go, and they know they're going to have a market of 10 or 15 kids any time of the day.

1340

I can go by one of the schools out in the country—back on Highway 43, we have a couple of them. The nearest village is five miles away, and yet there are 20 people out on the roadway smoking—access to anybody who wants to stop. That whole philosophy of gathering a group together—it becomes a cool place to be.

We're seeing the results: It's just not working. It's interesting when you talk about the contraband. Some studies show it's up between 15% and 30%, and it could get worse.

Here's a letter that was sent to me. It says:

"Dear members of provincial Parliament,

"As part of my pre-budget presentation to the finance committee last week, I presented some new public opinion data (commissioned by the Ontario Convenience Stores Association) on illegal tobacco, including data on the proposed ban on flavoured tobacco products which includes a menthol tobacco ban.

"The survey provides substantial evidence that a flavoured tobacco ban and/or tax increase would drive tobacco users to illegal tobacco sources. Our retailers are concerned that the cost of the flavour ban legislation will be greater than the benefits of this policy...."

"We are also supporting a tougher stance on youth tobacco consumption—one that is supported by a majority of Ontarians. Our retailers feel it is important to share this data with you so that, as decision-makers, you have all of the necessary information in evaluating the potential consequences of this bill.

"Here's what a survey of 1,500 Ontarians (including 1,000 tobacco users) had to say ...

"Two thirds of respondents felt that contraband tobacco was either a major or minor problem.

"But, a large proportion of tobacco users still admit to purchasing untaxed tobacco products illegally: one

quarter of tobacco users admit to purchasing" contraband cigarettes, "and 69% would consider doing so.

"Banning a product, such as menthol, will not decrease its attractiveness: 43% of tobacco users said they would find the banned product somewhere else.

"Seventy per cent of tobacco users said they would consider buying untaxed tobacco if there were another tax increase on legal tobacco products.

"A plurality of Ontarians (including non-smokers) believe that raising taxes on tobacco products will increase the use of contraband tobacco....

"Most Ontarians (89%) mistakenly think that it is illegal for minors to purchase tobacco in Ontario. While it is illegal for a retailer to sell to a minor, it is not illegal for the minor to purchase it."

I think that's a problem. We look at minors coming into stores and providing false IDs, and there's no issue around that, but they march all over the private store owners.

Another study we have: "Study Shows One in Four Minors Leave LCBO Stores with Booze; One in Five from the Beer Store; Convenience Stores Best at Testing for Age.

"May 30, 2011—Toronto—An independent study of LCBO, the Beer Store and convenience stores has shown that the LCBO fares poorly when it comes to checking minors for age. The study, conducted by independent research firm Statopex Field Marketing on behalf of the Ontario Convenience Stores Association, used two groups of secret shoppers, minors aged 15-18 and young adults aged 19-24, to randomly test retailers on how well they check for age....

"When tested with underage secret shoppers (age 15-18), convenience stores scored the highest with an 87.3% pass rate, the Beer Store next with 80.7% and LCBO last with 74.6%—meaning one in four minors successfully purchased age-restricted products from LCBO, and one in five from the Beer Store—compared to one in eight for convenience stores.

"Testing with young adult secret shoppers near the age of majority (age 19-24) revealed that convenience stores once again scored highest with a 73.3% pass rate ... and the LCBO once again came in last with 40.5%."

That's some of the science they're using to try to ban this, but they're going after the little guy. They're not going after the government-sponsored stores, where the failure rate is drastically higher—and again, I guess I would support this.

I had a daughter who worked in one of these convenience stores. Of course, she had a little bit of a different slant on it. She wouldn't sell cigarettes to her friends, even when she knew they were 19, because she didn't like them smoking. So they would come in and they were of age, but they would have to go elsewhere.

But she used to talk about some of the shoppers who would come in and catch some of the—you know, generally, these are students; it's likely their first job, some of them, 15 or 16 years old. There's a car parked illegally outside with somebody in the car sending somebody in in

a big panic and putting pressure on people to sell, or coming in with IDs that are doctored up so you really have to look at them carefully. Of course, they swoop in and charge them.

I was on the local health board, and of course I used to get these complaints. They used to bring them up, and I'd be assured that, of course, they have people who look like they're 15 or who look like they are younger doing these test shoppings. It was interesting. One of the members on the health board was a former principal. He talked to me and he agreed that bylaw enforcement is not a pretty thing. But he said, "I take a little offence when you say that somebody's looking 15." And he said to a friend of his on the board, "Robbie, you know the person they're talking about. Would you have dreamt that she was under 25? To say that she looked like she was 15 is a stretch."

Those are the types of tricks we're doing, but we're not going into our own government stores that are scoring much worse. These people are really trying to do a good job, but the whole system is flawed. If you really want to have an impact, I think you have to start looking at making it illegal for minors to smoke and taking away their ability—you know, the get-out-of-jail-free zone where they can go off school property. You're just enticing them to a safe place, and of course, you're giving the people that are breaking the law a chance to go to them.

The other issue is on the menthol cigarettes. I think up to almost 50% of the population smokes menthol cigarettes. I don't smoke, and I've never smoked, but certainly a lot of my family did smoke, and a lot of them have stopped. I think now, to go back and take those off the market—I mean, if it was easy to stop, people would stop. I've got letters here talking about that. Of course, as we mentioned before, it only means more people are going to buy illegal cigarettes. It's not a proven way of trying to stop these people from smoking. I think that going the route they are won't have the results. It might be commendable to try these things, but if we know beforehand they aren't going to work, maybe there's a better way.

It's the same with electronic cigarettes. I've got letters here from people. I've got one that's addressed to Premier Wynne and Associate Minister of Health Damerla:

"My name is"—I won't say it. "I am an ex-smoker and you've lost my vote. Twenty-one years ago I quit ... cold turkey. I was so miserable for three months my wife refused to quit ... and she held true to her word until about two years ago. She made the decision to try once again to quit smoking as we were walking through a mall in Ottawa and passed a vendor selling electronic cigarettes. She made a comment of how this might work for her so I bought her the first starter kit. I would love to say she quit instantly, however this is not the case. She bounced back and forth between the cigarettes and her e-cig for the first year" or so. "Six months ago she had weaned herself down from a pack a day" to one or two

cigarettes a day. "Now she does not smoke at all. She is breathing better, she has more energy, and is generally happier all round that she kicked her 20-plus-year pack-a-day habit. And Bill 45 will treat this product as a real cigarette?"

I know I just have a few seconds, but it talks about how they agree you shouldn't be selling it to minors, but it's a great tool, probably the best tool and maybe the only tool for most people to actually quit smoking. They caution the government on making them as illegal as a cigarette. They are vapour only. They don't have smoke. I certainly encourage the government to rethink that.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting listening to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I will start by congratulating his daughter who put her job on the line to protect the health of her friends by refusing to sell them cigarettes when they came to her store. It takes quite a bit of courage to do this, I can imagine—she was a young person herself—if her friends were in that bracket and she actually understood that if she kept young people from picking up smoking, then there was a good chance they wouldn't become smokers and they wouldn't have the outcomes that one out of two smokers face, which is that tobacco, used as directed, kills one out of two users. So congratulations to your daughter.

1350

The same thing on his explanation of the bylaw enforcement by the health units: No, those are not glorifying jobs by any stretch of the imagination, but once we have regulation in place, it has to be enforced. Otherwise, it's all for none. I know that 99% of convenience store owners and people who are allowed to sell tobacco do respect the bylaw, but in part, because we're all human beings, knowing that there is somebody who is going to come and check up on you and knowing that the penalties are severe if you get caught helps to make sure that we continue to have 99% of the tobacco sellers respecting the bylaws.

Lastly, again, it takes a lot of bravery to stand in this House and say that he will support that not only minors be forbidden from purchasing tobacco, but also possessing and consuming it. I know that other provinces do this; we don't in Ontario.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for getting his thoughts on the record today with regard to Bill 45.

When it comes to Bill 45, I like to take direction on public health matters from my MOH in the riding of Peterborough, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, MOH for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit. I meet with her on a very frequent basis. Recently, she brought to me a delegation of high school students from both the public high school system and the Catholic high school system in Peterborough. They certainly impressed upon me, working with the public health unit, that Bill 45 needs to

be passed as we bring in other legislative measures to remove the scourge of smoking and the use of tobacco products in the province of Ontario.

I can't comment on other communities across Ontario, but I can comment on LCBO employees and members of the United Food and Commercial Workers who work at the Beer Store in my riding of Peterborough. It is my experience—and I've chatted with these two employee groups on numerous occasions—how vigilant they are in asking people for identification and making sure that underaged individuals do not buy alcohol beverage products, particularly in my community of Peterborough. These professional employees, whether it's the LCBO or the Beer Store, know that the problem of drinking and driving and, in fact, diseases that are related to the excessive use of alcohol are a pressing public health concern, so I just want to recognize their very good efforts.

When it comes to labelling, labelling is very important. From a broader perspective, last Friday, I had the opportunity to attend the Foodland Ontario Retailer Awards. The message there is that everybody is looking at labels for healthy food in Ontario.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm just going to start by offering a belated happy birthday greeting to my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Jimmy celebrated a birthday during March break. Of course, we weren't here, so just in case that got missed, I'd like to do that on behalf of our caucus.

He's a great guy. He comes to work every day on behalf of the constituents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry with a practical thought process. He does a great job of holding the government to account. He brings lots of ideas that can improve their legislation, and there was no change today with this piece of legislation.

What he talked about today was failed policy—he has three teachers in his family—particularly with regard to physical activity in high schools; it should be mandatory. It doesn't have to be a sport, necessarily, but something to keep people active and fit, because a good, healthy diet and exercise are the best ways to ensure that people have good health and stay out of our hospitals.

He raised a really good point—again, a failed policy—with regard to where they're going with smoking. Like him, I've never smoked. The difference with me is my two brothers, Norm and Gord, are quite a bit older than me. When I was five years old, they forced me to have a cigarette, then they forced me to have a pipe and then they forced me to have a cigar, and it was not good. The colour of these chairs might give you an idea of what happened. I'm not necessarily promoting it for everyone else out there, but I'll tell you, it worked like a charm for me. I've never smoked a day since and never will.

He raised a really valuable point in regard to—we make it illegal for people to not have cigarettes, but we don't for youth. So they can't have them, but they can consume them, and they can actually probably sell them if they so choose. I think there's a real opportunity, if we really want to get to the heart of this, to do it.

We also need to be addressing the contraband. He talked about menthol cigarettes as well as e-cigarettes. The people that can't get them through the legal way don't necessarily stop smoking if we ban them; they just go to the illegal—which, again, we're losing out on tax revenue. More importantly, that health is still declining, and we're promoting more and more that bad habit of smoking.

We've also been approached by people about smoking cessation. Sometimes these products help people to actually stop smoking. I had one of my vendors in my riding on the weekend approach me on this. We need to look at and make sure we do balanced legislation to serve all of the people.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm absolutely privileged, of course, to be able to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of Hamilton Mountain—their thoughts on what they feel that G45 will bring to their lives.

I had my time to speak on this bill, and for quite a bit of my time I talked about healthy food and making sure that people of all incomes have the ability to eat healthy vegetables, and what that would do. If they had a better income, possibly—people on OW or ODSP and their low income, and how they're struggling to get those healthy benefits. That's where I spent a lot of my time debating on this bill.

I just want to mention the member from Nickel Belt and how she has brought forward at least 11 private members' bills that have fed G45, and the work that she has put into it for years. I'm thankful that the Liberals are finally starting to listen to the great ideas that she has consistently brought forward on menu labelling and on stricter tobacco control. She wrote to the Premier in August 2014, talking about e-cigarettes and making sure that we had some kind of control, because we still know that, although they're doing a great job helping people quit cigarettes, it's also giving other people the opportunity to think, "It's not a cigarette but I can vapour and I do these kinds of things." Yet, we still don't know the true health effects and what that will bring in the future.

I'm thankful that we're going to see some of this. I wish—as said by the member from Nickel Belt when she did her presentation on this—that there would have been some sodium labelling and other aspects that could have been brought forward. Hopefully, through amendments, we'll be able to make those changes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the questions and comments.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. I want to thank the speakers from Parkdale–High Park, the Minister of Agriculture, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and Hamilton Mountain.

I kind of chuckle when I hear the member from Parkdale–High Park talk about my daughter, because I will say—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nickel Belt.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm sorry; Nickel Belt, yes—because she'd be a challenge for the store owners at MacDonald's Grocers, but I think they appreciated her, and I don't think she told them that much. But she used to come in just furious about some of the tricks she had seen pulled.

I go to one of the other villages where a person had been charged with cigarettes, and it's tough. I can see that the children are trying to get in, and they have them sign papers, but you're talking about people that are nervous. You have professional shoppers come in—that's habit—and you make them do things they wouldn't normally do. They have to put up a sign saying, "We sold contraband cigarettes illegally to a minor."

Anyway, with the new regulations, he had to do a lot of renovations at the store. While he was doing that, he took the sign off the wall, while they were replacing the counters and cupboards and made them so they were not visible. Tobacco cigarettes came in, gave him another fine and extended his ban on selling for another three months.

I'm thinking: Why are you doing this? Your own government stores have a much worse record—and nothing for them. Small businesses are having a hard time making a go—taxes, hydro rates—and this is how we treat them.

More or less, back to the bill here. I appreciate the comments from the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound about working in exercise. Really, when they are children, we have to get the message across. It's a story and it's a package. Part of that is exercise and eating properly. One without the other is not going to do it.

1400

Again, I really believe that if we're going to get serious about the cigarettes, we have to start making it illegal and really giving our police the tools to do something, like we do with alcohol. I think we've solved that problem somewhat, and it would certainly give them more tools.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Perth-Wellington on a point of order.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I would just like to acknowledge some people who are in the House today—they are the grandparents of Alycia Berg: Howard and Donna Famme, who are sitting in this gallery. I believe the Bergs are sitting in that gallery over there. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Welcome, indeed, to the Legislature.

Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's an honour for me to rise in the House today, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to join the debate on Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act.

I want to say at the outset, as my colleagues have been very clear about, that New Democrats will be supporting this bill. We will be supporting it because we have been

calling on the government for years to take action on the exact same health promotion issues that are addressed in Bill 45. We have been pushing the government to ensure that Ontarians have information about the calories they are consuming when they buy their meals in restaurants, and we have been pushing the government to protect the health of young people by introducing new measures to discourage smoking.

My colleague the member for Nickel Belt and health critic for the Ontario NDP caucus has been leading this fight since she was first elected to this Legislature back in 2007. She has introduced at least 11 private member's bills on calorie menu labelling and stricter tobacco control measures, and she was one of the first to raise red flags about the lack of regulation of e-cigarettes.

I want to acknowledge her leadership and her persistence, because the member for Nickel Belt did not give up. Despite prorogation and two elections, and despite the Liberal government's unwillingness to take action, the member for Nickel Belt kept reintroducing her legislation until the government finally agreed to address the issues that are before us today in Bill 45. I'm proud of the work she has done and proud to be her colleague. It is thanks to her dedication that MPPs are debating this important legislation today.

Bill 45 includes three schedules: The first schedule deals with calorie counts on menus, the second schedule deals with flavoured tobacco products and the third schedule deals with e-cigarettes, also known as vaporizers.

Schedule 1 requires owners and operators of food-service establishments with 20 or more locations in Ontario to display the number of calories in each food or drink item offered for sale. By requiring calorie labelling on the menus of chain restaurants, Bill 45 will help families make more informed decisions about their food choices. It is good public policy and a natural extension of the requirements that have been in place over the last decade for nutritional information to be included on prepackaged food.

Ontarians use that nutritional information to make healthy choices when they are buying food at the grocery store. There's evidence to show that once that information became available, consumers used their purchasing power to force brand names to change their recipes, and food processing companies used the information to promote their products; for example, to advertise their products as reduced fat or low sodium.

As people's lives have gotten busier over the past decade, we are seeing more and more people eating in restaurants. On average, Canadians prepare and eat at home only two out of every three meals. With Bill 45, nutritional information is moving from the back of a package box to the front of a restaurant menu. Certainly, some restaurants have already taken steps to make calorie counts available to their customers, but it's usually on the back of a placemat, on a company website or in a brochure that's buried behind the counter.

The difference is that Bill 45 would make the information available at the point of sale. Customers wouldn't

have to ask for it or have staff search for it. It would be available on the menu display board when a customer goes into a fast-food restaurant, and it would be available at all restaurants across the province with more than 20 locations. Point-of-sale menu labelling will help people make more informed choices about their food items, and it makes a difference in the choices that people make.

The Ontario Medical Association has found that children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat at a restaurant compared to eating at home, and we know that there is much greater risk of being overweight as adults when children are overweight in their youth.

We've also heard about the significant health costs associated with being overweight. The financial cost to Ontario's health care system is about \$1.6 billion annually in direct costs, with another \$2.9 billion in indirect costs. While Bill 45 will not, in and of itself, reverse the statistics on youth obesity, it is an important step in the right direction.

Frankly, it's too bad that it is such a small step. Bill 45 will only require calories to be posted. It will not provide anywhere near the kind of information that consumers can get from a package in a grocery store. It will not require restaurants to post the sodium content of their menu items, as was required by the private member's bill brought forward by the member for Nickel Belt. It will not require foodservice premises to list the recommended daily caloric intake for children, youth and adults, as was recommended by Ontario's Healthy Kids Panel in the Healthy Kids Strategy.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit from my community sent a letter to the Premier earlier this month urging that Bill 45 be amended to include clear, prominent labelling of both calories and sodium content on menus. Their letter cites a study conducted in 2013 that showed alarmingly high sodium content in Canadian restaurant foods. Children's fast-food items contained an average of 790 milligrams of sodium per serving, which is two thirds of the recommended intake for children. Children's side dishes contained an additional 375 milligrams of sodium.

The health unit points out that while calorie counts are essential to address obesity prevention, information about sodium content is also needed to achieve broader public health goals.

We know that Canadians want more information about the food they consume. Just over a year ago, Environics reported that 92% of Canadian adults agreed that it's important to know the nutritional breakdown of the foods they eat. Nine out of 10 Canadians felt that they would be missing pertinent information if they only got calorie counts. In addition to calories, they wanted to know the total amounts of fat, sodium, trans fats and sugars.

Another study, by a researcher at the University of Waterloo, showed that publishing this information and making consumers aware of calorie and sodium counts can trigger concrete changes in behaviour. It can switch people's decisions about what they're going to eat. Certainly I know that when I check the nutritional

information on the items I purchase at the grocery store, I will put something back on the shelf if I find that it's too high in sodium. So the lack of sodium content information in this bill is a real concern to New Democrats and a real concern to public health experts across this province.

The second schedule of Bill 45 amends the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to prohibit the sale of flavoured tobacco products. It also allows cabinet the authority to exempt certain flavoured tobacco products from the new ban. Our understanding from the government is that the exemption will apply to menthol-flavoured tobacco products for a period of two years, after which the sale of these products will also be prohibited.

This schedule of the bill doubles the maximum fines for individuals and corporations for many contraventions of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, making these penalties the highest in Canada, and also authorizes inspectors to seize tobacco products that are prohibited from sale.

One thing that is not in this schedule of the bill is the date that the legislation will come into force. The schedule currently says only that it will take effect on a day to be named by proclamation. So it's hard to know, from the current wording of the legislation, exactly when flavoured tobacco products, and menthol products in particular, will be banned.

New Democrats have major questions and concerns about this schedule of the bill, which we hope will be addressed when the bill goes to committee. First, we do not understand the rationale for exempting menthol-flavoured tobacco products from the ban for a period of two years. During her speech on Bill 45, my colleague the member for Nickel Belt shared her experience with her private member's bill to ban cigarillos. Her legislation passed, which, as we know, is rare for private members' bills and demonstrates all-party recognition of the importance of this issue. However, the bill became obsolete before it could be enacted because the tobacco companies figured out a way to reinvent their product so that it would not be subject to the ban.

