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(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 24 November 2015**

**Mardi 24 novembre 2015**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 24 November 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 24 novembre 2015

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

ENERGY STATUTE LAW  
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT  
DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 18, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / *Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Mr. Speaker, this morning I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

I want to say that I'm very pleased to rise in my place in the House today to add some comments to this debate on Bill 135, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge. Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, is going to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole by maximizing the value and reliability of energy transmission projects while maintaining our government's commitment to energy conservation.

Amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998, and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, will replace the current electricity planning process, known as the integrated power system plan process, with the long-term energy plan process. This new process would enshrine the successful 2010 and 2013 long-term energy plans to ensure that future long-term energy plans are developed consistent with the principles of cost effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, and community and aboriginal engagement.

As well, the amendments would empower the Independent Electricity System Operator to undertake competitive selection or procurement processes for electricity transmission projects when appropriate. This would help

ensure that ratepayers get the greatest value for new infrastructure investment.

In this new planning process, conservation is the first resource considered before building expensive new generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure. Our government believes that this approach will provide multiple benefits to Ontarians by helping families and businesses save money on energy bills, reducing the need to build expensive energy projects and upward pressure on energy prices.

Significantly, this conservation initiative would contribute to fulfilling Ontario's climate change strategy objectives by lowering greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution while ensuring that ratepayers get the best value from new infrastructure developments.

The second major focus of the bill involves amendments to the Green Energy Act that would introduce two energy and water conservation initiatives. The first of the initiatives is the energy and water reporting and benchmarking initiative for large buildings. This initiative would require property owners of buildings of 50,000 square feet or more to track those buildings' energy and water use and greenhouse gas emissions over time in order to determine how a building's energy performance is changing and how it compares to similar buildings. Many leading jurisdictions around the world in energy consumption have such reporting and benchmarking requirements already in place.

Recently, a similar program in the United States was found by the Environmental Protection Agency to result in a 7% improvement in energy consumption savings over a three-year period in buildings that continuously met conservation benchmarks. Think of that, Speaker—that savings on energy bills. Thus, this initiative shows promise to achieve greater energy conservation, and its expected low implementation cost will result in further savings for building owners—something they are certainly all looking towards.

The second initiative created through the amendment is the water efficiency standards for energy-consuming products and appliances that would set water efficiency standards for products that consume both energy and water. This initiative would assist energy-conscious Ontarians in making more environmentally friendly choices when shopping for appliances and would strengthen Ontario's leadership in the regulation of product energy efficiency in Canada by creating more stringent energy requirements. I have to say, when I go shopping for new appliances with my sons, the first thing that they look at

when they're with me in the stores are those signs showing that these appliances save energy.

These initiatives would go a long way in helping families and businesses save money on their energy bills, reduce the need to build expensive energy infrastructure along with greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Not only does that save our environment in the future, but decreasing air pollution certainly helps those 2.4 million Ontarians who have respiratory difficulties. Any reduction in air pollution in this province certainly decreases their need for expensive hospitalizations. Furthermore, these initiatives would bring Ontario in line with other jurisdictions, saving consumers money and showing our province's continued leadership in setting efficiency standards.

In closing, this bill is yet another example of this government's commitment to ensuring that long-term energy planning in this province prioritizes energy conservation and also the environment while ensuring the best value for Ontario ratepayers. That, Mr. Speaker, is something we all want to see.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I now recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Good morning, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much, and thanks to my colleague from Cambridge for leading off this debate. I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to be a part of this debate. It's an important discussion and, obviously, an important piece of legislation. I think everyone in the Legislature recognizes how important the long-term energy planning process is for, perhaps, a number of obvious reasons. I'll try to break some of those down in terms of the time that I have to make remarks today.

May I say, certainly as an MPP from northern Ontario and as the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, I'm very conscious of the long-term planning projects that are under way and are a priority for our government in terms of the north. That really is because we know that there is a high level of needs. It's also important that we actually do it right, that we get the process right. That, in fact, is really what Bill 135 is all about.

**0910**

I think it is extremely important that we bring forward a process that is transparent, efficient and able to respond to ever-changing policy and system needs. So it needs to be pretty fluid in that regard. So as part of this particular legislation, we're introducing two new initiatives to help Ontario's families and businesses, and the province as a whole, to conserve energy and water to manage costs.

As my colleague pointed out, and I think it's probably worthwhile repeating, Bill 135 very specifically amends the Electricity Act, 1998, and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, to replace the current electricity planning process, known as the integrated power system plan, the IPSP—we've all got these acronyms; we try to avoid them—with a long-term energy plan process, and also to empower the IESO to undertake competitive selection or procurement processes for electricity transmission projects when appropriate. That's obviously a very import-

ant part of the work we're doing today, in terms of this particular legislation.

I think it's fair to say—and I trust there would be agreement by most members in the House—that the long-term energy plan process has proven to be more adaptive to a fast-moving policy environment than the previous process under the integrated power system plan. Again, a significant part of this is that the long-term energy plan would continue to be informed by a high degree of stakeholder, public, and aboriginal and Métis community feedback.

In terms of the energy system planning process itself, again I can speak specifically about some of the projects that are under way in Thunder Bay, but I think it's important to put the larger context of this legislation in place. The legislation would enshrine the long-term energy planning process that developed both the 2010 and 2013 long-term energy plans to ensure that future long-term energy plans are developed consistent with the principles of cost effectiveness, clearly an important point; reliability, hugely important; clean energy, something we need to continue to move forward on; and, of course, community and aboriginal engagement, again something that I work on very hard, as a local member, to make sure that community and aboriginal engagement continues to be part of the process. This basically enshrines this.

From a transmission point of view, the Independent Electricity System Operator, the IESO, would be authorized to plan and undertake competitive approaches for transmitter selection and procurement of transmission projects to ensure that ratepayers do indeed get the greatest value from new infrastructure investments, which are significant investments. That's pretty important and significant and, I think, obviously needs to be put into our legislation, which is why it's there and why we hope to get support for it.

Other aspects of Bill 135: It also proposes amendments to the Green Energy Act, 2009, to enable the implementation of two energy and water conservation initiatives—again, hugely important—one of them being large building energy and water reporting and benchmarking. This would require the owners of large buildings—I think it's 50,000 square feet and above, in terms of actual size—to annually report their monthly whole building energy and water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and other building characteristics.

The other of those two amendments would be water efficiency standards for energy-consuming products and appliances, which would set water efficiency standards for energy-using products and appliances that consume water as well. Of course, examples would be, obviously, residential and commercial clothes washers and integrated washer-dryers, residential and commercial dishwashers, and commercial ice makers.

Under this proposed legislation, the IESO and the Ontario Energy Board would independently develop a plan for achieving the policy goals of the long-term energy plan. It's complex but it's actually remarkably

straightforward in terms of what the goals and the commitments are under this legislation.

I think we all acknowledge a number of facts, one of them being that long-term energy planning is absolutely essential. The right decisions need to be made in terms of our long-term energy planning all across the province.

Again, I have, perhaps, specific and particular sensitivities related to northern Ontario and some projects that indeed are priorities for our government. I'm working very closely with all those involved in those projects.

Long-term energy planning is absolutely essential to a clean, reliable and affordable energy future—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Affordable? That's a joke.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I see I have agreement from the other side of the House, and I'm very grateful to have that.

The fact is that I think Ontarians, the people of our province—and again, I can reflect on northerners' point of view: They've been very clear to me and to many of us that they want to play a more significant role in the government's long-term energy planning process. That is why we have listened and we are introducing the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but there's only so much time that we have to make our remarks: If passed, this legislation would ensure that a consistent and a transparent long-term planning process is followed. That's very important.

It would enshrine in law a requirement for extensive consultation with the public, with stakeholders and with aboriginal groups in the development of energy plans. That is already standard practice, but we're going to enshrine that in legislation.

It would amend the Green Energy Act to introduce those two new initiatives I just referenced earlier that I know have support from all sides of the House to help Ontario families and businesses—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** How about repealing it?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** A warm smile from the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I appreciate that. Thank you very much.

Those two initiatives will help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker. I don't mean to divert from you. I know I've got to pay attention to you, as Speaker, and I understand that.

We want to conserve energy and water, to manage costs. That's something that's a huge priority for everyone. We want to enshrine that.

We also want to support the increased competition and enhance ratepayer value by empowering the integrated energy system operator to undertake those competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement when appropriate.

It's probably not a bad time to point out, Mr. Speaker, that the 2013 long-term energy plan was the biggest, the most open, the most comprehensive consultation process in the Ministry of Energy's history.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** So you say.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Let me give you some examples of that, just to more completely make that point.

Part of that openness, part of that comprehensive quality, was that we posted the long-term energy plan discussion document on the Environmental Registry. There were 12 regional sessions, including a round table discussion with stakeholders and open houses for the public. There were 10 aboriginal sessions.

There was an academic focus, an innovation session, something that we probably cannot speak enough about in terms of the importance of so many initiatives in the province. That certainly is something we relate to, from the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines' perspective: the importance to move forward in innovation.

In fact, we had a northern leaders' dialogue a couple of weeks ago. Under an agreement we have with the Northern Ontario Large Urban Mayors, we bring together the large municipal and aboriginal leaders twice a year to discuss the northern Ontario growth plan, moving forward on the northern Ontario growth plan. What was one of the clear priorities of our discussion a couple of weeks ago was innovation, entrepreneurship and innovation, and how important it is. That's certainly a very important part of these discussions as well.

**0920**

So in terms of the long-term energy plan, to get myself back on track with that, there was an academic-focused innovation session that was done in development with the Mowat Centre. The Mowat Centre, of course, actually has a very important relationship with the Northern Policy Institute, something else that we're very proud of that we've been supporting through the northern Ontario growth plan. One of our benchmark initiatives when we released the growth plan in March 2011 was to put in place an independent, not-for-profit research institute, the Northern Policy Institute, which has been doing some remarkable work, and we're very, very proud of that.

As I get close to needing to wrap up, Mr. Speaker—the legislation before us is indeed important. I do think it's something that, again, I would hope we'd get support on from all sides of the House for all the right reasons. I think it's fair to say that the current integrated power system plan, or the IPSP as it is described—the current process, I think it's not impolite to say that it is slow. May I say I think it's not impolite to say that it might be a tad unresponsive to the changing environment of the energy sector, and I think it's fair to say it's costly. So the fact is that this legislation is very much focused on trying to make a difference in terms of how those decisions are made while we continue to enshrine in legislation a transparent, consultative opportunity for everyone.

There is not much time left, but certainly one of the issues I would like to have had more time to speak about is energy conservation. It's one of our government's key goals. Again, I think this is something that is shared by all members of the Legislature. There really is no argument that conservation can sure help families and businesses save money on their energy bills. It does reduce the need to build expensive energy infrastructure,

and it reduces greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution as well. That's all good.

So these are all important aspects of Bill 135. Again, I'm looking forward to the fullness of the debate this morning and am grateful to have had an opportunity to express my feelings on this piece of legislation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I thank the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm pleased to rise today to talk about another government long-term energy plan. I've been here four years, and I think we've seen five long-term energy plans here. It just seems that every week there's a new one out. We should change the name from long-term to short-term.

We see a record here, where peak power is up 77% under this government. We have the gas plants cancellation costing \$1 billion, moved to Kingston, where a plant is now idle, not being used, so why we need to double the capacity there I'm not sure. We have the smart meter plan; \$2 billion. We have the highest rates in North America. The sale of Hydro One—the Financial Accountability Officer has already told them it's a net loss. It would be cheaper to go out and borrow money—not that they need to borrow any more money. This government has double the revenue they had when they came to power, and they're still broke.

What are they doing? We have people leaving the province now because they can't afford to operate and run a business. Ontarians refuse to pay the high price of our own manufacturing because it's too expensive. We buy American manufactured goods because their hydro rates are now cheaper.

It's a real mess, and where are we going? More regulation. We have a government that specializes in regulation. I meet with businesses and small farmers; they talk about the amount of paperwork that's required. They can't do their work. One farmer in our area built his own generator, a diesel-powered generator—it's cheaper than getting on Hydro One. As people are getting off Hydro One, there are fewer people to pay for the grid. That means, again, higher rates, and this government is talking about another 42%. I don't know where it ends. I guess it ends when we can't afford to even run our plants that are here, we shut off the lights altogether and declare bankruptcy, because that's where we're going. We see it every day, and it's time that we take a different direction and look at the consumer of this province.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'm particularly somewhat in a very good mood today. Why? Because yesterday I was with family up in Timmins at an unfortunate family funeral. My uncle Conrad Carriere passed away. He's the last uncle from my mom's side. He was a doer. He stood for his community, and he acted. He was a very honourable man. He was a man who was only completed by his wife, my aunt Lucille.

Ma tante Lucille, je te dis bonjour aujourd'hui. Puis, je vais dire que mon oncle Conrad est tout le temps à la même place où, moi, quand j'ai besoin de ma mère, Rita Mantha—il est tout le temps là et va tout le temps t'écouter. Fait rien que de lui parler; il va t'écouter.

We're talking about this bill here this morning. We're in this bill; I'm looking at it. The IESO, the OEB, the OPA: It's an alphabet soup of what's going on in this bill.

My friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and also the member from Cambridge, who I work a lot with on committee, are two individuals who I find very honourable. I enjoy sitting and having many discussions with them.

However, let's call a spade a spade, and let's call this bill what it is. It's a freeway to privatization is what it is. This is what's happening with this bill: When you look at this bill, and you're going to open up all of it, and you're going to restrict all of it to any type of people who are going to come in and question this process—any type of testing, any type of engagement with the communities—you're going to open up a freeway and make it that much faster to make more gas plants, to make more problems within our energy act and increase rates that much more quickly. This is what you're doing. Come on, let's call a spade a spade. That's what you're doing. You're taking away public scrutiny is what you're doing. You're taking away oversight. And you're celebrating this? Shame on you.

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** It's a always pleasure to rise and speak in support of the government bill, Bill 135.

Let me begin my remarks by sending my condolences to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin for his loss. Anytime you have a family loss, it's a sad thing for the family.

But I want to challenge the member opposite because the 2013 long-term energy plan had the largest and most comprehensive consultation process. So I'd like to think that the member opposite of the third party always listens to his constituents. You know the government has consulted on this bill. We posted the discussion documents on the Environmental Registry—12 regional sessions, including the round table discussions with stakeholders and open houses for the public, 10 aboriginal sessions, an academic-focused innovation session that the Minister of Northern Development and Mines talked about with the Mowat Centre, and 7,883 question-responses. So I want to challenge the member opposite when he says that this is like an alphabet soup and that it wasn't discussed etc.

The proposed bill, if passed, would amend the Electricity Act, 1998, and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. At the end of the day, there's a lot of criticism about the proposed legislation. I want to remind both opposition parties that the proposed legislation was drafted in consultation with the public. At the end of the day, I constantly hear the members opposite saying that the government has not listened. Well, folks, we have

listened, we have consulted, and now we're moving forward.

This morning, I want to pay tribute to Robert Fisher. He was at the session this morning at the library. He talked about the changes from typewriter to the tweeting process in the Queen's Park gallery. The proposed legislation will move with the times and technology. I believe that technology is there to support what we do here at the Legislature. I want to remind the members opposite.

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

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to join the debate today. When we take a look at this particular bill, there's lots to be worried about. In particular, I found it interesting that one of the members opposite mentioned that this bill, Bill 135, would enshrine the long-term energy plan process to develop consistent, economically viable options. Well, I have a problem with his concept of what's economically viable in Ontario these days because, quite frankly, it seems like they're doubling down; they're adding burden upon burden on taxpayer shoulders.

0930

Just yesterday, when we met with OREA, I had Ontario realtors from the counties of Huron, Perth and Bruce joining me, and with that said, they're offering concerns that seniors are going to be burdened with energy audits. Those conservation energy audits are a concern in that if a senior wanted to sell their home, they would have to take a look at their windows and their furnaces. The burden to ensure that their furnaces and their windows meet specs and are energy-efficient, if you will, will totally take away from, perhaps, their life savings and/or the ultimate return on the sale of their house. Do seniors in Ontario really deserve this? I think not.

Another thing that I'm concerned about in this particular bill is how they revisit the Green Energy Act. If they were serious about being economically viable and ensuring that a process in terms of long-term energy planning is viable, they would be throwing out microFIT contracts and FIT contracts altogether, because they're paying out subsidies that we cannot afford.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for a final comment.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I want to thank the members from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Algoma–Manitoulin; my colleague from Scarborough–Agincourt for her very wise comments; and, of course, the member from Huron–Bruce.

Let me also express my condolences to my friend and colleague from Algoma–Manitoulin on the passing of your uncle. He sounds like a remarkable, special man. Of course, we all feel for those when we have those losses.

But now that we're back in the Legislature, and the member will follow with his comments, I actually found his comments a little startling from the point of view that I also think it's fair to say that I could look at the third

party, particularly the member as someone who recognizes what a priority consultation is and what priority transparency is—and to suggest that this is actually an open door to do something else simply isn't reflective of what's in the legislation or the intent of the legislation.

I understand opposition politics. I spent eight years myself on the other side of the House when I was first elected, so I recognize that you have an obligation, perhaps, to go on a bit.

If one looks at this legislation, again, as my colleague from Scarborough–Agincourt pretty accurately pointed out, look at the level and the kind of consultation we had.

May I say, also, that the fact that the member for Huron–Bruce in particular talked about pieces of legislation that focused on the long-term energy planning in the past—the long and the short of it is that we really are determined to make this process work better for consumers, work better for businesses, work better in terms of long-term energy needs in the province. That's something that's a huge priority for our government, as I know it is for all members of the Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate. I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for a continuation of where he left off last—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the indulgence of the chamber in allowing me to finish the speech that I could not finish a couple of weeks back, and giving me the opportunity to finish it today.

It's interesting how you get the two perspectives. You've got the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who spoke at some length today talking about Bill 135 like this was the panacea: "This is the thing that is going to turn Ontario around. It's the best energy bill since sliced bread."

But then the opposition, you see, which has done its job of holding the government to account, points out the problems associated with the bill and the fear that we have, not just because we've somehow invented it. Based on the record of this government over the past 12 years, we have a fear about what could happen if this bill becomes law without significant amendment. We have some serious concerns about how the power is concentrated. The minister says, "Oh, this actually empowers the IESO and the OEB." That's the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board, two of the key components in managing the energy system, but they've become, quite frankly, tools of the government.

The number of directives this minister has used, I believe, is 37 since he has become the minister: directives telling the IESO and the OEB what to do. So 37 times he has issued a directive to those agencies saying, "You're going to do this." How independent is an agency when it's constantly working under the threat of a government directive, a ministerial directive, if they are not doing things or if their actions somehow displease the minister who happens to hold the office at the time?

So now they're codifying this in law, that the minister is going to draw up the long-term energy plan. The

Minister of Northern Development and Mines was so proud of that long-term energy plan that they did in 2013. He talked about the extensive consultation that took place across Ontario. Well, I would like to find out from members of this House—give me the names of two constituents who were actually consulted on the long-term energy plan. You see, when this government talks about consultation, this is what it means: “We will hand-pick a group of people who we know already in advance are going to be in general agreement with what we’re doing. We will bring them into a meeting. We will sit them down”—perhaps buy them pizza; you never know—“and then we’re going to leave that meeting, compile all the information from the meetings throughout the province, and we’re going to declare that we’ve had the most extensive consultations on this long-term energy plan ever in the history of the province.”

And all of the Liberal minions are going to stand and applaud, and there’s going to be a press conference and they are going to say, “Yes, yes, this has been an extensive consultation.” But then if you go and try to find anybody in the province of Ontario who was actually consulted, you can’t find them; you cannot find them. But first of all, they declare that a consultation is something where we put something out on a website, call it a meeting, never really had a meeting, but that’s consultation too; that’s consultation too. We’ve seen it time and time again in this process here in Liberal Ontario.

So right off the bat, the basis of what they say, that they’ve had extensive consultations on long-term energy plans or anything else, is absolutely false. It is invented; it is fictitious; it is not true. In their mind, they believe they’ve had consultations, but, Speaker, we have come to doubt the Liberal mind in this province. I think the people have come to doubt the Liberal mind; they have come to question it, and they’ve come to wonder what makes the Liberal mind work. Well, with their definition of consultations, I think you can get a pretty clear picture of what I’m talking about.

The biggest concern people across this province have about energy—the pillars of energy policy are sustainability, reliability and affordability. Let’s just start with affordability. That’s the number one issue for the people in the province of Ontario who pay their hydro bills every month: Is energy affordable in this province? If that was the question that was put to everyone in this province—“Is energy affordable in this province?”—I can categorically say that the majority of people would say no, and they would base it on the record of the past 12 years, where energy prices have quadrupled since 2003 when this government took office. Now, I want you to think about that, Speaker. That is not doubled, that is not tripled; that is quadrupled since this government took office. On-peak electricity was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour in 2003. On-peak electricity today is 17.5 cents a kilowatt hour.

**0940**

Now, through all of this time, every time you turn around, the government has come out with one of these new programs that are supposed to mitigate the damage

they’ve done. There has been a veritable cornucopia of programs since they came out with the Green Energy Act in 2009, because that was the biggest driver of the change in energy prices in this province. There were increases in energy prices from 2003 to 2009, but when they came out with the Green Energy Act, the whole world changed. The acceleration and the rapidity of energy increases became far greater than it had been in the past.

So the government was forced to do something, because they were under such duress, I would say, from the public, and from the members of the opposition, who were going home and hearing from their constituents about the problems in this province with regard to the price of energy.

One of the issues we’ve heard the most about in our ridings over the last seven years has been the price of energy, but interestingly enough, you never hear it from the members on the other side. We hear it in our constituencies, and the members of the third party hear it in their constituencies. But they would have you believe, on the Liberal side, that they never hear a complaint from anybody about energy prices. You never hear them raise it in the House.

But, you see, secretly, they don’t want to talk about it, but they know it’s happening. That’s why the government has brought in these so-called mitigation measures when it comes to the price of hydro.

So, here we are now with the latest one, the Ontario Electricity Support Program—

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** That’s a good program.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The minister responsible for seniors’ affairs says, “That’s a good program.”

Well, now, here is this new program. The government has now drawn some lines in the sand where some people are going to be getting a rebate on their energy bills. This is just the latest shell game. You see, at the end of the year, a couple of things are happening. The debt retirement charge is going to end—that’s 2016. The debt retirement charge is going to end on people’s hydro bills—

**Hon. Dipika Damerla:** Aren’t you happy about that?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, yes, we’re happy about that, but it should have ended in 2011. It should have ended in 2011. I say to the Associate Minister of Health, you should not be crowing about the end of the debt retirement charge in 2016. You should be ashamed of yourselves that it took five years longer for it to happen. That’s what you should be doing. You should be apologizing to the people of Ontario.

The debt retirement charge is going to end at the end of this year, the beginning of next year. But one of those so-called mitigation “we are the Liberals and we are guilty” programs, the clean energy benefit, is going to end too—10% off the hydro bill because they were so embarrassed by what happened on hydro bills. That 10% is going to end too.

Now, with the Ontario Electricity Support Program, if you’re one of these individuals who just falls outside of the line—the way I describe it is this: They are pitting one energy-poor family against another energy-poor fam-

ily, and the Liberals are drawing the battle line. They're drawing the line in the sand that says, "If you are on this side of the line, you're eligible for the Ontario Electricity Support Program. But if you're on that side of the line, you're not eligible."

If you're one of these people who falls just outside the line, not only do you not benefit or get any rebate or derive any other benefit from the Ontario Electricity Support Program, but you are now one of the rest of the province who pays for the program. These programs are self-sustaining within the energy envelope. You either benefit, or you pay for the benefit. Your rates are going to go up even more in order to pay for the benefit that you're not eligible for.

How does that make someone feel? The line is not like the equator, where it's an imaginary line, but it is paper-thin: a dollar on this side, a dollar difference on the other side. If you're one of those people who fall just outside that line where you're eligible, you must really have felt like you were about the unluckiest person in the world the day the Minister of Energy, Bob Chiarelli, brought out this so-called great program.

They not only believe it's a great program, but they're spending millions of dollars advertising it. You can't pick up a newspaper, you can't turn on the radio—I haven't seen it on television yet, but I haven't been watching that much television. But as I was driving last week throughout my riding, I don't know how many times I heard the ad about calling the 1-800 number—1-855 or whatever it is, something or other—to see if you qualify for the Ontario Electricity Support Program. It's basically telling people, "You know what? This government is wonderful. We're going to make energy affordable for you." Well, I say to the minister: The bottom line is, energy is not affordable, and each and every day it gets less affordable in Liberal Ontario.

#### *Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I say to the Minister of Natural Resources, please stay. I'm not done yet.

What should they do? What should the Liberals do in order to bring real energy relief to the people of Ontario? Let me just preface this by going back a little bit and reminding you, Speaker, of how the Green Energy Act changed the energy landscape here in the province of Ontario. That was the critical piece of legislation.

Do you remember—well, I know you remember, Speaker, because you were here. You had already been here for quite some time, and you were here when energy was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Do you remember the famous George Smitherman? George Smitherman. Do you remember George Smitherman, Speaker? I know you do. He went for a tour and visited his friends at Samsung, and he came up with this plan. He came up with this plan that was going to bankrupt Ontario in energy but it was going to look really good from an environmental point of view. He decided to invent this Green Energy Act.

Since the Green Energy Act became law in 2009, that's when energy prices really escalated. Part of the Green Energy Act was that they were going to take forms

of energy generation that were unlikely to be able to make much penetration on their own because of the costs involved, and—speaking back on one of those pillars of energy policy, reliability—the reliability factor wasn't there either.

When you look at something like large-scale wind developments, are they sustainable? They're sustainable from the point of view that, as long as we're on this Earth, the wind is going to blow at some time. The problem is that we don't know when. So are they sustainable? Yes. Reliable? Absolutely not. No one could ever argue that something that is reliant on nature is reliable, because nature is fickle at best. But nature rules the day. We don't control nature; we have to live with nature and prepare and deal with nature as best we can. When she's having a good day, it's wonderful. When she's having a bad day, it's not very pretty. We don't have that control over nature, so we don't have that control over when the wind blows or when it doesn't blow. That inherently makes the energy form unreliable.

#### **0950**

Solar was another one. The government paid huge subsidies to these types of generation. So there was also solar. Is solar sustainable? Of course, because we will have the sun—when we no longer have the sun, we will no longer be. It's as simple as that. Everything we have depends upon the sun. The sun will be there long after the sons and daughters over there are gone; the sun will be there long after I'm gone.

So is it sustainable? Yes. Is it reliable? No, because the sun interacts with Mother Nature, and sometimes those nasty clouds block the sun from getting to us. Then we don't have sun. And because we have an earth that rotates, we only have the sun, at best, for part of the day. So is it reliable? No.

Then we go to the third pillar: Is it affordable? The Liberals have answered that in spades over and over and over and over again. I could say "over and over" a few more times because that's how many energy increases we've had since 2009. Every six months the price of electricity has gone up in this province—every six months. There has not been a six-month cycle where the price of electricity has not gone up in this province. That is, in short, the answer to the question, "Is it affordable?"

So they've made their decision. They've made their decision on how we're going to generate energy, and the decision for this majority government is that we are not going to generate energy based on the third pillar, affordability, and we are not going to generate based on reliability.

I like to say positive things about the government whenever I have the opportunity. I certainly agree with the government—I don't necessarily agree with their schedule, and I know I have people in the third party who will disagree with me, but it's vitally important that we proceed with the refurbishment of our nuclear generators. Some 60% of our electricity is coming from nuclear generation. We can't survive in this province without it. It is not replaceable in any short term. So it is vitally

important that we refurbish our nuclear generators in this province, our nuclear units.

However, the schedule that this government has, or is at least looking at, by the time they can actually make a decision—perhaps they're having more consultations. Actually, no, they're not having consultations. They just can't seem to make a decision. By the time they actually get to going ahead and approving the next plan for nuclear refurbishment, we're going to have a huge problem in this province, and that is the overlap. When a unit is down, we're not taking a few megawatts out of service; we're taking, in the case of Darlington, closer to 900 megawatts out of service; in the case of the Bruce, we're taking around 800 megawatts out of service at that time. When you take those down, because of the calendar, we're going to have times when we have more than one nuclear unit down for refurbishment at the same time. That is going to have a huge impact on the reliability of our supply, because we're going to be caught in a situation where demand could very well exceed supply.

Why has that happened? Because the government couldn't make up its mind and was playing the political game about whether or not they'd do it, whether they'd do a new build or whether they'd do refurbishment—we have to do both. Perhaps not at this moment do we have to do a new build, but we have to do both, because we're not going to be able to have a secure energy future if nuclear is not a big part of that mix here in the province of Ontario, full stop. It's not even possible.

There aren't enough places to put windmills to generate enough power to make this province go, and on a day that the wind doesn't blow, you'd have nothing anyway. So we are going to need to make those decisions with regard to nuclear power, with regard to refurbishment and with regard to new build.

Having said that, while those units are in refurbishment mode, while they are taken down for refurbishment or off for refurbishment, we're going to see a significant increase in our greenhouse gas emissions because we're going to have to fire up gas plants that are not normally running on a continuous basis. They've been there to be ramped up when the need is greater, and they pull them back down when the need is not there. We're going to have a situation where we're going to have a significant increase in our greenhouse gas emissions here in the province of Ontario.

All of those things are going to be issues that the government has to deal with over the next several years. Hopefully, there's a government in place that knows how to deal with them. We know that we have an election year in 2018, and hopefully things change so that the people who are in charge are able to handle that issue during that time.

But I want to talk a little more about the mechanics of Bill 135 here, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015. I had to make sure I had my glasses here, Speaker, because this printing is a little small for me.

George Vegh is an energy writer at McCarthy Tétrault. He wrote a very good piece on Bill 135 in

which he questions it on the same basis that we do: If enacted, are we simply cutting the legs off the IESO and the OEB and concentrating all of the decision-making—we get it. The decision-making powers always have rested and always will rest with the government. They'll rest in the minister's and the Premier's offices. We understand that. But there were always safeguards built in that they had to take into great significant consideration, and they would have to justify if they worked against the recommendations of the agencies the government created.

The OEB was created by the Conservative government many, many years ago, even before your time, Speaker. The IESO used to be the IMO, independent market operator, which was created by the Conservative government that you were a member of. It became the IESO under this government. And then remember the OPA? That was created by this government with Bill 100 back in about 2005. Then the OPA amalgamated with the IESO, because it was clear the government finally got our message that there were redundant agencies and one of them needed to be moulded into the other. So the OPA disappeared.

But, you see, the OPA, which is now part of the IESO—its work hasn't gone away; it just doesn't exist in name. But it was primarily created to act as a deflection shield for the government. You understand as well as I do that whenever the government had a situation where the news was not good, it always seemed to come from the OPA, because the government and the minister would say, "Well, that's the OPA. The OPA looks after that. We don't really have anything to do with that. The OPA deals with that."

But if there was ever an announcement that the government really felt proud about, the minister himself would trot out—or herself, depending upon the situation; Donna Cansfield was minister at one time. So depending on the situation, the ministers would make the announcements themselves, but when things went bad, then it was the OPA again. Good news: my problem. Bad news: their problem. Unbelievable how they used that agency to their own gain, just to treat it like a little bit of a game where, you know, "You're my fair-weather friend." The OPA was their fair-weather friend. When it was good news, "We love you at the OPA." When it was bad news, "Well, the OPA deals with that, and maybe they need to take a good look at that and see what they're doing."

#### 1000

But all along, they were getting ministerial directives for almost everything they did, continuously. I don't want to single out the current energy minister, because his predecessors used ministry directives continuously as well. When the member from Scarborough was the minister, he issued 20-some ministerial directives, maybe more.

But just to put the case in point, when the member for Simcoe-Grey, Mr. Wilson, was the energy minister in the previous government, do you know how many ministerial directives he issued while he was Minister of Energy?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Not very many.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Two. Two ministerial directives. We allowed the agencies to operate the way they were intended to do in the best interest of the people of Ontario. We didn't interfere unless it was absolutely necessary. Two directives for Mr. Wilson; 37 directives for the current minister. I leave that to the people to decide whether the world has changed that much—Conservative world; Liberal world.

I guess we know some people like to let things work through and trust the people they put in place and make a decision if it is necessary, and some people just like to meddle all the time because they're playing politics with the energy system.

Do you remember when Dwight Duncan brought in Bill 100? You were here. "We're going to take the politics out of the energy system." Do you remember? "There will be no politics in energy with Bill 100." That was Dwight Duncan. He was the energy minister at the time. Now, energy is more political than it has ever been. Since Adam Beck, energy has never been more political than it is today.

Why is that? Well, you see—I don't know if I can say this or not, but if I can: When you screw it up, you have to keep screwing. That's what happened to this energy system. They screwed it up so bad with Bill 100 and the Green Energy Act that now they can't get out of it. Every day they've got to do something more, because it's such a mess. The system can't heal itself because they have injected it with some kind of virus that is incurable. It's a virus of their doing, with their Green Energy Act, but it just continues to inflict more and more damage on the energy system. Each and every day they're trying to have some kind of a cure, hoping that maybe things will get better. Then they mask it and confuse it by saying, "This is the latest energy mitigation program that the government is bringing out on your behalf for the people of Ontario to help you with your hydro bills."

But it doesn't help, because every day, each and every one of those people out there—maybe it's different for the people on the Liberal side, but I've never had anybody come to my office and say, "You know what, John? That hydro is just too cheap. My bills—I can't stand it—are just getting too small. I'm so tired of how, every time I turn around, my hydro bills are going down." I have had nobody come to my office with that complaint.

Now, I don't know; have any of my colleagues had that complaint?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** No.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Nobody here. Anybody in the third party had that complaint? No, no, no, no. But, what about over there? Are people telling you their bills are too low? Are they even telling you they're manageable?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** They're thanking us for closing the coal plants.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** No, they're not thanking you for closing coal plants.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, the member for Burlington has awakened and is engaged in the conversation.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That is correct. Not correct about the coal plants, but that is correct. You do have a choice. I say to the member that you do have a choice. You could go back to your office, get on the phone and call some of your constituents. You could ask them, "What do you feel about your energy bills? Do you think they're too high? Do you think they're too low? Do you think they're just about right? Is there something we could be doing?"

I could ask the member: Did she call anybody in the last week in her constituency to ask them how their hydro bills are doing? Has she made that call to her constituents? That's what I would like to know. I would like to know, on behalf of everybody in the province of Ontario: How many over there are making those calls to their constituents? That would be a wonderful use of your time.

We hear about it. I cannot believe that they don't hear about it. I'm absolutely certain that they do.

Do you know what else I'm certain of, Speaker? And I understand how it works. I may have been a little harsh on the member from Burlington there because I realize they don't really get much to say about this.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** They're not allowed to.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They're not allowed to. The backbenchers in the Liberal party—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You can rise if you want to, I say to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

The backbenchers in the Liberal Party are basically told what to say. All of the orders come from the Premier's office. If they want to be viewed favourably in the eyes of the Premier, they will do as they're told.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** A point of order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Sit down, Bob. There's no point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Point of order: the member from Mississauga East.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Thank you, Speaker. That would be Mississauga–Streetsville.

While my colleague is welcome to make his case, he is, however, constrained by the standing orders from either imputing motive—which he has just done—or from making an assertion against members, which he has just done.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** You should stand and talk about your constituents—the fact that their hydro bills are too high. Why don't you represent your constituents and talk about their hydro bills?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** He can talk about whatever it is he wants, but he cannot do so by imputing motive on behalf of members, either on his side or on this side, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** It's not a point of order. The member will continue.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Mississauga–Streetsville must be on a crusade to get his name into Hansard as often as possible because he continues to

raise ridiculous and fictitious points of order. I am not impugning motives or making assertions in any way, shape or form.

I am stating a fact of life in Liberal Ontario. The members on that side are told what to say. They get their speaking notes. They get their marching orders. They come into this House and they do as they're told. And if they want to please the Premier, they're going to continue doing that. From time to time, there will be a little bit of a charade about standing up and asking a question and pretending that they're holding the minister to account, but that's just the way it works over there. That's just the way it works, with puffball questions. At the end of the day, nothing really changes.

Having said that, I want to try to get my three minutes in so I'm going to try—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** Order, please.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm going to try to lower the temperature, as the Speaker says all the time, on the folks over there because they get very sensitive and then they start to react, and then I have a hard time getting my message across.

As I was saying about George Vegh: The point of it was the independence of the so-called independent agencies. That is the key: the independence of the so-called independent agencies. It even exists in their name. That is the irony of it, Speaker. The Independent Electricity System Operator: They used to be the ones who would write the LTEP, the long-term energy plan. Under this bill, it is the minister who's going to write the LTEP, not the IESO.

Right off the bat, I think in a reasonable person's mind that would conjure up a picture of: "Boy, is this making the independent agency more powerful or less powerful; more influential or less influential; more relevant to energy policy in the province of Ontario or less relevant to energy policy in the province of Ontario?" I think a reasonable person would probably come to the conclusion that if the minister is now codifying into law things that required a ministerial directive in the past, you are weakening the independence of those agencies. Given the fact that we have had, every six months, year after year, massive increases in the price of energy in this province, who do you think the people would rather have being influential on energy policy? The so-called independent agencies? Or the government that has brought them a quadrupling of energy prices in their term?

Well, I'm quite confident in saying that the people would want those independent agencies to retain their independence, to retain their power—not power to be exercised willy-nilly or in a nefarious way, but to retain their power to be as influential as possible. The technocrats who understand the energy system should be the ones that the minister relies on to a great degree in devising energy policy.

But never forget that we are all here to serve the people. Number one, energy policy or any other policy, if it does not serve the people, then it is the wrong policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** That concludes the time for this morning's debate.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman):** The House will stand recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1011 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to welcome somebody we all know who's been in Alberta for some time: Marion Nader, who's here with her minister. She's here attending question period today.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** In the members' west gallery today we have Jennifer Wilson, who is the executive director of the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society, from my riding of Peterborough, and Jennifer McLauchlan, who also works for the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society. They're here today as part of their advocacy day for children's aid societies for Ontario.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** It's a pleasure to welcome Stephen Scott and Jennifer Moore from the Dufferin Child and Family Services, as well as Stephen Bald, Lucie Bais-trocchi and Bryan Schone from the Peel Children's Aid Society. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** We're joined today in the members' gallery, and I believe soon to be in one of the public galleries, by a number of very special guests. We are joined today by the mayor of Sora, Italy, Dr. Ernesto Tersigni; Monsignor Gerardo Antonazzo; Monsignor Antonio Lecce; and Monsignor Bruno Antonellis.

We also have Frank Cipollone, Vince and Rita Mariani, Rocco and Mary Grossi, Joe Tersigni and my very good friend Sam Ciccolini, who I believe will be joining us in one of the galleries soon. Welcome to our special guests.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I am delighted to welcome today to Queen's Park Denise Dilbey, Jeff Morley and Jack McCrudden of the Guelph and District Association of Realtors, as well as Daniel Moore, who for years has been our executive director at the Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I'd like to introduce page captain Benjamin Shoalts's mother, Kerry Shoalts, and his aunt Shannon Donnelly, who are here in the members' gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** As members know, today is Hamilton Day at Queen's Park.

**Interjection:** Go Tiger-Cats!

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** Yeah, I wish.

We'll be joined momentarily by His Worship Mayor Fred Eisenberger and many distinguished members of council.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'd like to welcome Susan Carmichael and Melanie Cooper from Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, the children's aid society of Simcoe-Muskoka, here to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I'd like to welcome members of the Association of Native Child and Family Service Agencies of Ontario and the members of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies to Queen's Park. I have had a number of meetings with them this morning, and I encourage everyone to attend the lunchtime reception in room 228.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to welcome representatives from our local Huron-Bruce CAS branches: Shaun Joulis, Marie Parsons, Janet Culliton, Phyllis Lovell and Dave Wyles.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It is Hamilton Day today and we have a former mayor of Hamilton with us as well in the gallery: Larry Di Ianni and his wife—oh, no, his wife is not with him, but he's here with a number of other Hamiltonians as well. Welcome.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I would like to introduce and welcome Heather Morrison, the board chair of the Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington.

As well, in the members' gallery are Sylvie DesHaies, chair of the political action committee of the Kingston and Area Real Estate Association; and Susan Nish, executive officer, Kingston and Area Real Estate Association. Welcome.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'd like to welcome to the House today Christianne Newton, Lisa Cyr-Ault and Paul Martin from the Rideau-St. Lawrence Real Estate Board, as well as Adam Rayner from the Kingston real estate board.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I think we all want to welcome the grade 5 class from Royal St. George's College who are here in the public gallery today, along with their fine, dedicated teacher, Mr. Kearsy. Welcome.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to welcome Phyllis Lovell and David Wyles from Bruce Grey Child and Family Services. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** A little bit earlier, when I introduced the guests who are here, I did forget one name, and that is Danny Montesano, who will also be joining us today.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to welcome Sue Christiansen, a friend and a great volunteer from Perth-Wellington.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** It is my privilege to welcome Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU, here today for a press conference, along with Monte Vieselmeyer, Gord Longhi, Tom O'Neill, Lyndsay Chapman, Alex Sawicki, Greg Arnold, Tim Humphries, Gareth Jones and Jim Richards. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** I'd like to introduce a number of members of our Ukrainian Canadian community who are here with us today. As you know, it's Holodomor Awareness Week this week. They were here today in front of the Legislature to launch the Holodomor awareness tour and the Holodomor mobile classroom, which the province has funded.

With us today are a number of guests. I won't be able to introduce you all by name, but I do want to highlight a

few of the people who are here and thank you all for coming.

I'd like to start in the east members' gallery. We have with us Bishop Stephen Chmilar, of the Ukrainian Canadian Catholic church. We have Bishop Andriy, of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada.

Up in the gallery, we have Bob Onyschuk, who is chairing the Holodomor awareness tour. We have Denny Dzerowicz, one of the inspirations behind the tour. We have Taras Bahriy, who is president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Toronto branch. We have Victor Hetmanczuk, who is the president of the Canada Ukraine Foundation.

We have with us a survivor of the Holodomor of 1932-33: Stepan Horlatsch is with us today as well.

Thank you all for joining us at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I will entertain further introductions.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome Mark Kartusch from the Highland Shores Children's Aid Society, and chair of the board, Mike McLeod, who wears many hats in Prince Edward county.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I am very pleased to welcome many folks from Hamilton today, including two guests who I have brought into the side gallery here. We have Judi Partridge, from ward 15, and Jason Farr, from ward 2. Up there, I see our former mayor Larry Di Ianni, and I'm sure there are many others from Hamilton.

Welcome to Hamilton Day at Queen's Park.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Although I don't see them in the chamber right now, I do also want to welcome OPSEU president Smokey Thomas; the chair of the MERC committee, correctional officer Monte Vieselmeyer; and Tom O'Neill to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Yesterday, I was pleased to meet with representatives from the Chatham-Kent real estate board. I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Janice Wieringa, Barb Phillips and Michael Gibbons. It was a pleasure to meet with you yesterday. Thank you. Welcome.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to move unanimous consent for a moment's silence and for us to send condolences to the Alberta Legislature for the tragic death of a colleague member, an MLA of the Alberta Legislature, who died yesterday while trying to help a fellow Albertan in a car accident. I'd like a moment of silence for the passing of MLA Manmeet Bhullar.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** With your indulgence, I did see a couple more introductions to do before we interrupt with that, and I want to give that its full respect. So with your indulgence, I'm going to finish with the introductions, as I saw there were a few more to be made.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome Colette Prévost, the CEO of York Region Children's Aid Society, to Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I, too, would like to welcome two hard-working folks from CAS Highland Shores: Mark

Kartusch, executive director, and chair Mike McLeod. Welcome.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd also like to welcome, from the Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society, Jennifer Wilson and Jennifer McLaughlan.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I want to welcome our new constituency assistant, Kimberley Aherne, who is joining us today; and a very good friend, Amiel Blajchman, who is a neighbour but also a great community activist. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### DEATH OF MEMBER FOR CALGARY-GREENWAY

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent today to rise and observe a moment of silence to mark the tragic and untimely death of Manmeet Singh Bhullar, a member of the Alberta Legislature. He was a leader, a friend, a role model and somebody who embodied true values of public service. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Bhullar family in this difficult time.

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**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'll consider this a unanimous consent similar to the member from Eglinton-Lawrence and collectively do that as one. The unanimous consent is that we rise and observe a moment of silence to mark the tragic death yesterday of Manmeet Bhullar, a member of the Alberta Legislature. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask—first of all, thank you all for joining us, but I would ask all members of this place to stand and observe a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Pray be seated.

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### CHILD PROTECTION

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is to the Premier. Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, Quebec and New Brunswick all provide child protection services for youth over the age of 16. As you know, in Ontario, children's aid societies are forced to turn away youth over 16 unless they are already receiving assistance. We are turning young people away when they are asking for help.

Premier, when will you extend and fund child protection services to youth over the age of 16?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is going to want to comment on the specifics, but I appreciate the member opposite raising this important concern.

I know that the minister has been working on extending supports. I know that there is more that we can do. I will say to the member opposite that we are looking at

how to best support children in care, young people in care, across the province, including how to support them in their education path and how to help them in post-secondary. We will, in the supplementary, speak to the specifics.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Well, Premier, it isn't even mentioned in the minister's mandate letter, so I'm not sure how we can talk about how important it is if you don't task her with the responsibility in her mandate letter.

Not only do other provinces believe it's right to provide care to youth over the age of 16, but the Youth Leaving Care Working Group's 2012 report, Blueprint for Fundamental Change to Ontario's Child Welfare System, called for the age of protection to be extended to 18. The UN defines a child as 18 years old and below. By ending support at 16, Ontario is actually in contravention of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies also supports extending child protection services to the age of 18. The Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth also supports raising the age of protection to the age of 18.

Minister, when will you extend and fund child protection services to the age of 18?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Children and Youth Services.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank my critic from the opposition party for this very important question on this particular day when we have so many people in from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies and our aboriginal partners in children's aid. We talked about exactly what she's asking about this morning: the age of protection for children in Ontario.

As I'm sure the critic knows from attending briefings, the Child and Family Services Act review has recently been completed. This is a very significant theme, in terms of whether we should adjust the age of protection in Ontario. I take that advice and the input from the CFSA very seriously, and I'll just say that it's under active consideration.

I'm guided by what is best for children and youth in this province. I'm guided by what our sector tells us, and we, I think, all agree that the welfare and protection of our children is important in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Final supplementary. The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Back to the minister: Raising the age of protection was also a major request from contributors to the Child and Family Services Act review, which was completed earlier this year.