1410

By giving tobacco companies two years' notice before the phase-out of menthol products, what we are doing is giving them two years to find other means of getting their products into the hands of young people. The government is caving to the pressure of the tobacco companies and providing them with a window that they can use to find loopholes and come up with new menthol products that will entice young people to start smoking.

From the tobacco industry's perspective, the earlier you can hook a young person on smoking, the longer you'll have a customer and the more money you'll make; that is, until the smoker dies from cancer or other smoking-related diseases. Selling flavoured tobacco—tobacco that is packaged to look like candy, that comes in cherry, grape and all kinds of tempting flavours—has been a very effective marketing strategy for the tobacco industry to gain new customers among youth.

According to the Canadian Cancer Society, fully half of Canadian youth who reported smoking used flavoured

tobacco products. In Ontario, that represents more than 57,000 youth. Make no mistake about it: Menthol tobacco has also been a key part of the tobacco industry's marketing strategy. In fact, it is the most popular flavour of flavoured tobacco. More than 19,000 Ontario youth, or one in four of the youth who are smokers, say that they are smoking menthol cigarettes. Even more troubling from a public health perspective is the fact that high school students who smoke menthol smoke substantially more cigarettes per week and are three times more likely to intend to keep smoking.

Tobacco use continues to be the leading preventable cause of death and disease in our province. It is responsible for 30% of all cancer deaths and 85% of lung cancer cases. In Ontario, there are 13,000 deaths each year from tobacco use.

Stopping youth from smoking before they start is incredibly important, because the vast majority of smokers start before the age of 18. Removing tobacco products that target youth can have a huge impact on smoking and cancer rates in this province. A government that is serious about reducing the unacceptable toll of illness and death from tobacco use must do everything possible to prevent tobacco companies from seducing our young people.

I want to share with members of this House a statement I received from a high school student in London name Jack Zhan, who is the co-chair of YouthCan, a London youth group that meets monthly to plan activities involving cancer prevention, advocacy and fundraising in schools and the community. YouthCan's slogan is, "You are never too young to make a difference in the fight against cancer." YouthCan has organized many different events in London to reach out to people in our community and last year collected 1,376 signatures in support of Bill 45.

Jack wrote to me and said: "As a teenager, I truly believe Bill 45 is a crucial bill to be passed. For several months, our YouthCan team, with the Canadian Cancer Society, have been going around London collecting signatures with the goal to ban the use of flavoured tobacco in Ontario. Flavoured tobacco is a sneaky and deceptive tactic used by the tobacco industry to attract youth into smoking in order to replace the dying smokers. If this bill passes, the future would look a lot brighter for us youth today. End the flavour by passing Bill 45!"

The third schedule of the bill enacts the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014, to regulate the sale, display, promotion and use of e-cigarettes in Ontario, which are also known as vaporizers. This schedule of the act also bans the sale or supply of electronic cigarettes and any components to anyone under age 19. In addition, this schedule of the bill bans the sale of prescribed flavoured e-cigarettes. This means that flavoured e-cigarettes will still be available for sale until they are specifically prescribed as banned.

New Democrats believe that regulations to restrict the sale and use of e-cigarettes to persons over age 19 make good sense. I know that we have all received emails from

people with conflicting information about e-cigarettes, but we believe that the government needs to act on the basis of the precautionary principle; that is, until there is a solid body of evidence concerning the health impacts of e-cigarettes, we need to take precautions and treat e-cigarettes just as we treat conventional cigarettes.

Aside from the health impacts of e-cigarettes, we support regulating these products because we want to ensure that smoking is not normalized again. We do not want young people to vape and then perhaps pick up smoking, too. We do not want to undo the work that has taken decades to achieve to denormalize smoking by allowing e-cigarettes.

In closing, I want to reiterate the support of the NDP caucus for this bill. However, it is important to keep in mind that the bill does not do everything the Liberals say it does. The Liberals claim that menthol tobacco products will be banned, but as I have pointed out, the bill says nothing about menthol specifically. The bill also allows the government to exempt certain flavoured tobacco products from the ban. We have been told by the Liberals that this means that menthol tobacco products will be exempted for a period of two years.

Speaker, New Democrats support Bill 45; there is no question about it. But we would like to see it go much further. We would like to see an explicit ban on menthol tobacco products. We would like to see sodium labelling on restaurant menus, as well as recommended caloric intakes.

New Democrats will work to make Bill 45 stronger by proposing amendments in committee. We will continue to work with public health professionals and advocates to ensure that health promotion efforts remain at the forefront of the political agenda.

When we look at issues around sodium labelling, for example, we know that nine out of 10 people in Ontario consume too much sodium, which compromises their health. Overconsumption of sodium is associated with all kinds of complications, such as high blood pressure, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, osteoporosis, stomach cancer—the list goes on. We have an opportunity in Bill 45 to address some of these issues and provide Ontarians with clear information about the sodium content of the items they are purchasing in restaurants. New Democrats believe that this is an important health promotion responsibility, and we would like to see the legislation amended to include sodium content.

It has taken the Liberals a long time to finally do the right thing for the health of families and kids. The Liberals could have passed a bill requiring menu labelling six years ago. They could have supported the private member's legislation that was originally brought forward by my colleague the MPP for Nickel Belt. They could have supported her other private member's bill to ban flavoured tobacco products, which she introduced in the last Parliament.

Clearly, governments should be doing all they can to prevent young people from starting to smoke and to encourage people to quit. Banning all flavours of tobacco products in all types of products is critical to this effort.

In closing, I urge the support of MPPs across this Legislature for Bill 45. It's an important and much-needed step to a healthy Ontario. It is widely supported by people in my community of London West and, I know, by people in ridings across this province.

1420

I look forward to seeing its passage through this Legislature and its comprehensive review in committee so that improvements can be made, so that the health of Ontarians can be taken into account and a much stronger bill comes back to this Legislature for third reading and is enacted in the province of Ontario.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you to the member for London West for her remarks and for her expression of support for the legislation moving forward. It sounds like it's a caucus-level support, which is great.

I think it's very clear, based on this legislation, that the Minister of Health and our government are very much committed to pledging to reduce tobacco use prevalence to make it the lowest in the country. There has obviously been significant progress made, and that's why our government is moving forward with this legislation and the regulations that go along with it that will very much strengthen our ability to reduce youth exposure in particular.

It's important to state, and I think the member referenced it, that this is not simply a reintroduction of our previous legislation. This act has been amended to include new initiatives to help accomplish our government's goals and it does look to, of course, ban all flavoured tobacco, including menthol, regardless of the timing. Everybody, I think, very much acknowledges now, even from a medical point of view, that flavoured tobacco products have tended to very much prove to be a gateway to tobacco use and addiction for young people.

It's kind of remarkable when one looks at the statistics, actually, that one in four high school students who report smoking have apparently smoked menthol cigarettes in the past 30 days. There are all kinds of other statistics that make that case as well.

The long and the short of it is that the proposed legislation very much strengthens our Smoke-Free Ontario Act by increasing penalties for selling tobacco to kids, making them the highest in Canada, and strengthening enforcement to test for tobacco use in indoor public places. We would look forward to seeing strong support of this legislation by all parties.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It gives me pleasure to rise and speak to the remarks from the member from London West. I look around the chamber and I think we're all supporting this bill. But I look at the pages that we have here, and I hope they're listening to what's going on in the House today, because very often pages will be probably bored to tears as to what we're talking about and maybe not understand some of the things we're talking about. But this is a good piece of legislation that certainly

they can take back, when they get back to school, and perhaps talk to their schoolmates about.

If we get the younger folks to buy into legislation like this, it certainly helps legislators' jobs in making sure that this is—that the message gets out, I guess is what I'm trying to say. So I would hope that the pages are listening to this debate rather intently and can take something out of it back to their home ridings and their home schools.

I think something that hasn't been brought up in the Legislature about this bill—I've certainly seen it on television and I've seen it in movies. Years ago, for the most part, they stopped actors from using cigarettes when they were in the movies. It used to be quite prevalent, a long time ago. You see it happening more these days in television programs and movies: They're getting back to using cigarettes in the movies. I wonder if that's something that we can look at in the future. Whether it should have been part of this bill—maybe it could have been. But I think that's something that we have to be aware of, that if you watch a lot of TV programs, they are using tobacco.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was a real pleasure to listen to my colleague from London West basically make a very good analysis of the bill that we have in front of us. She went through the three pieces of the bill, showing that we do give our support to all three. But we think that within the aim and the goal of the bill, there are opportunities to make little changes that will have a huge impact.

On the first part of the bill that has to do with calorie labelling, certainly we agree with calorie labelling to the big chains. They already have that information on the backs of their little trays or on the poster on the way to the bathroom or in a brochure that nobody seems to be able to find. Now we will have it right there on the menu board, telling you the number of calories.

What an opportunity wasted to not add sodium. A bill is not an incremental process. You either get it done or it doesn't get done for many, many years. I would say that it will be a decade before we look at this again. Let's get this right. We are going to mandate them to change their menu boards. If they're going to be changing their menu boards, it's a good time to put a check for high sodium.

When it comes to banning flavoured tobacco, something I've been working on for a long time, we know they target kids; there's no doubt about it. I used to buy a lot of those products when we were getting ready to introduce the bills. Nobody can handle those cigarettes without wanting to smoke one, Speaker. Let me tell you, a lot of flavoured tobacco disappeared from my office, with people looking quite sheepish, because the moment you start to handle them, you want to smoke them. This is exactly what they want to do. Let's get rid of this—the sooner the better. Flavour includes menthol.

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm pleased to join the conversation this afternoon and to follow the member from London West on Bill 45.

This is a bill that is directed to the next generation. I agree with that statement that the member from London West has made. Certainly, it is about denormalizing smoking.

I grew up in an era where smoking was completely normalized, I would say. I can remember my doctor smoking, my teachers smoking in the classroom and professors smoking. As the member from Perth–Wellington mentioned, many actors and celebrities are smoking on television, smoking in movies and creating that celebrity status.

When I was a teenager, I think for women, and young women in particular, smoking meant you were up with the times. You were a more modern youth, and not—because we didn't know as much as we know today about the harmful effects of smoking. Definitely, today, we know.

We cannot allow this to go back to the way it was. I think it is true that we should look at some of the laws that we have, especially in regard to advertising, but we also have to do everything we can here in this Legislature to protect the future generations, the young generations, hoping that they will never pick up these bad habits and that we can learn from the past.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We now return to the member from London West for her reply.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the member for Perth–Wellington, the member for Nickel Belt and the member for York South–Weston for their comments on my remarks.

A couple of things: The member for Perth–Wellington, I really appreciate your acknowledgment and recognition of our pages and the importance of engaging young people as champions in the fight against cancer and preventing young people from taking up smoking. Certainly, young people are going to be critical as ambassadors to get the message out and prevent other young people from becoming smokers.

1430

Also, a very interesting comment about media images of smoking—I know that the Canadian Cancer Society has looked at getting restricted ratings on movies that include smoking. It is a very dangerous thing, because it is going back to the normalization of smoking that we have worked so hard to prevent. So I agree that is something we should look at.

The member for Nickel Belt also makes the great observation that this is an incredible opportunity we have before us to do everything possible, as the member for York South–Weston said, to address this issue in this legislation now, at this time. When this legislation goes ahead, we need to be very clear that menthol will be included in the ban on flavoured tobacco products, not in two years' time, but now.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the comments of the Minister of Northern Development and Mines about the importance of strengthening enforcement. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the members from Scarborough Southwest, Northumberland–Quinte West and Brampton–Springdale.

Many of us are going to speak about aspects of the bill. I'd like to talk about what this bill does. I'd like to talk about that from some of the things that have happened to me in my life.

I'd like to begin by talking about two people I knew in my working life, both of whom were smokers; both of whom worked for the same company I did. One worked for me directly, and in the 1980s, when we decided to make the workplace non-smoking, if I was looking for my assistant, I would often have to go down to the designated smoking section in the cafeteria.

Ultimately, she managed to kick the smoking habit, but it took her years. Then one day, at one of the occasional reunions, I was asking about her and was told, "Well, she passed away." The reason? Lung cancer.

There was another one, named Donna, who was a good friend of mine. I would often attend a music festival in the Qu'Appelle Valley, where she hosted a whole bunch of the gang from work at her sister's home. One day, I was sitting at home and the phone rang. It was her.

I said, "That's not your number. Where are you calling from?"

She said, "I'm calling you from the hospital."

"Is there anything wrong?"

"Well, yes."

"What's wrong?"

"I have cancer."

Within the span of about four months, she too passed away—a needless death, because this was a vibrant, intelligent young woman who just couldn't kick the smoking habit.

When I've been in classrooms, I've often asked some of the students, particularly my high school students, "How many of you here will admit to smoking?" Maybe a dozen hands go up. I'll say, "Has somebody got a coin?" And I'll just flip the coin and I'll say, "Call it." They'll call heads or tails, and I'll say, "All right, all of you who have said that you're smokers: This half of you just got cancer; this half of you didn't get cancer. Now, let's take those of you who do get cancer. Let's flip the coin again. You call it." They'll call it, and I'll say, "That half of you, the cancer just killed you. The other half of you, you had cancer, but you got over it."

Those are the odds you are playing if you decide, as a young person, that you want to light up and you think you can beat it. You can't. If you think you can quit, you can't. You'll be no more or less successful than the generations before you. Half of you who become habitual smokers will develop cancer, and of that half of you who develop cancer, it will kill half. That's what we're trying to do in this bill: to have a few hundred thousand people in the province of Ontario continue to live healthy, normal lives. That's the reason for this crackdown on menthol.

There is no benefit to be gained from smoking—none whatsoever. Some of the folks I have met from rural Ontario have referred to the days when they formerly grew tobacco—because a lot of the farmers have moved away from it now. They said, “You know, I understand what it was that I gave up. I support the reason for giving up growing tobacco, but let’s understand the economics of growing tobacco. For us, it was like planting gold.” That’s the value that the cigarette industry places on the crop.

For anybody who starts smoking, if smoking kills you, do you think a single tobacco executive is going to be at your funeral? Do you think a single tobacco company is going to offer you any form of compensation? They won’t. To them, you’re just a statistic.

Speaker, that’s how I feel about smoking. I think it’s a reprehensible habit, and if this bill is able to advance the cessation of smoking just a small amount, it will have been worth all of our time here.

I’m glad all three parties are going to support this bill. Let’s get it to committee. I’m looking forward to its passage and its enactment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It’s a pleasure to be able to speak today for a few minutes on Bill 45. As others have mentioned, this is An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

There’s a lot to talk of here. I could go on for quite a long period of time, but I just want to make a few points here regarding the cigarette part, which my colleague mentioned earlier. You cannot be healthy if you smoke a cigarette—bottom line. You cannot be healthy. I’m sorry if there are smokers in this room or elsewhere, but I was told a long time ago that you cannot be healthy if you smoke a cigarette—bottom line.

Secondly, I remember when they first started introducing labelling on food products. I started to pay more attention in the last few years, and you start to realize how much fat is in a product and how much sodium is in a product. One of the interesting ones is a Big Mac. If you take a Big Mac, it comes with 234 calories, which is quite a lot of calories. It also contains quite a bit of sodium, or salt—454 milligrams of salt or sodium.

There’s a whole bunch of products that have a high percentage of sodium and a high percentage of fat. It’s not the good fat; it’s the bad fat. Because we also have some good fat that is found in various products, such as avocados.

What I like about this bill is that it works on beginning to put the onus on these companies that are selling the products to list what’s inside those products. If someone wants to lose weight—and I have lost some—you have to start reading and paying attention to what’s healthy and what’s not.

I love Häagen-Dazs ice cream. No offence to Häagen-Dazs or anyone out there—Häagen-Dazs tastes great, but

it has a lot of calories and a lot of fat inside an ice cream bar or a container of Häagen-Dazs ice cream; the same with other brands of ice cream. People just don’t know. As was mentioned earlier about the smoking part, we’re becoming more and more aware of it. That’s been covered by other people here, so I want to focus on the part of the bill here that makes the healthier choices with regard to food.

Basically, owners and operators of regulated food-service premises are required to display the number of calories in each standard food item sold at the premises as well as any other information required by the regulations. I’m really happy with the fat part because when you’re younger, you can burn the fat off more easily. As you age, your body slows down in producing muscle and, instead, makes more fat. That’s the way it goes.

A person has to start to educate themselves on what is healthy and what is not. Things like broccoli, which some people don’t like, are healthy. Carrots are healthy, and all sorts of vegetables are healthy. If one starts at a young age to put it into their head to eat those kinds of products, that’s a good way, too, to start avoiding some of the bad products. When you start programming your brain to think, “I’ll eat bacon today”—and no offence to the farmers who make bacon. Unfortunately, certain parts have a lot of fat in the bacon and other meat products as well.

1440

Interjection.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Well, cholesterol tastes good; that’s the bottom line. Someone told me that the thing about cholesterol, even though it’s bad for you, it’s very tasty. If you go down a list of products, a lot of them that are tasty—ice cream, bacon, hot dogs and so on; those sausages that street vendors sell—have a high amount of cholesterol, and they’re tasty. People want to eat those products because they’re tasty, but they contain a lot of cholesterol, and cholesterol is very tasty. People have to start understanding that, that these products—I don’t mind; I’ll have bacon and eggs on the weekend once in a while. I don’t want the bacon to be made of turkey; I like the real bacon—but make it less in your daily, monthly or weekly eating schedule. I don’t want to be eating Brussels sprouts every day. I don’t want to be eating Brussels sprouts every day, but if you start realizing they’re good for you, and don’t harm your body—the sooner the better.

I know there are other speakers on this bill and I’d rather have them speak in more detail. Basically, I’ll wrap up by just saying that this is a great bill. I fully support it and hopefully it will go to committee and then come back up here for third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Again, it’s a pleasure to rise to speak on Bill 45. I’m delighted that we seem to have consensus around the House, yes? It’s non-fattening; it’s good for you.

A couple of things: Just a week or so ago, during constit week—I know all of us here appreciate being back in our riding to meet with our constituents—I had two interesting conversations that I want to bring forward to the House. One was with Karen White, a local volunteer with the cancer society in Quinte. She's very, very committed to the cause of raising money for the cancer society, but just as important if not more important, is to help come up with a cure, and the whole cancer awareness. We had a discussion about Bill 45, because that's of interest to them. Of course, the whole smoking cessation and e-cigarettes—we spent quite a bit of time. Her final words to me on that piece was the fact we cannot do things fast enough when we're trying to improve health for our kids and us adults as well. So it was the right time for us to have that discussion.

I also had the opportunity to talk to a former medical officer of health for Northumberland, Kawartha and Peterborough, I believe; the title is HKPR. Dr. Hukowich—I've known him for a long time; I happened to sit on a board of health back in my municipal days—is very, very supportive of what we're trying to do. I remember the days when I sat on the board, about him—and this is going back 12 to 15 years ago—how even then he was so passionate about the whole smoking piece and, of course, the food that we consume. It's really sort of timely.

Speaker, we talk about tobacco companies and tobacco. I represent an area where tobacco was a major crop for farmers. I remember being in this place eight, nine, 10 years ago when we talked about how we help the farmers out who are virtually going to get out of tobacco. As bad as it may sound, I mean, this was their livelihood. That's what their forefathers—and we have still up a number, although it's kind of decaying, of smokehouses, drying houses for tobacco. Speaker, I can tell you, during the campaign, as I visited some of the rural portion of my riding where tobacco was a staple for farmers, there was still some old equipment sitting in the sheds, rusting away.

I'll tell you what's happened on that particular phenomenon. I think some of us had the pleasure, not too long ago—two, three weeks ago—of having a gentleman visit Queen's Park who had won the Premier's award for innovation in agriculture for all of Ontario. He grows kale. We know it's a healthy product. It looks somewhat like a cabbage—not a cabbage, but—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Spinach.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi:—spinach, and it's got a very long growing season. As long as the ground is not frozen, you can grow kale. He went a step beyond. He's now processing kale into kale chips. I think we all had the opportunity—all caucuses—of tasting some of those kale chips.

I was talking to Adrian just on Friday. He has now opened up this facility where they're actually processing—they're virtually shipping almost all over the world. It's something that started with a 10-acre plot in Castleton, just north of Colborne, where the Big Apple is, and he has turned that into a real business.

He anticipates that, I believe, by the year 2019, there will be 1,000 acres of kale in Northumberland county and the surrounding area. We're talking 1,000 acres of a new product which is very, very healthy.

This legislation, combined with some of the advancements we've made in the last few years—I think we're in a good place, but we need to do better. I look forward to this legislation getting by the House and getting it done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Brampton–Springdale.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand up today in the House to speak to this bill. Our minister and our ministry are committed to keeping Ontarians healthy. As a government, we have pledged to reduce our tobacco use to be the lowest in the country.

We know that it's so important what we expose our kids to, what we expose our students to. Coming from a school trustee background, I will say that we always tried to teach the students in our schools about making strong and healthy choices, and this would continue to help them make those healthy choices.

This is going to support what the Ontario government has done in the past by introducing healthy eating habits within our schools, by introducing healthy products in our cafeterias. It was a changeover. It did take a while and some adjustment, but our students adjusted and we did have better options for the children to lead healthy lifestyles.

We know that healthy kids turn out to be healthy adults, and a better start for our kids is better for our health care system in the long run. Our kids, if they're given the right options, if they're given the right information, will have that ability to make healthy choices.

What's important here is the second part of our healthy choices bill, where we talk about labelling menus. Just recently I was in New York and I had the ability to see what labelled menus did. I, myself, looked at some of those menus. When you saw the calorie counts you were more reluctant to order certain things on the menu, to make certain choices because you knew what you were taking in and you had that ability to calculate without having to go into complicated systems or use technology. You could simply see what your intake was for the day by looking at the menus. Everything on every menu—every fast-food restaurant, everywhere I went in New York, basically had their menus labelled. This was a very good piece of information for me, and it's great that we're now debating this in our House. I noticed how important it was and how helpful it was for people.

The Ontario government constructed a Healthy Kids Panel. They provided us with a lot of invaluable advice, and we're moving forward on many of the panel's recommendations, including choices around healthy eating for our kids. In order for our parents and our children to make healthy choices, they need to be informed about the food that they are eating. As I said, it's so important for them to understand the calorie intake.

If this legislation passes, Ontario will be the first province in Canada to legislate menu labelling, which will help people make those informed choices. Menu labels at the point of purchase have shown to increase awareness of nutrition information and have been shown to influence consumer behaviour.

If passed, this legislation would require the posting of calories on menus and menu boards across Ontario and will raise public awareness about the calorie content of foods eaten outside the home; make it easier for people to make healthier choices when dining out; and encourage the industry to offer healthier items and reformulate high-calorie menu items. This would create a more supportive food environment that would make it easier for Ontario families to choose healthy food.

1450

These initiatives build on steps we've taken to give our kids a healthy start, which include the new investments in breastfeeding supports and additional investments in Ontario's Student Nutrition Program. Though our Healthy Kids Community Challenge we're supporting community-based activities to promote healthier living.

The legislation has developed, following consultations with the food industry, health sectors and parents. If passed, the legislation would require calories for food and beverages, including alcohol, to be posted on menus and menu boards in restaurants, convenience stores, grocery stores and other foodservice premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario.

It would also require foodservice operators to post a contextual statement that would help to educate patrons about their daily caloric requirements.

It would also authorize public health inspectors to enforce menu labelling requirements, and to monitor restrictions on use in public places and restrictions on advertising and promotion.

I think that, all in all, this is going to be a great program for our kids to make those healthy choices and to build on a healthy lifestyle. It will build on what we're doing in our schools already, so that the kids can continue those lifestyles outside of school. Our families will have more knowledge about what they're taking in when they're ordering fast food. When they have different meal choices, they'll make those healthy choices more and more, obviously.

I think that it's very important that we move ahead with this legislation and I look forward to it passing in the House.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: It's a pleasure to rise today and make some comments on Bill 45. I'll comment on the members for Mississauga–Streetsville, Scarborough Southwest, Northumberland–Quinte West and Brampton–Springdale. I don't think I've forgotten anybody. There are a number of comments.

We, obviously, support this bill and want to see it get to committee, of course, where we can comment some

more on it and bring some folks in to speak on it—maybe even make it better than it is.

The smoking side of it: Thank God I quit 35 years ago. I didn't realize how long ago it was until I just did some calculations here. I wish I had never started, but I did, unfortunately. Anyway, I've been off them for 35 years now, and that was probably one of the better decisions I've made in my life—quitting. Starting was easy. A number of years ago, I won't say it was peer pressure but a lot of young people that I chummed with, I guess you would say, at that time—it was just the thing to do. Everybody smoked. My dad smoked; all his colleagues smoked. It was unusual for someone to be a non-smoker. A lot of guys smoked a pipe. I even had a pipe for a while, but found it too cumbersome.

Anyway, I certainly support those aspects about encouraging people to quit smoking. I'm not so fussy on all the regulations on small business. When I buy my gas, I go in and I see this cumbersome set-up that the merchants, the small business people, have to go through to try and make a living in this province. I'm not in favour of that; I certainly don't agree with that. It's something I would work to change. I certainly do agree with encouraging young people not to start and not to be smoking in schools or around schools, anywhere like that.

Anyway, I look forward to the rest of the debate.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting to listen to four of the members on the government side talk about the bill and different parts of bill.

I think we all agree that putting the number of calories on the menu board would be something that Ontarians want. The statistics are there to say that up to 85% of Ontarians want to see the calories right on the menu board, and they want to see the sodium. Sodium is associated with so many chronic diseases that are hard to handle. Prevention is the key.

It is very refreshing to hear a bill that deals with health promotion. They are very few and far between that we talk about health promotion in this House. This is why we have to get it right. We have to make sure that when we finally come out with menu labelling, very much like what they've put in New York City seven years ago, Ontario also puts a flag for high sodium. This is not the kind of bill that will find its way back to this Legislature for many years to come. Let's get it right.

When it comes to flavoured tobacco, I agree with lots of what has been said in this House—that very much more could be done to help people quit smoking, to make sure that people don't pick up smoking. But right now, the bill focuses on flavoured tobacco, so let's do that part right, and that means making sure that the ban includes a ban on menthol. We all know by now, because the stat has been shared widely, that one out of four youth smokers smoke menthol, and the ones who do smoke menthol are more likely to smoke more and have no intention of quitting. So let's get this right.

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

Mr. Han Dong: It's my pleasure to respond to some of the comments made by my colleagues from Mississauga–Streetsville, Scarborough Southwest, Northumberland–Quinte West and Brampton–Springdale. I paid close attention to what they had to say about this bill.

I noticed, for example, that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville mentioned his experience as a teacher, dividing the class to show them in a real sense how devastating and how dangerous it is to pick up this habit.

Also, my colleague from Scarborough Southwest mentioned that cholesterol is tasty. I have to agree with him, because in my community, the diet may not be the healthiest of them all, and I have to confess that some of my favourite dishes are not too healthy. Having the labelling showing me what's in there may not change my mind on ordering that dish, but it will definitely limit my consumption, knowing that it's not good for my health. With two young kids, I want to see the future and I want to live a long life, so it does help me if this bill gets passed and proclaimed.

Also, I want to take note that my good friend the member from Northumberland–Quinte West mentioned that in his community there were a lot of tobacco growers. Tobacco, we all know, is a highly profitable crop, but the world is changing. With globalization, now we'll be able to export a lot of our goods, and they become more valuable, like the kale that he mentioned. Hops: Hops are becoming a new product that can replace the growing of tobacco, and that has a great future.

I agree with them and look forward to supporting this bill further.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: A comment: A number of the members opposite made mention about Ontario's growing of tobacco. I have an interest. I represent most of the tobacco farmers in Canada; in fact, I have for the last 20 years or so.

I worked in tobacco in the early 1970s. I took great pride in being a primer. We could take the crop off. We could be done at maybe 12:30 each day; we started pretty early.

At that time, in the early 1970s, there were about maybe 3,400 to 3,700 tobacco farmers, primarily in Norfolk, Oxford, Elgin and Brant counties. Now we have a handful of farmers, a very large acreage. The acreage is still there. Some of the market is there, and it has its ups and downs, depending on export.

The tobacco farm community took a really big hit in the early 1980s. Tobacco is a culture. They had been growing it for 100 years. Many people killed themselves. Unfortunately, they really saw no way of living other than tobacco. I know in Langton township in Norfolk, 97% of the farms were tobacco farms.

Ten years ago, another very significant reduction: The federal and provincial governments won a lawsuit against

the tobacco industry. The federal government, as expected, bought out a large number of tobacco farmers. Unfortunately, at the time Mr. McGuinty, I assume, told Leona Dombrowsky to not use the money accrued to the province of Ontario to help the tobacco farmers.

1500

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I want to thank those members who stood up to add their own thoughts on this particular topic. Certainly I was touched by my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton on his adventures in quitting smoking.

The member for Nickel Belt talked about some other things that could be in the bill, and I guess I would remind her of an adage that I learned in software development that goes a little bit like this: "The perfect is the enemy of the good." This bill is out to do a good thing, and although the bill doesn't go through every other product that could be and is harmful to you, let's take what the bill does that's good and let's get the food industry used to doing something good.

She mentions calories. We all agree: Let's get the calorie count on the menu. It's going to absolutely shock a lot of people when they realize what the vendors are trying to put into their mouths. I completely agree: Let's get salt, sugar and fat on it, too—but not in this bill. There's going to be a chance to come back to that.

My colleague from Trinity–Spadina certainly had some very helpful comments. Finally, to my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk, who told the story of working in his riding, really tobacco country, and talked about the courage that a lot of our tobacco farmers showed in making the transition from what I called in my remarks "planting gold" to moving to other crops, there is no question that a product as destructive as tobacco is also every bit as profitable, but it takes a lot of courage to do the right thing, in this case to plant something else and look for another value-added way of using prime agricultural land.

I have to acknowledge, first of all, the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for his absolutely encyclopedic knowledge of the agricultural sector and also for his leadership in helping to support this bill. I really do appreciate that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member—oh, I'm sorry. I've been reminded by the table to read the following:

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. The debate will, therefore, be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader, or his designate, specifies otherwise.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, we wish debate to continue.

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

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I am here today to speak to Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014.

Schedule 1, Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014: Section 1 specifies that a “regulated foodservice premise” is not only “a foodservice premise that is part of a chain of foodservice premises” but also “any other foodservice premise that may be provided for in the regulations.” Adding new classes of business through regulation versus legislation concerns me, as I know that there are many mom-and-pop restaurants, particularly in small towns and rural Ontario, that would not be able to afford to undertake the testing requirements to label the calories of all the food they serve.

Before expanding the class of food premises to which the labelling requirements apply, the legislation should come back to this chamber for debate. As it is currently drafted, regulations under Bill 45 could potentially capture all so-called fast food premises and disadvantage small business owners who do not have the economies of scale that, say, a Tim Hortons or a Burger King does. Increased regulatory requirements do not impact all businesses in the same way. Small businesses do not have the same capacity to respond the way that large corporate entities do. They do not have the ability to spread their costs across many operations. Given that small businesses account for a large number of jobs in Ontario, we need to be careful that we do not regulate our job creators out of business. It is curious to me that, on one hand, we have agencies and ministries whose mandate it is to help businesses thrive and grow in Ontario, while other ministries are regulating small companies out of business.

Again, I reiterate, the job of this House is to legislate. Regulations are a poor substitute for legislation, especially when the potential impacts are unknown and unknowable. Our job as legislators is to debate, in an open and transparent way, the merits of proposed legislation prior to a final decision being made on a bill. We are responsible for making major decisions that impact all Ontarians, and therefore should not delegate our legislative authority to bureaucrats. If the provincial government decides in the future to expand the class of regulated food premises, they should bring this issue back to the House for a full and open debate.

Schedule 3, Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014: Last week, I met with Denise Smith, Denise De Campos and Kristen Yeung from the Heart and Stroke Foundation. They explained to me that researchers and public health experts are concerned that emerging research shows that e-cigarettes have the potential to renormalize smoking and undermine tobacco control and smoking cessation efforts. In addition, there is a potential for e-cigarettes to be a gateway to tobacco use and nicotine addiction, and that the marketing of e-cigarettes is targeted to youth with the addition of candy and fruit flavours. Their presentation was thorough and very convincing, and confirmed my existing support for the restrictions on e-cigarettes identified in Bill 45.

Our office has received much correspondence in support of e-cigarettes and their value in quitting smoking. However, the scientific research is currently unclear as to the long-term health impacts as well as the effect-

iveness of e-cigarettes as a cessation device. That the tobacco industry is investing heavily in e-cigarettes causes me concern that nicotine addiction, rather than harm reduction, may be the goal of e-cigarette manufacturers. The issue is that those who do not smoke tobacco cigarettes but have started smoking e-cigarettes could potentially form a lifelong addiction to nicotine.

Sales of e-cigarettes are estimated to reach approximately \$3 billion worldwide by 2015. Although precise usage is difficult to estimate, a number of research studies identify that e-cigarette users include children, youth, current smokers and non-smokers in Canada: 3% of adults are current users, 8% have tried e-cigarettes, 16% of young adults had used e-cigarettes in the past, 18% of Quebec non-tobacco-smoking high school students had tried e-cigarettes, and 31% were interested in trying them. Given that those numbers will likely continue to increase into the foreseeable future, a cautious approach is needed. Similar to contraband cigarettes, we do not know what specific ingredients in what specific amounts are included in e-cigarettes, given the lack of safety requirements regarding product development, ingredient disclosure, information on nicotine levels and risk of abuse.

1510

Contraband tobacco products: Given the increasing number of illegal smoke shacks popping up across Ontario and the uncertain quality of the products being sold at them, it seems to me that provincial government resources would be better invested in shutting them down rather than imposing increasing restrictions on law-abiding retailers.

The Ontario Korean Businessmen’s Association estimates that 5% of current tobacco users purchase menthol cigarettes. Banning flavoured tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, will not necessarily have the intended effect. Instead of reducing smoking levels, these bans will likely decrease the revenue of law-abiding retailers, reduce overall tax revenue from the sale of legal tobacco products, and open up new markets for contraband cigarette manufacturers.

Contraband smokes are a large and growing problem in Ontario, particularly when it comes to their contribution to underage smoking. Remember, law-abiding retailers are required to not sell cigarettes to people under the age of 19 years old and to seek the identification of cigarette purchasers who merely look under the age of 25 years old, whereas we know that illegal cigarette sellers are willing to sell cigarettes to children of all ages. In addition, we do not know what ingredients are being used in the making of contraband cigarettes. There could potentially be, and likely are, ingredients in contraband cigarettes that are far worse than what is included in regulated tobacco products, as bad as we know they are.

Closing down illegal smoke shacks prior to implementing a ban on these illegal products is critical so that we do not facilitate the establishment of new and expanded markets for contraband tobacco manufacturers and retailers. As we have witnessed, once illegal smoke

shacks are established and are allowed to flourish, they become increasingly difficult to eradicate from our communities.

Similarly, we can predict with some certainty that if contraband cigarette manufacturers and retailers expand their operations to include menthol and flavoured tobacco products, they will eventually target children, thus potentially contributing to the very situation, underage smoking, that this legislation is meant to curtail. Currently, illegal cigarettes—which are cheaper, easier to purchase and likely more deadly than regulated tobacco products—are the biggest threat to our children.

The problem is the policing policy of the provincial government. The provincial government is letting the fear of making a mistake dictate its policing policy when it comes to illegal smoke shacks. The provincial government should not let fear dictate law-and-order policies in Ontario. Fear led to the breakdown in law and order in Caledonia, with catastrophic results for a number of families. Now fear is dictating policing policy when it comes to the manufacture and sale of contraband tobacco products, with potentially catastrophic results for our children. If we care about our kids, shutting down the manufacture and sale of contraband tobacco products should be the provincial government's number one priority.

Marketing to kids: Bill 45 mandates that the calorie content be labelled for standard food items in fast food chain restaurants. To date, calorie labelling has had mixed results on reducing obesity, particularly childhood obesity. On the other hand, it is no secret that advertisers target children and that, as most parents know, marketing strongly influences children's preferences, requests and consumption.

Just last week, Denise, Denise and Kristen from the Heart and Stroke Foundation were explaining to me that food and drink advertising is associated with childhood obesity, that Canadian children's exposure to advertising is amongst the worst in the world—nearly six times per hour—and that the advertising of nutritionally vacant food to children is a key obstacle to improving the health outcomes of Canada's children.

Foods containing lots of sugar, fat and salt appeal to our taste buds, but not necessarily our waistlines. Children generally live for the moment, are more easily influenced and do not necessarily understand the long-term consequences of the choices they make today. Being bombarded with thousands of commercials a year does not generally improve their decision-making processes.

To that end, the Heart and Stroke Foundation is requesting that commercial marketing of all foods and beverages to children be restricted. In their fact sheet, the Heart and Stroke Foundation identifies that Quebec has had legislation in place since 1980, and fast food expenditures in the province have dropped by 13%; Quebec snack consumption rates are the lowest in the country; and a 2011 Ipsos Reid poll found that 82% of Canadians support this restriction. It is certainly something to think about.

What I found very distressing when reading their literature was the statistic that the average time children and youth spend in front of a screen, including computers, tablets, phones and televisions, is seven hours and 48 minutes per day. This statistic goes a long way to explaining the rising rate of childhood obesity.

To say that our culture has changed since I was a child is an understatement. I couldn't wait to get outdoors every day and spent as little time as possible indoors. So although I understand that overconsumption plays a role in obesity, we will not solve the obesity problem by only addressing consumption. It is not enough. We must also address the increasingly sedentary lifestyle many school-age children are currently leading.

Certainly, schools can and should play a role in promoting physical activity or, at the very least, removing barriers such as onerous restrictions on children's games and playtime. We should let kids be kids. Allowing kids to play freely is the surest path to kids engaging in physical activity. Kids' play, including playing tag, climbing trees and any number of other activities that kids have always enjoyed doing, is either being banned outright at schools or is so restricted that the fun is sucked out of it. I understand that these restrictions are well-intentioned and meant to keep kids safe from injury, but they have the potential consequence of making kids fat.

1520

Yes, kids often make mistakes. That is how they learn life lessons and avoid making bigger mistakes in the future. Kids do not learn by only ever being allowed to engage in perfectly safe behaviour. We must examine the relationship between risk and reward, with the understanding that we cannot completely eliminate risk in children's lives, and that overprotecting our kids rather than equipping them with knowledge has profound consequences for their future health, which we are now witnessing.

I am a farmer. Farming can be a dangerous business. While risk can be mitigated, it cannot be eliminated entirely in day-to-day farming. For me, the rewards far outweigh the risks. If farmers such as myself decided to only engage in practices that did not entail some level of risk, if we did not balance the risks and rewards, there would be far less food to eat.

I believe that it's time to reverse the trend of continually restricting children's play activities. Encouraging children's play, both indoors and out, is the surest way to a healthier future for our kids.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting listening to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

Because I know those bills very well, the first thing I want to reassure him is that it won't apply to small mom-and-pop restaurants. Basically, the only way that calorie labelling can apply is if the recipes are very standard and the portions are also very standard. If you look at little mom-and-pop restaurants, they tend to buy local. They

will cook with whatever is in season. If it's in the summer, they will go to the local market and they will buy and they will make their soup. Depending on if carrots or kale or whatever is on sale, this is what you're having. So it could never work.