Minister, a solution is staring at us right from the order paper. With all-party support, we owe it to our vulnerable youth, who today face the real risk of homelessness, poor school performance or being forced out of school and becoming a victim of crime just to survive. Can Ontarians count on this government taking the necessary steps to ensure that Bill 54, the Right to Care Act, passes by this summer? Minister, it is the right thing to do.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I appreciate the question from the opposition. I take all good ideas that come forward that help protect and support our children who are at risk and who need protection. All ideas are welcome here.

We're taking a number of measures in our government to enhance child protection and welfare in Ontario. We are supporting our children's aid societies through continued investments. I know they're doing a great job locally as well, but I'm absolutely open to any other means that will enhance their care.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Pass the private member's bill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order.

New question.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Premier. Our province has pledged to receive 10,000 Syrian refugees by the end of this year. When they arrive, they deserve the same high quality of health care that every Ontarian expects. But as you know, there are over—

*Interjections.*

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

Please finish.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** There are over 800,000 Ontarians without a family doctor, and at the same time, this government has cut over 50 residency spots. We will need each and every one of our doctors to help.

Mr. Speaker, will the government reverse their decision to cut residency positions?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very surprised that the member opposite is asking this question in this particular way, given that his leader—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It goes both ways. Any comment from here on in is not acceptable.

Please finish.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —that his leader was part of a government that cut the health care services for refugees. Our government subsequently picked up those costs; we paid those costs for refugees. And now the newly elected Liberal government is going to reverse that decision of the Conservatives and reinstate those supports for refugees.

I am thrilled that in our meetings yesterday in Ottawa, it was clear that the supports that used to be in place that were cut by the Conservative government are going to be reinstated for refugees.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Premier: Based on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Syrians could be expected to present with communicable diseases, pregnancy, chronic diseases and mental health problems. Relationships with medical associations will be critical in meeting the health requirements for the provision of primary care. This province's doctors and nurses will be at the forefront, helping these new Ontarians settle, while at

the same time this government will slash the doctors' and nurses' fees.

Mr. Speaker, will this government stop their attack on doctors and will they help them treat the new Syrians in our province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just begin by saying that I am so proud of this province and I am proud of this country for opening our doors and being clear that we will take our responsibilities seriously to help out in this humanitarian crisis.

If the member opposite is saying that our doctors are not going to work with the refugees because they're not being paid enough, I really think that that is a shameful, shameful position to take and that is not what I know of Ontario doctors.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the Premier: This government capped physician services to a 1.25% increase in the budget when the natural growth is 2.5%. That's mainly due to the 140,000 new patients every year and the baby boom population that's aging. This budget did not provide for such a sudden increase in residents.

**1050**

The Syrian refugees deserve the same health care as Ontarians. Will the government penalize the doctors wanting to help the Syrian refugees if the budget cap they set is exceeded?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, again, I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care wants to answer this question so badly, but I really need to take the member on. The reality is, we're opening our doors to 10,000 refugees. We are doing our part as Ontarians; it's our moral responsibility. I'm proud of our country and I'm proud of the new Liberal government that is restoring the refugee health services that were cut by the previous Conservative government. If—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Ahem.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have enormous faith that the health professionals in this province will step up and will be caring for the refugees who come here, as they have in the past. That is my understanding of who Ontario doctors are.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. One of the greatest challenges facing us today is climate change. In 2008, this Legislature voted in favour of a cap-and-trade system. We've waited eight years and, so far, there has been no real action.

I hope today's announcement will be different; however, any plan will be made weaker and less effective by the Premier's decision to sell off Hydro One. The Liberals are giving up one of our most powerful tools to drive conservation and to fight climate change.

Will Ontario's climate master plan explain why the Premier is putting corporate dividends ahead of clean air and action on climate change?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** That's a pretty convoluted argument. I welcome the leader of the third party to the party. I welcome her on board as we continue in our actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The reality is that the single most important initiative has been taken in this country, the initiative that the former Prime Minister inadvertently, without naming us, actually leaned on as he touted around the world the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of the country. That initiative was in Ontario—began by my predecessor—to shut down the coal-fired plants. We have continued; those coal-fired plants are gone. That is the single most important initiative in North America in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

I welcome the leader of the third party to this discussion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** A privatized Hydro One has only one job: making money for its shareholders. The more energy people consume, the bigger the dividend cheques for their investors.

With Hydro One in private hands, the government loses another tool to help in the fight against climate change. That is a fact. Publicly owned utilities in British Columbia, Manitoba and Quebec invest more in conservation, and consumers pay less in those provinces. Why is this Premier taking a step backward on conservation and climate change by selling off Hydro One?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I would ask the leader of the third party—perhaps she might want to look at what has happened in Alberta, where there is private distribution. She might want to look at what has happened in Alberta, where a significant decision was made by the NDP Premier of Alberta—who is part of the discussion at the Premiers' table and who will be going to Paris with me, with Premier Couillard, with other Premiers and with the Prime Minister to take a stand internationally. That is the stand of a progressive country moving on initiatives to reduce climate change, to fight climate change. That's what we're doing. That's the work that we're doing.

Yesterday, the legislation passed to ban coal-fired plants in the province permanently. I look forward to the announcement today that we are going to be making in terms of our climate change strategy. All of that is significant, and I hope that the leader of the third party will be supportive.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** It took the NDP Premier of Alberta, Rachel Notley, a whole six months to actually act on climate change in her province. The Liberals talked about it for eight years and we still don't have anything here in this province. Quebec, Manitoba and BC's public hydro agencies have among the lowest hydro rates in Canada—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Start the clock.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Just forget the—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Energy. Finish, please.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** They're the top three provinces for investing in conservation, with nearly twice the investment of Ontario. Selling Hydro One is going to mean even less investment in conservation.

It's time to do the right thing for the economy and for the environment and stop the sale of Hydro One. Will this Premier admit that selling Hydro One is the wrong decision for the environment in this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, the question demonstrates that, really, the context is not well understood by the leader of the third party. We started shutting down the coal-fired plants. In fact, we continued an initiative that had been begun years ago, and we have shut down those coal-fired plants. We've jump-started a renewable energy industry in this province. We've been doing that work all along.

It's fantastic that Rachel Notley has made the decision that she has made, but Alberta has a huge, huge hill to climb, so they need to get going, absolutely. We are on that road. We have taken initiative. We have made significant sacrifices in this province in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will continue to do that, and we will put in place a cap-and-trade system that will foster innovation and will actually make our businesses more competitive. That's the track we're on, and we welcome the leader of the third party to join us.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. On page 5 of his report, Ontario's independent Financial Accountability Officer wrote that the net proceeds of the full 60% sale would be between \$1.4 billion to \$3.1 billion. Yet this government keeps claiming that selling Hydro One will put \$4 billion into transit.

But \$3.1 billion is less than \$4 billion, and \$1.4 billion is a lot less than \$4 billion. The Premier's numbers simply don't add up, and it is Ontario families that get stuck holding the bag. Will the Premier admit that her Hydro One math simply does not add up?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're on track to realize the \$9 billion that we are going to be investing, part of which is going to pay down debt and part of which we're going to invest in transportation and infrastructure. Now, the leader of the third party is saying there's not enough money to invest in transit and transportation. She needs to make up her mind: either she believes in those investments or she doesn't.

Our plan laid out clearly that in order to make those investments, we needed to leverage our existing assets to invest in new assets. That's what we are doing by broadening the ownership of Hydro One. Municipalities and communities across this province need investments in roads, in bridges and transit. They need investment in waste water systems. They need those investments in

order to be economically viable. Either she is onside with that or she's not, and clearly at this moment she's not.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Speaker, \$1.4 billion is a mere 1% of this Premier's promises for infrastructure and transit investment. It is really barely scratching the surface. Everyone knows, however, that the sell-off of Hydro One is a lousy deal, and that this government is in total denial in that regard. The Minister of Finance said that the government has already put \$3 billion in the bank, but the truth is that the government is counting on billions of dollars that they simply cannot spend, that are not cash. Those are just numbers on a spreadsheet.

There's an old saying that you're entitled to your own opinion, but you're not entitled to your own facts. Will the Premier admit that her plan is based on billions of dollars that she cannot actually spend?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I play that expression back to the leader of the third party. The fact is that we have realized \$3 billion. We are on track to realize that \$4 billion, to be able to invest in transit and transportation and infrastructure.

1100

But the fact is that the opening gambit of the leader of the third party around climate change and around the importance of these investments now, the importance of taking the initiative right now in order to not just be able to go to Paris and stand with countries around the world, but, in fact, to actually make a difference—we have an opportunity as a country, as provinces and territories working with the federal government, to make a difference on this enormous challenge that is facing us. We're taking that responsibility, and part of that is investing in the transit that we know is needed in order to get people out of cars and get them onto public transportation.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Liberals insisted that selling off Hydro One would be a painless way to pay for transit, but here's the truth: The cold truth is that it's not really paying for transit, and everyone who pays an electricity bill is going to feel that pain. Families know it, businesses know it, the independent watchdogs of this province know it, municipal leaders know it and Liberal backbenchers know it. Everyone knows it. I expect the Premier knows it too. Why is she so stubbornly ignoring the facts despite the harm to Ontario's families and businesses?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the facts. The fact is that we're investing more in infrastructure than any government in Ontario's history. The fact is that, as we broadened the ownership of Hydro One, we were able—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** “The fact is”? The facts are.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The fact is, there's an amendment before this House—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Just say “are.”

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** —yes—with the Trillium Trust that allows for non-cash items to be credited to the Trillium Trust. That will net \$3 billion into the Trillium Trust, to be reinvested in infrastructure. An additional \$1 billion will be used to pay down debt. That would never have happened had we not increased the valuation of Hydro One and broadened its ownership. We still own 84% of a much more valuable company than we did before.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Todd Smith:** My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, as you sold off Hydro One, you repeatedly told us that ratepayers would be protected by the Ontario Energy Board and that this would be a transparent process. But with Bill 135, which you've introduced to the Legislature, you're silencing the experts by putting all of the power in this minister's office. And with Bill 144, you've buried elements of the Hydro One sale in an omnibus bill that has 23 schedules that include electricity, liquor sales and horse racing. Is there a single tactic that this Premier won't resort to to hide the seedier elements of the Hydro One sale from the public?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, we have made it very clear, with the bill before this House, that we're increasing the understanding of how the Trillium Trust will enable us to reinvest and dedicate those funds to the trust to reinvest in infrastructure. That's what is happening here. Also, we're getting rid of the debt retirement charge nine months early, for the benefit of certainty and to allow those businesses to benefit from lower costs. That's what we're putting in this bill. It's all about helping the people of Ontario and the families of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Back to the Premier: The government has done everything possible to keep the behind-the-scenes details of the Hydro One sale out of the public eye. When they announced it, for goodness' sake, they had a big sign behind them that said, “Beer in grocery stores,” at the same time that they were announcing the sell-off of Hydro One. There's a big, black curtain that exists over there, and it's time they came out from behind it.

When a woman in the Quinte region wanted the background correspondence from the Ministry of Energy about the sale, the government sent her a freedom-of-information request with a bill for \$7,100 attached to that. She could have gotten a better rate from a loan shark.

Is the Hydro One sale now so bad for ratepayers that even an FOI request to the government comes with a global adjustment attached to it?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** We had a prospectus. We had a draft prospectus. We had months of consultations with the public, and it was very detailed, explaining very clearly the Hydro One opportunity. Members of the opposition had the opportunity to review it, as did many others. In

fact, the market spoke: They gave a high value for Hydro One. We received the high end; we're on track to receive \$9 billion over the course of four years when we look at the way we provide for the broadening of that ownership. It's happening, and it's providing greater opportunity for us to reinvest into our communities.

We're also talking about merging the OLG with horse racing, something I think the opposition would like us to see. We're facilitating that in this bill as well, all of which is very detailed and enables us to provide for greater support to communities everywhere.

## REFUGEES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario's New Democrats are proud to stand with Ontarians and welcome Syrian refugees into the province. We believe Ontario should be an example for the world to follow. This begins with making sure that they start their lives here in Ontario with dignity. The province needs a concrete resettlement strategy, because a promise is simply not enough to build a life on.

My question is to the Premier. Where is your health plan? Where is your housing plan? Where is your jobs plan and your education plan?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, recently there has been lots of media coverage on the refugee issue—and lots of speculation, by the way. I want to thank Ontarians who are concerned and care about the coming of the Syrian refugees.

Today, the federal government will have a big announcement in terms of their logistics and also their updated plan. We are waiting for that announcement.

Having said that, Speaker, I want to let you know that Ontario has contributed \$10.5 million in helping the Syrian refugees, with \$2 million going directly to the United Nations and \$8.5 million to strengthen servicing and resettlement of the incoming refugees. So Ontario is committed with the 10,000 refugees we have committed to come to Ontario, and we will bring them over.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Back to the Premier. With winter quickly approaching and temperatures dropping, refugees need a warm place to live, money for food and winter clothes, and access to health care services. This government needs to come forward with a plan that ensures that they receive the adequate services they so desperately need.

Last week, I sent a letter to the Premier asking her to outline this plan. Will the Premier commit to creating a robust resettlement strategy for refugees and sharing it with myself and Ontarians?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Speaker, I refer to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the interest and support and advocacy from the third party on this important issue. I have to say, having been involved in refugee

issues all my professional life, I couldn't be prouder than I am today in terms of the outpouring of support from Ontarians to support the incoming refugees, to welcome them and to provide them with that safe and secure environment.

And they're right; the third party is correct that we have an important role to play as government in terms of preparations. We are well under way in developing our strategy on housing, on education, on health care, virtually every issue that's important to the incoming refugees and important to Ontarians.

I've been so impressed by the literally hundreds of Ontarians from every walk of life who have come forward to me and expressed their support, wanting to help, asking for ways that they can get personally involved. I'm confident not only in our strategy that we're developing together with the federal government, but I'm confident in Ontarians that this is going to be a huge success.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Many of my community members in Sudbury and across our province are troubled by reports of human trafficking taking place in our neighbourhoods. This is a practice that overwhelmingly targets women and girls and preys upon some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Last week, Ontario held its first Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment, where presenters spoke about ending sexual violence and harassment and supporting survivors in the best and most appropriate ways possible. It is important that Ontarians know how serious we are about fighting all types of sexual violence and harassment in our province. It is also important that Ontarians see the strong actions that are being taken to fight human trafficking in our province.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what steps we are taking to stop this deplorable practice in our province?

1110

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to thank the member for asking a very important question.

The member from Sudbury is absolutely right. Human trafficking is a disgraceful practice and there's no room for it anywhere in our communities.

It is essential that we collaborate between all levels of government, municipalities and police services to eliminate this practice, and this collaboration is already taking place. In October, a major investigation led by the OPP was responsible for rescuing 20 people, some as young as 14, who were thought to have been forced into the sex trade. This operation, known as Operation Northern Spotlight, brought together 350 officers and support staff from 40 police services, including the RCMP and the FBI.

Our government has also funded 11 projects totalling \$1.4 million through the proceeds of crime grant along-

side an additional \$200,000 of funding for police services from the ministry to fight human trafficking in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Glenn Thibeault:** I'd like to thank the minister for his answer.

It is certainly encouraging that the OPP led such an expansive and successful operation. I'm glad to hear that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services is taking the issue so seriously.

But we also know that to tackle human trafficking, we need to see co-operation across ministries. Policing is an important element of our response to human trafficking, but we also need to see supports in social services and legal sectors as well.

Can the minister please inform the House of the work going on across government to address human trafficking?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Minister responsible for women's issues.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is absolutely right. Human trafficking is a heinous crime. It's an issue I take very seriously as the Ontario minister responsible for women's issues.

There are a number of ministries working together collaboratively to combat human trafficking. In addition to the police measures that the minister mentioned, the Ontario Women's Directorate provides \$225,000 in funding to the White Ribbon Campaign to develop resources for young men in ending human trafficking and sexual violence. We're also providing over \$9 million to help victims of sexual violence across health care and legal and social services in more than 70 languages.

Last year, wearing my other hat as the Minister of Children and Youth Services, we funded a pilot project in York region to support youth involved in trafficking. Our Attorney General's ministry has crown attorneys with knowledge of human trafficking to advise on trafficking prosecutions and policies.

We take this kind of crime very seriously as a government. I'm looking forward to continuing this important work with all members of the Legislature.

#### HOUSING SERVICES CORP.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Social housing providers recently renewed their insurance. For many of them, once again, the cost from Housing Services Corp. was far higher than if they were allowed to purchase the exact same insurance from another source.

The social housing providers are being forced to pay the Housing Service Corp. to be allowed to purchase the cheaper insurance because the minister refuses to let them opt out. Last year, there were 100 providers who paid the kickback to the HSC because he wouldn't let them opt out.

Could the minister tell us why he is forcing social housing providers to waste money that could otherwise be providing housing for people in need?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** I think the member opposite would be the ideal person to make any principled argument since it was his government that established the HSC and put in place the provision of pooling for insurance purposes.

The honourable member has risen in this House now 28 times to talk about the integrity of the Housing Services Corp. He fails to mention that we did an independent review. The review came back quite positively in as much as the HSC agreed to a number of provisions, including a revisitation—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** It's clear that the member opposite is going to go back in history and not acknowledge the good work that we've done to fix the problem that they set up in the first place.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Back to the minister: Perhaps he'll give me a different answer than the one he just gave that's 12 years told.

The minister may want to play off getting out of the provincial insurance trap fee as a pittance, but in Waterloo region we've now seen close to \$30,000 stripped from local housing. That's \$30,000 just for the privilege of choosing a better insurance deal than the province's Housing Services Corp. wants to force on them. That's \$30,000 that should be supporting housing for vulnerable families diverted straight to the pockets of the HSC. If the minister can't tell us why he allows this punitive practice to continue, can he tell us when we can expect the \$30,000 back to the Waterloo region?

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** The answer is a simple one, and it's one that the party opposite ingrained in their original legislation, and that's that the good of the many supersedes the good of the one. There are advantages to pooling—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Finish, please.

**Hon. Ted McMeekin:** There are advantages to pooling, Mr. Speaker. I've had several meetings with service managers where we've raised the question of the Housing Services Corp. and asked them about our approach vis-à-vis the study and whether it's serving well. We have not heard the kinds of complaints that the member opposite is raising.

#### CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** My question is to the Premier. Today, we are once again joined by a group of this province's hard-working front-line correctional officers. The truth is, they have joined us many times over this past year, and that's because there's an ongoing crisis in corrections under this government's watch. Crumbling

infrastructure built through P3 arrangements, understaffing and overcrowding levels are dangerous for everyone living and working in our corrections system.

Ignoring a problem doesn't make it go away; ignoring a problem gives it the chance to grow and get worse. Other than tout its review, what tangibly is this government doing to fix the dire situation in our correctional facilities?

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Let me start by thanking our corrections and probation and parole officers for the incredible work they do in our correctional institutions in our communities every single day. They are truly a front line to ensuring that our communities are safe at all times. In all my conversations that I've had with them—and the work that I've heard from members opposite as well—I think we all recognize that we need to collectively work to ensure that we're transforming our correctional services system, a system that moves away from just warehousing individuals and, most importantly, focuses on rehabilitating and reintegrating them better in the community.

One of the mandates that has been given to me by the Premier is to ensure that we do not address the issues around capacity in our jails by building more jails but in fact we deal with capacity by reducing the demand for jails. That is why the transformation of our system, in partnership with our correctional officers, is extremely important.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** As we've said, there is a crisis in corrections, and pretending that there isn't is not an acceptable strategy. Talking about rehabilitation and talking about the vision for the jails without ensuring that those things can happen—well, again, that's just talk.

This government is being asked what it's doing about the lack of mental health training for staff. It's being asked about malfunctioning locks and a worsening situation at the Toronto South Detention Centre and a hunger strike by inmates. It is being asked about multiple inmate deaths across the province. It is being asked why it is content to lock down facilities with inexperienced managers rather than reach a deal with its professional staff. Why is this government content to fiddle while our correctional system burns?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** There is a lot of work that has already started in partnership with our correctional staff in our system to ensure that we do that transformation. We are moving forward with better mental health supports and enhanced rehabilitation and reintegration programs so that we can help break the cycle of reoffending and build safer, stronger communities right across the province. That's why we have already hired 500 new correctional officers since 2013, and we're working hard to hire more. In fact, there are almost 100 new officers who are going through training at the correctional college as we speak.

**1120**

As part of our transformation, Speaker, we have also launched a comprehensive review of Ontario's use of segregation within our correctional facilities.

We have also begun construction of a 112-bed new regional intermittent centre at EMDC to ensure that we address the capacity issue, reduce contraband and improve safety of our correctional staff. I look forward to working with correctional staff on this.

## ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. I understand that the Ontario public service was again recognized as one of Canada's top 100 employers for 2016 in a special section of the *Globe and Mail*. This is the second consecutive year that our public service has received this honour. I'd like to congratulate the dedicated men and women of the Ontario public service and thank them for the hard work that they do every day, providing us with the best advice in helping us deliver on our plans to build Ontario up.

Speaker, through you, can the minister please tell us more about the significance of this recognition for the Ontario public service?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for this question and for recognizing the hard work and dedication of our extraordinary public service. I second her congratulations, and I'm sure everyone in this House joins me in congratulations to the OPS for this honour.

Our public service is second to none. They are dedicated, they are talented, and they are committed to delivering the best possible government for the people of Ontario. As the member notes, the Ontario public service was again recognized as one of Canada's top employers for 2016, making this the sixth time that the OPS has received this recognition.

Our public service has also been recognized as one of the greater Toronto area's top employers for the past seven years in a row, one of Canada's greenest employers for six years in a row, and one of Canada's best diversity employers for eight years in a row. Speaker, this recognition is important as it helps us attract and retain the very best.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Speaker, as someone who has had the great pleasure of working with our public service, I wholeheartedly agree that this recognition is well earned. We rely on their advice, their professionalism and expertise to help us make Ontario the best place to live, work and do business. They're absolutely instrumental in the development and delivery of programs and services to the people of this province. It's wonderful to hear that our public service continues to be recognized as a top employer in a number of categories, and that the Ontario public service is seen as a leading employer.

I hope that the minister can tell us more about why the Ontario public service continues to be selected as a top

employer and what our government is doing to maintain our status as a leading employer.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, as Secretary of Cabinet Steve Orsini said recently, this recognition is a testament to the hard work of our public service each and every day, and it's a testament to the hard work that's been done to make the OPS a great place to work.

Ontario is a leader when it comes to inclusive, accessible, respectful, healthy and productive workplaces. For example, we have strong employee networks like the OPS Pride Network, which provides support to employees on LGBTQ issues, and Tomorrow's Ontario Public Service, or TOPS, which is fostering future leaders.

The OPS will continue to lead by example and set a high standard for other employers to emulate, but we need to work hard to stay in the top tier of employers. That's why we've released a new HR plan for the next five years focused on fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture, developing engaged and innovative leaders, and implementing effective and fair HR practices.

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Mr. Speaker, my question this morning is to the Premier. On November 4, I wrote to the Premier to ask that she take a leadership role by advocating for the proposed expansion at Billy Bishop airport here in Toronto. As you know, it is estimated that the proposal will create 2,000 new, well-paying jobs. Many of these jobs will be at the iconic Canadian company Bombardier, including jobs here in Toronto at Bombardier Downsview, which recently had to lay off 500 workers.

The Premier's support for this project would send an important signal to the federal government and would be the kind of leadership that Ontario desperately needs.

Speaker, will the Premier take the opportunity here this morning to stand up for Ontario's workers and clear the air by declaring her support for this important proposal?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Transportation.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member from across the way for the question. It's the exact same question that he asked here in the Legislature only a few days ago, Speaker. The answer today remains the same as it was then, which is that, as it relates to this particular issue, it's a matter between the federal government, the city of Toronto and the Toronto Port Authority. I understand that those are the authorities that are taking care of this matter.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** There are 2,000 jobs at stake, and all this Premier wants to do is continue to pass the buck.