It is a complicated process to do calorie labelling and be somewhat exact, and it only works with big chains, because their procurement chain never changes—it's always very narrow—the recipe is always exactly the same and the portion size is always exactly the same. So, not to worry: The little mom-and-pop restaurant that buys local and cooks from whatever is available in their local market, supermarket or grocery store will never be captured, because it would be impossible for them to do the calculation.

The bill really targets chains that have at least 20 premises. And all of those chains already have that information. They already know the amount of calories; they already know the amount of sodium in all of this. They have this information; it's just that the information is not on the menu board. The information is on their website. Well, who looks at the website, before they go out and eat, so they can make a healthy decision? I think I'm the only one.

So, not to worry: It won't be a hardship on small business.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a pleasure for me to comment on the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and his comments regarding Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act. Of course, the bill has three major components, and the member did a good job of going through each of the components and expressing his concerns about some sections, and pretty much his good support for the rest of the sections, because we all do want to see people healthier in Ontario.

I want to focus, however, on the comments that were made with regard to e-cigarettes. We appreciate the concerns of some about e-cigarettes being a gateway to youth involvement in tobacco and being addicted to nicotine, and that certainly isn't the intention. A number of constituents in my riding of Beaches–East York have shops—they're vaping on Queen Street East. When this bill was first tabled, they called up very concerned because of the stigmatization this bill seemed to be giving to e-cigarettes. They invited me down, and I spent a good hour and a half with a number of constituents who had started to vape. In so many cases, I heard stories of how people were cured of smoking. It was quite an exhilarating experience.

This one woman, for instance, who was overweight and smoking and couldn't get up the stairs, with eczema—she's now running marathons, Mr. Speaker. She started to vape, got off cigarettes, got off of the harmful components and the danger and damage it was doing to her lungs. She took up running, lost a lot of weight and now she's successfully competing in marathons. It's somewhat short of miraculous.

We know and are quite confident that vaping is a great smoking cessation tool. But does that mean it's something we want to encourage people to do for the rest of their lives? The reality, with an e-cigarette, is that you can reduce the amount of nicotine that's being consumed and you can reduce your nicotine dependency until you have none at all, and at the end of the day you may be just vaping vapours that give you a nice smell, a nice feeling, maybe of bread cooking in the oven and such.

So we appreciate the concerns. This is a good piece of legislation. We look forward to it moving forward.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to take a couple of moments of comment to my colleague and friend the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills and his speech. I particularly was struck with his concern about the amount of regulation that this government deals with, and I also got his concern about some unintended consequences that sometimes happen with this government.

I can recall, just about the same time that the 2011 election took place, that the government had made a change and was trying to have students eat healthier at school cafeterias. I can remember going to Elgin and having a mid-morning coffee at the Rideau Pizzeria and Restaurant in downtown Elgin. There was a hand-written—sort of on bristol board—menu sign. It had items like slices of pizza, poutine and chicken fingers. I had mentioned to the owner whether that was the luncheon menu and they said no; that was the menu for Rideau District High School. The unintended consequence of that piece of legislation at the time was that the students ultimately didn't eat at the school. They walked down the street to the local restaurant and, ultimately, rather than eating better, actually ate worse.

So I appreciate the member's comments because, when you deal with regulation as opposed to things like education—and certainly, I think, many of us over on this side of the House feel that there should be a far greater emphasis on educating rather than legislating, but I just want to thank him for his comments. He made a great speech on the bill. I know he was ready to speak on the bill last week in the Legislature, so I'm glad he had his chance today.

I'm very glad that we're still debating this legislation and the government hasn't tried to cut off and stifle debate on this very important bill. Thanks for giving me the chance to do a two-minute speech on that, Speaker.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I appreciate the comments made by all the members who stood up before me. I'll start off with the other members and finish with comments to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills.

The member from Beaches–East York stood up and spoke at great length about the use of e-cigarettes. Near the end of his time, he mentioned the aroma that these e-cigarettes give off. In fact, he mentioned the smell of bread baking and the other wonderful smells they give

off. I think that's why it's important in the bill that it addresses the limits to the access to e-cigarettes, because, as we know, children often model the behaviour of adults. Certainly if they're in the home and a parent is using an e-cigarette, the smell of the e-cigarettes and being able to visualize a parent using it would entice a child to want to access e-cigarettes. I think it's important to note in the bill that it addresses who has access to it, where they might have access to obtaining e-cigarettes and where these e-cigarettes can be used.

To the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, I think he made a very valid point when he brought up how much time our children spend in front of a TV during the day. He brought up schools and the ability for children to go out and have free play and to exercise. I think it's important to note that—to bring it back to schools—certainly communities in Toronto are facing the closure of many schools that have green space, the only green space in their communities, so we're not encouraging students or those in the community to go out and use those green spaces to stay healthy.

1530

I know there are schools in the riding of the member from Essex that are being looked at for closure as well. We have to look at the impact on those communities and access for those students to green spaces and the ability to free play. I think it's very important that families have access—all families, regardless of income—to healthy foods that are labelled so that they know they're making healthy choices.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to thank the members from Nickel Belt, Beaches–East York, Leeds–Grenville and Windsor West for their comments.

I would like to respond, first, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Nickel Belt for her comments—not to worry about mom-and-pop operations being threatened. So I feel reassured. Thank you for your comments in clarifying that.

The basis of my remarks was from an experience about 10 years ago, I say to the member, when I had an experience where small bakeries were threatened with government regulation or legislation, and I can't remember which ministry or agency it was, with labelling—these are the mom-and-pop places—every loaf of bread, buns and tarts with the nutritional components that were in their baked goods. This was going to be a showstopper for these small businesses and such an onerous task. It would have put them out of business; that was my concern. But I'm reassured to hear that we don't need to worry about that.

I think the most important part of this bill is probably the nutritional part, as it would be aimed at children with advertising from the food companies that are advertising foods that are less nutritious and less healthy, shall we say. What a very sophisticated, intensive system of advertising they use through television, and the kids watch

so much television—even on their iPhones and screens—that they become conditioned to think they should be eating and buying the wrong kinds of food.

This legislation doesn't go so far as to ban marketing and advertising aimed at the kids for that reason, and I think it should. I support this bill and everything it stands for. It probably should go even further and ban direct marketing through television to kids, like they have in Quebec.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'm always happy to rise to speak on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West. I've not had a chance to really speak to this bill yet, and I'm glad I'm going to be able to today.

I'd like to touch on a comment made by the member from Scarborough Southwest during earlier debate where he actually brought up the calorie count in Big Macs, which was quite high, and then that was followed by the amount of sodium, which was even higher. So I find it interesting, as the member from Mississauga–Streetsville had pointed out, that although they certainly support that it should be labelled, that it should be in the bill, now isn't the time to put it in the bill. I'm not certain why now wouldn't be a good time to put it in the bill.

Today's debate, of course, is on Bill 45, titled the Making Healthier Choices Act. Although I wouldn't consider a lot of decisions made by this government to be healthy, like forcing school boards to close small community schools and busing students outside of their neighbourhoods rather than students being able to walk to school, I do hope this government understands that it is important to preserve the health and viability of neighbourhoods when discussing policy. Nevertheless, I do support the bill before us today.

Given that March was declared Nutrition Month by the Dietitians of Canada, I think it's fitting that this bill is being debated today. I'll speak at length about the importance of sodium labelling today and fast food, which I think fits in this month's theme of eating healthy at work.

To help spread awareness this month, the Windsor–Essex County Health Unit held a food competition called Sliced, which attempts to encourage people to eat healthy at work. Thank you to the health unit and Food Matters Windsor Essex for organizing this event. When discussing nutrition and healthy choices, we should always be aware of nutrition in schools and encourage healthy lunches for students and healthy menu options in school cafeterias.

Before I begin my analysis of this bill, I want to take a moment to commend my colleague the MPP from Nickel Belt for all of her excellent work on the health care file. This member has worked tirelessly on issues such as menu labelling. As she stated in her lead speech, she has introduced at least 11 private members' bills on menu labelling. In fact, six years ago, the Liberal government could have passed a bill requiring menu labelling, which at the time was known as Bill 156, the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, 2009.

It's nice to see that the Liberals are finally listening to my colleague from Nickel Belt and bringing this legislation forward. Imagine all the time we could have saved if they had just listened to New Democrats the first time—although, and as you will soon find out, I'm not sure the government listened closely enough.

Schedule 1 of the bill before us today enacts the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014. As a number of my colleagues have already stated, this requires calorie labelling for all food and drink items at foodservice premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario. Of course, this can include restaurant chains, grocery stores, convenience stores and even movie theatres. What it doesn't include is sodium labelling on menus. That's right: The bill only includes calorie labelling. We need this bill to go further.

Sodium levels in foods, especially prepared foods, can be dangerously high, as the member from Scarborough Southwest himself pointed out. Dietitians of Canada indicates that the average Canadian takes in 3,400 milligrams of sodium per day. Health Canada defines high sodium as 360 milligrams. As mentioned several times during the debate on this bill, fast-food chains serve products that contain over 1,500 milligrams of sodium.

The value of menu labelling cannot be overstated. In a 2012 study, it was reported that customers at a fast-food chain who received a menu highlighting the lower-calorie sandwiches were 48% more likely to choose low-calorie options. Menu labelling works, and it is well worth labelling sodium content.

Organizations like the Ontario Medical Association support sodium labelling legislation. It's my hope that if we did provide information on sodium content and make that information easily accessible for consumers, this would help people choose foods with lower sodium content. Awareness may be the key to reducing the growing trend of increased sodium intake among Ontarians.

I know some of my favourite food choices are grown in my area of Windsor and Essex county. I'm counting down the days until the opening of the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market. Speaker, it opens on May 30, and I invite you to join me on opening day or any day they're open in the spring or summer. We can enjoy eating local and whatever is in season, from fresh tomatoes to fresh apples or even cucumbers.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I love cucumbers.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Me too. Cucumbers are great.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Especially Leamington cucumbers.

If you can't make it downtown, there's the Ford City farmers' market, Windsor Market Square, City Market Windsor, Riverside Farmers Market and the Midtown Farmers' Market. Moving out towards Leamington, there is the Leamington Farmers' Market, along with markets in Lakeshore and Amherstburg.

One of my favourite things during the summer is to drive out into the county, stop at all of the little local farm stands they have out in front of their homes and their fields, and enjoy the fresh fruits and vegetables that are available in our area.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: In the riding of Essex.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: In the riding of Essex.

What I'm trying to say is that there are a number of low-sodium, fresh options available, especially if you enjoy fruits and vegetables.

Of course, more and more Ontarians are eating at restaurants. To quote my colleague from Nickel Belt once more, about one fifth of Canadians eat in restaurants, and it's important we put all of the information about their food in front of them.

I'm conscious of my time today, and unfortunately it's in short supply. I do want to speak to some of the other aspects of this bill, including those outlined in schedule 3.

The schedule introduces the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014, and seeks to prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to youth under the age of 19; prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes in certain places; restrict the promotion of e-cigarettes; and prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed work spaces, enclosed public places and other locations where smoking is already prohibited.

1540

There are a few points already mentioned by my New Democrat colleagues that I would like to reiterate. Until there is a body of evidence concerning the health impacts of e-cigarettes, we need to exercise caution over the use and sale of these products. Specifically, I'm in favour of restricting the sale and supply of electronic cigarettes to anyone under the age of 19, as outlined in this bill. This bill will also require customers to produce identification if they appear to be under the age of 25, and ban the use of false identification to purchase e-cigarettes.

When we're talking about restricting the use of e-cigarettes, we need to remember all of the work that went into decreasing the smoking rates for young people. In Windsor, community-based organizations such as Quit Smoking Ontario work tirelessly to prevent smoking among people in Ontario through services, education and research. We need to remember the efforts of these organizations when we are discussing e-cigarettes.

I'm concerned that the use of e-cigarettes by young people will again normalize smoking. Since the use of an electronic cigarette normalizes the use of nicotine inhalation in public places, this is at least worth considering. We cannot undo our efforts to denormalize smoking in recent decades. Banning the sale of e-cigarettes in vending machines is another important step.

I'm aware of the time, Speaker, so I will wrap up. Bill 45 is a bill that I can and will support. Unfortunately, I think it could be a lot stronger and go a lot further. and I hope that's something this government considers in the future.

Specifically, I spoke at length about the need for sodium labelling, which I think would greatly improve this bill, and I'm not alone. I hope this government continues to take our advice, the advice of New Democrats, and decides to amend this bill to include sodium in the menu labelling provisions. Speaker, the member from—I think it might have been Brampton–Springdale—had mentioned he certainly supports putting sodium on the

labels but not now. I would hope that the Liberal government would reconsider that position because clearly, as another member from the government side had pointed out, it's very important for us to be able to walk into an establishment, and for children to walk into an establishment, such as McDonald's, look at the menu and see that on a Big Mac the sodium level is well above what the calorie intake is. We need everybody to be able to make these informed decisions. I think that now is the time to include sodium labelling in this bill.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Windsor West. I certainly concur with her on the need for ensuring that we have healthy options in schools.

I heard her speak about her farmers' markets that are opening up at the end of May. We're fortunate: We've got a number of them in the city of Ottawa. We actually have one that operates year-round inside the Aberdeen Pavilion. They're very important to making healthy choices—local food, fresh food.

I appreciate very much that she's going to support this bill, and I do take to heart her comments with regard to sodium. It's important that people know what they're putting in their bodies. We've heard some comments in debate about kids needing more exercise. They do, but the most important determinant of health is what you put inside your body. Sometimes you can't exercise enough to take care of all the stuff you put inside your body. So it's important that people make informed choices about what they're eating. As I said earlier, I take to heart what she's saying about sodium and the importance of that and labelling.

I also agree with her in her support of banning the sale of e-cigarettes to minors. Normalizing that behaviour is not something that we want to do. There is potential for e-cigarettes to be part of harm reduction. However, we really don't know what the long-term effects of e-cigarettes are. Again, I appreciate very much her support of the bill.

One thing I wanted to add: The banning of menthol cigarettes is, I think, a really important provision of this bill that we don't talk about often enough. I think that it's a gateway cigarette for young people, and removing that as part of flavoured tobacco is a really important measure in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to add to the comments by the member from Windsor West. They made me think that we also have a couple of farmers' markets in Sarnia-Lambton, that I'd like to speak about while making my comments. One is in Petrolia. It opens in late May and goes through until October. Of course, the Sarnia market, in the city of Sarnia, is open every Wednesday and Saturday all year round. They're very well attended by people from throughout my riding, and they're very well received.

One thing, talking about food labelling—I think it's a good idea. I've been following a lot of that in the last month, more than I have for a long time, reading labels. My wife has got me doing that. I don't know whether it's getting me anywhere or not, but I'm reading the labels right now. If I can just do something more than read the labels, I'll be better off.

Hon. Jeff Leal: One step forward.

Mr. Robert Bailey: You've got to start somewhere, right? The trip of 1,000 miles starts with the first step.

The e-cigarettes: I did talk to a gentleman the other night. He's a municipal leader down our way. Unfortunately, his wife is in a nursing home. She's a smoker, and she likes e-cigarettes. He said, "Would you talk down there when you're on that bill? One thing that really irritates my wife is that she can't get outside anymore, and the only real pleasure she has is having an e-cigarette. There are a lot of people in these institutions who are unable to maybe be outside or go out on the deck."

I said, "Well, I'll bring it up. When it gets to committee, maybe it's something we can look at for seniors who are in institutions and not in their own homes, where they can go outside, obviously." But it is their home while they're living there. It's their residence.

He said, "That's the one thing she still enjoys."

I said, "Well, I'll bring it up down here. There must be other members with constituents in the same situation."

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I applaud my colleague from Sarnia. You did a great job.

I'm very happy to follow my colleague from Windsor West, who referenced the great things and the bounty in Essex county. We certainly have that. If you take a trip down any county road, you'll find a roadside stand where you will find heirloom varieties of some of our best fruits and vegetables in the county.

I think this bill comes not a moment too soon—or late. Which one is it? Either way, now is the time.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's overdue.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's overdue, given that our colleague France Gélinas, from Nickel Belt, has been introducing variations of this bill for years now. If you step outside—even if you go down to the food court at the Eaton Centre—I think you will see that it is no longer food express; it's no longer quick food. People, corporations, companies and food distributors are seeing that the consciousness of the people is changing. We are looking for a food experience. By that, we want to know not only where our food comes from, but certainly what is in it. It's an economic driver: I'll choose something that I know is grown here in Ontario and something that I know employed people from Ontario way before I choose something that's in a box.

I was listening to a show the other day. You know, ultimately we're talking about fuel. Food is fuel. Don't buy fuel for your body in the same place where you buy fuel for your vehicle. Those probably aren't the best places to do that. What we should be doing is identifying,

of course, where it is, how the foods were grown and what's in them. This goes a long way to doing that. Of course, sodium would be a large component and would have another multiplier effect in the reduction of health care costs throughout the province.

I will give credit where credit is due: The government is jumping on the New Democratic bandwagon. We're used to that. When we have good ideas, we're used to that. But this is something we certainly applaud and support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I was delighted to hear the comments from my colleague from Windsor West. I, of course, have a very soft spot in my heart for Windsor. Actually, I did my second degree at the University of Windsor. I was a resident of the graduate house in Electa Hall.

I think maybe it was the member from Windsor—Tecumseh—I was quite sad to hear that the Roman Catholic Diocese of London, Ontario, which has responsibility for Windsor, is closing Assumption church. I had the opportunity on at least two occasions to go here to hear Handel's Messiah performed at Christmastime. Assumption church had the most wonderful acoustics for doing that kind of thing.

I can relate to the member's speech, because a lot of students at the University of Windsor used to go to the DH. You know, we tried to stretch our dollars in those days, as I was a starving student. I would think the menu back then and the choices that were available probably were in direct contradiction to what is suggested in Bill 45.

1550

I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't get in a plug for Peterborough. Every Saturday I go to the Peterborough Farmers' Market. My good friend Jill Staples is the volunteer manager at the Peterborough Farmers' Market. She's also a very accomplished nurse with the Peterborough branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. She and her husband have a farming operation just outside of Peterborough: Staples Maple Syrup. Anybody in the Peterborough area over the next couple of weeks: Go to Peterborough Farmers' Market and buy the maple syrup product from Staples. It's absolutely wonderful. It would be great on your pancakes, produced as Aunt Jemima at Quaker Oats in Peterborough. So you buy the local maple syrup, put it on the local pancakes made in Peterborough and you would have a really great breakfast. It's very nutritious and, frankly, would meet all of the objectives that are outlined in Bill 45.

I want to thank my friend from Windsor West for a very articulate speech this afternoon.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I'd like to thank all the members who stood up and spoke to the comments that I shared. I

noticed a common theme to the comments, and that seems to be farmers' markets. It's almost like we've got a battle of the farmers' markets going on now. I'm afraid someday we're all going to come in here and start throwing produce at each other.

Interjection: That would be fun.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It would be fun. I'm not sure it's entirely respectful, but it would be fun.

I think the common theme to all the comments was the access to healthy foods. I would hope that we'd look at different income levels and ensure that people from all income levels have access to healthy foods, that when they walk into a restaurant they are able to look at a menu and ideally be able to see not just what's included in the bill but also see the sodium content, especially those who have issues with high blood pressure or other related health issues with sodium intake. Again, I would make the plea because I heard several times on the other side that they support having sodium labelling.

I should correct my record. I believe I mentioned the wrong member. It was the member for Mississauga—Streetsville who said that he would certainly support having sodium labelling, but just not now. I would ask that the government side reconsider that and answer why. Why not now? Now would be a great time to put that into the bill so that anybody who goes into—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: You want to be transparent at the moment.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: —yes, to be transparent, so that anybody who walks into a chain restaurant where there are 20 or more in that chain, they're able to look at the menu and make a very informed decision, not just for themselves but for the children that they take into these restaurants. We already have an issue with school-children potentially not having access at school to the food choices that appeal to them. They then step outside and go to restaurants and, unfortunately, are accessing unhealthy food. We want them to be able to make better decisions.

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

M. Glenn Thibeault: Je vais partager mon temps avec la procureure générale.

I'm very happy to be sharing my time with the Attorney General and speaking to Bill 45 today, the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014.

I know we're all talking about our farmers' markets so, of course, at some point I'd like to be able to talk about the Sudbury farmers' markets and the great produce that they have there, but first I think it's important to talk about the commitment of this government and the minister to ensure that we're keeping Ontarians healthy. I know as a government we've pledged to reduce tobacco use prevalence to the lowest in the country, but on top of that there are also e-cigarettes and restricting the use, sale and supply to individuals who are under the age of 19.

Also, of course: menu labelling, which I think is an important piece, and I know we've heard about that as well.

If we start looking at why this government is moving forward with this proposed legislation and the regulations, first I'm going to talk about tobacco. I think strengthening our ability to reduce youth exposure to all tobacco products is paramount.

Mr. Speaker, if I go back to my own personal history and think about when I first started smoking—now I've quit for 20 years, so 1995 was when I kicked the habit, so to speak. But I recall starting to smoke when I was 12 years old—12 years old. I did not like the taste of tobacco. So what did I do? I purchased gum. I would buy a pack of gum and then I would either snag some of my parents' cigarettes or, back in the day, you used to be able to go to the corner store and have a note that was written by your parents saying, "I need to get a pack of smokes for my parents," but it was actually for yourself. So there were ways around the system. But I'm glad to see now that we're coming forward with laws and with legislation that actually don't allow that to happen and that we're now going to be protecting our youth from a lot of those bad habits that we started.

I'm 45 years old. I said I quit 20 years ago, in 1995. I smoked for quite a few years. I think it was over 10 years on and off. One of the hardest things I had to do was quit smoking. The interesting thing about it is, back in the day, I went to college to become a behavioural consultant. While I was there learning and understanding what we need to do to change behaviours, I had to use those programs on myself to try and get away from the habit of smoking. It almost took a life-changing—well, it was a life-changing event in which I went into anaphylactic shock. I ate some almonds, went into anaphylactic shock, didn't know what was going on, but at that time, I thought it was important while I was having a hard time breathing—what did I do? I grabbed a cigarette, lit up and started to smoke. The doctor said if that would have been about 20 minutes into that whole anaphylactic shock that I could have died. It was the next day that I decided to quit smoking and then having to change my behaviour—so not waking up in the morning and grabbing a coffee and then lighting up a smoke as the first thing you do, but having to do something different.

Why do I talk about changing behaviour? It's because that leads into e-cigarettes. When we had the folks here from the Heart and Stroke Foundation last week talking to us about e-cigarettes, they were talking about the habit-forming conditions that come with e-cigarettes, that if we're not putting in place the requirements and the regulations to keep these e-cigarettes out of the hands of our youth, that we could then be creating the habits that lead to smoking. We don't want that. As my colleague said, and shook his head, we don't want that. We don't want our youth smoking because we all know the problems that come with smoking.

Then, of course, there's the menu labelling piece, and the one thing that I haven't heard yet in this debate and I want to bring up very briefly is that this government has consulted on this bill with stakeholders. Not only did we talk with the children's advisory panel, we also spoke

with small business owners, we also spoke with the restaurant and foodservice and retail sectors to ensure that we are getting this right, especially when it comes to menu labelling.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to wrap up now and hand it over to the Attorney General.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Attorney General.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ça me fait bien plaisir aujourd'hui de parler sur le projet de loi 45.

Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014, has three components to it. The first one is to ban all flavoured tobacco, including menthol. I think it's a good idea because research has shown that these flavoured cigarettes are a segue for youth to start smoking. So I think it's a given that we should all be supporting that.

The e-cigarettes: There are still studies to be done about the effectiveness of e-cigarettes to help people quit smoking. But if it does help someone quit smoking, we'll have to reconsider what we are going to do with it.

1600

I want to speak today about menu labelling, especially because this past weekend I was in my constituency and I went to le Festival des sucres, the sugar bush festival. If you don't already know, in Vanier we have the only sugar bush in a town or in a city in Canada. It's always a very good festival where all the families get together with children and we eat. I hope that one day they will put how many calories we have on our plate. You know, it's a pancake with a lot of maple syrup. It's the fried potatoes. It's the bacon. It's les fèves au lard and all of this. So it's pretty rich.

Anyway, it's a good idea, because if you're at home, you watch what you're eating; you watch the way you're cooking your food. And then you get to the restaurant and you know nothing about what is being included in the preparation of food. So it's important for us, if we want to reduce our calorie intake and to eat more healthy, to know exactly what is in the food that we are ordering at the restaurant.

They already know what's in it, so why not publish it? If you pay attention to what you eat at home and you want to reduce your calories, you want to do that also when you eat out at restaurants. And it has been proven that more and more Canadians eat at restaurants at least once a week, and for some it's more than once a week. So that's a very good provision that has been included in Bill 45. Listening to my colleagues around the House, it seems that it's going to be supported.

Let me say a few things about smoking. Ottawa was the first city in Ontario where we banned smoking in public places, and you know what? The businesses and restaurants were supposed to shut down when we banned that, but—surprise, surprise—the restaurants were more busy. First of all, prior to the ban in Ottawa some restaurants and bars had already started to prohibit smoking on their premises and they wanted to keep it secret because it was so busy. A lot of people were going there because they were not asking the question, "Am I

going to have to breathe all this smoke if I go to that restaurant or that bar?" They knew that they were not. And since we are on the border, the Quebec customer would come to Ottawa because it was smoke-free in the restaurants and bars, so it was very, very successful.

Recently I was in Switzerland. They don't smoke in the restaurants but people are smoking over there like—I was very surprised. So if there's something that we should be proud about, it's the fact that we can go to public places without having to breathe the smoke from people who are smoking cigarettes.

I'm very supportive of Bill 45 and I hope that it will go to committee soon.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to rise in this House and give my comments on the member opposite. It was interesting, Speaker; we talked about pancakes and sausages and bacon and whatever else. I'll tell you, they're good. I mean, it's part of our Canadian tradition, especially the maple syrup part.

Two weekends ago, I spent four hours in the Presbyterian church in Listowel cooking pancakes for Paddy-fest. It was only \$5 they charged to get in, so you can imagine that the place was packed. People were just enjoying the tradition that we have at this time of year of eating pancakes and fresh maple syrup, and certainly the caloric intake was rather high that day. But I think back to a time when, some of us can remember when we were growing up—I was from the agricultural community. I lived on a farm all my life. Even the city kids always had something to do after they ate a big meal—physical. I think our lifestyles have changed quite a bit since then. We had chores to do, we had animals to look after, so we ate a lot. We probably ate more than what maybe people eat now, but we could work that off. Unfortunately, our habits are the same. We still jump into these pancakes and sausages or whatever, and we have to be careful what we eat now because we don't work it off. We put the weight on. I can understand what the member was talking about here, but I still enjoy my pancakes, bacon and sausage.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I was listening intently to both speakers on this bill. There is obviously some consensus on moving forward.

The issue of e-cigarettes, though, is very, very serious, and so there is a need to have a very strong position on it. I was in a high school in Hamilton East this weekend. My daughter had a basketball tournament and I was at Delta Secondary School. In one of their hallways the students had posted a poster that said e-cigarettes, pipes and hookahs are as harmful as tobacco products and these influence our perception of these products as a safe alternative to tobacco, which is not true, and that students should try to avoid using any of these products and being sucked into media influence, which I thought was a fun pun on smoking.

So the students are ahead of us, which is actually often the case. They see the vapour stores and the e-cigarette stores opening up and they see their peers experimenting. They're trying to do something themselves, and I think we need to make sure that the businesses understand that selling e-cigarettes or vapour cigarettes to youth is completely unacceptable, and there should be a strong fine.

Listen, Mr. Speaker, everybody's got a hungry heart. We've been talking a lot about food in this place. The issue of this government not addressing the sodium content is a missed opportunity. Once again, why? If not now, then when? The research and the evidence are really clear on sodium, so why not do it right the first time? That's certainly something that we're concerned about that and that we're going to pursue going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, thank you very much. I want to begin by thanking our minister for bringing Bill 45 forward, the Making Healthier Choices Act.

Many people have dealt with various components of the bill. I'll focus on the smoking piece of it as well, as others have. We've made great strides, I think it's fair to say, in the province when it comes to dealing with the issue and trying to keep the numbers down—in terms of the percentage of people who are smoking, I think it's somewhere in the range of 18% to 20%. It's a very difficult, ongoing and recurring challenge because, as we know, this is about an attitudinal shift, but we also know that there's always a new potential generation of smokers coming along. So the work of our government, and the work of succeeding governments when it comes to trying to suppress the percentage of people who are smoking in Ontario—that work will never end.

I'm sitting here listening to debate today and I'm looking at the pages sitting out in front of you here, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking at young Mr. Peltonen from Thunder Bay, him and his colleagues and his cohorts. They're the people who are the target of the industry.

When we look at things like flavoured tobacco and e-cigarettes, this is the reason the industry is always thinking, "How can we do this?" They're seeing the work that's being done, power walls and all the other things we've done to restrict smoking and help to keep these numbers down, but the industry is creative as well. They always continue to come along with new ideas: "How can we get a new generation here to start buying our products?"

We all have a vested interest in this. We have a publicly funded health care system. We know this is not a smart thing to do. What is interesting is that very smart people continue to do it.

1610

The work will continue, Speaker. I want to thank the minister for bringing this forward. As I've said, the work will continue.

Another shout-out—I listened to my colleague speak earlier—to the city of Thunder Bay. I was on council

when we brought in a bylaw 10 or 12 or 15 years ago—I forget how long ago—restricting smoking in public places. The sky was going to fall; restaurants and bars were going to shut down. That didn't happen. Congratulations to the city of Thunder Bay for getting that done as well.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm going to focus quite a bit of my time on, again, the reality that it's illegal to sell to minors; however, it's not illegal for minors to smoke. I think that's something we can do, if we really want to impact the next generation, people like our great pages in front of you, in not smoking: to actually put some teeth into that and to ensure there is a challenge both to possess and/or to consume. That's one of the things I think is ironic: that that store owner cannot sell to the minor, but nothing stops that minor if they get it somehow.

Lots of smokes out there today are through the contraband market. I think, sadly, there's a lot of youth trying it because they are so inexpensive. I was a little disappointed in this bill to not see anything in there going after that whole market.

We had the Korean Businessmen's Association in to speak with us last week. I really feel for these folks sometimes, because they are operating a legitimate business, and it's almost like people are hiding around trying to find them doing something wrong even though they're not. They put a lot of challenging legislation in place in regard to having to identify someone under 25 years old. Most of them want that; they want to run a good, reputable business. Yet there are people lurking behind counters, almost, trying to find it.

But there's nothing in legislation that prohibits a minor from smoking. That's an area that I think we definitely need to look at, and I would like to see us, certainly when it gets to committee, take a good, strong look at that and see if we can put something in there. It's illegal to sell and consume alcohol at a younger age; why not smoking?

As I said earlier in my comments, I've never been a smoker; it's something that I find repulsive. I lost my sister to lung cancer. It was the worst, most horrible thing that I've seen. If I can do a shout-out to anyone listening who has children of any age in their family, try to prevent them from smoking. It was the most horrible, graphic thing that I've ever seen. I don't want to see anybody else have to go through that.

So I do credit the minister with bringing this forward, but I think there are some pieces of it that we could amend. We could make it even better legislation and truly, at the end of the day, do things to stop any of our youth and/or adults from smoking down the road.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I return to the Attorney General for her reply.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais remercier les députés de Perth–Wellington, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Kitchener–Waterloo and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Yes, things have changed. When I was a nurse working in the delivery room, everybody was smoking. The patients were smoking, the doctors were smoking and the nurses were smoking.

Mr. Steve Clark: But the babies weren't smoking.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: No, the babies were not smoking, but just imagine. I'm a bit embarrassed to say that. The doctor would go from one room to the next to visit their patient, with their cigarette, and there were ashtrays in almost every room. Look at today. It would be a real scandal if people would go and smoke in the hospital. I'm still so perturbed when I go by a hospital and see the patients who are outside with their IV pole, in the wheelchair, and they're smoking. But what can I say?

My friend from Perth–Wellington talked about the sugar bush and all the good food that is being served there—very high in calories. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organizers of this big festival in Vanier organized by le Muséoparc. The president is an employee of mine in Ottawa, Michael McLellan. I'd like to thank him and his team and the numerous volunteers who helped to organize this sugar bush festival. When I went for breakfast on Sunday around 11:30, there were close to 1,000 people who had already been served there. And yes, perhaps next year they will have the list of calories in what you're eating. You go out of the festival a lot heavier than when you went in, but once a year, what's the point? So happy festival, and thank you.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a real pleasure to have a few moments to speak on Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act. It's a very important bill, and I believe it has a very admirable goal of helping Ontarians lead healthier lives.

I think we have to be leaders for our young people. We have to enact legislation that will lead to healthier lifestyles. As I said earlier today, and I'll say it again as part of my few minutes to speak, I also think we have a duty to do a better job at educating the public.

I met with some folks in my riding on Friday and the previous Friday, and over and over again—I'm not happy with the statistics in my riding. We've got too many people who are smoking. We're losing too many people far too early because of heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases. I really think that as legislators, we have to look within our ridings and rise to a higher standard.

I also want to take the opportunity today to talk about my colleague the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. He is our associate health care critic. He noted in his leadoff a statistic about obesity, that that alone costs our health care system about \$4.5 billion annually. So there's no question—we've had a limited number of our caucus who have spoken to this bill, but those who have have expressed their support for Bill 45. I think we've got an effective tool in education. I think we need to arm people with the knowledge to make better choices.

But I do want to raise some issues that came up in the riding, over the break regarding Bill 45. I want to put

those on the record because I promised some of those constituents that I would.

Most of us know that the bill focuses on three pieces of legislation to give it its teeth—the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2014, which will require fast-food restaurants to display the calorie counts for their menu items. The bill also amends the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, primarily to prohibit the sale of flavoured tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes—and I’m going to deal with a delegation of young people from Gananoque that I met with in my office. Finally, there is the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2014, which brings in a number of restrictions on e-cigarettes, or electronic cigarettes, which include banning their sale to anyone under 19 and restricting display and promotion of e-cigarettes, much like we do today with the regular, more conventional cigarette products. So all very laudable goals; all very important pieces of legislation.

I want to talk to you about issues on three components of the bill from people I’ve met from Leeds–Grenville. Aside from hydro rates, Speaker, I have to tell you that the e-cigarette measures in the bill have lit up my inbox. I couldn’t get over the volume of emails that I’ve received in a number of months. I’ve also heard directly from a number of former smokers who told me that it was only with the help of an electronic cigarette that they were able to kick the habit. So it was very interesting information that I got from some constituents.

I also had a chance to visit one of the local vape shops. I think there were a number of members who, in their speeches, talked about reaching out. Mr. Potts, the member from Beaches–East York, mentioned that. I went up to Kemptville and I met with Don LeBreton at the Evape shop he owns there. He told me that he’s among those former smokers for whom vaping finally ended their addiction to lighting up. In his case, it was 46 years that he was a smoker. Since opening the shop, he’s helped many, many others kick the habit.

When I was at Don’s shop, I had an opportunity—I stayed there quite a long time. I got the whole show on the different types and different prices of e-cigarettes, and I did meet some former smokers who told me that they felt better than they had in years because they no longer smoke a pack or more every day.

I want to take the opportunity in my speech to read one of the emails I received from a constituent who had been a smoker for 50 years. His comments really sum up the concerns that Don LeBreton and so many others said in their emails.

This is one email I got from a constituent:

“While it is true that not a lot of research has been published related to the health effects of vaporizing liquid nicotine, we have much evidence that smoking tobacco is extremely harmful to our health and, via second-hand smoke, to those in our surroundings.

1620

“Given the numerous carcinogens identified in tobacco cigarettes and compared to the three ingredients in liquid nicotine (nicotine, vegetable oil or propylene

glycol, water and flavouring), it is obvious to all that e-cigarettes are much safer.

“Why would you want to discourage the thousands (if not millions) of people like myself who are trying to quit smoking?”

That’s the excerpt from the email.

Now, I know the minister would tell me that we’re not going to ban the sale of e-cigarettes, but some people are, again, worried about the unintended consequence of the legislation, which might find fewer people finding their way to e-cigarettes and a path to lighting up. I know that the science isn’t out there and isn’t conclusive regarding e-cigarettes, but I just felt compelled, because I have received so many emails, to put it on the agenda.

I go into pharmacies and I see the Nicorette Inhaler, which to me is the same sort of thing. You’re grabbing something that looks like a cigarette, and you’re inhaling. In this case, the one I saw in the pharmacy was a mint inhaler. So there are some parallels—vapers have told me that there are some synergies—yet one is given out by health units and heralded as a smoking cessation device, and the other, without the science, has not gotten there yet.

I did mention the meeting I had in my constituency office with students from Gananoque Secondary School. They obviously talked to me about the components of Bill 45 regarding cracking down on the marketing of flavoured tobacco products. I want to recognize Jeremy Somerville, Carly Hart, Rayna Hachez and Jonathan Lancaster. They came to see me with Rebecca Shams, who is a health promoter with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. They all attended the Freeze the Industry summit last fall, where they talked about initiatives to reduce tobacco use among their peers.

I’m very impressed with these student advocates. They pointed out that two thirds of youth smokers use a flavoured tobacco product, and there are some 66,000 students who smoked and said they smoked menthol cigarettes. Those statistics mirrored what they saw at Gananoque Secondary School. When they see their friends lighting up, they’re usually doing so, they told me, with a flavoured product. So there’s no question, after hearing from Jeremy, Carly, Rayna and Jonathan, that I really understand the need to butt out of this kind of marketing aimed at creating that new generation of smokers.

At the same time, I know that when we pass Bill 45 and eventually eliminate flavoured and menthol tobacco, the products aren’t going to disappear. I think it’s very important that we have to—I know that the government is very reluctant. They’ve been reluctant for the five years I have sat here as an MPP to really crack down on the flow of contraband tobacco in our communities. It’s a huge problem in eastern Ontario, and I really believe we have to get serious about reducing the number of youth smokers. If we do, we have to have a strategy that increases enforcement measures to put a dent in the illegal tobacco trade.

Speaker, I only have a little bit of time left, and I do want to mention one final component, and that’s the

calorie posting component. It's a measure that I do support. But I did have a meeting about a year ago with Wendy Preskow and a group from the National Initiative for Eating Disorders. We had a discussion about the potentially devastating impact, on a person with an eating disorder, of walking into a restaurant and seeing calorie counts on full display. Wendy's group is working hard, on behalf of the 600,000 Canadian men and women with an eating disorder, and they're very concerned about the effects of this measure on the people they represent.

I don't have an answer on what we can do, but I had one troubling statistic that I wanted to put on the record today. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate, at 20%, among mental illnesses. It's a figure that I found absolutely shocking. I hope that the minister will engage Wendy and her group. I think we need to provide information to people in Ontario on what they're eating, but I was particularly struck with Wendy and her group, and the fact that I think the minister needs to be able to deal with that issue as part of the bill.