Speaker, back to the Premier: In 2013, Porter Airlines signed a \$2-billion deal with Bombardier to buy up to 30 CS100 planes. Those planes would allow the airline to fly passengers to destinations as far as Vancouver, Los Angeles and the Caribbean while also increasing services to locations throughout both southern and northern

Ontario. This proposal will create 2,000 well-paying jobs while generating more than \$250 million in annual economic impact for the city of Toronto, but this Premier won't even add her voice to support it.

The Premier knows that there's a \$2-billion deal, thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions in annual economic activity all at risk. Speaker, will this Premier stand up for the workers at Bombardier and declare her support for this important proposal today?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Again I thank the member for the supplementary question. This is essentially a repeat of what we said the last time we had this back and forth on this issue.

What's interesting to me, in particular, is that the member opposite is talking about the potential for job creation. Speaker, I'm not sure if that member or the leader of his party or his caucus understands that, with the infrastructure investments that our Premier and our government are making across Ontario, we will create or sustain 110,000 jobs each and every single year.

What's fascinating, I know, for the people of Toronto, for the people of the GTHA and for the people of Ontario is that, with our plan to create over 100,000 jobs annually with infrastructure investments, that member and that party on the Conservative benches continuously vote against and oppose our plan to move the province forward. So there's something that's a little bit off here, Speaker. He asks questions about job creation and he rejects our efforts to build the province up and move Ontario forward.

#### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, the Liberal government reintroduced a 2014 Conservative bill that the Premier herself voted against just last year. Essentially, this government is giving well-connected Liberal insiders an early Christmas present by releasing corporate construction giant and major Liberal donor EllisDon from its 60-year-old obligation to hire unionized workers. Speaker, why is this government putting well-connected insiders and friends ahead of hard-working Ontario families?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thanks to the member opposite for the question again. What the member will understand is that there was a private member's bill before the House that would do what the courts were asking the Legislature to do, and that was to act on this issue.

If you'll recall, the first bill that was before this House would have given everything that one side wanted and nothing to the building trades union. What I asked these groups to do, as a result of this coming back again from the courts, was to sit in the same room, spend a weekend together and see if they can reach a settlement to resolve this long-standing issue.

They were able to reach a settlement within that room. One of the parties was able to ratify that agreement; the other wasn't. What we're doing today, what we're asking the House to do, is to pass the legislation that gives us a

vehicle to implement a regulation based primarily on what the arbitrator is asking us to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Speaker, hard-working Ontarians know full well that this has got nothing to do with a fair settlement, as the minister claims. Despite numerous court decisions upholding EllisDon's obligations, despite tools available to solve labour disputes, we know full well that this is about thanking the Liberal Party's highest donor, building on great relationships between cabinet members and their insider friends. This is about a Liberal government interfering in workers' democratic right to negotiate a fair deal—

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

I'm listening very carefully, and you're tiptoeing so tight. I'm going to have to warn the member not to get into an accusation that I know you know is unparliamentary. Carry on and finish. I'm listening carefully to that.

1130

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** This is about the Liberal government interfering in the workers' democratic right to negotiate a fair deal with a private corporation.

Will the Premier do the right thing and remove this section of the bill and put Ontarians ahead of corporate donors?

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thanks again to the member for the question. What we have, specifically, is each and every one of those—

*Interruption.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Sir, I'm going to ask you to leave, please. We cannot have people participate in House business—observation only. Thank you.

Please finish.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** The fact is that the building trades unions retain every one of their rights in the province of Ontario. What we did is we brought in, I think, one of the best mediators, one of the best arbitrators in this country, and sat down with these parties. They reached an agreement on that weekend; one party was able to ratify, the other party was not.

The arbitrator, Kevin Burkett, has come back to me; he said that what we should be doing is we should be framing the regulation to resolve this dispute based primarily on the agreement that was reached on that weekend. I'm suggesting that's the best way forward. It's a way forward that I think protects the interests of both parties in this regard.

## VETERANS

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Every November, we come together as a nation to recognize the sacrifices made by our veterans. Last year, while attending a community tree-planting event in Oshawa, as part of the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry's partnership with Trees Ontario under the 50 Million Tree Program, I was approached by Forests Ontario with a wonderful idea, one that would create a unique and lasting tribute to Canada's

fallen soldiers, a tribute that would allow all Ontarians the opportunity to commemorate these veterans every day of the year in perpetuity via a living legacy.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House about this initiative and our partnership with Forests Ontario?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the member from Burlington for the question and also for her tremendous leadership on this very important issue.

In 2007, as everyone in this chamber will know, the Ontario government dedicated the segment of Highway 401 between Glen Miller Road in Trenton and Keele Street in Toronto as the Highway of Heroes. This dedication was a fitting way of commemorating the bravery and sacrifice of Canadian soldiers whose lives have been tragically cut short in defence of our country.

I was extremely proud to join the member from Burlington to announce that our government has formalized a partnership with Forests Ontario to move forward with the Highway of Heroes tree-planting partnership. This partnership will see 117,000 trees planted along the Highway of Heroes—one tree for every soldier who has died serving Canada since Confederation. The formal tree planting will begin in the spring of 2016, and this wonderful initiative will stand forever as a living memorial to those who have proudly served our country.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I want to thank the minister for his response.

I was incredibly proud to stand with him to announce our government's partnership with Forests Ontario for the Highway of Heroes tree-planting initiative. I join him in thanking them and, in particular, Mark Cullen for his passion and commitment not only to this program but to our veterans.

I'm also pleased to note that this is not the first investment that our government has made for our veterans. This past summer, our government announced a new initiative that seeks to help military personnel in making a transition to civilian work and life.

Can the minister please tell the members of this House more about this important new initiative?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** Again, I thank the member from Burlington for the supplementary question.

She is right. This past June, I had the honour of standing with the representatives from the Department of National Defence, the organization known as Helmets to Hardhats and the Ontario Trucking Association to make an important announcement. As of this past July 1, our government is making it easier for Canadian military personnel and veterans by allowing them to exchange their Department of National Defence 404 driver's permits for an applicable Ontario licence. Extensive review of DND's licensing standards have shown us that military training and testing requirements meet Ontario's licence standards. Taking this important step will help those leaving the military transition to civilian work and assist them in finding jobs in the trucking sector. While Ontario will waive knowledge and road tests, we will still require

applicants to complete a vision test, meet medical standards and satisfy identification requirements.

I am very proud to be a member of a government that stands up for, defends and helps those who serve our country.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Education. As the minister knows, for a number of years people in Wasaga Beach have wondered when they will get a high school. We think we have enough local students to justify the building of a high school.

I ask the minister to tell this House: Who is it that makes that decision, and has the Simcoe County District School Board ever asked the minister to build a high school in Wasaga Beach?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to talk about our capital priorities program. We just recently announced funding for 56 capital projects totalling almost half a billion dollars.

I can confirm that the Simcoe County District School Board did not submit a request for a new high school in Wasaga Beach to our capital priorities program. In fact, I can confirm that none of the four boards that serve Wasaga Beach—that would be Simcoe county, Simcoe Muskoka, Viamonde and Centre-Sud—submitted a request for a school in Wasaga Beach. Although we did get 220 requests for \$2.7 billion, I don't fund projects if I don't get a request.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Again to the Minister of Education: I keep getting told that one reason the school board is reluctant to ask for a high school in Wasaga Beach is that it might jeopardize the viability of Stayner Collegiate and/or Collingwood Collegiate.

Can the minister tell us if that is true? Will Stayner and Collingwood be affected? And what does the minister say to those of us who truly believe we have a good case for a high school in Wasaga Beach?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Obviously, given that the case wasn't submitted, I can't comment on its impact on other schools, but what I can share with the member is that one of the 56 projects that was successful was Simcoe county's request for a school in Elmvale. As the member opposite knows, Elmvale is 15 kilometres down the road from Wasaga Beach and, in fact, does serve the students from Wasaga Beach.

We did approve the request for construction of an addition to Elmvale District High School. We approved a 180-pupil-place addition, with funding of \$5.5 million. The students who reside in Wasaga Beach will be well served by that updated high school in Elmvale.

#### HOMELESSNESS

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** My question is to the Premier. This week, we learned that poverty and homelessness continue to grow in northern Ontario. This Liberal government's rhetoric and record on homelessness and poverty simply do not match up.

In Sudbury, the homeless population has more than doubled since 2009. Shockingly, almost 1% of Sudbury's population is homeless. Rates of homelessness and poverty in North Bay and Timmins are higher than the rest of Canada. This government is failing vulnerable people, families and children in northern Ontario.

Will this Premier admit that her government's inaction is forcing marginalized people in northern Ontario to pay the price?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you so much for the question. As I hope the member realizes, I recently co-chaired an expert panel on homelessness with my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to actually make our commitment to end homelessness in Ontario a reality.

We have now developed the strategy; we know what we have to do. We absolutely did hear loud and clear in those panel meetings about the diversity of homelessness and the diversity of poverty across the province. We know that solutions that might work in large urban centres will not work in rural centres; that the north is way different from the south. Working with our partners across all levels of government and beyond—the not-for-profit sector and the business community—we will end chronic homelessness within 10 years.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Back to the Premier: The numbers speak for themselves. While indigenous people only represent about 8.2% of the population in Sudbury, they represent about 43% of the homeless population. More than half of people at risk of homelessness have mental or physical health problems. Some 182 homeless people in Sudbury are children under the age of 18.

The Premier must acknowledge that this is unacceptable. This government's neglect of vulnerable people in northern Ontario is atrocious. Speaker, will the Premier admit that she is failing families and children in northern Ontario and tell us what her government is doing about it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I know the tone of the question is confrontational, but in fact the substance of the question is completely aligned with our work on this. We have identified four population groups that we are focusing on first when it comes to homelessness. We are talking about youth, aboriginal people, people who are chronically homeless—that means they've been homeless for six months or longer—and, very importantly, people who are transitioning from government organizations or institutions like the children's aid society. We don't think anyone should leave one part of provincial care into homelessness.

There's a lot of work ahead of us. I'm counting on the third party to support us as we do this hard work.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. MaRS is recognized as one of the world's largest innov-

ation hubs, with a 1.5-million-square-foot complex located in the heart of Canada's research cluster in downtown Toronto. MaRS equips innovators and organizations with entrepreneurship skills to compete in the 21st century.

Recently, we saw stellar tenants moving into the MaRS west tower. Over 1,000 start-up companies have been incubated or advised at the MaRS west tower just down the street here.

In September, there were two exciting announcements at MaRS. On September 3, we celebrated a whole roster of innovative companies and organizations that would be collaborating in MaRS. On September 8, we welcomed JLABS, with their very first incubator outside the United States.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please update the House on the latest exciting MaRS announcement from last week?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for her question and for her observations. Time is winding down here. I think this is a really important question, so I think the member should probably ask it at another time, when I can give a more fulsome answer.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I know the member opposite is getting hungry; that's why he's getting ornery. So I'm going to be really tight in my answer.

The announcement last week that Autodesk will be opening one of its biggest R&D centres at MaRS here in Ontario is not just good news, it's a milestone that I believe marks a huge victory for the MaRS west tower project. I'm pleased to be able to inform the member today that the MaRS tower 2 project is now 84% leased, well on the way to being fully leased.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask the member to re-ask this question at a later date, and we'll give the member opposite a more fulsome answer.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo on a point of order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to correct my record. Yesterday, during the debate on Bill 144, Budget Measures Act, 2015, I said that all Liberal members voted against the EllisDon bill, Bill 74, in 2013. In fact, there were two Liberal members who voted in favour of the EllisDon bill.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I wanted to welcome to the House Arijana Haramincic, executive director of Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County, and David Studham, a member of the board, who have joined us for question period here at Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to thank the minister for opening a door that I had closed for quite some time during question period.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1144 to 1500.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'd like to welcome to the members' gallery Jason Woycheshyn, from the Ukrainian Canadian Professional and Business Association, and Roma Dzerowicz, with the Holodomor National Awareness Tour. Thank you for coming to Queen's Park.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### HOLODOMOR

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Today, I would like to begin with a quote from Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations: "A genocide begins with the killing of one person not because of what he has done, but because of who he is."

As we begin National Holodomor Awareness Week, I rise to remember the victims of the terrible famine in Ukraine, in which millions of people were starved to death in 1932 and 1933.

"Holodomor" means murder by starvation. This intentional and targeted genocide of the Ukrainian people, which took the lives of an estimated 2.5 million to 7.5 million people, many of whom were children, was perpetrated by the Communist dictator Joseph Stalin to punish Ukrainians for resisting Soviet rule. Soviet authorities confiscated all food grown by the Ukrainian farmers. Although the harvest was rich, the Ukrainian people were forbidden to touch it. Anyone, including children, caught taking even a stalk could be executed.

Special brigades searched homes and forcibly took all food from Ukrainian people, ensuring a mass famine would ensue. While millions were dying of starvation, the Soviets took the wheat the Ukrainians had produced and sold it abroad.

This genocidal famine was denied, ignored and covered up throughout the 20th century. Today, the Russian government continues to deny that the Holodomor was a genocide.

In the days ahead many events will be held across Canada to commemorate the Holodomor. I will be honoured to attend one such commemoration this Saturday in Mississauga, organized by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, together with PC Leader Patrick Brown.

By commemorating the victims of the Holodomor, we remind Ontarians that we share a responsibility to ensure that similar atrocities never happen again. This week, I join all Ontarians, particularly Ontarians and Canadians of Ukrainian origin, in solemnly marking the anniversary of this crime against humanity.

##### STEEL INDUSTRY

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Today is Hamilton Day at Queen's Park. I grew up in the east end of Hamilton, home to the steel works. For many it was a hard life. But people worked hard and many were able to forge a good future for their families.

Those who worked in the steel mills knew it wasn't paradise. They recognized the dangers of working there. It wasn't necessarily the future that they wanted for their kids, so they made plans. They put money away for their kids' education. Instead of asking for big raises, they negotiated decent pensions and health benefits for when they retired. Although the work was hard and dangerous, they were comforted that they had made the best of it to secure a decent life ahead for them and their families.

Later in life, I moved up onto the mountain, an area of the city that I share with the highest proportion of steel retirees in the city. They are my neighbours and my friends. Their dream has turned into a nightmare. US Steel has reneged on agreements that it made years ago. Through decades of service, the workers fulfilled their part of the deal, but US Steel feels no obligation to fulfill its end of it. Health benefits have stopped with no notice, and people are worried about their pensions.

The government committed \$3 million to a transitional fund for health benefits, but nobody knows where it is and how to access it. I urge the government, Speaker, to confirm the process immediately and allow people this badly needed funding.

#### COMMUNITY AWARDS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** I rise today to recognize three remarkable women from L'Amoreaux Collegiate Institute in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt who have contributed significantly to a stronger, more positive and compassionate Ontario.

First, I would like to recognize educator Michelle Forde, who has been a teacher at L'Amoreaux Collegiate for the past eight years. Ms. Forde views the classroom as a communal space where she and her students learn together. At L'Amoreaux Collegiate, Ms. Forde and her students have received two grants, one for funding a students wellness centre and another to bring yoga to their school to further manage stress and promote physical activity.

Ms. Forde oversees the Equity Club, a student-led committee that focuses on educating the student population about social justice. For her outstanding contribution at L'Amoreaux school, Ms. Forde received an honourable mention in the Toronto Star Teacher of the Year Award this year.

I would also like to recognize two students from L'Amoreaux Collegiate: 14-year-old twins Maryam and Nivaal Rehman. Earlier this year, Maryam and Nivaal received the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award for their outstanding work in promoting education and opportunity in Pakistan. They have visited Pakistan on several occasions, meeting with students from some of the poorest neighbourhoods to speak with them about the power of education and learn about their struggles.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Maryam and Nivaal, as well as Ms. Forde, for their contributions to the L'Amoreaux community.

#### HANNAH FLINN

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise to recognize Cadet Corporal Hannah Flinn of the 113 The Brockville Rifles Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps. Hannah is from Jasper in my riding and next week will receive the Cadet Medal of Bravery in a ceremony at the Brockville Armouries. It's the Canadian cadet organization's highest honour. It is awarded to a cadet who performs an outstanding deed of valour in risking their life to save someone else.

Hannah was recommended for this prestigious honour for her incredible bravery and selfless actions following a crash while travelling in a van with six family members. She suffered severe injuries when the van collided with a tractor-trailer in April, but this remarkable 14-year-old's response in the aftermath reflected the courage and the character exemplified by the cadet program. With the van toppled on its side, Hannah freed herself and moved about inside, reassuring her injured siblings. As motorists arrived, Hannah passed her siblings into their care, but her elder sister Sarah remained trapped upside down. After unbuckling her, Hannah stayed with Sarah until paramedics arrived.

Emergency crews could not initially reach them, so Hannah held an oxygen mask on her sister for 30 minutes until they were extracted.

I regret that I am unable to attend next week's ceremony due to my duties in the House, but I ask everyone to join me in recognizing this outstanding young person. In our own moment of crisis, we should all aspire to summon the same courage that Hannah showed to put the well-being of others ahead of her own. What an outstanding role model, and we're so proud in Leeds–Grenville to call Cadet Corporal Hannah Flinn one of our own.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** The discussion of climate change is becoming increasingly a part of debate and discourse in this chamber. Today, I attended a press conference held by the Premier and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to speak about the most recent announcement of a climate change plan. Effectively, today, we had the reannouncement of a pending announcement. The "high-level climate plan" that was introduced today had no costs, no targets by sector or details of implementation. That was disturbing enough.

But more disturbing was the apparent burial of the 2020 climate targets. The whole focus, in the 40 pages of documentation that was produced, mentioned the 2020 targets once. The discussion was about the 2030 targets and the 2050 targets. I went through this with the run-up to Kyoto in 2012: the fact that governments wanted to move targets far enough away that they never really would be something that mattered in their term of office.

Speaker, you understand, and the members in this chamber understand, the seriousness of the crisis that we face on this planet, in this society. To fail to meet the 2020 targets is a very significant matter. This government

will be judged by its ability, or its failure, to meet targets that it has set.

1510

#### DAN PRENDERGAST

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I would like to remember today an incredible teacher, father and basketball coach—probably the best basketball coach in Canada for decades—Mr. Dan Prendergast. Dan was born in London, Ontario, the youngest of eight children. He came to St. Mike's, where he taught, coached and counselled young men for over 50 years.

He just died recently after a long battle with cancer, but Dan will be remembered for his incredible love of teaching and of coaching. He basically made basketball what it is in Toronto today. I know today we hear about the Raptors and their great fan following.

Dan built basketball up with his basketball clinics, with his coaching, with his powerhouse team the Blue Raiders at St. Mike's. He coached the likes of Leo Rautins, who went on to Syracuse University and received a scholarship there, and then was the first-round draft choice of the 76ers. So Leo, who is now an analyst with the Raptors, knows what a great man and coach Dan Prendergast was.

We say goodbye to Dan and also his late wife Sharon Marie Flanagan. He is survived by his daughters Erin and Kelly, and sons Daniel and Ryan who attended St. Mike's.

Goodbye, Dan. You were one of the best.

#### DIABETES

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** As many of us know, November is Diabetes Awareness Month. During the month, we reflect on this prevalent chronic condition and how it affects many Ontarians throughout the province.

Over 1.5 million Ontarians, or 10.2% of our population, suffer from diabetes. By 2025, that number is expected to rise to 2.3 million Ontarians or 13.4% of the province's population. With proper knowledge and treatment, many of those afflicted with diabetes can lead healthy lives. Until a cure is discovered, preventing the onset of negative health effects due to diabetes is key.

All diabetics should follow and know the ABCs of care. A is for A1C: Knowing your A1C allows you to know the average blood sugar level over the last few months. B is for blood pressure: Blood pressure control is just as important as blood sugar control. High blood pressure increases the risks of heart failure, stroke and kidney disease of diabetics. C is for cholesterol: It's important to keep cholesterol levels in check because high cholesterol levels can also lead to a higher instance of heart attack and stroke.

Diabetics in this province must know that they are eligible for coverage of routine eye examinations so that they can be monitored for any retinopathy that may

occur. Diabetics are also prone to kidney disease, as well as neuropathy.

Diabetes Awareness Month reminds us to make the necessary lifestyle modifications, such as healthy food choices, being active, stopping smoking and losing weight to help prevent the onset of diabetes.

I'd like to thank all those involved with the Canadian Diabetes Association and all of the volunteers who work hard to advocate and help those with diabetes throughout our province.

#### HIGHWAY OF HEROES TRIBUTE

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** On November 6, I, together with the Minister of Transportation, the MPP and the MP for York Centre, attended the launch of the Highway of Heroes living tribute at the Forensic Services and Coroner's Complex in Downsview, the beginning of the Highway of Heroes. On the same day, the MPP for Northumberland-Quinte West attended a similar ceremony with the base commander and staff at CFB Trenton at the highway's end.

The tribute will plant one tree along the Highway of Heroes for every fallen Canadian soldier, 117,000 in all. How fitting that we honour and remember our fallen heroes with a living legacy along this highway, symbolically bringing them back to the land they died to defend.

This project was first brought to my attention in the fall of 2014 by Mark Cullen. I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Mark at a community tree-planting event in Oshawa, organized by Trees Ontario, as part of our government's 50 Million Tree Program. Mark's obvious passion for the Highway of Heroes living tribute had me engaged from the beginning, and we worked together alongside a number of partners over the past year.

Mark established the living tribute website and partnership, and worked with stakeholders including the MTO. I'd like to thank him and his executive director, Scott Bryk, for their dedication to this project.

I'd also like to thank everyone who so diligently worked to get this project where it is today, especially our partners at Trees Ontario and Trees for Life. I know that all Ontarians will be proud of this wonderful initiative.

Indeed, I know too that generations of Canadians may one day bask in the shade of these beautiful trees, a legacy to our veterans. As they travel along the Highway of Heroes, I hope they will feel a deeper connection to every single one of our fallen heroes.

#### DIABETES

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Diabetes is a serious condition that affects more than 10 million Canadians, including 1.5 million Ontarians, and costs approximately \$14 billion and rising to Canadians annually. In 10 years, the number of Ontarians living with diabetes is expected to increase to 2.3 million.

The Canadian Diabetes Association is helping those affected to live healthier lives, preventing the onset and consequences of diabetes, and discovering a cure. The association has called for increased public awareness regarding OHIP-insured yearly eye exams for adults living with diabetes and increased access to offloading devices to help treat diabetic foot ulcers and reduce the risk of amputation in people living with the disease. As a nurse who has cared for many diabetic patients, I understand the value of these programs.

Our government supports those living with diabetes through many initiatives. Ontario is the first province to introduce a publicly funded pediatric insulin pump program, in 2006. It expanded to adults in 2008, when we introduced the Ontario Diabetes Strategy that supports diabetes prevention, care and management across the province.

Recently, I visited the pediatric diabetes clinic at the Cambridge Memorial Hospital in my riding. Nancy Easton, a certified diabetes educator, informed me that they have a team of medical and social service professionals to help maintain the health and wellness of these children and their families to prevent possible complications of diabetes.

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

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated November 24, 2015, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

*Report deemed adopted.*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I beg leave to present a report on the Smart Metering Initiative, section 3.11 of the 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled Smart Metering Initiative, section 3.11 of the 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Lisa MacLeod, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Harinder Malhi, Julia Munro, Arthur Potts and Lou Rinaldi.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Energy, Hydro One, the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board for their attendance at the hearings.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the auditor, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in the Legislative Research Service.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Hardeman moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Carried.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (FIREFIGHTER BENEFITS), 2015

### LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (PRESTATIONS DES POMPIERS)

Mr. Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to firefighter benefits / Projet de loi 147, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les

accidents du travail en ce qui concerne les prestations des pompiers.

1520

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Today I introduced the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Firefighter Benefits), 2015, to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to firefighters entitled to benefits under the insurance plan because of an occupational disease that may have occurred as a result of concurrent employment by one or more schedule 1 employers and one or more schedule 2 employers.

The act would further prohibit the board from determining that an employer is a firefighter's employer for the purposes of the insurance plan solely based on the fact that the firefighter's last exposure to the substance that may have caused the occupational disease occurred while working for that employer.

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE  
SENIORS IN THE COMMUNITY  
ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DES PERSONNES ÂGÉES VULNÉRABLES  
DANS LA COLLECTIVITÉ

Ms. Wong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 148, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur la prise de décisions au nom d'autrui et la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** The Protection of Vulnerable Seniors in the Community Act, 2015, amends the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

The Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 is amended to require regulated health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected. The Public Guardian and Trustee is required to investigate the report to determine whether an application for temporary guardianship is required.

This requirement applies even if the information that is required to be disclosed is confidential or privileged, unless the information is subject to solicitor-client privilege. No proceeding may be commenced against a regulated health professional for making a report in good faith. The intimidation, dismissal or penalization of regulated health professionals who make a report is prohibit-

ed. Coercion or intimidation of a regulated health professional who makes a report is also prohibited. In addition, authorizing, permitting or concurring in a contravention of the requirement to make a report is prohibited.

The Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 is amended to make it an act of professional misconduct for a regulated health professional to fail to report reasonable suspicion that a senior is being abused or neglected as required by the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

It's signed by, actually, hundreds of people from my riding. I'll hand it to page Rachael.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition from London, St. Thomas, St. Williams, St. Marys, Dorchester, Parkhill and Windsor.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

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

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I fully agree, will affix my name and give it to Prasanna to take up to the table.

#### ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

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

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to Michelle to bring to the table.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

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

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

“Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults battling this catastrophic disease;

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

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I totally support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the desk with Hannah.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Hydro One Not for Sale.” It reads:

“Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

“Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

“Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don’t have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

“Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

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

“That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario’s Hydro One.”

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

#### HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** On behalf of my colleague the member from Ottawa Centre, I would like to bring to the House this petition to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to protect gender identity and gender expression.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas protection of human rights is a fundamental Canadian value;

“Whereas discrimination based on gender identity and gender expression is a violation of human rights; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has passed and enacted Bill 33, Toby’s Act (Right to be Free from Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity or Gender Expression), 2012;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encourage the government of Canada to pass and enact Bill C-279, An Act to Amend the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code (gender identity)—without any amendments.”

It gives me great pleasure to put my signature to this petition and give it to page Benjamin.

1530

#### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for improved post-stroke physiotherapy and eligibility:

“Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of 20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

“Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible to maybe return to work and become provincial income taxpayers again and productive citizens;

“Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

“Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians to wait until age 65 to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

“Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs and/or sell their houses to raise funds;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment practices.”

It was brought to me by Reverend Paul Grassie and Jim McEwen from my riding.

#### POET LAUREATE

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

“Whereas poets laureate have been officially recognized at all levels of Canadian government and in at least 15 countries around the world; and

“Whereas the establishment of our own poet laureate for the province of Ontario would promote literacy and celebrate Ontario culture and heritage, along with raising public awareness of poetry and of the spoken word; and

“Whereas the member from Windsor–Tecumseh has introduced private member’s Bill 71 to establish the Office of Poet Laureate for the province of Ontario as a non-partisan attempt to promote literacy, to focus attention on our amazing poets and to give new focus to the arts community in Ontario;

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

“To support the establishment of the Office of Poet Laureate as an officer of the Ontario Legislature and that private member’s Bill 71, An Act to establish the Poet Laureate of Ontario, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

I fully support this petition and the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, and will sign this and send it to the Clerks’ desk.

#### WATER FLUORIDATION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled “Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water.” 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” value;

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

“That the ministries ... 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’ll join the signatories here, mostly from Brampton, to affix my own signature and send it down via page Hannah.

#### HYPERBARIC THERAPY

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

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven to prevent unnecessary limb amputations, improving the quality of life of thousands of Ontarians;

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven effective to treat 14 medical conditions, including: chronic non-healing diabetic wounds, decompression sickness, air embolisms, carbon monoxide poisoning, gas gangrene, flesh-eating disease, compromised skin grafts, bone infections, radiation injuries and burns;

“Whereas diabetic non-healing wounds are the number one cause of limb amputation in Ontario;

“Whereas hyperbaric medicine has prevented hundreds of amputations, which in the short term cost \$65,000 per patient, and long-term cost \$350,000 per patient and have added up to hundreds of millions of dollars over the years;

“Whereas amputation of a limb greatly diminishes the quality and length of life of patients, something we cannot put a price on;

“Whereas there are only limited facilities in Ontario that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy necessary to treat diabetic wounds that prevent unnecessary amputations;

“Whereas the government of Quebec funds hyperbaric medicine for the treatment of chronic non-healing wounds in that province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

“(1) To recognize the existing and scientifically sound studies in the US, Europe, Japan, the UK, Australia and Asia which clearly show that hyperbaric oxygen therapy is effective especially in treating of diabetic wounds and ulcers;

“(2) To provide stable funding for the technical and professional costs of providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy, for doctors, medical staff and technicians, for existing and future facilities;

“(3) To increase the number of hyperbaric oxygen therapy centres across Ontario to prevent unnecessary suffering, economic loss and loss of quality and length of life.”

I agree with this petition. I'll affix my signature and send it to the desk with Jack.

#### ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I have a petition signed by people from London, Toronto, Aurora, Welland, Kitchener and Whitby.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

“Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

“Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015 shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost of transportation; and

“Whereas people receiving ODSP already struggle to get by, and incomes on ODSP provide them with little or no ability to cover these costs from regular benefits; and

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry's goal of increasing employment and the provincial government's poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government's plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

I fully agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and give it to page Lauren to bring up to the front.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

#### LOI DE 2015 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 23, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / *Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** It is my turn to speak to Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act. I'm going to share my time with two of my lakefront colleagues: one from Northumberland-Quinte West, the beautiful member from Brighton, and also the member from St. Catharines, the beautiful member from Dalhousie.

**1540**

I will talk about this bill in practical terms. This is part of a budgetary process—a very complex one, given the billions of dollars involved in budgets in Ontario, Canada's largest province.

The reality of this budget is that it enables the implementation of a lot of essential bridges, roads, subways, hospitals and sewers. My riding is right in the middle of probably the largest construction project taking place in Canada right now. We are building a subway line from the west end of Toronto, near Black Creek and Eglinton, all the way through the middle of Toronto, all the way out to Scarborough. Most of it is underground. Right now, the tunnels have been dug from Black Creek to Bathurst Street and now they're doing the tunnels from Yonge Street west. These tunnels are being built by massive tunnel-boring machines. To pay for this kind of construction, you need this type of budgetary support.

By the way, these tunnel-boring machines were developed by a local Toronto person called Richard Lovat. He was a genius in building equipment for mining and for sewers. He developed these two massive tunnel-boring machines years ago, and now they're used all over the world.

These tunnel-boring machines operate in shafts about the size of this room here. The tunnel-boring machines go right underneath the street as the street is operating, buildings are operating, and people are taking buses and cars to work. If you ever drive—sometimes I tell people to avoid the area of Allen Road and Eglinton, if you don't want to see traffic gridlock in action. Anyway, they're still working as they're building the subway and the road is still open.

This is the type of investment that is being made through Bill 144.

The thing that we forget is that this type of investment is not only for the tens of thousands of jobs that are going on right now in building these massive tunnels for the subway, but these jobs will go on for the next 10 years. They're very good-paying jobs, very skilled; incredible technology. In fact, earlier this spring these two tunnel-boring machines were lifted out of the ground by these giant cranes and were then rolled across Allen Road by a company that came, I think, out of Guelph.

The expertise we have in construction in Ontario is second to none. We've got men and women who can build anything and build it well. That is one kind of investment we're making with this budget bill, in these men and women and in the jobs that keep the economy active and keep the economy engaging people.

When we talk about the economy, we talk essentially about the macroeconomics of it, but the microeconomics is that when people are building roads, building hospitals, building subways, they're putting food on the table and they're giving opportunity to small companies, to big companies, to young men and women who are just starting as apprentices in the construction trade, and to the veteran skilled labour that's there.

Also, in these construction projects it's amazing to see that half of the employees now actually work on computers in these temporary workplaces. They're the ones doing all the design work, all the scheduling. All these young men and women, who probably have never touched a shovel or done anything with lumber or steel, are basically the backbone of the construction projects now.

They just finished building a hospital just outside my ward, the Humber River Hospital. It's the world's first totally digital hospital. If you are in that hospital and you want to order your meal, they give you a touch screen and they give you a picture of what you want to eat. You punch in that picture, and before you know it, in half an hour, you've got your hot chicken soup or your roast beef. This is Humber River Hospital. If you get a chance, Mr. Speaker, visit that site. It is an incredible hospital. Most of the rooms are private, with the best technology, and it's going to employ over 8,000 people. That is at Wilson and Keele. It's the old Ministry of Transportation site.

When we talk about the paper before us, Bill 144, we have to relate it to the real-life investments that are being made across this province, which means that there are jobs, improved services, improved health care in the case of the new hospital, and better public transportation, as we see in the case of the Eglinton subway, which is being built.

These projects are not built on a simple order of the government. They sometimes take months and years to come to reality. The Eglinton subway was actually started back in the 1980s. In fact, they had dug most of the hole for the Eglinton subway; the tunnels were built back in the early 1990s. But we had a difference of

opinion with the new government that was elected. They decided not to proceed with the subway; I think it was in 1996 that they stopped the construction. Now we're back at building it again in the year 2015.

These construction projects don't turn around quickly. It takes a lot of years of environmental assessment, in terms of signing contracts and in getting approvals from local councils and the Ministry of the Environment. You just can't turn the construction tap on and off. It takes a lot of long-term planning and processes that cost a lot of money.

I would say that one of the things that is very good about the Eglinton Crosstown is that we've also signed, for the first time, a community benefits agreement with the consortium that is building the subway, in that they have to agree to employ, train and provide apprenticeship opportunities for young people in the community who are starting in the trades. Whether it is basically doing digital work behind a computer screen or working as a plumber, welder, carpenter or common labourer on the construction site, they are now to be given some opportunities to be part of that capital investment that is taking place.

In other words, it's great to have the infrastructure project take place, but we have to think: Are there jobs for local men and women who want to work? In this community benefits agreement, which is the first of its kind in Canada, the companies that are working on this almost \$10-billion contract by the time it's completed, believe it or not—it's hard to believe that much money. That contract says that you have to give opportunities to train young men and women to get into the workforce, too. So there's a community benefits agreement along with the construction that takes place.

As we know, when we do construction projects, whether it's hospitals or whether it's roads or bridges or sewers, there is a community benefit that goes on for decades, so that people can get to work, so that people can get to health care and good public transportation. Without that kind of infrastructure, the economy will stagnate.

That's one of the reasons why Ontario, despite the challenges, is a very active, vibrant economy. It is not as vibrant as we'd like all over the province, but it is very active, compared to other jurisdictions. If you look at our capital infrastructure budget in here—over \$130 billion over 10 years—that is as much as most nation states will ever invest in infrastructure.

This is what this bill is really about. It's about jobs. It's about improving the economy, about digging subways, about building hospitals, building schools, building better roads. That is why I encourage people to look at this budget, not just in terms of a piece of paper, but in terms of an investment in the future of this incredibly hard-working province.

**1550**

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Continuing debate, I recognize the member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's hard to follow my colleague from Eglinton—Lawrence.

Obviously he is passionate about infrastructure in the city of Toronto, especially the Eglinton Crosstown project, which is something that, he's right, should have been done 10 or 20 years ago, but for whatever reason—we're not here to point fingers. It's finally happening, and it's a good thing, not only for the people of Toronto but for the economy of the province as a whole, both from a construction standpoint and also for relieving some of the gridlock. I used to live in Toronto; 30 years ago, I travelled Eglinton, and I knew then that there was gridlock, so can you imagine today?

Speaker, let me just talk about Bill 144. I want to talk about some of the specifics of the bill. Sometimes we talk about our own interests. This particular bill implements necessary changes in order to continue to implement our economic plan to build Ontario up. What does this plan include? It includes investing in people's talents and skills. It involves making the largest investment in public infrastructure, over \$130 billion over the next 10 years—the biggest in Ontario history—and creating a dynamic and innovative environment where business can thrive. I talked about the good things that are going to come out of just one project, the Eglinton Crosstown.

And of course, it strengthens our retirement security. That's something where some of us are there, and obviously we want to—not to be in a selfish way, but sometimes we forget to think about tomorrow, and we need to do a better job of that.

So why are these changes necessary as we continue to roll out our plan for Ontario? This legislation will help our economy grow and create jobs. As people work, they pay their taxes, and that certainly helps us offset some of the infrastructure discussion we've been having.

As you know, our government has committed to unlocking the value of provincial assets and making very, very clear that the net proceeds from the sale of qualifying assets will end up in the Trillium Trust. That will help fund the \$130-billion commitment that this government has made.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015, seeks to make amendments to the Trillium Trust Act, 2014, which would specify these qualifying assets. We want to make it clear that that's where that money is going to go. These amendments will help us fulfill our commitment of investing more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure across this province over the next 10 years. We want to even go beyond that \$130 billion—investments to help our economy grow and enhance the quality of life for all Ontarians.

The Budget Measures Act, 2015, also seeks to make amendments to the Liquor Control Act, to support the sale of beer in grocery stores that hopefully we'll see, Speaker, before Christmas.

We're also proposing to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998. I won't have the time to go into detail, but the other thing that we'll do—we're already taking action to reduce electricity cost pressures on Ontario households. This will allow that to happen.

As previously announced, we are removing the debt retirement charge from residential electricity user bills,

beginning January 1, 2016. That's in about a month and a half. If passed, the proposed amendments will end the debt retirement charge for all electricity users in Ontario by April 1, 2018.

There is a lot more that I could certainly talk about in Bill 144, but I'm going to leave some time for my good friend from St. Catharines.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Continuing debate, I recognize the member from St. Catharines.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Much of this bill revolves around, of course, the opportunity to be engaged in a number of infrastructure projects. For the edification and information of members of the Legislature, I think they would like to know what some of those investments have been in downtown St. Catharines.

You may have noticed in the *Globe and Mail* and that a recent television report talked about the cultural renaissance in downtown St. Catharines that's taking place. That did not happen simply by accident. It is because of a number of investments which were made by various levels of government.

I can share with you that the Ontario government provided some \$18 million for the new performing arts centre. I had the opportunity to be at the official opening of the new performing arts centre, which is a marvellous structure to serve the people of St. Catharines, in particular the cultural community. Next door to it is the Brock University Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts, to which the provincial government dedicated some \$26.2 million. And, as people need a place to park, the government of Ontario recognized that it could assist the city of St. Catharines with a new parking garage, for which they invested some \$9 million.

Then, coming into the city, there's an older bridge that needed replacing, and, of course, what the government of Ontario did was contribute some \$18 million to the replacement of that bridge—and also, \$1 million to the new hockey arena, or spectator facility as it is called, the Meridian Centre.

So we have seen a renaissance. Those who would have driven on Highway 406 and looked at the back of the city of St. Catharines' main street would not have been impressed 10 years ago. If they went and looked at it now, they would be extremely impressed, and the people of St. Catharines are benefiting.

That's what we're talking about when we talk about infrastructure investments, and this bill helps to ensure that there are going to be infrastructure investments taking place and that there's money for them.

People used to drive through the city of St. Catharines. They would drive in and there would be a narrowing of the QEW as they went through St. Catharines. It wasn't as safe as it should be, the roads going on and off of the QEW. In fact, the Tories used to refer to it, when I was in opposition, as the Bradley bottleneck. They were being very unkind on that occasion.

Finally, when we got a Liberal government in Ontario—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** We got it fixed.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** We had it fixed. There was a widening that took place with the assistance of the federal government a few years back, in the early 2000s. That's a multi-million dollar project which has enhanced safety. All of these things are good, and we look forward to new projects.

I know that the people of Welland, at the other end of the Niagara Peninsula, appreciate the fact that the government of Ontario invested some \$110 million on Highway 406. There are people around here who said, "Wow, why would you invest that much money in Highway 406? It wasn't because you were the Minister of Transportation at the time?" I said, "No. There was a need there." The mayor of Welland, the chair of the regional municipality of Niagara, Peter Partington, a former Progressive Conservative member of the Legislature and a good personal friend of mine, requested this, and I said, "Peter, we can work together," because that's what we do: We work together with local government.

So part of this legislation enables those kinds of projects to take place to the benefit of all communities. And, of course, Welland is not a Liberal riding provincially, yet we put the money into Welland.

I know the people in Niagara Falls appreciated the multi-million dollar contribution the Ontario government made to their new convention centre and to their downtown transportation system, because they receive a lot of tourists.

So there have been a lot of investments taking place. What do they do? They create jobs, first of all; they stimulate the economy. In the longer run, what they do is leave a physical legacy which can be of immense benefit not only to the people of those communities but to the people who take the time to visit those communities. I'm delighted that this bill helps to enable that to happen.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm going to provide a couple of minutes in response to the speeches that I just heard from the members from Eglinton–Lawrence, Northumberland–Quint West and St. Catharines.

1600

You know what I find very funny about this government? Actually, it's not that funny; it's sad. Here are members who over the last federal election stood up with their federal Liberal candidates, some of whom are now sitting in the federal House, and they railed against the Harper government on their omnibus bills. Yet what is Bill 144? Let me quote our finance critic, Mr. Fedeli. He said yesterday, "Quite frankly, this is nothing more than an attempt to double down on the misguided 2015 budget. This is a politically motivated, very cynical, last-minute finance bill." That's his quote. It's just hilarious that they put an omnibus bill on the order paper and they have a straight face when they try to defend it—when they try to defend individual projects.

But you know, Speaker, this is a government that has governed by closure motion. We've had 16 closure motions, and I'm going to guess, I'm going to make a

prediction, that after Thursday, when we have nine and a half hours, this government will invoke closure on probably their last rotation. If they don't do it on Thursday, they will do it very, very early in the week. That's the way they are.

This is the same government that stood up in their throne speech and talked about putting partnership over partisanship, yet they talk out of both sides of their mouth all the time. They talk one way in the House; they talk another way when they're out of this House. I tell you, you keep talking that way and things are going to change in two years and six months.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It's an honour to stand in the House and make comments on what the government spokespeople have just shared—their 20 minutes, done in fives, or whatever it was.

I found intriguing the member from St. Catharines talking about the Bradley bottleneck. It's good to know there's some history to that, because on this side of the House I always thought the Bradley bottleneck was when the government shut down debate, when they brought in closure, when they did time allocation, when the members on this side of the House have something to say and we stand up and we want to do 20 minutes or 10 minutes or whatever, and Mr. Bradley, the deputy House leader and Chair of Cabinet, says, "No, we're going to time-allocate this."

It's like you've got a funnel and you get that Bradley bottleneck and there's not a lot of time left to say anything because they've choked it off; they have choked off the debate at that Bradley bottleneck. It has happened time and time again in this House in the last couple of years. I just get a big kick out of it. I did not know that he was living up to his reputation of the Bradley bottleneck. I think it's great. Now we get little drips of debate as opposed to a full-fledged flow of debate.

To listen to the government members, they say Bill 144 is all about infrastructure, and if you vote against the bill, you're voting against infrastructure. Well, they can sit there and read their *Fifty Shades of McGuinty* or whatever it is they're reading over there, but it isn't. It isn't about infrastructure. It's about being fair to the people of Ontario and allowing everybody to stand up and have a debate without going through the Bradley bottleneck. I think that's an apt description of what we've put up with on this side of the House.

Thank you for those two minutes, Speaker.

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

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm pleased to be given an opportunity to stand here and offer a couple of comments based on the input from my colleagues from Eglinton–Lawrence and Northumberland–Quinte West and the deputy House leader and Minister without Portfolio.

This bill actually fulfills the commitments made by the government in the 2015 budget and further implements the government's economic plan on a go-forward basis as

we campaigned on in the last election: that we are about to build Ontario up.

My colleague from Eglinton–Lawrence covered just two projects in his riding. I would encourage people also to go and visit the Humber River Hospital, because it is a masterpiece in modern technology, and it is one of the hospital projects that are being built around the province. It is projects like this that are in our budget, and we intend to follow through with them.

But he also talked about the subway—or, as we all know, a light rail transit system underground—and he mentioned that in the mid-1990s there was a tunnel there already dug up. The subway was supposed to be built, and then it got filled in, and today this government is completing that job that should have been done in 1995, and probably many of us would have been using it before the millennium.

If you look around and you listen to everybody, they're talking about gridlock and how we're losing money daily because of gridlock in the GTA. Can you imagine, if this subway was built along Lawrence, along Eglinton, and it proceeded all the way to Scarborough, how many people in this city would not be driving their cars today, but would be taking public transit? It would be a lot.

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

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** It's a pleasure to add a few comments to the speeches earlier by members of the government side, one who spoke for 10 minutes and two who spoke for five minutes each. They didn't have much to say about this bill, yet it's one of the largest bills that we've seen in this House in a long time. In fact, I'm going to get a couple of them and use them for weights in the back of my truck this winter so that when the snow is on the ground I have more traction with my tires in the snow.

My colleague the critic for finance yesterday had his hour-long lead, and he talked about the omnibus nature of this bill. In fact, it amends fully 23 acts, I believe. Twenty-three acts are amended by this bill. There are 23 schedules in this bill; it amends 23 acts in one piece of legislation. This is something that throughout their term in opposition the Liberals decried whenever the government would bring in a piece of legislation that was not specific to an issue at hand and was amending several acts and had several schedules. They felt it was an insult to the Legislature to be able to bring in a bill that covered this many bases with this short a debate.

If they bring in a bill and they're required to have six and a half hours of debate on that bill, and they brought in a bill that only dealt with changes to the Electricity Act, then we would have at least six and a half hours of debate on that bill. But the reality is, we're dealing with changes to 23 acts of this Legislature, and we're only entitled to a minimum of six hours of debate. I agree with my colleague from Leeds–Grenville: The guillotine is going to come down on this bill as soon as they have the opportunity. It is the way they're doing business. That is

why we have the minister of the guillotine in here today. He's watching closely and he is waiting to bring in that closure motion. It will come.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for final comments.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I want to thank the members from Leeds–Grenville, Windsor–Tecumseh, Scarborough–Rouge River and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for speaking to the bill.

I don't know what doors the members of the Conservative Party were knocking at. At the doors that I went to in helping my federal counterparts, they weren't talking about the size of bills or how bills are written. They were talking about choosing hope over fear, choosing infrastructure jobs over dividing people, and including people in Canada. That's why the Conservatives lost: because they were negative. They just tried to divide people and frighten people, whereas the Liberals under Trudeau talked about hope, talked about this great country, talked about the great people. They didn't talk about the size of bills.

Today we hear all kinds of comments about the size of this bill, yet nothing about the need to invest in the people of Ontario, the need to encourage entrepreneurship, the need to invest in building sewers, roads and hospitals, and how that builds this province and gives people aspirations to make life better for everybody in this province. That's what people want to hear. They don't want to hear about, "Oh, this poor bill. It makes me work so hard because they're going to cut off debate," and all this stuff.

Let's talk about what real people talk about. They talk about putting food on the table. They talk about paying the bills. They don't talk about the size of bills in this Legislature. They talk about the meat in the bills, which is investing in bridges, schools, hospitals and jobs. You never hear them talking about jobs. Talk about jobs for a change. That's what this bill talks about: jobs, hope, and building this province, not whining about bills.

1610

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'm going to speak about Bill 144. I don't know what the member from Eglinton–Lawrence was speaking about because all of those things about putting dollars in infrastructure and about jobs in the province of Ontario—you're not addressing any of that here. Actually, you're going to be hurting the province of Ontario further. We'd like to think—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** What are you going to talk about, then, if not the bill?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Sure I'll talk to the bill—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Yes, talk to the bill.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** —because you didn't, but I will. So, Bill 144—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Excuse me, if I could just interrupt for a moment.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Mr. Speaker, my comments are towards you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I know you want to talk to the bill, but I would also ask that you talk to me. Thank you.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It would be a delight to speak towards you, Mr. Speaker.

This is 194 pages. There are 23 pieces of legislation that are going to be affected. They're things we forgot to put in the budget bill, a kind of a collection in this bill of some housekeeping—

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Housekeeping?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Some of it is. It's actually 194 pages and 23 pieces of legislation, so some of that is, Minister without Portfolio—but Mr. Speaker, towards you. They're going to change some small things, which is housekeeping; it's fine with us. But the large majority of the bill affects Ontarians, actually, in negative ways—

**Interjection:** In your opinion.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Actually, a lot of things that I'm going to comment on I heard when I was door-knocking and speaking to the people of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, which I do all the time.

The bill affects everything from property taxes to horse racing and Hydro One—some of the top three things that I hear about all the time from the people in the riding. The changes to the Electricity Act and the Trillium Trust Act are changes, as our critic for the Ministry of Finance, the member from Nipissing, brought up yesterday, that should actually be two separate bills. They're so important that we feel they shouldn't be in this big omnibus bill, that they shouldn't be pushed through—I say that because we talked a lot about closure; the member from Eglinton-Lawrence doesn't like to hear that, but it's when the government shuts down debate—so at least we have some time to debate them separately.

We can start the discussion—I'll be specific for the members opposite in case they were concerned that I wasn't going to speak to the bill—with schedule 2 and schedule 15. Schedule 2 amends the City of Toronto Act, 2006. But basically, I'm going to lead into why these changes, in general, are affecting all of our municipalities in rural Ontario. It's giving municipalities more taxing authority. In Toronto, they're talking about adding the flexibility on the business property tax-capping program.

In schedule 15, they're talking about the flexibility that's given in the City of Toronto Act, 2006. Now all municipalities across Ontario will have the option to increase taxes on businesses in order to cover the funds that they really should have gotten from the government, if they had managed their books properly and put the tax dollars where they need to be.

I know that my colleague from Leeds-Grenville is bringing forward a bill. On December 3, it's going to be debated. The municipal land transfer tax—basically, it is saying, "Do not give authority to municipalities to tax the people when you haven't properly managed the govern-

ment's books." The government should be helping municipalities more. I know that they're struggling.

When they gave that to the city of Toronto, the Ontario Real Estate Association, which was here yesterday—very supportive of the member from Leeds-Grenville and the great job that he has done—telling them what the impact would be in our communities. But in the city of Toronto, they estimate that, over five years, 3,227 housing transactions did not occur because of the taxing powers that they gave to the city of Toronto back in 2008.

Now that's going to ripple across all of our areas. I know that the Haliburton-Muskoka real estate board, the Kawartha-Peterborough real estate board—two of those members; three, actually—were in to see me yesterday. Top of their list: Stop that land transfer tax with serious implications across the province. Now, we all know that when someone buys a house, they sometimes renovate, change the carpets, add on additions. They figure that that will actually impact the economy greatly. They say the average homeowner spends about an extra \$55,000 when they make a house transaction. It also negatively affects the first-time homebuyers and middle-class people—young people, young families just starting out.

The Ontario Real Estate Association is a big organization. They have done a lot of studies. They have compared what's happened in Toronto, and they say how negative that is going to be if that comes in. I certainly don't need to have any less jobs in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I can tell you, there are a lot less jobs there than when I started in 2003, and that's about the same time that this Liberal government took power. When you bring in taxes, taxes, taxes, it's just another impediment to young people buying houses. It's bad for our economy. It's going to cost jobs and have a negative impact on our local economies, as it did when the city of Toronto got that power. So I wanted to put that in there and thank the member for Leeds-Grenville for being on top of this issue.

The other amendments: Schedule 6 provides another problem with the omnibus bill. It amends the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act and eliminates the Ontario Economic Forecast Council. It's never a good thing to see a government, during a time when they have not been transparent about the sale of Hydro One—and I'll touch upon that again—that they are now amending an act that supposedly ensures that the government is transparent and accountable, only to take something away from it. How transparent can that be?

The amendment will eliminate the Ontario Economic Forecast Council, which is a council of economic experts that would, in the future, be consulted on large-scale fiscal issues. As I say, it's not a good sign that this government, which has already made some financially irresponsible decisions, decides that it should get rid of a group of economists who could potentially actually help them avoid such debacles in the future. Maybe if the minister or the Premier had listened to this council of experts they would have realized the negative impacts

that the sale of Hydro One will have on our economy. Every independent officer of the Legislature has certainly made that recommendation to the government. In fact, they blatantly told them not to sell off Hydro One. Now, they're eliminating this council, so who's going to actually keep our government in place? Anybody that they can listen to? They certainly don't want to listen to us, from the calls from the government benches today when we got up to point out—which is our role in opposition—some great flaws we see in the legislation.

The two major problems that we've seen with the schedules is Hydro One and the Trillium Trust Act, as well as the new horse racing legislation. In the time I have, I'll try and speak to all of those quickly.

Schedule 3 amends the Electricity Act, 1998, in a variety of ways. It sets an end date for the debt retirement charge for commercial, industrial and other non-residential electricity users of April 1, 2018. This date is nine months earlier than they had previously estimated, but we learned from the Auditor General's report in 2011 that the DRC had actually accrued enough money to pay off the residual stranded debt. That means that the debt retirement charge, which lots of people in my riding love to talk about, should have been off a long, long time ago. It was an extra charge that was no longer necessary.

I know that the member from Nipissing, our critic, spoke to this, that basically the government has collected, I think, actually \$8 billion, if I can read his comments from yesterday. So an extra \$8 billion from the electricity users of the province of Ontario. So where did that money go? I know that we asked Dwight Duncan when he was here, and he didn't have that answer. And that was before it was even that high. We asked, "Where did that money go? The Auditor General has been asking." Nobody answered that. It goes into the big black hole of all their scandals that have occurred and that the people of Ontario are paying for.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, through you Mr. Speaker, mentioned that this is a great deal for Ontarians. They can't afford their hydro bills. So eating or heating is real. We didn't make up that line. That is a real story in most of our ridings over here in opposition. There is no question that that is a true story.

**1620**

I know the government has this new program out, and we—actually, my office is basically a Hydro One sub-office. We have a full-time person on Hydro One situations, from billing to smart meters. Now we have a program to help those with low income. I spoke to the Minister of Energy and he, to his credit, is making a lot of corrections in the program that was frustrating my constituents—when you go to the Legions on Remembrance Day and you have senior ladies crying because they can't access the program; you had to have a computer, you had to print the form etc.

Anyway, I'm hoping that we're helping the Minister of Energy correct those problems so that low-income Ontarians can access this little bit of money, but it is a shell game. They take the debt retirement charge off

residential and then they try and give you a little bit—to those who qualify, and it is very hard to qualify for the low-income, which is going to be just \$30 a month. But then they are taking off the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit starting January 1. So really—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Bottom line, we're all paying more.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:**—my people are not any better off and the bottom line is, as the energy critic so vocally says in the Legislature, it's a shell game and the bottom line is, we're all paying more. People are still up against the wall on paying their bills, especially with hydro.

I know that I've gotten off track a fair bit. The difference in the bill between the stranded debt and the actual residual stranded debt with hydro—to ask us to simply trust the government that they will actually retire this residual standard debt but the Minister of Finance continues to use this collected money for other purposes—we won't know. It is, again, the lack of transparency through these minute term changes. It really only hurts the people of Ontario and the government's accountability. Again, our role in opposition: We're laying out some thoughts. Some amendments for sure are going to come forward in committee to try and adjust that to—

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They'll limit committee to one day. A closure motion will take care of that.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes, well, the Liberal Party doesn't want me to talk about bringing in closure so we can't have this debate, so I won't.

But the revenue from Hydro One should be able to at least, in part, pay off the hydro debt this government still holds onto. With these new provisions, the only way to still pay off the growing debt will be to increase the rates yet again. So another shell game appears. There are so many shells being moved around on the hydro desk. No wonder people are confused. All they know is that they're paying more money. We're trying to keep this government accountable and they're taking any remnants of accountability and transparency out with part of this bill.

The peak rate for hydro is 17.5 cents a kilowatt hour now. I've mentioned in the Legislature—that's unbelievable. That has gone up fourfold since I've been in. You can't ask seniors to freeze during peak hours because they can't turn on the heat because they can't afford to—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:**—or the dairy cows to cross their legs, because they can't be milked until after peak hours. That's just the reality. You can't tell businesses to shut down between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. and just open up at night. I know that my colleague, who used to be a dairy farmer, is over there giving some advice, so maybe they can cross their legs? It's not pretty, anyway.

We've talked about the Trillium Trust Act. My colleague has very much shown that there is no way that the government is actually selling off Hydro One and putting it into infrastructure. They're not spending any more; they're not putting any more money into infrastructure than they had said previously. Again, they're—I can't

use that word—not being truthful with the people of Ontario in that respect.

I don't have a whole lot of time left, which most people are probably happy about. I want to touch a little bit on horse racing. I have Kawartha Downs. It's in my riding, but right across the road is the member from Peterborough's riding, who is now the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. So he knows this issue quite well; don't we all in this Legislature? Not well enough, I say, because there is a part of Bill 144, Mr. Speaker—schedules 9 and 16, if people want to be exact and to keep me in line that I am speaking to the bill—that is going to allow the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, through the registrar, to make rules on horse racing, racetracks and off-track betting facilities in Ontario. It's also going to enable the registrar to issue, suspend or revoke licences for jockeys, trainers, grooms and other horse racing professionals. It's probably a little more information than some people want to know. It will establish a Horse Racing Appeal Panel to adjudicate suspected breaches of the rules and empower the Licence Appeal Tribunal to deal with appeals related to licensing horse racing. So it will bring horse racing as a government-run industry under the umbrella of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission.

It says that the Ministry of Finance can establish a grant program to support live horse racing in Ontario; again, administered by the OLG. Funding would come from the OLG; the money does not have to come from the track itself. By allowing the minister to create this new grant program, it's inevitable that they're going to leave out some tracks.

We've seen them slowly kill the horse racing industry in Ontario; there is no question. Kawartha Downs used to have 100 races; now they have 20. They've got some great management there, I have to say—their advertising and marketing—so on the nights they do race, they've had some great crowds. Just think what they could do if they were allowed to have more races and bigger purse money. They would actually be very, very successful, because they have the potential to do it. But this government has hamstrung them.

I know that they've asked for more races. They were like the poster child for trying to work without the Slots at Racetracks Program. We agreed there were some changes that needed to be made, but basically they tried to reinvigorate themselves after the Liberal government cut the legs out from under the horse racing industry. They said, "We did such a good job with 20 races; could we have 50?" Nope, the government wouldn't let them have 50 races. They kept them at the 20 or 21 races. I think they gave them a couple of extras in September, just, you know, to break bread and keep the peace.

But really, what is the future of Kawartha Downs? We've asked that question and, to be fair, they don't answer it directly about horse racing. They have these gaming bundles. We've got the Ontario Gaming East Limited Partnership. It's going to provide gaming bundles. It addresses the slots that exist at Kawartha Downs; it doesn't address horse racing.

I've had lots of people lose jobs, so I'll talk about jobs, to keep the member from Eglinton–Lawrence happy, if he's listening. I'm talking about job losses in the horse racing industry, and there are going to be more, because they are going to decrease the number of tracks that have horse racing in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, that's not right. It hurts rural Ontario.

We had an industry that was thriving; it was a world-class horse racing industry. This Liberal government has decimated it over the last three to four years, and it is going to continue to eliminate tracks, especially in rural Ontario, and I lose jobs in my riding. The people who work—the grooms, the trainers, all the people associated with the industry—want to be hard-working people and contribute to society and pay taxes. Where does someone in their fifties find another job like that in the province of Ontario? Those jobs have gone, similar to our 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have gone.

Hydro is the number one reason why businesses aren't flocking to Ontario, because it can't be competitive anymore. When they see the sale of Hydro One, they see less accountability and transparency, and they see that this government is not actually going to pay off its debt and balance the budget, that doesn't induce people to come to the province of Ontario for businesses to expand, and I can tell you it's twice as bad in rural Ontario for jobs.

When we stand up in opposition on this side of the Legislature and say these things, we really want the government to listen. They have to listen to us, because our constituents are telling us this; we're not making this story up. There are a lot of days when I feel frustrated that the government doesn't care about rural Ontario and doesn't care about what we are saying.

I'll speak for this last bit about the Tobacco Tax Act. There have been some amendments proposed, but I think the most important thing, if I can just take a moment, is that this Thursday the member from Prince Edward–Hastings is going to bring in his piece of legislation, the Smoke-Free Schools Act.

I think that we all should understand how large the contraband tobacco industry is in the province of Ontario. It is huge. I can tell you that I see tons of high school students smoking outside their high schools. Any butt survey—which means tobacco butt survey, to clarify for those watching—shows how many contraband tobacco butts there are. These cigarettes are not vetted. We don't know what is really in them. I don't encourage smoking; I'd like it stopped. But they are smoking, so they could at least be smoking legitimate cigarettes instead of contraband. What his bill addresses—because his wife Tawnya is a schoolteacher, he knows the story first-hand—is the impact that has on our children's health, but just the whole economy of getting such cheap cigarettes and we don't know what is in them. That's affecting our young people. When Quebec introduced similar legislation, they saw a 60% decrease in youth smoking when they brought in this measure.

**1630**

Mr. Speaker, I know that I am out of time, but basically, the Smoke-Free Schools Act is coming up this

Thursday, and I encourage all the government members to certainly vote for this. We'd like the support of the third party, too. With that, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always a pleasure to stand in this House. Today is my first opportunity to speak to Bill 144, but I'd like to concentrate on responding to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha–Leeds–Brock and—

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Sorry. My own writing is very bad.

She touched on a lot of issues that affect rural Ontario and that are very pertinent to rural and northern Ontario: hydro, hydro costs, electricity costs. I say this with some reluctance, but we talk a lot about refugees—it's a huge issue—but in northern Ontario, we're starting to have electrical refugees: people who can't afford to heat their house and can't afford to pay their municipal taxes, which are much higher in rural Ontario. Other people say, "Well, just move." Move where? No one else is going to buy that house either.

These people are stuck, and platitudes about how we're going to—again, in my riding, we do everything we can to make sure that every person can benefit from every government program that comes out; of course we do that. But programs to help lower-income people aren't solving the problem, because electrical rates are starting to hurt all income levels. Those who can move—job creators—are moving, and those who can't move are stuck.

It's a huge, huge issue, and the sale of Hydro One is going to impact it even more. Now, when we have an electrical blackout, Hydro One actually comes to fix it. We're not a high-revenue area for Hydro One; we know that. But when Hydro One is purely profit based, how long is it going to take before somebody comes to fix your hydro? It's a huge issue.

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

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act. Bill 144 fulfills commitments made by the government in the 2015 budget and further implements our economic plan to build Ontario up. I feel that the changes that are made in the Budget Measures Act are extremely important.

First of all, if passed, it would enact five new statutes and amend a number of other statutes. The ones that I'm going to concentrate on right now, in my conversation with all of us here in the House, have to do specifically with transportation and also energy. Mr. Speaker, as you know, our government has committed to unlocking the value of provincial assets and placing the net proceeds from the sale of qualifying assets in the Trillium Trust. What this does, essentially, is make funds available for public infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges and transit. What really happens here is that we are making

available \$130 billion for public infrastructure improvements across the province.

I recently held a transportation town hall in my riding. I held it very specifically to deal with the concerns that the members of my community have about transportation. Since this is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country, many of them are commuters and are concerned about getting to and from work as quickly as possible.

What this will do, and what this piece of our Budget Measures Act will do, is unlock some of those valuable funds that we need to make sure that people not only get to work on time but get home to their families on time. Right now, you can wind up being stuck in gridlock for periods of time that are really keeping people away from their families and from being able to get home for dinner. What this will do is ensure that we move that forward.

As far as energy is concerned, I recently had the Minister of Energy in my riding. He spoke about the retirement of the debt retirement charge, and this is huge, because this change will affect all electricity users, not just residential electricity users. This moves things up so that really small businesses—

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** It's my pleasure to comment on the speech by my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on Bill 144.

Earlier today, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence was talking about hope. Well, in the speech that we heard from my colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, we heard very much about fear. That is what's actually out there. People are losing hope in this province, hope that this government actually cares about them, because every time you turn around, the cost of living under this government is going up.

Governments at the provincial level have almost an unfettered ability to raise revenue. They have the power to tax. These people over here, Speaker, don't seem to understand that there's a tipping point. When you push people too far, they'll vote with their feet. They'll leave the province; business leaves the province. People can simply not afford to exist in the jurisdiction that you govern. That's what is fast happening here in the province of Ontario.

What's coming next—we're very concerned about this—is that they're going to try to shift that load and cleverly tell the municipalities, "You can now inflict a further tax on your residents with an increase in the municipal land transfer tax." The government is then going to say, "Oh, it's the municipalities that are taxing you." They're going to say to the municipalities, "We've given you these powers to tax, so now we're going to take away this source of revenue from you." And what do the Liberals then say? "We're going to balance our budget now," but they're doing it always on the backs of someone else.

They can't balance their budget by being fiscally responsible. They're going to download the taxation to the municipalities. At the end of the day, the people will

pay more, and we'll go deeper and deeper and deeper in the hole.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I was looking forward to making comments on what was said by the good member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, but then I thought I should respond to a few of the things that were said by the Liberal member from Halton instead.

I got the impression from the member from Halton that we're selling Hydro to pay for infrastructure. This was our plan all along. By coincidence, I happen to have the comments made yesterday by the finance critic for the NDP, Ms. Fife, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. She did a great job of researching Hansard. She went back a bit, and she really laid it out there. She said:

“In April 2014, there was a speech to the Economic Club of Canada by Mr. Sousa, who said, ‘Continuing public ownership, however, remains a key priority’....

“There are ways to improve efficiency and optimize financial performance of any company, including OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO.... We will not do what the previous PC government did ... with the fire sale of Highway 407.”

On October 20 last year, “the Premier denied any plan to sell public hydro: Ed Clark ‘has said quite clearly that he doesn't believe that selling those assets is the right answer. He has said that.

“I believe that the leader of the third party is probably having a bit of a hard time framing the question because in fact Ed Clark has said he agrees that selling those assets is not the right thing to do”....

“On October 27—this is actually just over a year ago—Mr. Sousa replied, ‘We have made it clear that we are not going to sell off our assets.’ On November 3, once again, the Premier said, ‘Let's just be clear: Despite what the NDP are saying, we asked the council to retain the government's long-term ownership of these assets. In fact, what Ed Clark said, on October 17: “We recommend keeping all three companies—OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO.” So, in fact, there is not a sell-off of these companies.’”

That's all in Hansard. I wanted to put that back on the record.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for final comments.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I appreciate the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Halton, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Windsor–Tecumseh for their comments.

I'm sure that the member from Halton hopes that all the things she said were actually reflected and will be that way, but I think we have to have a sense of reality, the fact that, as my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said, there's a tipping point.

**1640**

I can tell you, and I've said many times, I have more poor people than I did when I first started in 2003 in my

riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. I believe it was the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane who just said—I call it energy poverty, because that's how the OEB tracks it. I don't even think that that was something they tracked before this government came in. I know they're sick to death of me talking about hydro, but I have to tell you: It's the number one issue that is hurting the people in my riding and across Ontario.

Business competition is one thing. They're forcing people out of their houses. People who thought that they could retire and live in a single-family dwelling basically can't any more. I've got a lot of people who are marginal, especially in the north part of my riding, because you just can't get jobs. It's seasonal at best. I now have heat banks started up and supported by local churches. Everybody had food banks—unfortunately, people have to use them—now I have heat banks, because there was a huge need.

Up in Haliburton county, that community is wonderful. It responds to the needs of the people, but I've never seen it so rough on people that are already pressed against the wall. I thank those community people and the municipality for the heat banks that they created, but it's such a sad statement that exists in the province of Ontario today that that is what we are reduced to.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Bill 144 is an omnibus bill that covers a lot of ground, but first, let me say, what an honour it is to be able to stand here in the provincial Legislature, our provincial Parliament, as the elected representative for the riding of Windsor–Tecumseh. No matter how many times I say it, it really is a humbling experience knowing that I am one of just 117 voices—117 members—of the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** It's 107, Percy.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Well, I guess it's 106 at the moment, because there's a vacant seat. That aside, our voices are all equal, no matter the political party we represent. Back home, our voters have chosen us because they had faith that we would represent them well and speak our minds as we fight for what is best for our local communities. That, my friends, is called democracy.

Let me begin by speaking about the portion of Bill 144 that deals with hydro's stranded debt and the impact this bill will have on payments in lieu of taxes. There are a few old sayings that come to mind today. British author Daniel Defoe is famous for his novel Robinson Crusoe, but he wrote another book called *The Political History of the Devil* back around 1725. There's a line in there that says, “Things as certain as death and taxes, can be more firmly believed.” If you fast-forward to 1789 and to the American statesman Benjamin Franklin, one of his more famous quotations is the familiar “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” Personally, I like Margaret Mitchell's line from her 1936 book *Gone with the Wind*: “Death, taxes and childbirth! There's never any convenient time for any of them.”

Speaker, what was to be convenient was when the debt retirement charge would finally come off of our hydro

bills. We wouldn't be paying so much money for hydro. Our local distribution companies were looking forward to getting some of that money from that debt retirement charge fund by way of payment in lieu so they could charge us, their customers, less money on the local portion of their hydro bills. However, as I read the sections of this proposed bill, it seems to me, unless I am mistaken—if I am, I'm sure the minister will correct me at his first opportunity—the way I see the bill, there are surprising and unwelcome provisions with respect to the residual stranded debt and payments in lieu owed to municipalities once this debt is retired. As I understand it, currently, under section 92(4) of the Electricity Act, certain payments in lieu must start flowing to municipalities once the residual stranded debt is retired.

As you know, Speaker, currently, those payments flow to the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp., the OEFC. Estimates were that this debt would be retired by the end of 2018, but—and this is a big “but”—Bill 144 repeals this subsection, and instead of going to municipalities or to their municipally owned local distribution companies, the proposal in Bill 144 says that even after the residual stranded debt is retired, the money that was to go to help local DCs lower rates is instead going to continue to flow to the OEFC, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. Wow. You talk about another kick in the teeth to Ontario's municipalities.

Speaker, as you are well aware, I think we're up to 185 or 187 municipalities in the province who have already debated and passed motions calling on the Liberal government not to proceed with the sell-off of Hydro One. Yeah, yeah, yeah, we all know that all 444 municipalities, including mine, would like more money for infrastructure projects, but no one—and I mean no one—but the Liberals is actually buying their argument that that's why they are selling Hydro. We can still build infrastructure without selling Hydro.

We've done it since Ontario Hydro was first created—created and kept public, instead of turned over to private hands, I might add, by a referendum. Imagine that: People who used the distribution system actually had a say, a direct vote on whether to keep it in public hands. Wouldn't that be nice today, Speaker? That's how “good government” was conducted in the days when the province was entering the electrical age.

Now we see a Liberal government—a “not-so-good government,” if you will—going in the opposite direction, denying the people a direct vote in the future of their electrical grid. Instead, as the Liberals know, their own polling on this issue shows that 80% of the people in Ontario oppose the sell-off of Hydro One. It takes a lot of arrogance to ignore 80% of the wishes of the people—a lot of arrogance. I say that the next provincial election can't get here soon enough for those 80%, and they will have a say on the arrogance of this Liberal government.

Speaking about arrogance, the Liberals are at it again. Part of this bill screws around with the horse racing industry yet again. It wasn't enough that the Liberals closed the slots at a number of harness raceways a few

years ago, putting thousands and thousands of good, hard-working people out of work. Down in my area, that led to the closure of Windsor Raceway—3,000 jobs lost.

We don't reward that type of behaviour. That led to me being elected as a New Democrat, and I'll argue that that led to the Liberals losing their seat in Windsor West as well, and I'm sure it was a factor when New Democrats took the riding of Niagara Falls, because of the cutbacks at the Fort Erie track.

Voters can sometimes have long memories, as you well know, Speaker, and the issue of selling Hydro, just like the collapse of much of the harness racing business in Ontario, is going to come back around and bite the Liberals in their as-pirational haunches. The decision on the racing sector brought devastation to the men and women who breed horses in these province. It caused havoc—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Withdraw your aspiration.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Your play on words is somewhat borderline, especially when you were putting the emphasis on certain elements of the words. I would ask that you proceed cautiously and choose your words perhaps a little more selectively before I ask you to withdraw anything. At this point in time, you're all right.

I ask you to continue. Thank you.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, I will aspire to do better.

It caused havoc with those who earn their living as blacksmiths, veterinarians, grooms, trainers, drivers; those who sell tack, harnesses, carts and trailers; those who grow hay and straw and feed; and even those who build and sell pickup trucks. And for what? Thousands of people who gave their lives to a sport they loved were devastated. They worked hard—damn hard—for little pay. Many of them are in harness racing for the love of the sport, and they had it all ripped out of their lives by a stupid, stupid political decision that wasn't based on solid and sound information whatsoever. There was no warning, no consultation. The Liberals have paid and will pay the price for that, and rightfully so.

**1650**

They could have improved the industry, but instead of putting people in place to improve and grow the business, they devastated it. Now they're taking it away from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and handing it over to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. I don't know that this is a necessarily a bad thing. Maybe they should have done it a while ago. Maybe that's where the accountability problem was. Who knows?

We do know that the Premier put it in her mandate letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. She said the minister would be “Continuing to work with other ministers and partners to support a sustainable, customer-responsive horse racing industry that supports jobs and local economies; and to integrate horse racing within the broader Ontario gaming strategy.”

I'll come back to the Premier's mandate letter in a moment, Speaker, because there's some pretty good stuff

in there that I hope will help me prove a few points about the harness racing industry down my way.

I know in my area we are looking for more changes than just shifting responsibility to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. We have been proving ourselves, proving that harness racing has a future in the 100 Mile Peninsula, as well as right across southwestern Ontario.

Speaker, as you know, the Lakeshore racing group has been given permission to run 14 races at the Leamington Fairgrounds the last couple of years. I know you know because I've seen you at the track. Leamington is a half-mile track. Each Sunday the handle taken in is \$20,000 or more, proof positive that a new, not-for-profit track is feasible in the Windsor-Essex county area.

Imagine, Speaker, if the Lakeshore racing group was allowed to run a few more races in the summer months; just imagine if they were allowed to open an off-track betting site, or two, three or even five. We used to race 150 days in southwestern Ontario when Windsor was open. The purse money was \$11.5 million in 2011. Now with just 46 race dates across the southwest at Dresden, Hiawatha and Leamington, the purse money is \$1.6 million. Imagine what revenue the province could bring in by believing in the Windsor-Essex county area again: believing in families, believing in horse people, believing in family farms, believing that a new track along Highway 401 and Lakeshore or in Tecumseh would prove a tourist draw for harness people from Michigan, Ohio and right across Ontario.

Speaker, there is no shame in admitting to a mistake. All could be forgiven if the Liberal government saw its way to saying, "You know what? We made a mistake. We didn't get this right. There is a future for small harness tracks in Ontario, and we're going to prove it by allowing a new, not-for-profit track down in the Windsor area."

Speaker, believe in the horse people, the breeders like my friends Bob and Veronica Ladouceur who run St. Lad's Farm down in Ruscom in Essex county in the riding of Essex. They're the nicest people you'll ever meet, salt of the earth. They have a tremendous record of successful racehorses bred for the North American harness racing industry, and they're bred right here in Ontario.

I was thinking of them just the other day when I went back and reread the Premier's mandate letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. That's because she wrote of the need to work with other "ministers and partners to continue to engage with rural stakeholders," and to "deliver effective programs." Well, Bob and Veronica are waiting for that conversation. They certainly are rural stakeholders. They know the need to develop rural economies. She wrote about creating "new opportunities" and how she wanted to "champion to secure a future for people across our province." The Ladouceurs would like to meet with the Premier and chat about a secure future at St. Lad's Farm. They would like to know more from the Premier about her plan that would

place "emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth," and they would like to know what she had in mind when she talked about making a "positive impact" on their lives.

Speaker, in her letter the Premier said they would be engaging "people on the issues that matter the most to them," and that "meaningful solutions" would be implemented to their "shared challenges." Well, great, because the Ladouceurs are struggling every day to hang onto their farm and their breeding business, and they'd love to hear from the Premier, because what matters most to them is their livelihood. They see it as a shared challenge, since Liberal decisions have rocked their world and devastated their business. It cost the jobs of nine people who used to work for them; some of them on retraining opportunities to get off the welfare system.

Bob and Ronnie would be delighted to see how the Premier is going to grow the economy and help create good jobs, because they agree with her: Creating good jobs and growing the economy are fundamental to building more opportunity and security for their future. They accept the Premier at her word when she says that strategic investments in the talents and skills of our people are a critical priority. They have the talent; they have the skill. They run a successful business, and had for many, many years before the Liberals did away with the small racetracks in this province and created such uncertainty about the future of the horse racing business. They have the innovation and the creativity, and they are willing to partner with the province to foster greater prosperity.

If the Premier wants to grow the economy, create jobs and invest wisely in initiatives that strengthen Ontario's competitive advantage, they're up for that challenge. Her mandate letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs could have been written with them in mind. Give them a call. They're in the book: St. Lad's Farm in Ruscom, Ontario. The member for Essex and I will gladly host the Premier or the minister on a tour the next time they get down to our area. It doesn't matter that the industry will be shuffled off to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission. We'll take them on a tour as well.

While you're down our way, meet with Tom Bain. Tom is the mayor of Lakeshore. He's also the warden of Essex county. He's a good Liberal, as far as I know. He owns standardbred race horses. He trains them; he drives them. He's 100% behind the move to expand the racing dates at the Leamington Fairgrounds, as the minister well knows. He's a driving force behind the fight to get a new non-profit raceway built in the Windsor-Essex region. He knows it can be successful.

We know it can work and pay for itself. We just need the okay; the Premier's stamp of approval, if you will. Give us four or five teletheatre sites for off-track betting so that we can raise some money. Give us back what you took away. Give us back those jobs. You want to grow the economy? You wish to create jobs in Ontario? You want to find willing partners to work with in rural parts

of the province? Come on down. We'll even leave the light on for you, Minister. It's pretty dark down there these days. Our unemployment rate is among the highest the country.

This bill, Bill 144, is the Budget Measures Act. How do we measure the minister's bill? Martin Luther King said it: The measure of a man is taken not at times of comfort and convenience, but at times of conflict and controversy—conflict and controversy, Speaker. Closing down an industry with a controversial decision certainly threw us into conflict. Some 3,000 jobs were lost in Windsor and Essex county, and more in Chatham-Kent. Marriages suffered, people lost their dignity, people lost the family farm and people lost their dreams—that's the hardest part. Young people moved away to look for work in other provinces.

The consequences of your political decisions reach far and wide. You have a chance to do something about that. Do it now. There's no shame in changing your mind. There's no shame in reversing a bad decision. There's no shame in admitting a mistake. Open your minds. Open your hearts. Listen to the hard-working men and women of Essex and Windsor county and Chatham-Kent. Listen to Bob and Veronica Ladouceur. Listen to Warden Tom Bain. Listen to Brian Tropea at the Ontario Harness Horse Association. Listen to Ken Hardy or Donnie Rankin Jr. or Mark Williams or any of the other drivers and trainers. Talk to veterinarians such as Dr. Paul Branton. All they're saying is, give them a chance to prove to you that they can make this work. They can get us back on the track of rebuilding the local economy—pun intended, Minister.

We need a new racetrack. We have the talent, the skill and the determination to make it work. We need a willing partner. The Premier's mandate letters say you want to work with others to create jobs and grow the economy. Well, change this budget bill. Take out the word "may" when it comes to working out a better deal for the horse racing industry. Replace those "mays" with "will" and "shall." A small change in wording, but a huge change for a better future for the horse racing industry in Ontario.

1700

And while you're at it, change your mind on selling off Hydro One. There's no need for it. There are very few people in the province who support you on that—right now about 20% or less. Listen to the people. For once, just listen to the people of this great province. You don't have to sell Hydro. You don't have to keep the tracks closed that you shut down and threw so many people out of work.

We hear in the Legislature, day after day, how the priority for the government is to grow the economy, create jobs and bring Ontario up. Well, bring up our part of the province. Give us back those 3,000 jobs. Give the people their dignity back. Bring the young people back to the province from Alberta and Saskatchewan and British Columbia—places they had to go to find work because when you closed the tracks, you put the farms out of

business. You put so many people out of work; so much devastation in the families. This can change. With the stroke of the pen, the Premier's stamp of approval, you can just say, "You're right. We made a mistake. We're going to correct it. Let's do it now."

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Windsor-Tecumseh. I just want to comment on a few of the things that have been said, not merely by him, but by some of the others this afternoon.

I think I want to start off in the quick two minutes with a question. What do you think they're talking about with regard to electricity south of the border? The answer is rapidly rising electricity rates. Whether you're talking about the US eastern seaboard or the US Great Lakes basin or California or the US southwest—Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona—the big issue is high and rising energy prices. Does this sound a little bit familiar? And how is that the case? Well, 10 years later than we did, most US electrical utilities are realizing that their wires are old, that they need to turn off their coal plants, they need to move to renewable energy—wind power is the fastest-growing thing in Texas and in California—and their nuclear plants need refurbishment.

Among the things that are happening south of the border is that US electrical utilities are doing now what we did 10 years ago. Here's how to compare it: What we did is over the past 10 years, we bought tomorrow's electricity infrastructure at yesterday's prices, financing it at nearly 0% interest rates. In the United States, the problem they're facing is to buy today's electrical assets at tomorrow's prices, at interest rates that have nowhere to go but up. So in addition to facing rising interest rates, our brethren in the United States are also facing a situation in which they have to take their nuclear reactors off-line, they've got to take their coal plants off-line, and they've got to finance it all at tomorrow's interest rates. It makes what we've done here over the last 12 years look pretty good by comparison and puts it all into perspective.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** In 1953, there was a movie, *Stalag 17*.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Oh, William Holden.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** William Holden and Otto Preminger. Well, we have our own *17*. It's called *closure 17*—a little movie here in the Legislature. This will be the 17th time under the Kathleen Wynne Liberals in this Parliament that they will have invoked closure on a bill. We just received a copy of the motion. Tomorrow we'll be debating closure.

So here we have—Otto Preminger was Colonel von Scherbach. Well, here we've got captain closure and general guillotine at work in the Ontario Legislature, once again shutting down democracy. Barely did we hit 6.5 hours of debate on this omnibus bill—167 pages of legislation, and they have come in here with a closure

motion. Tomorrow, we won't be debating Bill 144 anymore.

The debate is over on second reading of Bill 144. The debate is over. We're going to be debating a closure motion—once again, democracy at work in Liberal Ontario. Hey, bring in an act that amends 23 different pieces of legislation and let the members of the Legislature debate it for six and a half hours, and three of that is taken up in lead speeches by the three parties.

That is unbelievable. I've seen a lot of closure motions, but I didn't expect to see one, Speaker, on a bill of this magnitude. My colleague from Nipissing has been fretting about this since it was introduced. A massive bill and they are shutting debate off after a mere, barely six and a half hours. This is unconscionable and yet—and I see—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Look at that: Lucas Malinowski—Lucas, in the under press. He's laughing, but he knows that this is terrible legislation. This is an awful way to run a Legislature.

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

**Mr. John Vanthof:** A hard act to follow, sir, but I would like to concentrate, in my couple of minutes here, on the remarks from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, because for those of you who had the opportunity to listen, it was one of the best, well-thought-out representations of what ill-thought-out legislation does to a community. He focused on the horse racing sector. I remember I had just gotten elected when the whole slots-at-racetracks debacle happened. Coming from a farm, I knew we were dealing with farm people, we were dealing with animals, and what the government did was, they threw uncertainty into the industry—mass uncertainty into an industry that was actually making the government money. Does that sound familiar? Let's wreck something that's actually making money.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** And Ontario Northland.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Oh, Ontario Northland wasn't making money, but they wrecked it. With the horse racing industry, it actually wasn't costing Ontarians money. It was actually bringing a dividend to the government, and they threw a monkey wrench into it, and as a result, people of rural Ontario suffered greatly. In my region, we lost Sudbury Downs. We've lost the breeders around Sudbury Downs, and a lot of people lost their market for hay. Many people who had been contributing to society in a very meaningful way lost their jobs.

Now the government comes with this, and all of a sudden we see horse racing again. Bill 144 and the government—the member from Windsor–Tecumseh made a very good commentary that there are lots of “mays” regarding horse racing in this bill, and they should be replaced by “wills” and “shalls,” to remove the uncertainty on what could and should be a very vibrant industry.

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

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** I'm pleased to rise today and speak to Bill 144. Specifically, I want to speak about the amendments that deal with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999. Mr. Speaker, in my riding, we have Mohawk raceway, so I often have conversations with people in the horse industry and get a chance to really find out from them some of the challenges that they are facing. I want you to know that one of the things that these amendments do is that they put the Ontario Racing Commission underneath the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. Why? Well, it really assists when it comes to industry governance, and it also enhances long-term sustainability. This is about improving safety in the industry and ensuring we are doing the right thing when it comes to the industry.

This will also allow people in the industry to be able to tap into those tools that the OLG is able to access. For example, it will help the industry grow. It will help it grow and also help it modernize. How? Well, a couple of ways: It will allow people in the industry to be able to now use more modern techniques that the OLG is able to use when it comes to advertising and marketing, simple things but things that can really impact on the industry. For example, under the OLG and with the tools that will now be available, people in this industry will be able to have horse racing-themed products available. They will also have opportunities at their fingertips when it comes to ads and being able to run ad campaigns, things they were not able to do under the old system.

**1710**

What this really does is modernize the industry, and it allows the industry to grow and succeed. This is good for the industry, good for Ontario and good for our economy. Essentially, it's going to be good for places like the Mohawk Racetrack, which is in my riding.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Back to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for final comments.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you to all the members who spoke: the members for Mississauga–Streetsville, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Halton.

The member for Mississauga–Streetsville was talking about electricity rates in America, I guess. I didn't mention that, but he chose to talk about that, which gives me another opportunity to say this to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: When you come down our way, down to Leamington and Kingsville and Essex county, and you talk to greenhouse growers, we're going to get a transmission line down there, but it's not coming until 2018. They've already told us that 40 people want to tap into that new power that's coming, and it still won't be enough. The demand is there, the business case is there, for twice or three times what's being offered at the moment. It would pay for itself if they would only supply the power. The greenhouse industry wants to stay open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and they can't do it because there's not enough power for them.

We've already lost one of the major growers. He went over to Ohio, where they rolled out the red carpet. They gave him practically free power—free hydro, practically—to open up a million-dollar industry over there and hire a whole bunch of people. I talked to another grower, Paul Mastronardi, just last week or the week before. He's this close to doing the same thing, this close to pulling the trigger on a deal in Ohio, because he can't get power from Ontario. Surplus power from Ontario is being given away to Ohio, and he wants to keep it here. He wants his industry here, his employees here to grow, and he can't do it because there's no power.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's a delight to have the opportunity to get a few words on the record this afternoon. I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

It is great to hear from my good friend from Windsor–Tecumseh, because my daughter, Shanae, is on the St. Peter's grade 11 basketball team in Peterborough. They won COSSA. They will be heading to Windsor tomorrow for OFSAA; all the OFSAA championships will be in Windsor. She'll have the opportunity to utilize the brand new opened Herb Gray Parkway going into Windsor.

To my friend from Nipissing, I've given serious consideration to cancelling my subscription to Fedeli financial, but I am going to give him the opportunity to give me a bit of a deal in order for me to continue to subscribe to that famous business publication in the province of Ontario.

Edward R. Murrow, the famous American journalist of the 1950s and 1960s, once provided some advice to President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. He said, "An error does not become a mistake until you refuse to correct it."

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh spent a lot of time talking about horse racing. I'm going to devote my remarks today to horse racing in the province of Ontario.

After the decision was made to cancel the Slots at Racetracks Program, we appointed a panel to look at horse racing in the province of Ontario: the honourable John Snobelen, the honourable Elmer Buchanan and the honourable John Wilkinson. An interesting commentary from John Snobelen, who at one time served on the treasury benches right over here: He said that the Slots at Racetracks Program was not transparent and was unaccountable. So he was an advocate for making changes to it. My good friend Elmer Buchanan, who resides in the riding of Peterborough, was on the treasury benches over here from 1990 to 1995. He was the NDP agriculture, food and rural affairs minister for five years, from 1990 to 1995. Along with John Wilkinson, they were the authors of a report on the future of horse racing in the province of Ontario. We took the recommendations from that report. We put a five-year TPP in place to sustain horse racing. We're now in the process of looking for the next five years to bring stability to both the standardbred, thoroughbred and indeed the all-important breeding industry in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that the prices we're getting from yearlings has now recovered. In fact, the average price for yearlings has now increased again, because we brought some stability to the industry in the province of Ontario, and that is very important.

I actually go to racetracks in the province of Ontario. One night, I was at the track that's part of my riding, Kawartha Downs. I actually went to the back stretch. I was hauling buckets of water, buckets of oats and horse blankets to really talk to the—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Horse what?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —blankets—to really talk to the grassroots people who are in standardbred racing in the province of Ontario. In fact, the good folks at Kawartha Downs, on October 30, had a pace in my honour, the Jeff Leal pace. It was the eighth race, a \$6,000 purse, and at the end of the race, they allowed me to go out to put a cooler on the winning horse, because they wanted to recognize that all of us working together have brought back stability to horse racing in the province of Ontario.

Is there more work that needs to be done? Yes, and we're involved in that right now. But one of the key recommendations from the panel—from Mr. Snobelen, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Wilkinson—was to integrate horse racing and gaming regulation out of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and dissolve the Ontario Racing Commission.

I always made the argument, whether you bet \$5 on Yankee Nick in the sixth, whether you play blackjack or you put money in one of those darn machines, gaming is gaming is gaming in the province of Ontario, and that's why it needs to be integrated. Part of Bill 144 is to facilitate that integration—very important.

It also allows the Alcohol and Gaming Commission, through the Registrar of Alcohol, Gaming and Racing, to make rules for horse racing—very important—racetracks and off-track betting facilities in Ontario, and it enables the registrar to issue, suspend and revoke licences for jockeys, traders, grooms and other horse racing professionals. We're very concerned about animal safety in the province of Ontario, and this is a key element of the changes we want to make to the Horse Racing Licence Act, 2015.

It also establishes the new Horse Racing Appeal Panel to adjudicate suspected breaches of the rules and empowers the License Appeal Tribunal to deal with appeals related to horse racing. This is a very important aspect, this integration. The Ontario lottery corporation just recently announced a vice-president for racing in the province of Ontario, and we'll be looking at initiatives to co-brand between gaming in Ontario and horse racing in Ontario to effectively use the marketing power of the Ontario lottery corporation to bring people to racetracks in the province of Ontario.

This past summer, I indicated that I've had the opportunity to visit racetracks. Attendance is up, wagering is up and confidence is back in horse racing in the province of Ontario. This is work in motion, and we'll continue to make that happen. In fact, I have been to Leamington,

Ontario. I have visited the racetrack in Leamington, Ontario. I talked to my good friend Tom Bain, and we'll certainly entertain any proposals that we have for that area.

Interesting enough, to my good friend from Windsor—Tecumseh, I'm also a graduate of the University of Windsor. I actually spent a little free time that I had as a student going to Windsor Raceway, so I was very familiar with that—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Oh, shame. You should have been studying.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Yes. My mother used to inquire whether I was studying.

But I've been to that racetrack—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** The trots, or the—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's a standardbred track. But I think there is good opportunity in Leamington. Horse racing is part of the heritage of the province of Ontario. You think of Colonel Sam McLaughlin from Oshawa. You think of E.P. Taylor. It is certainly a very important part of our heritage in the province of Ontario.

1720

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Sandy Hawley.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Sandy Hawley, the famous jockey; the McDonalds, who race at Mohawk raceway. It's very important for rural development in our community because those people who are involved in the smaller tracks, like Kawartha Downs in Peterborough county, they buy the Ford F-150s, they acquire veterinarian services, they acquire feed and they are real engines in many of our local communities.

I am pleased that, through Bill 144, we're starting the process of integration. That was one of the key recommendations of the panel, from Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Snobelen and, indeed, Mr. Wilkinson. So I just want to make sure that—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** You should mention E.P. Taylor. He helped build the racetracks.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** E.P. Taylor helped to build the modern—

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** You should mention Woodbine.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** —the modern Woodbine.

I think it's all-important that members on all sides of this House have a real interest in the sustainability and the long-term viability of horse racing in the province of Ontario. I wanted to take my time to address those aspects of the bill, Mr. Speaker, and now I'll turn it over to my good friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Mr. Gravelle.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Oh, I'm sorry. I was a little bit excited to get up, Mr. Speaker, but thank you very much for recognizing me and thanks to my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, who made some incredibly important points about a couple of

aspects of Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act, that are crucial to move forward. I know that he worked very, very hard to put that in place in terms of the horse racing industry, and is not only familiar with, but was really one of the guiding forces behind it, so I congratulate him.

I'm very pleased to support this legislation. There are a number of aspects to it that I think really, really are important. I listened to the opposition—as we all do; we listen to each other in the Legislature—and recognized that their approach is one of trying to, quite frankly, not move very quickly at all. They don't have an eagerness to move forward on these important measures and the fact is that there are pieces in this legislation that are incredibly important to move forward on.

I, quite frankly, could go on about a number of aspects of it. I do want to reference specifically the amendments to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act—that's the indexing factors, which are really important. From the moment I first got elected in 1995—like all elected provincial members, you reach out to all organizations and you try very hard to make sure that you establish the fact that you represent all the people, that you represent all the issues.

One of the first groups that I became close to was the Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group and the injured workers' support groups across the province. One of the issues that has been really important to them has been the issue of indexation on the disability benefits. In this legislation, if it's passed, we will be adjusting benefit indexation for all injured workers on disability benefits beginning January 1, 2018. They will receive full consumer price index benefits, CPI benefits, on an annual basis—with no upper limit, by the way, depending on what the cost-of-living adjustment is each year. That's a really big issue. We're making interim adjustments until that period of time.

This has been an interesting and long crusade, one that I know means a great deal to almost everybody here in the House. I suspect everyone works very closely with the injured workers' support groups in their communities. That certainly has been the example for me.

In fact—this is a bit of a side note and probably not a necessary one, but what the heck—the president of the Thunder Bay and District Injured Workers Support Group, a fine gentleman by name of Steve Mantis, ran against me as the NDP candidate in 2011—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** How did he do? How did he do?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** He gave me a heck of a run, too, may I say. It was a tough race; that was an interesting election. But what's most noteworthy from my perspective is that we were friends going into the election—I recall, actually, when he phoned me and told me he was running and asked my opinion, I said, "Actually, I'd prefer you didn't." The bottom line is that we remained friends throughout the campaign as well, and had a good race.

But I do recall one of the debates where—despite the fact, I think, that Steve and others would say that they wished that we had been able to move forward more

quickly on a number of things, when we had a situation during one of the debates where somebody was actually critical of the work that we were doing on behalf of injured workers, my opponent publicly stated, “Michael has worked very hard on behalf of the injured workers’ support group.” It meant a lot to me at that time. We’ve been fighting a long time to make this happen.

That’s pretty darned important. That’s part of this legislation, and we need to move forward on it. Obviously, there are other significant pieces of legislation that are coming forward that are so important.

The larger aspect of Bill 144—and there are unquestionably a number of pieces to it that are very significant, and I appreciate that there may be some criticism related to some of the pieces of it. But like many members, I’ve looked at it pretty carefully and I’m pretty pleased with the measures being put forward.

Ultimately, when you look at the entire grasp of the legislation, it really is about continuing our plan to build the province up, to build Ontario up. It implements necessary changes that continue to implement that economic plan that we have. That plan—we’ve said it before, but I think it’s worth saying again—very much includes investing in people’s talent and their skills.

It absolutely is crucial to us being in a position to continue forward with our plan to make the largest public sector investment in public infrastructure—over \$130 billion over the next 10 years, which is the largest in Ontario’s history. That, I think, is how you do create a dynamic, innovative environment where business thrives. May I say an important aspect of this as well is our determination, I hope with the support of all members in the House, to strengthen retirement security.

But focusing, if I may, for a moment or two on the significant increase in infrastructure spending, I speak very much as a northerner. I speak as the MPP for Thunder Bay–Superior North. Yes, I’m privileged to be in the position I am in terms of our Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, but as someone who has represented a riding that is as vast as Thunder Bay–Superior North, you become conscious of the infrastructure challenges for every single community, and certainly you see them for the highway system.

We’re proud of the fact that through the northern highways program, over the last 10 years we have invested over \$5 billion—that’s billion with a “B”—in our northern highway structure. In our last budget, even with all the fiscal challenges we had, there was still a clear understanding from our government, from the Minister of Finance and from the Premier, that those infrastructure dollars needed to continue to be spent—I think around \$580 million in our northern highways program—which has allowed us to continue to move forward on the rebuilding of our bridges and our key structures that need to be built on. That is not inexpensive, but it’s crucial in terms of maintaining our systems. It certainly is crucial in terms of rehabilitation of the highway system.

May I say we are working very hard to expand, which in many cases means four-laning a number of the

sections of the highway, with a determination to do more. How can we do that? We need to have the infrastructure dollars in order to do that while at the same time focusing on our commitment to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18.

Our infrastructure plan—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** And get the snowplows to clean them in the winter.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Snowplowing is a pretty important one as well. My colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh, I believe it is, referenced it. I’ve been watching it really closely. I’m going off track, but I can’t resist. I’ve got all my constituents out there in Thunder Bay–Superior North reporting in to me on a regular basis. We had our first snowstorm of the year about 12 days ago. In fact, it was during constituency week, and I was driving myself up to Beardmore to open up their new municipal offices—actually, not that new, but to officially open them. We got into the middle of the storm and I got to see the actual level of road maintenance. I was very pleased that indeed—I know Minister Del Duca is absolutely committed to seeing the best possible high level of road maintenance throughout the province. It means a great deal to us in northern Ontario. I look at my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane. I know it means a great deal there as well. It’s really important.

As I say, I’ve got constituents—I bet we all do—who are reporting in. May I say I’m grateful for all that.

**1730**

The bottom line is, though, in terms of the infrastructure, it means so much to our communities. Each and every municipal leader—I cannot go to a municipal gathering—whether it’s in northwestern Ontario with the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, NOMA, which many of my colleagues know very well, and Dave Canfield, the president and mayor of Kenora; or FONOM, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, the northeastern Ontario version of NOMA with Al Spacek, mayor of Kapuskasing as president; and all the hard-working, dedicated municipal leaders who continue to tell us how important it is that we recognize that their infrastructure needs must be met, and that’s what we’re doing. That’s why we are pleased that, again, Minister Del Duca has been able to find a way to bring the Connecting Links program back. That’s a huge improvement. We’re going to keep working on building that up. I can promise you that. But the bottom line is, it’s back and that’s really important. It makes a huge difference, again, to have that program back.

My colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane is suggesting we need more. You know what? We actually always need more. Getting the program back was very important. May I say something that Premier Wynne was committed to doing? She understands the needs of the north so well and has made it very clear to all of us, not just the northern members, that the priority in terms of economic development and growth really is in northern Ontario, and we’re all focused on that.

The bottom line is, we have a piece of legislation that, quite frankly, is going to position us to help us continue

to build the province up. That's hugely important to all of us. Again, I understand the legislative process and I certainly understand the debate that goes on, and that is what makes us a great democracy. I stand here proudly, speaking about a piece of legislation that will enable us to absolutely move forward and continue to build the province up. I will surely be spending my time continuing to work, particularly with my northern colleagues, to make sure we make the right decision in terms of those infrastructure needs, and there are many.

The bottom line is, this legislation is a crucial part of that. I'm going to do the best I can to always be the hardest-working member I can as an MPP. Thank you very much for the thumbs up.

I look forward to working with all of you as we all seek the same goals, which is to make Ontario the greatest province in the country and obviously a great jurisdiction for all of us. We're honoured to be here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** I would like to now encourage questions and comments.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** It's always a privilege to rise to talk about the various issues in this Legislature, but this one, I have to say, Speaker, is one of severe concern. People in the general public may not fully understand or appreciate what just happened here today. This bill is now what's called "time-allocated." That means this bill is going to be cut off from debate. Everybody in this Legislature is simply not going to have a chance to be able to comment on it. We already saw, yesterday, that this government does not want to talk about this bill. The minister himself, in the debate, where he had an opportunity to speak at length, for an hour, spoke 16 minutes, and it's all over.

Here we have a chance for each member to stand and speak and give their thoughts for 20 minutes. We did not see that from the Liberals, and I can tell you why. I talked about it yesterday when I had the opportunity to speak for an hour. Page 3, section 7, schedule 22: This gets to the nub of the issue, that the funds from the sale of Hydro One are never going to be used for transit. It says here that those funds may be used to fund or to reimburse the crown for the construction of infrastructure.

What we've been standing in this Legislature and saying now for months, for weeks and for days, is that the money they keep talking about—and they give these eloquent speeches about, "Don't you really want that infrastructure?" Of course people do. It was budgeted in 2014 and it was re-budgeted in 2015. We've proved beyond a doubt that that money is going to be used to attempt to balance their budget.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the people I represent in London West to offer some comments on the remarks that were given to us by the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Northern Development.

In some ways, I'm going to echo what the member for Nipissing just said. I found it interesting that there were

23 schedules in this 169-page bill and we heard very, very little about any of those schedules. We heard about the horse racing industry, we heard about the importance of transit in northern Ontario, but we didn't hear a word about two of the most significant and troubling schedules in this legislation. Those are schedule 3, the amendments to the Electricity Act, and schedule 22, the changes to the Trillium Trust.

What we see here is this government putting in place the legislative framework it requires to push ahead with its privatization of Hydro One which, as we know, the overwhelming majority of Ontarians oppose; 188 municipalities have passed resolutions calling on the government to keep Ontario's electricity system in public hands. All of us I'm sure—on that side of the House as well—are receiving emails on a daily, hourly basis from constituents who do not want to see this privatization move forward. And yet, the government in this bill puts in place the legislative authority it needs to move full steam ahead and remove the authority over Ontario's electricity system from the citizens of this province.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I just want to address this issue of—whether it's broadening the ownership of Hydro One or money going into the green fund, the absolute silliness of some of the positions taken, especially the member for Nipissing's.

We're putting \$130 billion into infrastructure. The last Premier in Ontario to do that was John Robarts, and I wasn't even out of elementary school. The previous government that the member seems to like so much spent \$1 billion a year on infrastructure in Ontario. That couldn't even replace the feeder sewer systems in a major city. When I was mayor of Winnipeg, we spent more on infrastructure than the entire province of Ontario did.

For 40 years in Ontario, we were spending less than 1% on infrastructure. What happened was our population doubled. We didn't see subways. We didn't see highways. We didn't see hospitals. This province spent less on infrastructure by about one quarter of what every other province was.

Now we have the problem that all that stuff that was built in the 1960s and 1970s is old. It's older than I am, and it's falling apart. The repair bills are enormous on this generation because governments for 40 years in Ontario shortchanged Ontario, artificially, so called, kept taxes down while creating the most enormous infrastructure deficit in North America.

I am proud that we are spending the same level of funding that we haven't seen since Drew and Robarts, which was the legacy of the party opposite. Thirteen billion dollars a year takes every single extra penny we can scrape together, and because we're not jacking prices up, we're making tough decisions. Broadening the ownership, which quite frankly is not something new—these kinds of partnerships are commonplace. The oppositions couldn't make a tough decision if it walked up and slapped them in the face.

If you actually do the macro math, you cannot have \$13 billion a year. Why? Because we're getting 5% of GDP, which every economist tells us is the minimal investment in infrastructure to grow jobs and attract business, and that's the right answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Once again, the Minister of the Environment is trying to change the channel when we are actually debating Bill 144. This is about shutting down debate of a major budget bill—167 pages, 23 schedules, which, for the listeners who are paying attention to this debate, actually means legislative changes. We're opening up 23 schedules. I am greatly concerned that after the absolute minimum—six and a half hours of debate—the government has chosen once again to shut down the debate on a budget bill that covers 23 schedules and 167 pages. If you are so proud of Bill 144, if this is so important to you and it leads to such important decisions, then let us debate it. You should not be ashamed of it, and all you're doing is shutting down debate.

1740

What we want, in opposition, is the opportunity to highlight what is in this 167-page legislation. You are not letting us do that. That's what we're concerned about. That's what we're raising. Instead of actually talking about what's in Bill 144, talking about how it impacts our communities and the horse racing industry and Ontario Hydro and on and on and on, we are once again talking about shutting down debate, not letting people discuss what is actually in this budget bill.

There is no reason, Speaker, that after six and a half hours of debate, three hours of which is taken up by the Liberals and the critics for the PCs and the NDP—we actually have only debated this for less than three hours. It's unconscionable to me that you can suggest that there has been sufficient debate on Bill 144 after six and a half hours, and I think you should be embarrassed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Thank you. Now back to the minister for final comments.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank my colleagues on all sides: the member from Nipissing, the member from London West, my colleague the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and indeed the member from Dufferin-Caledon.

I want to just talk about one section that's crucial. It is the Horse Racing Licence Act, 2015. Right now—after we came back from the panel's recommendation, we put a five-year plan in place to provide financial stability to horse racing in the province of Ontario. Mr. Speaker, we're now into year three of that plan, and anybody in this House who spends some time at the racetrack knows that the breeding industry works on a three-year cycle. So what we're really planning now is beyond the five years. We're actually looking at eight years because of the three years that needs to be built in because of the breeding cycle both for standardbreds and thoroughbreds in the province of Ontario. That's why this section, the Horse Racing Licence Act, 2015, is so crucial as part of the

integration program: to get it in place as quickly as we can to give that confidence to the breeders in the province of Ontario to allow those racetracks to start planning now and beyond for the next decade in the province of Ontario. That's exactly why this provision of the bill is in there.

It's interesting that the opposition members ask questions about horse racing. You would think that if they were really committed to the industry, they would make sure that this part of this bill got through as quickly as possible to bring stability to the industry, to allow the industry to start to move forward, and, indeed, to provide the confidence in the breeding side of the industry that is so important for horse racing in the province of Ontario.

Ontario has a reputation of being one of the centres of horse racing in North America. Our yearlings, both on the standardbred side and the thoroughbred side, are much sought after by people around the world because they have confidence in what we're doing in horse racing in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm pleased to actually have a chance to contribute to this debate because, as we've heard, it is very, very disturbing that this government, after only six and a half hours, has chosen to close it down and cut it off because, quite frankly, they've been caught. For the people who are watching here today, we're talking specifically about Bill 144, the Budget Measures Act. Well, quite frankly, the manner in which this government is acting and the omnibus approach that they've taken just really doesn't measure up. Who's going to pay for it at the end of the day, Speaker? It's going to be the Ontario taxpayers.

In case people want to know more about it, it's essentially a 194-page pieced-together hunk of legislation that is going to do something that people cringe about. This 194 pages is essentially, in summation, going to be taking opportunity to debate legislation out of this House because their goal is to remove actions of this government away from debate and into regulations.

When I spoke to stakeholders today about the essence of this bill, whereby there will be less legislation and more regulation, they cringed. They just shake their heads. When I have stakeholders saying, "We want to be part of establishing a vision for a go-forward plan for Ontario," and then they hear that that's going to be taken away from them and regulations behind closed doors will continue to be prescriptive and handcuff them in terms of how they move forward with their respective industries—the stakeholders are saying, "Enough. This government has just gone too far."

I agree with my colleague the member from Nipissing. The reason they have actually cut off debate and time-allocated it is the fact that they've been caught. To everyone watching today, I encourage them to grab the bill, Bill 144, and on page 162, to be specific, under section 7 is the information that my member, the finance critic, has caught on to, and this is why they're closing

down debate. They've been outed, and they're absolutely shameless in saying, "Okay, we've got to shut this down before too many people have a chance to talk about it and Ontario taxpayers catch on to what we're really trying to do."

Specifically, on page 162, under section 7, it says:

"Amounts not exceeding the balance in the Trillium Trust may be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the following purposes:

"1. To fund, directly or indirectly, costs relating to the construction or acquisition of infrastructure"—but here's the crutch, Speaker;

"2. To reimburse the crown for expenditures incurred by the crown, directly or indirectly, for a purpose described in paragraph 1."

So, again, Speaker, they're outed; they've been caught; they're busted. This is not about new money to build infrastructure, and they're shameless in shutting us down and taking away our opportunity to increase awareness of what this government is really doing.

I'm going to use my time, actually, that is available to me to talk about this a little bit more. Bill 144 contains 23 schedules which impact—I'm going to list them all because the fact of the matter is that people need to know exactly what's rolled up in this particular piece of legislation, because it's a worry; every single schedule is a worry: the Assessment Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Electricity Act, the Escheats Act, the Financial Administration Act, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act—that's rich because, in a spirit of fiscal transparency, you would think they would want more debate on this particular piece of legislation; but, no, yet again they closed it down.

Actually, Speaker when I say that, I feel I need to remind the listeners that this is the 17th time since Premier Wynne has taken office that they've closed down debate. This is undemocratic. It needs to be brought to an end. She's going at a pace that is—

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Unprecedented.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you. It's unprecedented. Nobody else has moved at shutting down democracy at a pace like Premier Wynne has.

The other schedules involved in this affect the Forfeited Corporate Property Act, the Government Advertising Act, the Horse Racing Licence Act—and I thank my colleague, my seatmate from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. She spoke about how this Liberal government had no idea what they were doing and, as a result, totally killed off the horse racing industry. I appreciate the comments from the member from Windsor-Tecumseh as well. You know, it's a shame that this government's knee-jerk reactions, time and again, wreak havoc across Ontario.

I think about my own raceway in the riding of Huron-Bruce, the Clinton Raceway—wonderful management, wonderful support, but they had their race days cut back and, as a result, some of the most successful horse farms in Ontario, in my riding, have sold their horses. I thought it was interesting, just moments ago, the Minister of Agriculture himself said that initiatives coming through

this omnibus bill were going to build stability for an industry that's already left the stable. It's gone, Speaker. The horse racing industry, as we once knew it in Ontario, will never be again, and that is shameful.

**1750**

Some other acts that this particular piece of legislation impacts are the Income Tax Act, the Interim Appropriation Act for 2016-17, the Labour Relations Act, the Licence Appeal Tribunal Act, the Liquor Control Act, the Municipal Act. With regard to the Municipal Act, really, Speaker, it's interesting.

Just yesterday, we had great discussions with stakeholders from OREA. These realtors are very, very concerned over the haphazard manner in which this Liberal government is saying to municipalities, "Look, you may choose, or maybe you don't want to choose to implement a municipal land transfer tax." Well, what's that going to do across Ontario in terms of consistency and making home ownership dreams a reality? Again, they come up with quick ideas, quick thoughts because they're so cash-strapped, and at the end of the day, all they do is squash hopes, whether it was dreams for growing successful horse farms and a racing industry in this province or buying a home. It just doesn't stop with this government.

Again, this particular legislation, Bill 144, is impacting the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act and the Pension Benefits Act. Last week, we had a number of small table discussions in my riding, and time and again ORPP came up with regard to concerns that small business has regarding building a future. Again, what do small business owners want to do? They want to be successful. They want to raise a family. They want to enjoy a good quality of life. But unfortunately, again, that particular dream, those particular hopes get squashed by the cavalier attitude this government has as it rams through legislation and rams through regulations, all because they cannot control their spending and they're desperate to generate revenue wherever they can, all on the backs of Ontario taxpayers and ratepayers. It's absolutely shameless.

Other acts that are impacted by Bill 144 are the Securities Act, the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act for 2015-16, the Taxation Act, the Tobacco Tax Act, the Trillium Trust Act, as well as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

I commend my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings. He's coming forward on Thursday with a private member's initiative that actually takes good steps forward in terms of addressing contraband tobacco. If this government was really serious, they would take hold of his ideas that he's bringing forward with his PMB and actually do the right thing.

This is what this government is found out to be. It's a government that's so cash-strapped, it never, ever does the right thing anymore, Speaker; it never, ever does. Whether it's the taxation associated with the pricing of carbon—we can't trust that they're going to get that right, for goodness sakes. If they were very serious about transparency and doing the right thing for Ontario, for goodness sakes, in this particular bill alone, under

schedule—I just need to double-check here. Under schedule 22, where they talk about the Trillium Trust, they would actually identify that perhaps the Trillium Trust would be an appropriate place to put revenue generated from the sale of carbon credits. Instead, no, they missed that opportunity. We don't have details.

There was a big announcement today about their commitment to tackling climate change, and when challenged for details—“There's got to be more to this announcement than just an announcement about an announcement”—they had nothing. Seriously, if they were going to be taking proper steps forward to address climate change and the carbon credits, they would have included the opportunity to put funds into the Trillium Trust. Instead, what do we have? It's a desperate attempt at a garage sale. Again, we have a cash-strapped government that's looking to generate funds wherever they can. Hydro One limited shares are going to be sold off. Hydro One Brampton shares, OPG headquarters real estate, LCBO headquarters real estate, OPG's Lakeview Generating Station—the list goes on. It's a garage sale. They're desperate. And who's going to pay at the end of the day? Ontario taxpayers.

This is a piece of legislation that is very extensive—hundreds of pages, as I said. One of the most significant worries that I have and my caucus colleagues share is the lack of transparency and the aggressive timeline. We talked about that already. It's a concern: How much more are they going to ram down our throats in their attempt to scurry and cover up their actions?

But we have very good critics. Our finance critics hold this government to account time and again with regards to specifically the second-last page of the legislation, where they're outed. They've been busted. We're going to hear so much more about other aspects of this legislation, because they don't want to talk about how they've been busted by their misuse of Ontario tax dollars and their need to find more dollars to cover their tracks.

In that regard, one of the most concerning aspects of the amendments the government is trying to ram through are the changes to the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. This government actually wants to eliminate the Ontario Economic Forecast Council, a body that was mandated back in 2004 to provide, upon request of the minister, advice relating to macroeconomic forecasts and assumptions to be used to prepare the budget and the related fiscal plan.

It's interesting, Speaker. Seemingly, they're wanting to shut down debate today so when it comes to Thursday, when we hear about a fall economic plan and accountability that is over two weeks late, you know—it's a

smoke show is what I'm trying to say, I guess. They're shutting down debate on Bill 144 and they are going to be ramming things through at a quick pace on Thursday because the fact of the matter is they are going to miss their mark. This fall, the economic statement that we're going to hear is going to prove what we've known in opposition all along: The track that this government is on is the wrong track, and they can't make their knee-jerk actions measure up to delivering a budget that's going to be on track.

It begs the question: When they're eliminating the Ontario Economic Forecast Council, what are they trying to hide? What do they want to keep from the public? What are they doing that is causing them to miss their financial projections? This government frequently seems to be trying to accelerate legislation that seems to benefit no one but themselves. We've talked a lot about that today—myself, our colleagues and the folks in the third party. But as I said, in the case of Bill 144, one can only assume they are ramming it through the House either because they forgot to include a majority of proper changes in the 2015 budget and they're trying to cover that up, or we really do have bad news coming in the fall economic statement.

I'd also, in my time, while we're discussing this bill today, like to touch a little bit on the Tobacco Tax Act. The proposed amendments would see a number of changes implemented. The first would be the clarification of how the taxable price of cigars is determined when the retail dealer is also a wholesaler, importer or manufacturer of cigars. It would also require registrants to provide information to the Minister of Finance in respect of raw-leaf tobacco that is damaged, lost, stolen, imported or exported. Lastly, it would seek to create baling and labelling requirements in respect of raw-leaf tobacco.

It's interesting. A former roommate of mine who I went to the University of Guelph with, she and her husband are tobacco farmers. They are just shaking their heads at the continued regulation that is being thrown at them time and again. Every fall, the Minister of Finance makes grand statements about how he will crack down on contraband tobacco, but when push comes to shove, he never acts.

I think that sums up this government: They never take the proper action on behalf of Ontario taxpayers.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):** The member will have additional time next debate time.

Since it is now 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

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

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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Miller, Norm (PC) <b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Parry Sound–Muskoka 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
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	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) <b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	York–Simcoe 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) <b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Halton 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) <b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Essex Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) <b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b> Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) <b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b> Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB) <b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt 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) Yurek, Jeff (PC) <b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b> Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard  
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo  
Han Dong, Michael Harris  
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith  
Monique Taylor  
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli  
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth  
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile  
Soo Wong  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson  
Mike Colle, Grant Crack  
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky  
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala  
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon  
John Fraser, Wayne Gates  
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi  
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney  
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri  
Laurie Scott  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren  
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Chris Ballard, Steve Clark  
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha  
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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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 / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**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  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French  
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat  
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**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  
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow  
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller  
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns  
Glenn Thibeault  
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, Sylvia Jones  
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi  
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon  
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler  
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch





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