Again, I don't have the answer. But I'm pleased to support the bill—I know that my colleagues do—and I am looking forward to the debate this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a pleasure to stand in my place this afternoon and make comments on behalf of the constituents of mine in Windsor–Tecumseh, and in response to the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Now we all have to take into consideration, when we debate legislation, the cause and effect. I'm fully in support of the bill, don't get me wrong, but I also recognize, when we do pass bills in this House, that some people are going to suffer. I know when we banned smoking in the workplace and in the Legion halls, I know business went down in our Legion halls. I was at a Legion last Thursday night, branch 255 in Riverside in my riding, and we're about to close the doors, turn in the keys because business is down. One of the reasons for that, of course, is, in the old days we had 2,000 members, and many of them smoked; now we're down to 350. But I say that, not to bring smoking back—don't get me wrong.

I was there with a friend of mine, Bruce Moncur, a wounded Afghanistan veteran, and we were enjoying each other's company, and I said to him, "What a great tie you have on." And he said, "You like it? Here, it's yours," and this is the tie he gave me, Speaker. I thought I'd wear it today in a shout-out to Bruce. For some reason the orange goes really well on this side of the House, and I just thought I'd give a shout-out to Bruce for that and wish him well in the future. He's considering a career change, considering studying for his LSAT and applying to law school at the University of Windsor, so I do wish him well with that.

While we're talking about sugar bushes and maple syrup, a shout-out to the John R. Park Homestead in my area, where they had a maple syrup party on the weekend and fundraiser. I hope they did very well.

Thank you for your time this afternoon, Speaker.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to support Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act.

As someone coming from public health before I came to the Legislature, this is the right bill to do, folks. I hear all the time that 20 years ago, or even five years ago, the issue of e-cigarettes was never in the conversation. Do you remember those days, Mr. Speaker, when we had the smoking room in restaurants? Well, the smoking room is gone because the restaurateurs were not cleaning them. They were not removing the filter and cleaning them.

At the end of the day, this progressive legislation is making sure that every young person is healthy and safe. There are actually three parts to this bill. One talks about making Ontario smoke-free, the second part deals with menu labelling, and the third piece deals specifically with e-cigarettes.

As someone who had been in public health for a number of years, Mr. Speaker, and has been working for a smoke-free Ontario, I can tell you right now, we have a generation of non-smokers—which is the right thing to do—because in the old days, we were seeing people smoking in boardrooms, we were seeing people smoking in hospitals; we were seeing people buying cigarettes in the hospital that's treating them for cancer. Now, how ironic is that?

The other piece is, as a former member of the Healthy Kids Panel—one of the recommendations of the Healthy Kids Panel is about labelling food, Mr. Speaker. That was one of the recommendations from the experts. I know the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills talked about food labelling earlier. The entire city of New York has food labelling, and you're trying to tell me that the province of Ontario cannot be as progressive as the city of New York? I don't believe so. So I'm encouraging all members to support Bill 45.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do know that towards the end of his remarks, the member for Leeds–Grenville made mention of not only menthol cigarettes but also contraband tobacco. I haven't seen it yet, but there's a tobacco ad in the TTC Queen's Park subway station, and a copy of this ad was sent to all MPPs. The question is: What has Ontario done? And they point out that contraband product accounts for 33% of the cigarettes purchased in the province of Ontario. I've seen other figures up to 50% in certain areas of the province.

1630

The member made mention of menthol, and this ad states that Ontario proposed a menthol ban—giving 5% of the tobacco market to organized crime. Someone is going to fill that need. It's basic economics, especially in the illegal trade; if the supply is restricted, if the demand remains the same and given the price advantage that the illegal marketers have over the legal trade, they will fill that gap, and that's the point of this advertisement.

The question is: What has Ontario done? Contraband is 33% of the cigarettes purchased in Ontario. And then it raises the question: Quebec reduced contraband tobacco use to 15%. A number of years ago Quebec brought in legislation that gave the police real powers to deal with the tobacco issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to listen to the member from Leeds–Grenville. I think he did excellent due diligence with this bill, really looked at it and did some research around it—there's nothing to fault with that at all—and raised some important points, both about vaping and eating disorders, which are a reality. I understand their concern. I don't think the answer is not to have the calories up there, and I don't think the answer to vaping is to make it available to kids. But they are concerns and they are legitimate ones and should be directed to the committee to look at listening, at least listening, to the folk out there in our communities, which he did.

You're looking at a survivor, actually. I never smoked, but the rest of my family did and we're proof positive it kills. I lost my mother, my father, my brother; in fact, in our family, if you smoke, you die, and if you don't, you survive or have a chance of it. That's very, very clear. I remember back to the days when a boyfriend of mine—his father was in the hospital, dying of lung cancer. He had a speaking box and they actually used it to insert a cigarette so that he could smoke out of his throat, if you can imagine. That's what our hospitals were like not that long ago, within my lifetime, and that's how little awareness we had about the issue of tobacco.

Of course, you've heard the concerns from the New Democrats. First of all, of course, kudos due to the member from Nickel Belt: These are all her ideas. But also the concern is that we may not be moving quickly enough or, really, strategically enough, to get in advance of what the tobacco companies will bring in next. That's also a concern.

To the member from Leeds–Grenville: good work and good points. I hope again that the committee that looks at this bill will listen to those folk as well.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the members from Windsor–Tecumseh, Scarborough–Agincourt, Haldimand–Norfolk and Parkdale–High Park for their very thoughtful and respectful comments. I appreciate all four of them joining in the debate this afternoon.

I do want to take the opportunity to again jump on something that the member for Haldimand–Norfolk talked about. He spoke earlier in the afternoon. He represents pretty well every tobacco farmer, I would think, in the province of Ontario—if not them all, certainly the vast majority. And I do believe that the government has to take some action, especially when we will be passing Bill 45. They have to take some action on contraband tobacco.

Once you shut down the issue of flavoured tobacco for our young people, the only other thing they're going to go after is price. That's what they're going to then migrate to: price. I've got two international bridges in the south end of my riding. They're going to go into the US. So we've got to have some level of enforcement to deal with contraband tobacco and access to other markets.

The other thing I want to talk about just very briefly—only because other members kept talking about it—is maple syrup.

It happened over and over again this afternoon. I also, like many members, did a tapping-out ceremony at one of my local producers, Edgewood Farms, Dave and Terry McGurrin. They've got a couple of concerns.

First, we're the only province that hasn't accepted the new regulations that every other province and the US have taken, the standard testing.

The other thing is that we still have a system where MPAC will shut down a farm and try to label it “commercial” because for two weeks out of the year, it sells pancakes after its tapping-out ceremony. It's ridiculous. If we really wanted to help those farmers, we would tell MPAC to eliminate that regulation.

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

M. John Vanthof: C'est un privilège de participer au débat sur le projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2014 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

This is a very, very important act. I'd like to commend our member from Nickel Belt, who has spent a lot of her career here in this Legislature promoting these very issues. In fact, she put through 11 private members' bills which are basically the cornerstones of this legislation.

It's divided into three main parts. The first part is the Healthy Menu Choices Act. What it does is it forces chain restaurants of over 20 stores to post the calories of their menu choices. It's really important to focus on how it's for restaurant chains over 20 stores. This isn't going to impact mom-and-pop restaurants or restaurants that have two or three outlets. Every riding has got great restaurants like that, as does mine. I was in Steak Villa a couple of nights ago and Zante's—

Ms. Catherine Fife: What did you have?

Mr. John Vanthof: I had a steak at Steak Villa, and today I have gout. Maybe the steak wasn't the wise choice, but it was a fantastic steak.

But it's important to note that it's for chains over 20.

It's also important to note it's for calories, and we could go further. We could do sodium, because sodium has an impact on many health conditions. It's interesting because one of the chains—I'm not going to advertise for the chains—advertises that they have no added hormones in their beef. If they can ascertain that, which causes lots of problems in the Canadian beef industry because that forces lots of imported beef into this country, it shouldn't be a problem to list sodium.

We really don't understand why the government—and we support this bill. This bill is a step forward. But it would be a greater step if we actually followed some other states, some other cities who force a more comprehensive labelling, because there is more than just calories. Calories is a big step—we're not discounting that—but it's just a step.

The next part of this bill, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, is also very important. It prohibits and regulates the use of flavoured tobacco. When I was listening to the member from Nickel Belt and her debate, she recalled how when she first came to this Legislature, she had a private member's bill passed against the unregulated sale of flavoured cigarillos. She thought it was a big step forward, yet there was an opening before this bill could be enacted. Before the sale of these things were banned, the companies had already changed the rules so that they'd added a bit more nicotine so that the cigarillos in question weren't the same as what was described in the act, and the sales kept going. I don't blame companies for doing this. Companies are out to make money. If you're a cigarette company, you're out to make money. But cigarettes kill people, and trying to disguise cigarettes in different types of flavours—to younger people—should be regulated, should be banned. This bill goes a way to doing that.

1640

We really question the idea of having a big window for menthol because we saw, when you give a little window to flavoured cigarillos, what happened. If you give a two-year window to menthol—and there are smart people on the other side who are going to spend a lot of time figuring out how to get around these regulations. That's just the way the world works. So we question the length of that adjustment period. Once again, we don't want to hurt someone who has a big stock of menthol cigarettes, but I don't think anyone has a two-year stock.

I would like to echo the member from Leeds–Grenville. We've had a lot of issues raised in our office regarding this bill. Some of those issues were developed by a campaign, but some of them are relevant. As we make stricter and stricter laws for the sale of cigarettes specifically to minors, which we totally agree with, we also have to look at the other avenues by which people have the ability to buy cigarettes. There is, in my riding as well, a lot of contraband tobacco. We don't see as much effort at controlling contraband tobacco as we see at controlling what is actually a legal product.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): There are a significant number of side conversations going on that are getting louder and louder. I would ask the members to please listen to the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, as I am.

I appreciate the member making his contribution, and the member has the floor.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm going to have to up my game, Speaker. No one is paying attention. That's not normal for me.

The third issue is electronic cigarettes. We've also had a lot of concerns brought to our office regarding electron-

ic cigarettes. A lot of people have stopped smoking using electronic cigarettes, and that could very well be. We're not disputing that. But this bill doesn't ban electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes, whatever they're called; it regulates the sale, so it's a whole different thing. We're not banning them; we're regulating so they're not sold to people who are under 19.

A lot of those issues that were brought to my office—I respect it when people bring issues to my office but, on this one, I think they're reading more or less into the bill than is actually there because, if you need to use an e-cigarette to stop smoking, you will still have that ability, unless you're under 19, but the whole focus of this bill is to help people not get addicted to smoking, like our pages who are here today. That's the whole issue of this bill. There may be people who are going to get caught in the transition. It's not a proven way to stop smoking, but it could help. If you're over 19, they're still going to be readily available.

In closing, once again I'd like to congratulate our member from Nickel Belt for actually laying the cornerstones of this bill. I'd like to congratulate the government on taking some of these and moving forward, but there are things that we need to look for, like sodium. There are other things we hope the government will look at, beneficial amendments that will actually make this bill stronger. We do wonder how long it will take, considering it has taken a decade to get to this point with some of these issues. We would hate to lose the opportunity to actually make the changes that we can make.

I don't think anyone in this House is going to say that for sodium, for one, "We don't want to do that, because we all know sodium is good for us." We all know that too much salt is not good for us. That would be a very low-hanging fruit. I'm sure that restaurants with 20 stores or more know exactly how much sodium is in there, because they pay for it. They know exactly how much salt is in everything they sell.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to speak to this bill. I think there are a lot of really important elements to this piece of legislation, as far as it impacts the health of Ontarians or could impact the health of Ontarians. I'd like to focus on menu labelling.

When I think about how my parents handled food in our home—one of the things my mother did very carefully was monitor what we ate and restrict what we ate to those things she thought were appropriate and healthy, as we were kids.

I remember getting to that age where I was moving out of the house and having to make my own decisions around diet and what I would buy. It was at that point that I realized I knew very little about what was really healthy and what was not, and what was somewhat healthy and what was somewhat unhealthy. I really didn't have a good sense of what my diet should be composed of, other than the fact that it should contain the four food groups that I was taught about in school. In fact, I think

there were friends of mine who somehow convinced me that pizza was healthy, because pizza had a little bit of all the various different food groups.

I think this piece about menu labelling is truly important, and that's why I wanted to speak to this issue. When we think about menu labelling, it's really about just helping people make better decisions. It's not telling them what they should do. It's just giving them the information they need to make a more educated decision.

This legislation would require that calories be posted on menus and menu boards in restaurants, convenience stores, grocery stores and other foodservice premises selling prepared food with 20 locations or more in Ontario. I don't have the numbers in front of me, but that would represent a large percentage, a large share, of the food that we consume in Ontario and, I would theorize, an even larger percentage of the unhealthy food we consume.

To me, it's an excellent start in terms of making sure people are informed and able to make the right decisions. I think about the next generation. I think about my future children and them growing up. I know they will be that much better informed and that much healthier and, as a result, that much happier, with a little better quality of life as a result.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to add some comments on Bill 45 and the speech from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

I know he and a number of the NDP members have brought up that they think sodium should be included, that salt should be included in this bill as well. I think it's fairly common knowledge that most of us eat too much salt in our diet, especially if you're eating a lot of processed foods. That seems to me to be a logical recommendation that the government should be listening to.

I know the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is also a farmer, and he was, at one stage, talking about steak in his speech, although he didn't give it the most positive recommendation, based on what I heard about gout after the steak.

I think I've mentioned before, when I was talking about this bill, that I happen to be reading the book *The Big Fat Surprise* right now. Essentially, what I'm learning is that saturated fat, which is the kind you might have in steak, is not necessarily bad for you. It has had a bad rap for years and years and years, as the common thought is that any kind of fat is bad for you. I'm rethinking that now. I've heard some of the government members talk about concerns with fat. I think you probably need to be very specific about that—perhaps trans fats. But saturated fat is not necessarily bad for you.

In fact, our move to low-fat diets can, in some cases, be unhealthy for young children, for example, if you're moving away from whole milks, which used to have more nutrients in them. Personally, now that I'm reading this book, I'm going back to drinking 3.25% milk because I always liked it better anyways.

1650

But I think a balance in terms of what we eat is important, and probably the most important thing, also, is just to encourage a lot more exercise in our society. There could be a lot of benefits. We all need to get out and get way more exercise, especially the people sitting around this place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): On that note, I'll stand up. The member for Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. If that's the only exercise we get all day, just standing up, we're in dire straits here.

I want to thank my colleague the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who brings a lot of knowledge and experience when it comes to food, of course, being a dairy farmer for his entire life and from generations, I would expect, of dairy farmers. He knows what it takes to produce good, high-quality food, and he took a lot of pride in doing that. I think it's a level of consciousness around our food source and network that is becoming more prevalent.

We heard the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, who's coming to a new realization about what our food is, which is what it used to be. What's old is new again. Natural foods and fats in products are really becoming what the market is demanding. It's something that this bill can promote, and I think it can actually be, or act as, a measure of economic stimulus, so to speak, in that we are giving more information to the consumer, which means more knowledge, which means a greater level of awareness and maybe, perhaps, a greater level of purchasing. We hope that that's the effect, but ultimately we hope that the effect is a greater level of health for Ontarians.

The bill also addresses the new reality of e-cigarettes. No longer do we find young kids smoking in the boys' room; we find them vaping in the hallway. It's a whole new reality here, and we—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Or wherever they vape. I don't know. You can vape anywhere, because it's less intrusive, I guess. But without science backing it, clear science, we definitely have to be prudent in protecting young people from the unknown dangers of vaping, or that gateway that we think it could be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I'm delighted to rise and speak to the Making Healthier Choices Act, and to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. I've been really interested in the whole area of smoking. I grew up in an era where my father was a chain-smoker. He smoked three packs of cigarettes a day, and he used to send me to the store to get his cigarettes. I was all of 14, and in those days a corner grocer never questioned it; he knew that my father was a smoker, and he gave me the cigarettes.

He smoked these cigarettes, and I never knew him when he didn't smoke. The interesting thing about it is that at age 54, he had a heart attack. He went to the

hospital, and the doctor saw him and said, “Mr. Kwinter, if you continue to smoke, it’s going to kill you.” He said, “If I can’t smoke, then I’m quite happy to die.” Interestingly enough, a year later, he was still smoking and he did die. He died at age 55.

Now that, subconsciously, really had a profound effect on me. I didn’t really think about it, because I didn’t know any different. He smoked, and I just assumed that everybody smoked, but that was a situation that has really coloured my view on this for the rest of my life.

I want to tell you an interesting story. I got a job in Montreal to edit a design magazine, and I went there for an interview. I was all of 24. My father had just died. I went to the Ruby Foo’s restaurant, a very famous restaurant in Montreal. When I was there, the first thing the president of the company asked me was, “Do you want a drink?” I said, “No, thanks; I don’t drink.” Then we had our lunch and we talked our business, and he said, “Would you like a cigar?” I said, “No, I don’t smoke.” He said, “Don’t tell me you’re going to be disgustingly consistent and tell me you don’t drink tea or coffee.” I said, “That’s right,” so he turned to his brother and he said, “John, see this kid? He’s not going to live to be 100; it’s just going to seem like it to him.” That was something that stuck with me, and it’s something that I think is a message that really emphasizes what can happen if you just allow this thing to continue.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: I’d like to thank the members from Etobicoke Centre, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Essex and the member from York Centre, who has shown us how much you can contribute to society when you live a happy, healthy life, and that is a testament to why we are actually doing this today.

I’d also like to commend the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for talking about homogenized milk and steak. He brought up the issue of calories. I think we can all agree that people should know about calories and, I think, sodium as well. But we have to be careful to make sure that things that we regulate—that it’s not just the fad of the day that they’re harmful.

A lot of people who have been avoiding eggs their whole life because of cholesterol—there’s now a study out that says that the cholesterol in eggs doesn’t really have much to do with the cholesterol in your blood. You’ve potentially been avoiding eggs for the last 30 years. Again, we have to be cognizant of that fact.

That’s an important thing to remember. We have to look at things that we know, without a doubt—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Research.

Mr. John Vanthof: Research. Calories is one we know. We fully agree. Sodium is one I think we all know. When you add a lot more salt than your body needs, eventually—when you add a lot more of anything than your body needs—if all you drank was milk, nature’s most perfect food, if that was your total diet, I’m not sure you would live a long, healthy life. Everything

in moderation. But the things that we know can be damaging, like sodium—we should let people see what’s actually in their food.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It’s a pleasure to speak about Bill 45 today. I don’t know if the title of the bill is quite correct, about making healthier choices, in all aspects of the bill.

I want to just let people know that I’ll be referring to a number of studies during my debate. They’re all from esteemed and thoughtful organizations. One of them will be an addiction research report. There are five authors on that report. They’re from cancer research; the Health Behaviour Research Centre, University College London, UK; the research department of clinical, educational and health psychology at University College London; the Maastricht University medical centre; and a host of high-calibre professional organizations that have done significant research into areas that this bill impacts.

I’ll start off by saying that we often hear this phrase from governments—not just this government but from many governments—that they’re going to make decisions and policies based on science and on evidence and not ideology. We hear that all the time. If they’re true to their word, Speaker, I’m going to ask them to actually look at the science and look at the evidence. Not only that, I want them to look at their own legislation.

The focus of my interest here is electronic cigarettes. Electronic cigarettes are often used as a smoking cessation device, something to help people make healthier choices. That is indeed their purpose for most people.

1700

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act—I’ll read one section of it:

“This act applies to tobacco in any processed or unprocessed form that may be smoked, inhaled or chewed, including snuff, but does not apply to products intended for use in nicotine replacement therapy.”

So the Smoke-Free Ontario Act does not apply to those products that are there to help people quit smoking. However, that whole section of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which precludes smoking cessation devices from its authorities, is made redundant or put into conflict with Bill 45, because Bill 45’s purpose is to prevent people from using smoking cessation devices—electronic cigarettes.

Speaker, I have a list of 38 different studies here from around the world that all demonstrate that electronic cigarettes are the most effective way to reduce smoking. They make nicotine patches look like a plaything. Over 10 times more effective, in most cases, are electronic cigarettes over nicotine patches.

It may be important for the members to recognize as well that often, nicotine patches are prescribed and are often paid for through public prescription programs, but electronic cigarettes, of course, are not. There’s no cost to the taxpayer on electronic cigarettes, but there is for nicotine patches.

These 40 studies that I have here—the American Council on Science and Health, the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, the UK’s Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency—these are not fly-by-night organizations; these are top-shelf academic studies—the Clarkson University centre for air resources; the New Zealand health ministry; the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York; the American Association for Cancer Research—the list goes on and on. There is science and there is evidence that electronic cigarettes are a healthier choice, but they are being banned and treated much like real—or tobacco—cigarettes.

I would like that to be raised up in the debate this afternoon. Here we have the science, but we all have the anecdotal evidence. We all have heard of and all probably know people who have used electronic cigarettes to quit smoking. A good friend of mine, the first person who introduced e-cigarettes to me, bought one about two years ago, and he has not picked up a tobacco cigarette since.

The Oxford medicine and health journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* found that using an e-cigarette does not have toxic tobacco-specific combustion products. There’s a raft of evidence. I just don’t understand why this government would want to limit people’s ability to make healthier choices, which they’re doing here.

The Cochrane Library, in their study in December 2014: “This study showed that people who used” electronic cigarettes “were more likely to cut down the amount they smoked by at least half than people using a patch.” It showed that electronic cigarettes containing nicotine further increased the odds of reducing smoking.

For context here, a lot of people may not understand this for smokers who have gone to electronic cigarettes. We all know that you can’t go into a pub or an office or wherever and light up a cigarette, but historically, those vaporizers were allowed to be used. If you’re driving your truck at work and you’re trying to quit smoking, it’s against the law to have a cigarette in a delivery truck, but you were allowed to use a vaporizer. Now, you’re not allowed to use a vaporizer in a truck when this bill passes. You’re not allowed to use it anywhere indoors.

So I say to you, Speaker, through to the House, that was the reason why a lot of people found e-cigarettes valuable and a good smoking-cessation device. Now, if you’re not going to be allowed to have a vaporizer in your truck or in some other indoor covered area, if you’re going to go outside into the cold anyway or into the rain, well, why the hell not just have a real cigarette then? Okay?

There are some unintended consequences here. I think the parliamentary assistant recognizes there are, and I think the Minister of Northern Development might recognize that this ideologically driven ban on electronic cigarettes may have very, very harmful consequences and actually keep people on tobacco longer than they otherwise would have. That would be truly a travesty and a shame, that government goes out and creates a bill that prevents or is a disincentive for people to cease smoking.

I’m going to be interested in listening to this debate, Speaker. I want to hear some members from the Liberal side challenge these 40 studies that I have, to challenge the scientific evidence and demonstrate—I’ll be looking forward to seeing if they can demonstrate to me that there is justification in preventing people from quitting smoking electronic cigarettes. If they can’t, I’ll be voting against this bill for that one reason. If this government is bringing forth laws that will prevent people from quitting smoking, I will oppose it and vote against it.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Very interesting comments today on this piece of legislation. I think what is so unique about this place sometimes is that we do bring very diverse perspectives to a debate, and while of course most of us in this House have already agreed that this is a good and strong piece of legislation, with some places that need to be strengthened, we bring our personal experience to this.

Clearly, there’s an issue around people feeling that if e-cigarettes are removed from the marketplace, then that’s an option that’s being removed from those people who are trying to become less addicted to cigarettes. Quite honestly, the addiction to nicotine has been compared to being stronger than that of people who are addicted to heroin. People are able to stop drinking more easily than they are to stop smoking. It is that addictive. So there’s a balance here that needs to be found.

I think the member touched on this in his own way, that you have to protect an option to ensure that people have a healthy choice instead of using traditional nicotine, but you also have to make sure that—and as I mentioned earlier, the students from Delta Secondary School in Hamilton who are already aware that these options are out there, and we don’t want to actually encourage youth to even try this because then they’re smokers in training. I think that’s the balance.

There’s a healthy tension here in this debate. The research on e-cigarettes is not sound yet; we don’t have it. But we have to make sure that in the absence of strong research and evidence, which I think will be coming soon, we have to put measures of protection first and foremost. That tension—it’s a healthy debate to be having, but I think our responsibility in this place is to ensure that youth do not have easy access to e-cigarettes. That’s all that we’re saying.

1710

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

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: C’est un plaisir pour moi d’être ici dans la Chambre aujourd’hui and to talk about the Making Healthier Choices Act, our Bill 45.

When I think about one aspect of this bill, which is our menu labelling legislation, I can refer to my daughter. She’s going to be 21 years old very shortly, in November. I look at how her friends and her inner circle have tackled healthy choices for themselves and how significant it is. I do believe that having the advantage of

knowing, when she goes to restaurants, grocery stores or any other place in Ontario, how many calories exactly she is putting into her body will enhance her capacity to make healthier choices.

Donc, monsieur le Président, c'est très important, je crois, pour tous les jeunes de l'Ontario d'avoir accès à de l'information concrète, un pouvoir décisionnel de savoir ce qu'ils vont manger à tous les jours. Et le fait de pouvoir leur permettre d'avoir l'inscription accessible à eux à travers l'Ontario rend, encore une fois, le pouvoir aux jeunes de décider encore plus significatif.

If this bill is passed, we'll be the first province in Canada to legislate menu labelling, and it will help people, like I say, make an informed decision when eating out or purchasing take-away meals.

Like I said, for my daughter, this will be a significant advantage in all aspects of her life. She likes to exercise. She likes to try to be a good person in putting the right thing in her stomach, but sometimes we make the wrong choice because we don't have that information. Certainly this bill is very important and I thank everybody. Merci.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington referenced the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and the fact that it does not apply to products that help people quit. This bill does. He reiterated that electronic cigarettes do help people quit. He referenced a host of studies, including by the Addiction Research Foundation. I worked for ARF for 20 years. I still have a great deal of faith in the neutral, objective research that comes out of that organization.

I'm wondering, with this legislation, are we seeing yet again the government going down the garden path and—I hate to mix metaphors—ignoring the elephant in the room? From my perspective, certainly down my way in tobacco country, it's illegal tobacco. My question: Why won't this government bring in some real legislation to deal with and to cut contraband?

Look at Quebec, next door. The province of Quebec brought in Bill 59, legislation that provides the resources and provides the power to police to address illicit product. This was introduced back in 2009. We have evidence of the effectiveness of this legislation. The use of contraband has decreased by 15%. Quebec has successfully reduced its rate of contraband tobacco by half, and, believe it or not, at the same time, they have increased their tobacco tax revenue.

Police enforcement—people make a decision: Don't break the law. They're buying the legal product in a controlled environment.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure always to rise to comment about the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington's comments. I have to hearken back, because we had a starring role in a film, not that long ago, set in a dog park. Those of you in this chamber who saw that film will know what I mean. We missed

spring fling last year, but I can tell you that that was a moment in cinematic history.

As to his comments, I have to disagree. In this bill, we see the hard work of our member from Nickel Belt—a lot of hard work—and a lot of what should have been done, truly, 10 years ago, in terms of regulatory change. Where vaping is concerned, really all this bill does is deny it to children. It just denies it to children.

I would actually challenge the member, because I don't believe that the manufacturers and those who are involved in the vaping industry would want their product to be used by children. I don't think it's in their best interests either. That was not how that was designed. It was designed as a substitute for smoking and/or a way of getting off smoking—that's the point of it—not to bring new smokers into the fold. That's the part of the bill that, of course, we would support as well. It says nothing about anything else.

In terms of calorie counting: again, important; again, necessary; again, done in many other jurisdictions. In fact, every part of this bill, again, modelled on the member from Nickel Belt's many bills over the years, actually makes this a safer province to live in and grow up in. That's the point. That's simply the point.

As we've said many times, we're going to support it. Of course, voices need to be heard, and I think we've all talked about that. But to say you're not going to support it, I think, is the wrong way to go.

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

I return to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. I just want to address a few of the comments made by the members of the third party. If this bill was targeted at youth, and only youth, I'd be supportive of it. But when you make it a violation to use your vaporizer in your work truck, and when you make it a violation to use your vaporizer on a licensed patio—youth are not allowed to be there, youth are not driving our highway tractors—it's not just targeted at youth; it's targeted at everyone. If we could get this bill that it would impact youth only, then I would be far more supportive of it. I might even vote for it.

There are other aspects in this bill, as well, that I didn't get to address in my 10 minutes. But I'd like to draw people's attention to schedule 3, section 10, where we institute civil forfeiture in this bill. Take a look at some of those aspects in the bill. You'll be quite surprised. It's not just about healthier choices. I can tell you that when there is civil forfeiture without remedy, that's not a good choice. But that's what this bill is bringing in.

I have to make a comment: The member for Ottawa–Orléans, I guess, was too busy reading the tablet, because she responded to comments that weren't made about calories. All of my 10-minute debate was about electronic cigarettes, not about counting calories. Maybe the next time the member engages in a debate in questions and comments, they ought to be relevant to what the debate is.

I am listening for the Liberals' challenge to my arguments, not just their talking points that their House leader or the minister has put forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

M. Percy Hatfield: Merci, monsieur le Président.

Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to stand here this afternoon as the voice for my constituents in the riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. I must begin by saying that I'm reminded of the old saying, "Don't do as I do; do as I say." When it comes to eating healthy, I sport a body of evidence that clearly shows that eating healthy is not something I do on a regular basis.

It's quite evident that I have made unhealthy choices, and I have no excuse. I started young. My mom would bake bread twice a week—the best bread ever. There's nothing like fresh, homemade bread or rolls, and I ate way more than my share, I have to tell you. If we were having spaghetti, for example, I'd load the pasta onto a piece of bread and butter, and I'd have pasta sandwiches. Potatoes on the table, hey, butter that bread, put the potatoes on there, I was in seventh heaven; maybe a splash of Heinz tomato ketchup on there—presto, potato sandwiches. French fries, absolutely; chip butties they call them in England, French fry sandwiches—anything for me to wolf down more of that great bread that my mom used to make.

1720

Even after a great roast beef dinner, instead of dessert, I'd put bread and butter down, pour gravy over it, add a little bit of pepper, that was my dessert—anything to get that bread in there. I had no shame. Ketchup sandwiches, absolutely; mustard on toast any day of the week; cucumber sandwiches—it didn't matter.

I loved bread so much I would eat anything. I still eat way more bread than I should. I apologize somewhat for that. I don't eat as much as I used to. That's because my mom lives in Newfoundland and I don't find the same quality of bread up in this area. It's a tough habit to kick, I have to tell you.

I know it's serendipitous, but this week I received in the mail at my constituency office at Tecumseh and Rivard in Windsor a 50-page booklet from the presidents' council of Ontario's food and agricultural sectors, which lays out a plan for an agri-food for health strategy. One of the headlines that first caught my eye was, "Healthy eating is a skill and practice that must be learned." No kidding. Another headline: "Informed consumers are the most efficient and effective means of contributing to food choices that are healthy"—no question about that.

Apparently there have been seven surveys over the past 20 years in the Tracking Nutrition Trends series. What do we know, now that the experts have looked at and analyzed the latest statistics? In Ontario—and I'm a prime example—60% of the men and 45% of the women are overweight or obese. Our federal, provincial and territorial health ministers have recognized that Canada is in the midst of a childhood obesity epidemic. The Heart

and Stroke Foundation has found that, "Between the ages of six and 12, children develop eating habits and attitudes that they may carry with them for the rest of their lives."

There are socio-economic factors at play as well. The presidents' council says, "Young people in households where no members had more than a high school diploma were more likely to be overweight/obese than were those in households where the highest level of education was post-secondary graduation."

The Heart and Stroke Foundation tells me that since 1978, when my son was born, obesity among Canadian children has tripled. These days, 31% of our kids are overweight or obese. Four out of five of these kids will carry that extra weight well into their adult years and remain overweight or obese. That means they will be in a higher risk group, such as I am, for high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke, as well as many other chronic diseases.

Our children watch way more TV these days than we used to and they watch way more commercials on TV than we used to, advertising unhealthy food choices that are high in fat, salt, sugar and calories.

Now to Bill G45, making healthier Speaker—the Making Healthier Choices Act, Speaker. I'll say it again—

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, we need a healthier Speaker—only kidding. The "G" in that should be for Gélinas, because again, as we've heard, it's 11 private member's bills the member for Nickel Belt has put forward about making healthier choices and cessation of tobacco. That's since 2008. She has peppered this Legislature with bill after bill after bill dealing with healthy food choices and bill after bill after bill dealing with flavoured tobacco: 11 bills in all, addressing menu labelling and stricter tobacco laws. That's an enviable record.

I started this afternoon speaking about my terrible eating habits, which started in the home. We didn't eat out much in those days. We all ate at home, unless we were on a road trip or something. When I was in high school in St. John's, Newfoundland, back in the 1960s, it was big news when we got our first A&W. We did have one pizza shop, the Tower of Pizza. Of course, being in Newfoundland, we had dozens of shops where we could get our fish and chips. Our cod and our halibut used to be plentiful in those days. I say that Ches's was the best. Other people say no; if you go out around the bay you'd find the Admiral's Table or one of those. But healthy food choices weren't always available, no matter where you went.

In southwestern Ontario on our 100 Mile Peninsula, you'll find some of the best sweet corn anywhere on this planet: fresh from the field, boiled up, covered in butter with a dash of salt and pepper and away we go.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Hey, stop it. Stop. Stop now.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I know from personal experience that they don't have that fresh corn on the cob in other parts of the country.

Gale and I were flying home to Newfoundland one time on an early-afternoon flight—I went out to what is now a farm in my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. I picked up an army duffle bag full of sweet corn on the cob. I took it down to St. John’s that afternoon on the plane. I got there, I went around giving away dozens of corn to friends and relatives. They were reluctant to take it because in their supermarkets they weren’t used to fresh corn on the cob. The corn on the cob that they had in those days in Newfoundland was old. It wasn’t very good. I had to practically bend arms to get them to try this sweet corn from southwestern Ontario. Once they tried it, of course, they loved it, but until they tried it—you know, that was an eye opener for me, and it was disappointing. I’d just thought, “Wow, what a treat we’re going to bring.”

I know we’ve talked about the need for more fresh food and more community gardens, and I’m glad we’re doing that because when we eat out, Speaker, studies show that our children consume twice as many calories as they do in their meals at home.

The Healthy Kids Strategy has studied this and have come up with some pretty startling numbers. Obesity in Ontario ends up costing the health care system \$1.6 billion in direct costs and \$2.87 billion in indirect costs. I’ll do the math for you, Speaker: That’s a total of \$4.4 billion each and every year, or at least until they can update the figures because we know the cost of health care isn’t going down and the obesity problem isn’t going away any time soon.

One of the biggest flaws in this bill—and it’s actually unforgivable, Speaker—is that the Liberals have turned a blind eye to the issue of sodium in our food choices. Good old salt—and I come from a region where we mine salt, make it available for your tabletops. Good old Windsor Salt from Windsor West—below the surface in Windsor West—actually not far from the closed and shuttered Windsor Raceway and slots property, which was another unforgivable decision by the Liberal government.

It’s one thing to count calories, and I certainly support that aspect of the bill, but why stop there? What pressure has the fast-food industry put on the corner offices at Queen’s Park? Why isn’t the sodium count factored into menu labelling? I think it needs to be there. Let’s make it happen at committee.

Thank you for your time this afternoon.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It’s a pleasure to speak to Bill 45 and respond to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh on his comments. We’re in the same club—the 60% club. My eating habits started at home. I have a particular affinity for ice cream, but bread is probably second on the list. If you ever really get a nice baguette with some great milk chocolate—it’s a chocolate sandwich. It’s very good. It’s not very good for you.

Having said that, I recognize the member’s concern for childhood obesity. It is something that should be of

great concern to all of us. We had a lot more physical activity. We didn’t have as many chocolate sandwiches and as many opportunities to have things that weren’t great for us when we were younger. Our meals were pretty simple. Yorkshire pudding, though, was something that was a regular at our house every Sunday.

1730

I’m pleased to hear the member’s support for menu labelling, and the whole bill in general. I hear what he’s saying with regard to salt. I hear that very clearly.

I do want to address something that was said earlier in the debate with regard to e-cigarettes. As the member from Kitchener Centre had mentioned in the debate—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Kitchener–Waterloo, pardon me; sorry—the evidence is really unclear there.

What I would like to suggest to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is that if, some 30 or 40 years ago, we had taken the approach that’s being taken right now to e-cigarettes in the workplace and with young people—the very cautious and thoughtful approach—there would have been a lot less human suffering. I think we have to keep that in mind. We should learn some lessons from tobacco and how tobacco was treated in our country for a very long time.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It’s always a pleasure to add comment to my colleague and friend from Windsor–Tecumseh. I think we all have that reality of moms who work really, really hard to put food in front of us. It would be rude, in fact, I used to tell mine, to not eat the apple pie and the bread and the butter and all of the great things that taste so good but aren’t necessarily always that healthy for us.

I think at the end of the day you really hit on the key: the physical activity and the obesity of children particularly. Back in the day, when I was in high school, I used to eat a full meal at my one sister’s house at about 4 or 4:30. I would run to my other sister’s house and eat at about 5:30 or 6 o’clock. And I would run home at about 7 o’clock, when my mom would get home from work, and she would cook a full meal. Through all of that, I never actually put on an ounce, and I did not eat the most healthy of meals.

Interjections.

Mr. Bill Walker: It was the running back and forth. Yes, I am a Walker, but I moved to a runner.

The reality is, I think, for me and for many people, it’s not so much what you put in, but it’s working that off. I think one of my colleagues, Mr. Vanthof, might have said—or maybe it was Randy in yours—that on the farm particularly, we worked a lot in between meals.

A lot of people did those type of things, and you worked a lot of it off, where now we have the couch potato generation. We have all these games. How active do we see the kids out in the streets or even in our schoolyards? In high school, I still think we should have daily physical education, and that’s something that I would have liked to have seen in the bill.

I want to just evolve a little bit to the e-cigarettes as well. I was out Saturday night at the Meaford community Rotary Club and chamber of commerce-sponsored community awards dinner. A fellow came up to me, and he runs an e-vapour shop. He said, "I heard you in the House, but I really want to give you even more information. Would you meet with me? There's a lot of misinformation out there and myth about this." He said, "Nothing's been proven that they are unhealthy for us." I said, "Absolutely I'll meet with you. That's part of my job to meet with you."

Again, like my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington said, there is no fact for sure saying that it's unhealthy. I think we need to give it a fair shot and ensure, particularly for those with cessation needs, that we don't ban it before we can actually go down that road.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: There should be a rule in this place that when we talk about food, we should be allowed to eat. I was absolutely salivating when my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh started talking about the sweet corn from Essex county. It is unbelievable. It's delectable. You should try it. We love it.

Speaker, something struck me as we were talking about food. Hundreds of millions of people every day wake up, and their first thought is about where they actually will get food. We have hunger and poverty around the planet that's unimaginable really. To stand in a Legislature—I don't know, I guess it's a mix of emotions that in our country and in our province, one of our biggest problems is how to try to avoid food. There's just so much. There's such a prevalence. It's everywhere.

That speaks a little bit to the bill and to the fact that we should ensure that there are some protections about what types of food and what the effects are, particularly when it comes to our children. This is just a changing generation. They are sedentary. They are not running around. They may be in organized sports, but they are not in the unorganized sports that we know from the past, where you would skate on the river until your feet froze, all night long, every day. That's an enormous caloric engine just burning calories like crazy. We're not doing that any longer. I don't know what has shifted, but we have to recognize that. We have to recognize that it's time to ensure that the food that we're putting in front of people offers that nutritional value and offers the assurance that it is not only safe, but that it's within reasonable limits to be able to ensure our health.

So I commend the member. I hope he doesn't talk about sweet corn or any of the other stuff afterwards, because I don't think I'm going to be able to make it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's great to make a few comments on the words from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I think he brought something to the House today that we all probably—I shouldn't generalize, but we all probably

fall into that category. I can tell you about myself. I can go two or three days really committed to make it happen. Probably on the third or fourth day, I'm not as committed anymore. I don't know what throws you off, frankly, but it happens.

I think what we're talking about here—going back to the bill—is to create an environment where there are going to be generational changes. People would expect that if this legislation gets passed in whatever form at the end of the day, that once it's proclaimed all of our problems will be solved about obesity, about cigarettes, about calories and food content. Well, I think the legislation should reflect on the kids at school the minute it's passed. It should be part of their curriculum, just like we do with many other things.

So it's going to take a while, but the reality is we need to start somewhere. We could argue that it should have been 10 years ago, five years ago or 100 years ago; but we need to do it now. I look forward to this moving through the debate process. I think we heard today, with the exception of a couple of Conservative members, who are not supportive of it for whatever reason—but let's get a move on. Let's get it to committee. Let's refine it the best we can. Let's get the process started. Let's get these kids at school to learn about the things that the legislation addresses for a better tomorrow, frankly, because up until now, we think we missed the point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments. We return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his reply.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the comments made by the members from Ottawa South, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Essex and Northumberland–Quinte West—thank you.

I was particularly touched by the comments made by the member from Essex, because he talked about other parts of the world where food is not as readily available as it is here. You can see families—I was in the Philippines a few years ago, in Olongapo. The poverty that is there and that is taken for granted was really somewhat troubling. I was on a municipal partnership, a kind of goodwill mission. We drove past the dump that on previous trips some of our members from the Essex county solid waste authority had helped show them how to run a municipal dump, but to see the families up there actually scavenging in the dump for food and to make their livelihood out of the materials that they could pick up and recycle.

Then you go to the homes just outside the city and see the patchwork of garden hoses that people get their drinking water through—we take so much for granted. And in the community itself, you have to be careful when you step out the front door because there's raw sewage coming right down in front of the door going into the nearest creek.

So we take so much for granted here. We want to do better. We want to make healthier choices, and we should be doing that. In other parts of the world, they'd love to have that opportunity as well, but they don't.

Thank you again for those comments. I appreciate them. I hope the bill does pass, despite some of the

comments I've heard this afternoon from the official opposition. I look forward to supporting it after it comes back.

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

1740

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to touch on a few points with respect to Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act. Personally, I see this legislation as a bit of a dog's breakfast. It mixes menu labelling with e-cigarettes and flavoured tobacco.

As far as menu labelling, I've made some poor choices over the years. I'm a firm believer that you are what you eat, to use an old expression, and I wish I'd paid a bit more attention. I never did learn how to cook. I married later on in life, so that means you eat in restaurants. Certainly in the 1970s and 1980s in Toronto, any meal you ordered in the kind of working-class restaurants that I was eating in always came with half the plate being chips—some people call them French fries. I'm not sure what they—

Interjection: I would worry more about poutine.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Yes, well, I did eat poutine, once. I guess that's not part of my culture.

Interjection: Once.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Once.

But I will say that I have not picked up a salt shaker since 1974, with one exception, and that's sweet corn. Sweet corn has to have butter and a little bit of salt with it. I've never picked up a salt shaker, because just about everything you eat has salt in it anyway, thanks to people down in the Windsor area, and just about everything you eat has sugar in it, and fat. As far as food labelling, we should probably make it real simple. Forget about the metric, forget about percentages and all the convoluted small print that you see on everything. Just label the salt, label the fat and label the sugar.

Now, when it comes to e-cigarettes and flavoured tobacco, the other parts of this bill, I shake my head a bit. It looks good. The anti-lobby likes to see these kinds of things. They have to come up with new topics year by year, good sound bites; it looks good on the 6 o'clock news. But I take the position that it's really not going to do an awful lot to curb the use of cigarettes among smokers and among young people.

I really feel, if this government was truly concerned with health as far as smoking, it would tackle the issue of illicit tobacco, illegal tobacco, contraband—various definitions. We know there has been talk in the last three budgets of tackling illegal tobacco; we're really not seeing much evidence of this.

I recently attended a symposium—it was hosted by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute—on tackling Ontario's contraband. It was the second of two meetings. They scheduled the meeting knowing the Ontario budget is coming up and knowing the treasurer has indicated that he wants to get some more money out of tobacco; he wants to do something about the loss of tobacco tax revenue. It became very clear from the presenters that it's

not only Ontario; Canada does have to face up to the fact that contraband is a problem. It's one of the biggest of its kind in the world. The solutions are complex.

Estimates suggest that the Canadian contraband tobacco market is larger in proportion to our population than that of any other western country, and Ontario is thought to have the highest rate of contraband of any jurisdiction in North America, possibly in the developed world. Again, I ask: Why is that? In fact, contraband product accounts for 33%, about one in three cigarettes purchased in Ontario. Some estimates push it up to 50%. There have been no new powers or resources for our police in this fight.

Again, the example we've heard of the menthol ban very simply, in the eyes of many, translates into another 5% of the tobacco market being handed over to organized crime. They will fill that gap.

Next door in Quebec, contraband use has gone down by 15%. Quebec introduced legislation—it was Bill 59—that provided resources and power to local police to address the illegal trade. It was introduced back in 2009, and since then Quebec has successfully reduced its rate of contraband by half, and it has, as well, increased its tobacco tax revenues. There's a road for the Treasurer of Ontario to fulfill his goal of getting a bit more money out of tobacco taxation. Again, if Quebec can do this, why cannot the province of Ontario?

I made mention earlier of an advertisement. It's at the Queen's Park subway station. It highlights the fact that tobacco is a cash cow for organized crime. The RCMP estimates that there are 175 criminal gangs that profit from the trade. It's a low-risk, high-reward crime, and, as we know, used to finance so many other illegal activities—the trade in guns and drugs; human smuggling.

Much of the answer, in my view, and I did introduce legislation a number of years ago to slash the tax rate and see how that works—see if that works like it did back in the 1990s, when it was done by Bob Rae and Jean Chrétien—because we know, with respect to the product of tobacco, that continually raising taxes increases the sale of illegal trade—those people who are tax-averse.

We've got a situation. We are playing into the hands of the criminals, and there are a number of consequences of doing this: the almost incremental year-by-year increase in tobacco taxes. Communities become less safe—less respect for the law. Government revenues do not increase accordingly. Small businesses like our corner stores shut up their doors. More young people have access to tobacco. It's delivered to the schools; it's available in the trunk of a car. My fifth point: Organized crime wins.

I have invited people over the years to come down to my riding. We're a bit of the Wild West of tobacco country, where tobacco rules, both legally and illegally, regrettably. I think of Caledonia and the occupation of Douglas Creek Estates, an area that is literally surrounded by illegal tobacco smoke shacks.

According to the Macdonald-Laurier Institute paper that was released earlier, since 2005, the RCMP, along

with provincial, municipal and First Nations police, have apprehended associates of at least 10 distinct criminal networks moving the illegal product into our province. At least four of the recent seizures involved members of a well-known motorcycle gang—I do not mention their name anymore because of some bad experiences a few years ago. It was very serious stuff. Why we've allowed that particular motorcycle gang into the province of Ontario—and I will admit that they arrived when we held government.

In the 10 networks that came up against the police, over 170 arrests were made, some members of the Mafia. The moving of illegal product from the US side of Akwesasne—this is tobacco from North Carolina. This isn't tobacco from down in Norfolk or Brant or Elgin or Oxford. Tobacco comes up; weapons come up; cocaine comes up. In return, we send down marijuana, ecstasy, and illegal migrants, on occasion.

We have the argument that high taxes are necessary to prevent smoking. The problem is that close to half the smokers in Ontario don't pay any taxes at all. It has no impact on them at all. These are the people, young people, out in front of the high school. They know full well. Why pay 80 bucks for a carton of cigarettes when you can buy them for \$8?

1750

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's a treat to make comments on the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. He really brings the heart and the passion that he feels about the issue of tobacco and illegal tobacco.

I go back far enough that I remember when we used to smoke on airplanes in Canada—Trans-Canada Air Lines, I think it was, before Air Canada—TCA. Then they put the smokers at the back, and then of course, you're at the back and you blow your smoke and it goes up to the front—not a healthy situation.

Now we know that in second-hand smoke, there are more than 7,000 chemicals, including 69 known carcinogens. Some 13,000 people die in Ontario each and every year because of tobacco-related diseases. People with illness caused by tobacco spend half a million days in our hospitals every year. That ends up costing \$1.6 billion a year and another \$4.4 billion in lost productivity.

This bill is aimed to protect our younger citizens from the dangers of tobacco. We know that something like 90,000 young people will be tempted and will experiment with smoking for the first time this year. Many will get hooked—they'll become addicted—and if they smoke for much of the rest of their lives, half of them will eventually die because of their addiction to tobacco.

When we talk about this—we could have handled this way back in 2008, when the member from Nickel Belt first put it forward. It was presented in the House in 2009. Eleven times since then, she has brought forward bill after bill after bill on tobacco restrictions, menu labeling, better healthy-food choices, and better choices overall.

I say this bill is a team effort—I know that—from all parties. We all have to work together. But the member from Nickel Belt has really driven this forward.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is a pleasure to speak on behalf of this bill and respond to the comments made by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, the member for Cayuga and the Grand River and so many great communities down there that I've had the chance to visit in the past.

The member spent much of his time speaking about tobacco. I'll try to focus my remarks in this area, particularly the notion of the contraband tobacco that comes into Canada in Ontario. He makes the comment that much of this tobacco is not grown in Ontario but is actually coming up from the US, and that, of course, is a tragedy.

But I characterize his remarks as being a tremendously public-spirited speech, in the sense that this is an area of Ontario that he represents which once was called the breadbasket—it's probably not the right word—of tobacco production, where so much tobacco was grown. It's my understanding that so much of that tobacco—some of it still does get to the US, where it's produced and comes back in contraband tobacco. For him to be up and speaking to the public good, I think, is a fantastic indication of his great public-spirited will.

We know that this bill is focusing on trying to remove people's desire to smoke. In that sense, that is a great strategy for removing contraband tobacco from the marketplace: by reducing the desire, reducing the marketplace for people who want to smoke, where it's young people who are starting on menthol tobacco. You'll know, Mr. Speaker, that much of the contraband cigarettes that are coming up are not flavoured cigarette tobacco; that's coming from the more traditional brands.

It reminds me of a conversation I had at an airport one day when I met a gentleman in a bar, during those days when you could smoke in airport lobbies. He was commenting that a fellow next to him lit up a cigarette, and he turned to the fellow and said, "Thank you for smoking. It's good for business." His friend turned back and said, "What, do you work for the large cigarette companies?" He said, "No, I'm an oncologist."

The reality is, smoking kills people. I appreciate the fact that we want to curb contraband and the production of illegal cigarettes in Ontario.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to make a few remarks in reply to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

I said a number of times that I grew up in Essex county. There used to be a farm just on the outskirts of a little place called Cottam, and they used to sell sweet corn; that was their business. They had a booth at the road where you could buy cobs of corn, or you could buy hot corn dipped in butter.

Interjection: Butter?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Well, they would dip it in—it was only a nickel or 10 cents—and they'd bring it up. The butter would just be dripping off this stuff, and they'd give it to you. Was it ever good. Maybe not the healthiest snack you'd ever want to have, but it was a tremendous product.

I have had a number of constituents call me who are very interested in the food labelling part of this bill. They think that's a good thing. I don't know whether food labelling stops people from eating a certain thing. If you have a craving for a hamburger or whatever, you're probably going to eat it. I think the whole thing with food is a balanced diet. There's nothing wrong with having a hamburger at a hamburger stand, but you wouldn't want to live on that all your life.

It's too bad we just couldn't have a prohibition on cigarettes, but we certainly saw what happened in the States with the Volstead Act. It just didn't work. I know all members in here know what the Volstead Act was. It was introduced in the 1920s and was repealed—I think it was in 1933. People made a lot of money off of that business, and they still got their alcohol. Unfortunately, a total ban on cigarettes in this country, although ideal, probably wouldn't work.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? I can now return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the feedback. I focused on tobacco and the illegal side. The Speaker may recall that when I was first elected I sat on that side and

Bob Rae was sitting on this side. As a Progressive Conservative, I was impressed with what Bob Rae and Jean Chrétien had accomplished, just a year or so before, in 1994, when they crashed tobacco taxes. I was working for the Addiction Research Foundation. Again, I spent a lot of time in my neighbourhood and on Six Nations, and I was able to report back to ARF that because of that crashing of taxes, overnight, 200 smoke shacks disappeared. It's a different climate now. There's a lot more vested interest, a lot more money involved. I know that the young guys are not going to want to lose their big, black, four-wheel-drive GMC pickup trucks, so there's a lot more at stake. But that approach worked at the time.

I dipped my foot in the water with respect to that in this Legislature. I introduced legislation—I titled it the Tobacco Tax Reduction Act—to reduce taxes by one third to try and stem the flow. I proposed that a stick or a cigarette be reduced to 8.3 cents from 12.35 cents, and called for a similar cut at the federal level, as did Bob Rae and Jean Chrétien, who went along with that, as did a number of other provinces—Prince Edward Island, for one, as I recall. It worked at the time.

We have a very price-sensitive product given the high levels of taxation, and I think we still have to look at some of the economic reasons for why people continue to smoke cheap cigarettes.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): With that, it's 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, 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
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Randy Hillier
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

Continued from back cover

Kraft Hockeyville 2015	
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	3167
Automotive industry	
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	3168
Plein Air Ensemble	
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	3168
Government's record	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	3168
Waterloo Region Community Legal Services	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	3168
Holi Gala fundraiser	
Ms. Harinder Malhi.....	3169

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Labour Relations Amendment Act (Strike and Lock-Out Information), 2015, Bill 83, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur les relations de travail (renseignements sur les grèves et les lockouts), projet de loi 83, Mme Gélinas	
First reading agreed to.....	3169
Mme France Gélinas	3169
Trillium Gift of Life Network Amendment Act, 2015, Bill 84, Mme Gélinas / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur le Réseau Trillium pour le don de vie, projet de loi 84, Mme Gélinas	
First reading agreed to.....	3169
Mme France Gélinas	3169

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Off-road vehicles	
Mr. Bill Walker	3170
Water fluoridation	
Mr. Bob Delaney	3170
Winter road maintenance	
Mr. Norm Miller	3170
Employment standards	
Ms. Peggy Sattler	3170
Legal aid	
Mr. Arthur Potts	3171
Hydro rates	
Ms. Sylvia Jones	3171
Privatization of public assets	
Miss Monique Taylor	3171
Student safety	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	3171

Taxation	
Mr. Steve Clark	3172
Hospital services	
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	3172
Credit unions	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	3172
Taxation	
Mr. Bill Walker	3172
Gasoline prices	
Mme France Gélinas	3172
Credit unions	
Ms. Harinder Malhi.....	3173

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015, Bill 45, Ms. Damerla / Loi de 2015 pour des choix plus sains, projet de loi 45, Mme Damerla	
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	3173
Mme France Gélinas	3175
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	3175
Mr. Bill Walker	3176
Miss Monique Taylor	3176
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	3176
Ms. Peggy Sattler	3177
Hon. Michael Gravelle	3180
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	3180
Mme France Gélinas	3180
Mrs. Laura Albanese	3180
Ms. Peggy Sattler	3181
Mr. Bob Delaney	3181
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	3182
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	3182
Ms. Harinder Malhi.....	3183
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	3184
Mme France Gélinas	3184
Mr. Han Dong	3185
Mr. Toby Barrett	3185
Mr. Bob Delaney	3185
Mr. Jack MacLaren	3185
Mme France Gélinas	3187
Mr. Arthur Potts	3188
Mr. Steve Clark	3188
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	3188
Mr. Jack MacLaren	3189
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	3189
Mr. John Fraser	3191
Mr. Robert Bailey.....	3191
Mr. Taras Natyshak	3191
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	3192
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	3192

M. Glenn Thibeault.....	3192
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur.....	3193
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	3194
Ms. Catherine Fife	3194
Hon. Bill Mauro.....	3194
Mr. Bill Walker.....	3195
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur.....	3195
Mr. Steve Clark.....	3195
Mr. Percy Hatfield	3197
Ms. Soo Wong	3197
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3197
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	3198
Mr. Steve Clark.....	3198
M. John Vanthof	3198
Mr. Yvan Baker	3199
Mr. Norm Miller	3200
Mr. Taras Natyshak	3200
Mr. Monte Kwinter.....	3200
Mr. John Vanthof.....	3201
Mr. Randy Hillier	3201
Ms. Catherine Fife	3202
Mme Marie-France Lalonde	3202
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3203
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	3203
Mr. Randy Hillier	3203
M. Percy Hatfield	3204
Mr. John Fraser.....	3205
Mr. Bill Walker.....	3205
Mr. Taras Natyshak	3206
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	3206
Mr. Percy Hatfield	3206
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3207
Mr. Percy Hatfield	3208
Mr. Arthur Potts.....	3208
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	3208
Mr. Toby Barrett.....	3209
Second reading debate deemed adjourned.....	3209

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 30 March 2015 / Lundi 30 mars 2015

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Gila Martow.....	3155
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	3155
Mr. Randy Pettapiece.....	3155
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	3155
Mr. Jim Wilson.....	3155
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	3155
Mr. Yvan Baker.....	3155
Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	3155
Mr. Wayne Gates.....	3155
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	3155
Hon. David Oraziotti.....	3155
Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	3155
Mr. Harinder S. Takhar.....	3155
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	3155
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	3155

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Taxation

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	3156
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3156
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	3156

Hydro rates

Mr. John Yakabuski.....	3156
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3157
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	3157

Executive compensation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	3157
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3158
Hon. Deborah Matthews.....	3158

Executive compensation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	3158
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3158

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

Mr. Randy Hillier.....	3159
Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	3159

By-election in Sudbury

Mme France Gélinas.....	3160
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3160
Hon. Yasir Naqvi.....	3160

Hunting and fishing

Mr. Glenn Thibeault.....	3160
Hon. Bill Mauro.....	3160

Public participation

Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	3161
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3161

Privatization of public assets

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	3161
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	3161

Seniors' health services

Mr. Yvan Baker.....	3162
Hon. Eric Hoskins.....	3162

Social Assistance Management System

Mr. Bill Walker.....	3163
Hon. Helena Jaczek.....	3163

Executive compensation

Ms. Peggy Sattler.....	3163
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	3163

Post-secondary education

Ms. Ann Hogarth.....	3164
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	3164

Government accountability

Ms. Laurie Scott.....	3164
Hon. Michael Coteau.....	3164

Automotive industry

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	3165
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	3165

Small business

Mr. Arthur Potts.....	3165
Hon. David Oraziotti.....	3166

Workplace fatalities

Mr. Mike Colle.....	3166
---------------------	------

Visitors

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry.....	3166
Mrs. Cristina Martins.....	3166

Members' anniversaries

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	3166
---------------------------	------

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Fish and wildlife management

Mr. Norm Miller.....	3166
----------------------	------

Holy Week

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	3167
-----------------------	------

Engineers

Ms. Sophie Kiwala.....	3167
------------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover