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Tuesday 16 February 2016

Mardi 16 février 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 16 February 2016

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 16 février 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

**LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT
UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS**

Mr. Murray moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2016 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2016 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la récupération des ressources et l'économie circulaire et la Loi transitoire de 2016 sur le réacheminement des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member from Mississauga–Brampton South, who I'm sure will be joining us shortly.

Before I get started, I want to welcome all members back to the House. It's nice to see our colleagues. I hope you had a lovely Christmas and seasonal holidays, and had some time and rest with the families and loved ones we spend too little time with. So welcome back to all my colleagues, and happy new year.

Mr. Speaker, today I'm pleased to move second reading of the proposed legislation that would support Ontario's effort to keep valuable resources—in our landfill. Of course, this bill is also intended as part of our climate change strategy, as it makes a very important contribution to that effort from the Ministry of the Environment.

Bill 151, known as the Waste-Free Ontario Act, is part of a bold plan to transform how we manage waste. If passed, the proposed legislation will make producers fully responsible for resource recovery and the reduction of waste associated with their product, which is quite a shift from the way we currently manage it.

Our approach is outcomes-focused rather than prescriptive. The bill would provide producers with the flexibility to manage waste in the most cost-efficient and effective manner. It would encourage innovation, lower recycling costs and allow for greater consumer participation through convenient recycling options.

Shifting the costs associated with recovering end-of-life products and packaging from municipal taxpayers to producers would also save money for municipalities and improve the sustainability of municipal waste systems. If passed, this legislation would help us reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets and achieve goals in our climate change strategy. It would boost the Ontario economy and create jobs, while saving taxpayers money. I think those are three things that all members of this House would agree are good things to be doing.

I'd like to start with the circular economy. I know that the member for Huron–Bruce and the member for Toronto–Danforth joined our delegation to COP21 in Paris, and I think that many of them will remember being in front of the Paris city hall and how often we saw the concept of a circular economy, which is a foundational policy right now in countries like France, Britain and the Netherlands.

It really is a cradle-to-cradle approach, developing a sustainable economic system where valuable resources previously sent to the landfill are reintroduced to the economy, which is the opposite of what we have right now, which is a linear economy that is really based on the idea that you produce something and eventually it becomes garbage. We often say that most of our products, sadly, are designed for the dump, as end of life. A circular economy changes that. It drives innovation; it encourages businesses to design long-lasting, reusable and easily recyclable products, which they are more likely to do when they are responsible for the end of life of those products. It provides an incentive to design innovative ways of turning what is considered waste into a resource, while changing consumer behaviour.

The spinoff of a circular economy will cross all sectors of Ontario's economy. In some ways, this is first and foremost an economic bill, because its biggest impact will shift us from an economy in which we waste resources and add cost, to one in which we recover resources and improve productivity. I'd like to give you two examples, Mr. Speaker, if I can pause for a moment.

Right now, we make aluminum, one of the most carbon-intensive and polluting products that we make. We source bauxite in Jamaica and ship it to Canada; we mine alum, and we transport it. It is one of the most intensive forms of producing materials. In Quebec and Ontario, we have three steel smelters and we have one aluminum smelter. We have enough aluminum in our waste and recycling stream and enough steel to be able to run those plants. As a matter of fact, in Ontario we have

three steel plants right now that run entirely—entirely—on recovered steel.

If we ran the Alcan aluminum smelter on recovered aluminum, we would cut the energy—I just want to put this on the record; this gives you an idea of how dramatic the impacts of this legislation would be. We have enough aluminum in Quebec and Ontario to supply our regional aluminum smelter with enough aluminum that we would never have to mine it. It would cut the amount of energy required to make aluminum for the auto sector and our beverage industry by 95%. So when you see major industrial sites being able to reduce their energy costs and their energy use 95%, you get a sense of how dramatic this shift would be.

Beyond the shifting in resources—a less-energy, lower-carbon economy—there are other ways in which this bill will actually help us reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Ontario's Climate Change Strategy, which calls for a resource and waste reduction framework to assist Ontario's shift to a circular economy, will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In Ontario, absolute greenhouse gas emissions from waste increased by 25% between 1990 and 2012. In 2013, the Ontario waste sector was responsible for nine megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, 5% of the provincial total; 93% of those emissions came from waste sent to landfills. Most came from organic waste.

What is more, every year in Canada, about \$1 billion worth of recoverable materials are sent to landfills.

Products made from recycled materials, as I said, require less energy, have fewer greenhouse gas emissions and reduce the demand for raw materials. Equally importantly, waste prevention and resource recovery will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill, and mean that fewer emissions are generated at various stages of production.

0910

There are also some rather remarkable direct economic benefits, because a less wasteful economy is a more productive economy and provides significant benefit to Ontario and to many sectors and industries. This bill would shift the cost of recycling to producers, who would have flexibility and efficient, innovative ways to reduce waste. This bill is likely to save the municipal taxpayers of Ontario \$115 million as we shift the financial burden away from municipalities that have no real way to manage the end use of the products that they collect. They often end up in landfills or recycling and they're dependent on the vagaries of the market.

But by shifting to making the producers who own the plants, who own the manufacturing process—it is much easier for them to reintroduce those materials at the end of the life of the product back into the front end of the manufacturing process. This is a rather remarkable shift, and in the process of doing that, about \$115 million comes off the municipal tax base, which will help municipalities. That money can be better invested or saved by municipal governments.

Businesses that collect, process, broker and recover waste materials, as well as companies that manufacture them and distribute products made with recovered materials, stand to benefit from expanding markets. Through procurement policies and other things that we're doing, we will be looking at opening up more market demand for recovered materials.

Studies across Canada and around the world have shown that Ontario's existing waste diversion programs can create up to 10 times more jobs than waste disposal. While waste disposal is not a labour-intensive activity, recycling and resource recovery is labour intensive; it requires a lot of people and it creates good-paying jobs.

One study indicates that diversion of organic waste creates 60% more GDP than disposing of those wastes. It is estimated that for every thousand tonnes of waste diverted in Ontario, seven jobs are created via the Blue Box Program and Ontario's diversion programs.

Members of this House should be very proud. We were the first jurisdiction in the world to introduce the now ubiquitous Blue Box Program. It was done under the leadership of my friend the Honourable James Bradley, the member for St. Catharines. That was in the 1980s. Minister Bradley and I talked about the fact that this is probably the largest, most expansive bill and change to waste-related resource recovery legislation right now—and competing right now. We're not the first, because the Netherlands and some other countries have done this, but this is probably the biggest expansion, investment and shift in the way we approach this since the 1980s, when my friend from St. Catharines stood in this ministry.

Recovering just 60% of waste materials could create 13,000 jobs in Ontario and contribute \$1.5 billion to Ontario's GDP. That's a very, very significant shift, and it's important that the investments we're making in public utilities and public services are resulting in rates of return on investment and in greater rates of job creation.

In addition to creating jobs, increasing waste diversion rates and improving resource recovery will help Ontario businesses stay competitive in the global economy because it's more resource-productive. We have often seen some of the great work done by Sustainable Prosperity in Ottawa showing that we have a problem in Canada, across this country from sea to sea, with productivity, and mostly "natural capital productivity," which is a big term for how efficiently we use resources in the economy. Our gap with the United States is about 25%. If we close that productivity gap, to which natural capital productivity is one of the largest contributors, the average Canadian family would have about \$7,000 more disposable income.

These things really do deal in very, very specific ways with our competitiveness, with our rates of job creation and with the disposable income of Canadians. Sadly, as Canadians—maybe because of the bounty of our resources—compared to other OECD countries, we have been much less productive in our natural capital. This bill will move us from the back of the pack to the front of the pack, certainly in legislation.

I also want to thank the many, many stakeholders over the years. This is the third time some form or attempt has been made in the last decade to fix and to improve our waste collection. I'd like to thank many people in the corporate community. Unilever Canada is a zero-waste company and a very large employer in Ontario that makes many of the household products that most of us are familiar with and pick up at our local stores. Their company's vice-president and general counsel, John Coyne, recognized that Bill 151 focuses more on outcomes than process and is essential to growing Ontario's recycling programs and encouraging all producers to continue investing in product and packaging innovation.

One of the things that's been quite remarkable, whether it's been Unilever or Loblaws, is that a lot of the retail and producer sector has stood with us on this and has worked hand in glove with us over the last year and with the ministry to develop something that will work for consumers and work for our citizens, and really allows them the tools to take responsibility—because Unilever knows it can reduce costs if it has more control over what happens to its project.

Obviously, all of us know that one of the largest areas that fills the waste stream and the recycling stream is the products from the beverages that we all consume and drink. A lot of those are disposable as well. As we move to make more durable products, we know we have some challenges there.

I want to thank the Canadian Beverage Association. They represent more than 60 brands of non-alcoholic beverages. They employ over 20,000 Canadians, and Jim Goetz, president of the association, calls the proposed legislation a positive step in waste reduction. He sees the government's approach to empower producers with more responsibility and flexibility as allowing the non-alcoholic beverage industry to implement initiatives that increase recycling, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and further develop a circular economy in Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank some of the other folks who have worked on this: the Ontario Waste Management Association, which represents more than 300 private sector companies, public sector municipalities, and others involved in the waste management sector. Rob Cook, the association's CEO, says the proposed legislation is an important step forward for the province. He has also said that it moves "towards a circular economy, which will improve resource efficiency, reduce our environmental footprint, increase productivity, create local jobs and foster economic growth." I want to thank them for their work.

Environmental organizations such as Environmental Defence and the Toronto Environmental Alliance also welcome Bill 151. These organizations recognize that the government's strategy marks the beginning of a new approach to waste in Ontario. In particular, they commend Ontario for making the explicit link between waste and climate change and committing to a vision for a circular economy where Ontario produces zero waste.

This proposed legislation would help us divert more waste from landfills, and it would increase accountability

for those who produce waste and have the greatest ability to influence the design of packaging.

The origins of the current system we have go back to 2002. As some of you know and as some of you tease me about from time to time, I was mayor of the capital city of the province to our immediate west. When Premier Wynne asked me to take this cabinet post on, she was very clear that she had thought we had tried many things in the last couple of decades around waste and a lot of them hadn't worked. I'm not taking partisan shots here, but I think it would be safe to say that while they were all well-intentioned initiatives, they left us with a very complicated system of numerous stewardship organizations. When I actually looked at the array of market management organizations and oversight organizations, I have to say, it seemed pretty excessive. When Premier Wynne took over, she said, "Can you find a way forward that simplifies this?" Having worked in other systems and having done consulting in my life in other municipalities—I'm not sure what the thinking was 10, 15 or 20 years ago when these things were introduced, but it seemed to invite a level of complexity that would defy accountability.

One of the things that was personally very important to me in the last year, because you can imagine that this has consumed a lot of my time as minister in the last 12 months, and that of my political staff—I want to thank Colin O'Meara and my team, and my colleague from Mississauga-Brampton South who's been a great partner in this—was sorting through this, because when you have a system that's so complicated, where you have organizations run by industry with very little accountability, you can imagine that changing a system that's that embedded, that involves municipalities and has complex relationships is hard.

0920

I want to thank the Association of Municipalities of Ontario for their work and their leadership, and those same industries, because this is a dramatic level of change: The IFOs are gone, the multi-layers of organizations are gone, the market is restored, and the lines of accountability to Ontarians publicly, as well as reduced cost, are very clearly drawn in this.

I will be happy—and I hope this bill gets speedy passage because it cleans up what I think has been the better part of a quarter of a century of different types of experiments with complex models of service delivery that, while well intentioned, didn't deliver the kind of clarity and results and accountability, we think. I want to thank Premier Wynne for her support in allowing this bill to come forward so quickly. You can imagine turning this around in one year is quite the task.

If you compare it to some of the other proposed legislation—Bill 91, bills introduced in previous Legislatures over the years to try and fix this, ones that never passed—you'll see that this is a much more dramatic shift and a fundamental shift, because I think even the attempts of the last several years were not as stringent or as complete. This is a much more comprehensive, funda-

mental change in the principles and in the accountability that goes with it. It should be very clear to everyone—whether you're a producer, a consumer, a municipality, a provincial minister, my colleagues from the Legislature—who is responsible for what piece of this; who is responsible for managing the money and the transactions; who is responsible for the outcome; who is responsible for ensuring that the most cost-effective delivery system is in place. Our diversion rates, Mr. Speaker, went up in the 1980s, when my colleague from St. Catharines introduced the Blue Box Program, and have really struggled to get improvements beyond that in the last few years. This will start to see greater ambition. This will put us into a system where we will see a much more significant increase in our diversion rates, moving us ahead.

It's also interesting that some of the most successful resource companies right now—our three steel mills, the companies that are working on resource recovery and energy recovery—have cut their costs and have increased their productivity, driving more outputs with fewer inputs. When you're making steel from old cars and old materials, or you're making aluminum from aluminum cans and not merging that, the input costs are so much lower. It's less energy; it is less resources. You've removed all of the costs associated with landfill—because when an aluminum can goes into a landfill, it sits there. Right now, when we talk about energy, if you took all of the aluminum cans that do not end up in recycling but just end up in landfills alone, there's enough embedded energy in those cans to run the Pickering nuclear plant for 59 days. That's how much energy we lose—never mind the aluminum. That's just the energy that we've lost by turning a perfectly usable material. Aluminum, steel, many of these materials can be reprocessed in perpetuity. The resource is never exhausted. They do not degrade. This concept of a circular economy starts to link us up with other progressive countries and other progressive jurisdictions that do that.

The other piece that we need to do some more work on—I think it's just one in my last few minutes I want to address before I turn it over to my colleague, who will have the last half-hour: We're struggling with climate change right now. You've often heard me say in this House, when people ask me when I'm out across Ontario, "What's your biggest concern about climate change?" I've said that it's really food and water security. You look at the droughts in California, you look at the droughts in Syria; the collapse of food production in the Fertile Crescent, the most important food source in the Middle East. In California, where 90% of our tomatoes and 74% of our lettuce comes from, they're projected, according to NASA, after the most severe droughts they've ever experienced, to be in a 40-year drought, which is as far as NASA projects. We saw fires in the Prairies that had air quality warnings in Regina and Saskatoon; pine needles impacting on our forestry sector, destroying millions of acres of woodlot; and the droughts that are causing fires that are taking out many of our natural resources—both agricultural land and fires on the Prairies as well as that.

The other piece with climate change is that every one degree Celsius that the temperature changes—Ontario will be more severely hit than other places; the southern part of Ontario over the next 30 years will increase by four degrees Celsius and the northern part, where my friend Minister Gravelle comes from, Thunder Bay, will see an eight-degrees-Celsius change. We didn't do anything about that. If you can imagine, Thunder Bay eight degrees warmer—having been the mayor of that other colder city down the highway, that may come as good news to some folks. But the problem is that the devastating impact it will have on the boreal forest and on people's livelihood, and on many of the industries that people in Thunder Bay live on, makes the downside a lot worse than the upside.

If you appreciate that, according to NOAA, one degree Celsius is a 7% increase in the amount of water that is absorbed into the atmosphere, dramatically changing precipitation regionally, the snow patterns and precipitation patterns in southwestern Ontario, in our food belt, or in the forestry belt in northern Ontario are going to be devastated; just the impact of that much water on trees that are not used to absorbing it, on wetlands, on the ecosystems from which many people get their livelihood—and we all depend on those forestry products and that food. We have winter roads now, Mr. Speaker, that are up for only six days a year.

The reason I was talking about food and those products and waste is because we on this planet, especially in countries like this, throw out 40% of all our food; 40% ends up in the garbage. During climate change, we'll lose about one third of our food production. That could be offset if we were just better at managing our food resource. We import \$4 billion worth of food into Ontario every year that we could grow here. Farmers are arguably some of the most important people, if not the most important people, going forward in the next few decades as we confront climate change, because they will be farming in more hostile environments than they ever have before, and our food security, because of many of the places we get our food, will be impacted by drought.

When you realize that about nine megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions come from organic waste, that's a lot—we're trying to reduce by about 19 megatonnes. If we can keep that material from degrading in landfills and not allow it to emit carbon, this is one of the most significant contributions, outside of the transportation and building areas, that we can make, and at the same time, we are also saving a lot of food. It's interesting that in Paris, France, they just introduced laws that don't allow food to be thrown out by retailers, which is an interesting new twist on things. While we're not going that far, I think this is a much more positive and voluntary incentive for people to do that.

It really is a lot of us just thinking about how much resources we use, Mr. Speaker—because we use the equivalent of about nine planets. That's how much resources our generation is using. If we continue to use nine planets' worth of resources, we won't be long for

this Earth, because we only have one planet. These things are connected: our climate change efforts, our environmental footprint and the amount of resources we consume. Canadians throw out more garbage than any other society in the world: 777 kilograms of garbage a year. If you can imagine a stack of garbage nearly a tonne large, that's a lot. We can live within the norms of other modern Western economies. We certainly should be able to get to the average, which means that we would cut our waste stream by about half. If we could all quickly get down to only throwing out 300 or 400 kilograms, that would be it. Our ambitions—even if they are in the middle of the pack in mediocrity—would be an improvement of about 100% if we could just get down to the world norm.

I am very proud to be associated with this bill. I think it's one of the most important pieces of legislation, both as an economic bill and in the 13,000 jobs it will create directly. The indirect benefits, as we move to a more efficient economy, making us more competitive globally: removing so much of the material that is out there in landfills, rotting away, emitting greenhouse gases; repurposing our economy to a higher-productivity economy, taking about \$110 million or \$120 million off the municipal tax bill, improving efficiency; and—really rewarding—breaking up what is a system that was incredibly complicated and defied the kind of accountability that we would like to see. This is a bold new direction that we're going in. It's very different than other attempts to reform the system.

0930

Mr. Speaker, I will turn it over to the member of provincial Parliament for Mississauga–Brampton South. In turning it over to my colleague Ms. Amrit Mangat, I want to thank her, because she has one of the tough jobs. She works with all of you to make sure that your voices and fingerprints are on this legislation, and on getting it through the House. I want to thank her personally for the great work she did on the Great Lakes bill. I think many of you had some good conversations about that. I look forward to her leadership and her stewardship here in the Legislature as we move this through.

It's a great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, again. To my colleagues: Welcome back. Happy new year. I hope you had a lovely time with your families. We often take the folks in our lives for granted until they're not there. God bless and keep you all safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Continuing with debate, I turn it over to the member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak in support of the motion put forward by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for the second reading of the Waste-Free Ontario Act. He is a minister who is very dedicated, very engaged and very passionate about fighting climate change and creating jobs.

Bill 151, if passed, would recover resources, reduce waste, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, fight climate change and, as our minister said in his speech, it would also establish a circular economy.

I would like to expand on the overview of Bill 151. If this proposed legislation is passed, it would enact two acts (1) reducing waste, and (2) replacing existing programs operated under the Waste Diversion Act, 2002. And if this proposed legislation is passed, producers will be accountable in full for recovering resources and reducing waste associated with their products and packaging.

This legislation would also create a new oversight body known as the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority to oversee the implementation of the new producer responsibility model. This authority will be equipped with new powers, new compliance and enforcement tools, and with enhanced oversight and accountability.

This proposed act would also enable our government to issue policy statements to support that interest. It would require ministries, municipalities, producers and others to perform in a manner that is consistent with those policies. The second act would ensure that existing waste diversion programs can be smoothly transitioned to a new producer responsibility model.

Now, the question arises: Why is there a need for such legislation? Why is it important? Ontario's recycling programs have been recognized internationally. Almost all Ontarians—97% of our households—have access to the Blue Box Program. In the residential sector, 47% of household waste is diverted from landfills, but the rate for the rest of the economy is much, much lower. Existing waste diversion programs cover only 15% of Ontario's waste stream, and over the last decade, our overall waste diversion rate has stalled at 25%. As a result, more than 12 million tonnes of waste is generated annually in Ontario, and every year, approximately \$1 billion worth of recoverable materials is lost to landfills across Canada, so it's very clear that more needs to be done. That is why Bill 151 is very, very important. It is intended to enable a shift to a circular economy which would increase resource recovery and waste reduction in Ontario.

In this proposed legislation, the new model, as I said earlier, would have a producer responsibility framework. That would make producers environmentally accountable and financially responsible for their products and packaging at end of life. The province would establish requirements that producers must meet to achieve desired outcomes for designated products and packaging. These requirements would apply to responsible producers and create a more level playing field. Requirements would be set out in regulation and producers would be able to decide how best to meet them.

We want all Ontarians to have reliable, accessible and convenient services like the blue box and other waste diversion programs. To provide this access, the government would have the ability to set consumer convenience and accessibility standards. The proposed legislation would support increased consumer participation. This

could include geographically based standards to ensure services are provided across the province. The province could also require producers to develop promotion and education programs to support consumer awareness.

In this proposed legislation, we will have a strategy to implement our broader approach, which is set out in our Draft Strategy for a Waste Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy. That draft strategy would be a road map to help Ontario to leverage planning, policy and economic tools to reduce the amount of waste generated in Ontario, improve resource recovery and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector.

Together, the proposed legislation and strategy would boost recycling in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. They would further foster innovation in product and packaging design, and they would incent companies to look for ways to make their recycling processes more economical and stay competitive. They would allow full producer responsibility for the Blue Box Program and remove the financial burden on municipal property taxpayers. Under the strategy, a plan would be developed to reduce the amount of organic materials going into landfills.

This proposed legislation would have a huge consumer impact also. How it would benefit Ontario households: Under Ontario's proposed approach, consumers would continue to have convenient access to recycling through the blue box. In fact, we expect the public will be able to recycle more material than they can today because producers would be required to meet collection standards for more materials, and the proposed legislation would make producers responsible for providing customers with clear information about how to manage their end-of-life products, including drop-off sites. In a more general way, Ontario households would benefit from the proposed legislation because our approach will be good for the environment and the economy.

There will also be huge economic benefits if Bill 151 is passed. It would boost the economy by recovering more resources from more waste materials and create jobs in the waste diversion sector. Our government's proposed approach would provide a range of tools to ensure valuable resources are recovered, reused and reintegrated into Ontario's economy, which our minister said in his speech would be known as a circular economy.

0940

In fact, according to the Conference Board of Canada's recent report, recovering just 60% of waste materials could create 13,000 jobs and contribute \$1.5 billion in gross domestic product in Ontario. Recovering resources from waste can create seven jobs for every 1,000 tonnes of waste captured, and it will generate 10 times more jobs than if that waste were sent to landfills.

If passed, this proposed legislation would provide producers with the flexibility to manage waste in the most cost-efficient and cost-effective manner.

Since shifting costs of recovering products and packaging from municipal taxpayers to producers would also help municipalities, and municipalities could save more

than \$100 million annually, this will further improve the sustainability of municipal services.

There are huge environmental benefits as well. The proposed Waste-Free Ontario Act would help us reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets and achieve the goals in our climate change strategy. Landfills have an environmental as well as an economic cost. When organic waste and other biodegradable materials, such as paper, are disposed of in landfills, they begin to break down. This creates emissions such as methane, which has a global warming potential 25 times greater than that of carbon dioxide.

Greenhouse gas emissions from Ontario's waste increased by 25% between 1990 and 2012 as the waste in Ontario landfills has increased. In fact, emissions from the waste sector, including the release of methane from landfills, accounted for 5% of total emissions in Ontario in 2013. Ontario currently avoids adding 2.2 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions to our air every year through our waste diversion programs. This is equivalent to taking almost half a million cars off the road each year.

Recycling uses less energy and produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions than creating products with virgin materials. It also avoids the environmental impact of activities such as the extraction of raw materials.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, there will be benefits for the municipalities also. Since the cost is shifting to the producer from municipal taxpayers, it would save money for municipalities and improve the sustainability of municipal services. Municipalities would realize additional savings as more materials are designated for the new producer-responsibility approach; for example, fluorescent bulbs and tubes etc.

Bill 151 would also set a clear process for addressing disputes. The proposed legislation requires dispute resolution provisions to be included in contracts between producers and other parties, such as municipalities, in order to address disputes related to services and compensation.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a transition from the proposed legislation, if it is passed—to replace all the existing programs. The proposed act was developed in response to what we heard from across Ontario. One thing we heard very loud and clear was that we needed to ensure a smooth and orderly transition of the existing programs to ensure no interruption of current services to Ontarians.

The Waste Diversion Transition Act, under Bill 151, would facilitate the smooth transition of existing waste diversion programs to a new producer-responsibility approach. The transition process would be based on four principles:

- (1) Government would lead the overall transition process;
- (2) Each program would have a customized transition process;
- (3) Extensive stakeholder consultations would be conducted; and

(4) Finally, Ontario's experience with and access to services such as the Blue Box Program will never be negatively impacted.

To ensure a smooth and orderly transition, Bill 151 would allow the existing waste diversion programs to continue until they are transitioned into new ones. Specifically, Bill 151 would set clear rules and responsibilities, and the process for transition. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change would provide clear direction on how the transition would be undertaken.

Working with stakeholders, each industry funding organization would develop and implement a wind-up plan for its own program and itself. The new Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority would approve and oversee the implementation of the windup plans, to ensure that the minister's direction is followed and to mitigate the risks of any interruption in services.

If Bill 151 is passed, we will be also working extensively with all relevant parties—including the existing industry funding organizations, producers, municipalities, waste management providers and the public—on how to make this transition as seamless and as efficient as possible, without disruption to program services or funding.

The Draft Strategy for a Waste Free Ontario: Building the Circular Economy would provide a road map for transitioning to the existing programs. If the proposed legislation is passed, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change anticipates that the transition of the municipal hazardous or special waste program, waste electrical and electronic equipment program, and Used Tires Program could be complete within two to four years. However, the transition of the Blue Box Program may take longer, as government, municipalities and producers would need to discuss the transition process extensively to ensure that residents continue to receive convenient and accessible collection services.

Now I would like to talk about the transition of the Blue Box Program, and its transition under the proposed legislation. As I said earlier, Ontario is recognized internationally for our recycling programs. The blue box system is a key contributor for reducing waste in Ontario while providing households with a convenient way to recycle their printed paper and packaging. A remarkable 97% of households in the province have convenient access to these programs.

This legislation, if passed, would ensure that everyone—whether in southern Ontario, or in northern Ontario, in urban and rural areas—would have the same level of convenient access to the blue box services that they have today. The proposed new oversight body, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, would be responsible for enforcing these service standards. I want to assure all members that the government would only transition the Blue Box Program to the new producer responsibility framework when producers are fully ready to deliver blue box services based on standards set by the government.

0950

I would also like to touch on organic waste diversion. As I said earlier, our strategy includes a plan to increase the diversion of organic waste. Organic waste such as food, leaves and yard waste makes up about one third of Ontario's waste stream. Much of this material still ends up in landfills. Keeping organic waste out of landfills ensures valuable nutrients are recovered, and it will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Addressing organic waste will require coordination among multiple players, including households, waste-service providers, restaurants, food manufacturers, retailers and food distributors. That is why our draft strategy makes it clear that the development of our organic action plan would be steered by a stakeholder working group to coordinate efforts and identify the best tools to move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have talked about how the proposed legislation and strategy would address the Blue Box Program and organic waste. Now I would like to turn to industrial, commercial and institutional waste.

As I noted earlier, Ontario's current overall waste diversion rate is about 25%, but for the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors, the rate is only 13%. The proposed legislation and draft strategy would provide a number of tools to increase diversion in these sectors. More materials would be designated under the new producer-responsibility approach. We would require more waste generated in industrial facilities, commercial establishments and institutional buildings to be diverted. Our organic action plan and disposal bans would also assist with diverting more waste from those sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize some companies' extensive effort in increasing diversion. Our draft strategy seeks to develop markets for materials and support behaviours that reduce waste materials before they are generated.

As I was talking about industrial, commercial and institutional waste—last year I had the opportunity to visit a school. Some institutions are doing it on their own. It is an elementary school, and the name of the school is St. John Bosco School. The students collected 730 kilograms of batteries, more than any other school in the province, because they strongly believe that recycling batteries protects our natural environment. I would like to congratulate all the students of St. John Bosco elementary school for doing such great work, who were doing it with the help of an NGO, Earth Rangers.

Mr. Speaker, in preparing the proposed legislation, Ontario looked to other jurisdictions—we didn't do it in a vacuum—which have started to move toward a circular economy already. They are implementing producer-responsibility approaches and other targeted measures to manage waste. We found that those jurisdictions that measure and invest in the effective use of their resources not only reduce waste but also improve their economic output.

For example, Quebec's residual materials management policy sets out actions, timelines and targets related to waste diversion in the residential, industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. Their approach includes pro-

ducer responsibility, landfill bans and a landfill levy to fund waste diversion initiatives and new infrastructure.

British Columbia has implemented producer-responsibility approaches for a number of types of waste, including a program for residential packaging and printed paper. Disposal bans have also been used at the provincial level in British Columbia for beverage containers and at the regional level for a number of additional materials, including organic waste, in metro Vancouver and Nanaimo.

California has set a goal of 75% recycling, composting or reduction by 2020. The state has implemented a range of initiatives to achieve that goal: Producer responsibility—again, the same model, voluntary and government-run programs, as well as retail take-back programs, are in place, supported by source separation requirements and landfill bans.

In Europe, Austria and the Netherlands have achieved or exceeded recycling targets by implementing a range of policy tools to increase resource recovery. These include producer responsibility, which we're going to adopt if this legislation is passed, disposal bans and voluntary agreements. Germany has achieved a 40% increase in resource productivity since 2000 and reduced its domestic material consumption. Producer responsibility is applied by almost all those jurisdictions to a number of waste materials, such as packaging and household hazardous waste.

Ontario's proposed legislation and our strategy for a waste-free Ontario build on the experience of these and other jurisdictions. We are looking to what all those jurisdictions have done and how we can adopt those programs.

As I said earlier, Bill 151 will not only be good for our environment; it will also recover resources and reduce waste, while also supporting our climate change strategy and helping us reduce greenhouse gas emissions—as well as creating jobs in that sector.

I don't see any downside to this bill; it's a win-win situation. I'm very pleased to support this bill, which is good for the economy, good for everything. It would boost the economy and create conditions to recover more waste materials and create more jobs. I encourage all members of this House to swiftly get this bill passed so that all the players in the industry can benefit from it. I will be very pleased to support this bill.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: That was almost an hour that we heard from the government on the new Bill 151. This kind of replaces Bill 91, if you recall. That was from a previous Parliament. It ended up in the recycling bin because it was such a bad piece of legislation. Thankfully, in this piece of legislation, they have incorporated some of the suggestions that our critic at the time, Michael Harris, made when we debated Bill 91.

I want to talk about the record of the government when it comes to waste diversion. It is a hugely important subject in our economies and in our province today to

deal with the waste, because we produce vast amounts of waste, I believe, sometimes, unnecessarily. Nevertheless, we still have to deal with it.

1000

I remember, when this government came to power in 2003—yes, 2003—they promised that they would have a waste diversion rate of 60% by 2008. They brought in an act in 2004, promising a waste diversion rate of 60% by 2008. It was 25% when they came into power. In 2008, it had not improved. They have a record of failing repeatedly when it comes to the issue of waste diversion.

We're largely in support of this act. We're going to be looking for some changes—our environment critic will be speaking to it shortly as well. But this can't be just another one of these Liberal publicity stunts, where, at the end of the day, they end up bringing in an act that fails again, like their Bill 91, which never even saw the light of day, because even they themselves realized that it was not going to be successful.

So I hope that they've figured this one out and we can act on waste diversion in a way that truly, truly reduces the amount of waste we are turning to our landfills in this province, because it's something we must do.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I want to welcome everybody back from—I won't say a break, because it was a recess from the Legislature. I'm sure everybody was busy back in their ridings. I don't want the public thinking that, during a recess here, we are not working back in our ridings.

It's my pleasure to join in the conversation about Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, or—the long-form title—An Act to enact the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act, 2015 and the Waste Diversion Transition Act, 2015 and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002.

There's been a lot said about waste management, and I think that we could all do our part to do a better job of waste management as far as recycling and that sort of thing. I'm reading through some of the notes here, and what jumps out at me is that, although it states that the producers of these products would be responsible for the cost of reclaiming the materials they used, such as packaging, municipalities would act as a service provider to producers to help them fulfill their obligation under the act. The fact that there are no details yet as to how municipalities are supposed to do that, that it's going to be rolled out throughout the regulations—we don't have a lot of information on that, and that's concerning to me, specifically in my riding, where we face a lot of economic challenges. We certainly don't want any surprise expenses to municipalities while they're trying to enforce or facilitate producers of these materials in recovering material.

It will be interesting, as the debate progresses, to see how these issues are going to be addressed and how municipalities are actually going to be affected by this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now recognize the member from Kingston and the Islands.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's certainly a great pleasure to speak today on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015.

Ontario's leadership in creating a circular economy is nothing short of inspiring, as is the work of the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I would like to thank the minister for noting the international and national implications of climate change and some of the impressive achievements from around the globe.

A circular economy where nothing is wasted is critical to not only Ontario's future but also Canada's future. Just the other week, I had the privilege to tour the recycling facilities at the Kingston Area Recycling Centre, led by Derek Ochej and Heather Roberts. Each one of our municipalities keeps track of our recycling rates. For example, 92% of Kingstonians are using their blue and grey bins, but only 50% are using their organic waste bins.

As the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has mentioned, there is an entire economy that is created through recycling. Consider, for example, plastic juice containers, which are purchased from our recycling facilities at between \$400 and \$700 per tonne, as opposed to cardboard juice containers, which garner around \$90 per tonne.

The recycling economy is very relevant to our municipalities across the province, but it also needs to become more relevant to each and every one of us as we make individual purchasing decisions. Considering that waste management contributes \$2.1 billion to Ontario's GDP, and every 1,000 tonnes of diverted waste from landfill generates seven full-time jobs, Ontario is on the right track.

It is my greatest hope that each and every member of this House will support this very important bill.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Good morning, everyone. It's a pleasure for me to speak for just a couple of minutes on Bill 151. As most people have noted, it's a very substantial act, and I want to thank the ministry for including some of the suggestions that our party and others in the province made on the previous bill, Bill 91.

Any time I talk about this subject, I have to think back to the days when I was involved in municipal politics. Back when I was a local mayor and we started the blue box recycling program in our community in the late 1980s, there was a lot of pride in the fact that we were doing something very positive. Back then, we promoted the three Rs: reduce, reuse and recycle. We did a great job in making sure that people were aware of the benefits of recycling, but I don't think over those years we did our due diligence with the other two—and our critic the member for Huron–Bruce reminded me about recovery as well.

One of the things that I would like to impart on the debate is the fact that we should, as parties, put a lot of effort into educating the community. There are still a lot

of people, especially in some of our rural pockets in the province, who still haven't understood the importance of participating in these programs. Some of their municipal councils need some guidance and some assistance in how best to attack the importance of what's involved in this bill.

As well, what I'd like to hear from the government is that they're willing to listen to some other amendments and some other suggestions. In our party we believe that there should be some clear, legislated timelines to eliminate things like the eco tax. We believe that we should be meeting with the industries and our businesses about fostering innovation.

I think there are a lot of things that we could do together. If we hear from the government that they're willing to amend this bill further, they might get a little more support as it moves forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The conversation has been pretty positive, and I hope it continues to be.

I take issue with my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

It's interesting, because I was living in a parallel universe at the time when my friend was a mayor. It was interesting in a sense because in Manitoba, at the exact same time, the bill from the previous government was being introduced. I said at the time, "How will this ever work? You're basically setting up stewardship organizations that break the very idea of a market." If you look at the systems that were built in Manitoba—and I'm not trying to take shots, because at the time, I think there was some thinking behind it.

I'm hoping we don't start getting into a pointing-fingers game because, quite frankly, there is some shared opportunity. We've tried to incorporate those ideas. I put a lot of private members' bills from the opposition into the legislation, so you'll see some of your fingerprints on that.

This is something, in my years at the Canadian Urban Institute and others—I've worked in this field for so long, both in the public sector and in the private sector—that this is engineered on a very different set of principles. It's really creating market mechanisms and restoring the market. I think there is some opportunity, but as the member from Leeds–Grenville said, it's going to be "How do we want to approach this together?" If people get into mud about who's responsible for which piece of what's broken, that's a very destructive kind of thing. If we want to get into a discussion—people were trying to do different things at different points in time and they didn't work.

One of the things that concerns me about going to extended responsibility—this bill actually has standards, performance standards and guarantees for remote, northern and rural communities that protect the blue box and the funding, I want to say that that was very important to us, and I know it's important to members opposite. I'm glad that's in here, and if there are ways to improve

things, the government is very open to ideas on how to improve this.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): First of all, I'd like to thank all members for a great debate this morning and their comments. Since it is now close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I see some people standing, but I'm not sure—the member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to be back. Good morning.

We will be joined by members of the Ontario Association of Certified Home Inspectors: Mr. Len Inkster, Mr. Scott May and Mr. Patrick Auriol. They'll be here in a few minutes.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: As all members will recall, this is the week that we kick off Kindness Week at Queen's Park, so I urge all members to be kind to each other. You will also remember that the members from Nickel Belt and Dufferin–Caledon and I, after question period, will be giving out kindness cookies. That's your reward for being kind during question period—because there are cookies waiting for you afterwards.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Mr. Speaker, I love the beard.

I wanted to introduce Aerissa Roy-Dupuis, who is a student from York University in my office, here witnessing the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would the members please join me in welcoming the family of the late Mr. John Twining Clement, MPP for Niagara Falls during the 29th Parliament, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his widow, Carol; daughter Marnie; stepson, Tony Clement, and his wife, Lynne Golding; and grandchildren Alex, Lauren, Jason, Maxim and Elexa. Tony Clement served as MPP for Brampton West–Mississauga during the 36th and 37th Parliaments.

We welcome all of you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And maybe numbers 31 and 32. Is that right? I can't remember.

Pat Reid has joined us, as well—thank you, Pat—and former Speaker David Warner is here. The chair of the former parliamentarians, Steve Gilchrist, is also joining us today.

JOHN CLEMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would call on the government House leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Good morning, Speaker. Happy new year to you and to all members.

Speaker, I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to John Twining

Clement, former member for Niagara Falls, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to give a tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure and truly my honour today to rise and commemorate the life and career of Mr. John Clement.

I would like to start by acknowledging the members of his family who are here today as we pay our respects. John's wife, Carol, his stepson, MP Tony Clement, and Tony's wife, Lynne, are all here today. I'd also like to acknowledge John's daughter Marnie and his grandchildren Alex, Lauren, Jason and Max, and thank you all for being here today.

Born and raised in Niagara Falls—anyone who reads through the history of Mr. Clement's extraordinary life can't help but be impressed by what this man was able to accomplish in almost everything he participated in. He was a graduate of Osgoode Hall Law School, an accomplished pilot, a community man who was involved in various different community groups and, by all accounts, one of the great speakers of his day.

Mr. Clement was first elected to this House on October 21, 1971, representing the great people of my riding, Niagara Falls. Just by looking at his career highlights, it's easy to see that Mr. Clement was a very capable representative. During his five years here in the Legislature, he would hold the positions of Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations and Solicitor General, and the post of Attorney General. Throughout his five years, he played an enormous role in the direction of this province.

It is clear that in this Legislature, Mr. Clement was a man who commanded the respect of his peers both in his bench and across the aisle. But I would like to remember Mr. Clement in a more personal way. As the representative for Niagara Falls, I still have the privilege of being able to meet and talk with people whose lives he touched and those he inspired.

Perhaps one of the best examples of those stories comes from Wayne Thomson, a former mayor of Niagara Falls and a current city councillor. After decades of service to our community, there is no one Wayne hasn't met and worked with in some way or another. When you talk to Wayne about Mr. Clement, he's very straightforward. He will tell you that Mr. Clement was a great man, a man who had a reputation of doing things his way. In the community, he was a respected lawyer and a man whose heart was dedicated to the people he served.

Wayne told me that one of the things that was most memorable about Mr. Clement was his sense of humour and how involved he was in our community. Imagine that: Mr. Clement was the right-hand man of Premier Davis; he was a brilliant lawyer, one of the most respected lawmakers of his day; and yet he's most remembered for his caring personality. He is remembered for being a

man who had a sense of humour and was willing to spend his time giving back to the community. That is why he's remembered as a great representative for his constituents. Receiving such high praise from a man like Wayne Thomson does not come easy, but John Clement earned it.

Over the years in this Legislature, he fought tirelessly on behalf of his constituents and certainly made them proud, leaving an incredible legacy. The work he did on behalf of his constituents is still remembered to this day in this Legislature and certainly in Niagara Falls.

Now his political legacy carries on with his stepson, the member of Parliament for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Though John and I had different political views, I can say I am proud to follow in his footsteps. He was an excellent representative for the people of Niagara Falls. I am proud to know that those who held this position before me still have such respect in their community.

I am honoured to say that Mr. Clement was from Niagara Falls, and I'm proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of this House today and remember his career and his service to his community.

1040

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The eulogy that appears in the local newspaper is always very revealing, and if I can take the opportunity to steal a few words from that eulogy, it really captures the John Clement that people in the Niagara Peninsula, and indeed people who served with him in the Legislature, knew and loved. It says:

“John lived life to the fullest and achieved everything he wanted in life—he became a lawyer, a father, a pilot, a member of the provincial Legislature and, most proudly, a grandfather seven times over. He was known as a loyal and generous friend. He sat on the Niagara Falls school board, was president of the St. Catharines Flying Club and served as a member of provincial Parliament for Niagara Falls from 1971 to 1975. During that time he made lifelong friends from all political parties in the Legislature. A brilliant public speaker, he was a much sought-after master of ceremonies at both political and non-political functions for many years after he left public life.”

It reminds me, when you think of a person of that nature, of a person we know, Andy Brandt, who is always wanted as a master of ceremonies at so many events. John Clement was in that particular ilk, and John Rhodes as well—these are people who served some time ago, before most members of this Legislature.

In the Niagara Peninsula, John Clement was highly respected for not only his work in the community but when he went to Queen's Park and held some senior positions—obviously an individual upon whom Bill Davis relied, with a good deal of reason, because of the kind of counsel that he gave.

I talked to a former member of the Legislature who would have known John—not that he served with him but knew him as a counsel to committees—and that was Sean Conway. The words that he kept recalling about

John Clement were the words that referred to his very, very good sense of humour. He said that to sit down with John Clement on any occasion was to enjoy stories from years gone by—but a very quick wit. He could pull a saying out of the hat so quickly and disarm an audience or others.

He was also a Progressive Conservative, back when there were Progressive Conservatives. I know there are still some around. But he was a genuine Progressive Conservative, and I admired that about him. In fact, I should tell my colleagues, when I came into the Legislature, we were you; in other words, we were the rural people of Ontario and the more small-c conservative people, and this side of the House was more progressive in those days, believe it or not. John Clement was part of that.

Sean recalled a committee for which he was counsel—this was after he was no longer a member of the Legislature. It was on Inco and Falconbridge and the terrible times that they were experiencing at that time. Ron Atkey was the counsel for Inco. Conway was a member of that particular committee and John Clement was a counsel, and John turned to Conway and said, “I think we should make Ron Atkey earn his pay as the counsel for Inco,” and then mischievously, and seriously at the same time, directed many questions to Ron Atkey as the counsel for Inco.

So here was an individual, though a member of the Legislature for only one term, who had a profound effect on politics in the province of Ontario. The fact that Tony Clement is here today and has served both in this Legislature, as a member and as a minister, and in the federal Parliament as a member and minister—no doubt he received a lot of good counsel and advice from John Clement, who was a giant among people in the Legislature.

One of the things you do remember, because it was a day—and it's more the circumstances than the individuals, I think, the timing we sit and so on. He lived in a time of collegiality in the Legislature, and he was equally popular with members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party as he was with his own colleagues. Of course, his own colleagues would agree more with his policies of the day.

He served in senior capacities—remember, he was an Attorney General of this province, which is a prestigious and important position—as Solicitor General, as Provincial Secretary for Justice, and, at the time, in an interesting Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

We in this province have been very pleased to have John's family share him with us as a public figure in this province. Without a doubt, Ontario is a better place because John Clement served in this Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for—

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you. It's an honour to rise in this House today on behalf of leader Patrick Brown and the Ontario PC caucus to pay tribute to and celebrate the parliamentary career of former Progressive Conservative MPP John Twining Clement.

First, let me welcome his family and friends to the Legislature, including John's wife, Carol; daughter Marnie; stepson and member of Parliament for the great riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, the Honourable Tony Clement, and his wife, Lynn Golding; and grandkids. I might name some, because they're on the list I have: Lauren, Jason, Max and Elexa.

I'm also pleased to welcome the former member for Rainy River, Patrick Reid, who I spoke with just the other day. Of course, Steve Gilchrist and former Speaker David Warner are here as well. Welcome.

In his four years in office, from 1971 to 1975, representing the people of Niagara Falls, John Clement amassed an impressive portfolio of positions held in government. This, of course, culminated in serving as the Attorney General in 1975.

Prior to his election, John Clement was a successful lawyer and member of the school board in Niagara Falls.

I was not fortunate enough to know John myself, but in preparation for this tribute, I called former Premier Bill Davis, because, of course, John Clement served in his cabinet from 1972 to 1975. He also served with my father, Frank Miller, who was first elected in the 1971 election with John. Premier Davis reminded me of the connection of the Clement family to Brampton and made me promise to mention Brampton a few times in my remarks. I'm sure that Tony Clement was influenced by and became interested in politics in part because his father was an MPP, and that led him to running and becoming the MPP for Brampton. I know, in my case, my father's involvement in politics got me interested.

Premier Davis commented that John Clement was a first-class minister. Everybody liked and respected him, including the opposition. He said that John Clement was "intellectually honest," fun to be with, and that he appeared to be relaxed and comfortable all the time. He also said he had a great sense of humour.

John's sense of humour came up with everyone I spoke to. The former Liberal member for Rainy River Patrick Reid said that John Clement was one of the all-time best joke-tellers in the Legislature. He also said that John was respected and liked by members from all political parties, and he pointed out that John became the Attorney General, a senior position in the government.

I also spoke with former colleague and cabinet minister Claude Bennett, who said what a "great fella" John was, respected by all sides of the House. He also commented on his great sense of humour.

I received this story from the family. I might point out that I received many other stories, some of which I was running over in the backroom and most of which I'm not allowed to use—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Aw, come on.

Mr. Norm Miller: —as much as I would love to, because there are some pretty good stories. But this one I received from Carol, so I think it's safe:

"When John was in first-year law school, one of his senior professors called him for a meeting where he basically told him that he thought it would be advisable

for John to look for another profession. He did not think that John was cut out for law. John did not take that advice.

"Turn the page forward to when he was made Attorney General by Bill Davis. That same professor was now a well-respected senior civil servant in the Ministry of the Attorney General. One of the first things that John did was to call him and invite him to his office for a meeting. He could not resist reminding his former professor of the last time they sat down to discuss his career choices. They both laughed and developed a friendship. In latter years, I heard that story from both of them."

John Clement loved to fly. He loved to spend an afternoon flying aerobatics in the skies over Niagara. He was a long-time president of the St. Catharines Flying Club. One of the highlights of his flying career was the 1971 air race from London, England, to Victoria, BC. I read about it many years ago in a book entitled *Don't Call Me a Legend*, about international pilot Charlie Vaughn's flying exploits, and wondered at that time if John Clement the lawyer was the same John Clement, Ontario MPP and cabinet minister. I have it here; this isn't a prop, is it?

1050

One chapter of the book describes the air race. This story demonstrates John's love of flying, sense of humour and fearless disposition. They flew in a very small aircraft, a twin-engine Piper Aztec. I would like to quote from the book because it gives an insight into the kind of person John Clement was:

"In 1971, John Clement was a lawyer living and laughing in Niagara Falls, Ontario. He was round and quick-witted. He was serious only when absolutely necessary. His measurement of any activity was the potential for having fun. As a pleasure pilot, Clement neither had the qualifications nor the aspirations to compete in a transatlantic race on his own, but the idea of doing it appealed to him."

So he talked Charlie Vaughn, his former instructor, into doing the race with him. Charlie describes flying to London with John:

"I was happy to fly for hours without saying much, but John told joke after raunchy joke. At one point, I told him that I wasn't interested in getting in trouble with women if we got a few days in London. He asked why I needed to mention that. I didn't answer him right away. So he asked what I did want to get into trouble with in London. 'Nothing,' I replied. Then I asked, 'What was the fuel level on the last dip?' 'I'm not telling you,' he said. 'You'll know soon enough when they are empty.'"

They dealt with a double engine failure, icing, navigation challenges in the pre-GPS world and a broken heater over the north Atlantic Ocean, as described here:

"As the sun touched the horizon to the north, they still had a couple of hours to go. The temperature in the cockpit continued to drop. Clement looked at the ocean and mused, 'I don't know about you, Charlie, but I wouldn't mind another double engine failure about now. I think that water would be warmer than we are.'"

And there were a few other quotes in here I'd like to use, but you'll have to read the book, I'm afraid.

John lived life to the fullest and accomplished so much; however, it was his family and especially his seven grandkids who he was most proud of.

To his family: You can be very proud of John Twining Clement. He left his mark here at the Legislature and across the great province of Ontario. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka—that kind of rolled off a lot easier than at the beginning, and I apologize—and I'd like to thank all the members for their very heartfelt and warm feelings.

The family should know that he was loved, and that we will accumulate a DVD and Hansard and send it to the family as a small token and memento of how he was felt here. Thank you very much and God bless.

Although the faces change, the demeanour hasn't. It's now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. At every corner in Whitby–Oshawa, I heard about the government's cuts to health care. Doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, technologists and patients all told me the same thing: The impacts of this government's cuts to health care are real.

The Premier says she recognizes the importance of mental health services, but she cut 25 desperately needed staff at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences in Durham late last year. This is on top of the 31 staff cut in 2013. Because of these cuts, some wait-lists are now a year long.

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier recognize how cruel it is to encourage those suffering from mental illness to seek treatment and then cut the very services they need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, welcome back, everyone. I want to congratulate Lorne Coe on his by-election win, and all of the candidates who put their names on the ballot. Congratulations.

I know that the leader of the third party has asked a specific question about health care, and I will respond to that first by saying that we have increased health care funding year over year.

All of that is within the context of our plan. We have a plan for growing jobs and growth in Ontario. We have a plan to invest in people and their talent and skills. We are investing in infrastructure, which is creating 110,000 jobs a year right now, and will build well into the future. We are working on providing retirement security for people in this province, and we're working with businesses to make sure that we continue to be the number one jurisdiction for foreign direct investment. That's our—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: Not a single nurse or doctor in the province believes that this government isn't cutting health care.

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences is a unique facility that offers mental health services to the entire province. Yet Ontario Shores is now preparing for its fifth straight budget freeze. Mr. Speaker, one in three people struggling with mental health issues are not receiving the care they need and deserve in our province. In fact, the PTSD support wait-list is almost a year long at that facility. In any other area of health, that would be unacceptable.

Just last month, many from across the aisle tweeted and texted their support on Bell Let's Talk Day, so why won't the government put their money where their mouths are? Why isn't the Premier supporting Ontario Shores and other mental health facilities in this province to the level that patients deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will just say that the investments that we are making in health, including the \$138 million more for mental health that was in our 2015 budget; the increases that we have made across the board in health care, which amount to a 53% increase in health care funding since 2003; and year-over-year increases in health care, which will continue, I will say—all of that is within the context of our initiatives to grow our economy.

We know that there is a national and, in fact, an international concern about the economy. We're very pleased that Ontario is leading Canada's economy. We are the leading jurisdiction in terms of growth, and that is because we are making the investments that we know are necessary now and are needed for future prosperity.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: I appreciate the talking points, but I'm going to ask a very specific question about Ontario Shores.

The loss of 25 staff at Ontario Shores is having a devastating impact on the entire region. Their outpatient women's consultation service providing treatment for critical postpartum depression can only operate one day a week now. The geriatric memory clinic and traumatic stress clinic are facing record waiting lists.

The Premier says she is committed to giving first responders quicker access to treatment of PTSD, but then she cuts funding to important facilities like Ontario Shores.

When will the Premier admit that she's forcing the mothers, seniors and mental health patients of our province to pay for their scandals and their mismanagement? Because of your scandals, you're cutting mental health in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The truth is that we actually spend more than \$3 billion a year in this province on mental health and addictions.

It's always more complicated than the Leader of the Opposition would like to portray it. Of those positions—he hasn't mentioned, in fact, that 33 new positions are being created. He hasn't mentioned as well that those and other vacancies will be made available to the individuals that he referenced earlier. He hasn't mentioned that those decisions were made after a substantial and comprehensive review planning process, including best practices, clinical practices and engagement and consultations with the community.

Part of the solution as well, which I would hope the Leader of the Opposition would support, is, where science has demonstrated and the outcomes prove, it's often better to care for people in the community. Community resources are being provided, we're doubling the funding—we have doubled the funding in that LHIN for community supports in mental health.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier knows I've always said there's no monopoly on a good idea. That's why I applauded this government's recent decision to help protect the mental health of Ontario's first responders. Our first responders play a crucial role in protecting the public's safety and well-being.

1100

Unfortunately, the government's announcement does little to help those already facing the serious and debilitating challenges of PTSD. Many of Ontario's first responders who have been diagnosed with PTSD have had their claims rejected by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. A fix to that problem exists in the member for Parkdale–High Park's bill, which would extend support for PTSD to first responders.

Mr. Speaker, why won't this government fast-track Bill 2 and get our first responders the help they deserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Labour is going to want to comment on this—but we recognize that PTSD is a significant risk. We understand that it is a huge challenge for people who are living in these dangerous situations in their work every single day, which is why we're bringing legislation forward, which is why we understand that prevention has to be part of those initiatives. We also understand that we need to work on what the presumptive component of that initiative would be.

We understand both parts of this. The Minister of Labour is working with the first responders and with the community to come up with the right initiatives, but we know there has to be both. There has to be prevention and we have to work on what the presumptive component of the legislation would be.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: It has now been 155 days since I asked this government to act on Bill 2. In those 155 days, I have heard from countless firefighters, police officers and paramedics who need this government's help. That's 155 days that the government has turned its back on our first responders.

The minister claims there is legislation coming, but Bill 2 has been sitting on the order paper for 244 days. Mr. Speaker, why won't the Premier do the right thing? What is stopping the Premier from passing Bill 2, other than you simply don't like it because it's an NDP bill? It is the right thing to do. Do it.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, because it's inadequate. It's an inadequate piece of legislation. It is not sufficient in and of itself. It needs to be broadened. It needs to be a better—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will withdraw.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'll withdraw.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's not that it's wrong. The core of the issue is there.

We have been working. The Minister of Labour has been very, very clear that we understand. We are building on work that we have been doing with first responders for years. We are the government that has brought in presumptive legislation for cancers. We've added diseases to that presumptive legislation.

We know that PTSD is important. We're bringing in legislation. It will be broader than Bill 2, which was a good start. We need to get it right.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: We cannot afford to wait another 244 days. Police, paramedics and firefighters—our province's first responders—are twice as likely to suffer from PTSD as anybody else. Just a month and a half into 2016, Canada has already lost 10 first responders to PTSD.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government waiting so long to take action on this important topic?

If there are problems with that bill, amend it. What you're actually doing is you're shrinking the scope. You are doing less. You are delaying. You are dithering. Do the right thing, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House and address this question, because it is a very, very important question. I think it's one that everybody in this House understands—that the people who are on the front lines deserve the best from the government of Ontario. That's exactly what we're doing.

The Premier has asked me to bring forward a comprehensive approach that looks at preventing people from

getting PTSD in the first place—and for those people who get PTSD, to make sure they get early identification, early intervention and early treatment.

Bill 2 is not good enough for the first responders in this province. It's a good start. We need to go much further than that. When we do move ahead on this, I believe that Ontario is going to become a leader in this regard. That's what I want to see.

I will note that in the history of civilization, the PC Party has raised this issue three times. Now, all of a sudden, they're champions of PTSD.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'd like to start by wishing everybody a happy first day of session. Welcome back to the House.

This is to the Premier. New Democrats are listening to Ontarians and this is what we're hearing: For most people, life is getting harder, families are struggling, and now the Liberals are making deep cuts to health care.

Ask any nurse or doctor and they'll tell you exactly how these Liberal cuts are hurting patients. It means longer wait times for seniors, fewer nurses in our hospitals and even more worry for families.

Why is this Premier cutting health care when she knows that these cuts are hurting Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Once again, let me just say that year over year we are increasing health care funding—every single year. We will continue to do that. We will continue to support the health care system as it goes through a transformation. We will increase funding in terms of community supports. We are increasing funding in terms of mental health.

The reality is that we are in the midst of a health care transformation which is part of an economic growth that is incredibly important for the people of this province going forward. If we don't make the investments in people and in their skills and their talents, in infrastructure, including health care infrastructure—if we don't make those investments now, we won't have the prosperity that we know we need going forward. That's why our plan is working, including increases in health care funding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier should know what's happening in Ontario. People are waiting 200 days or more for the home care that they need. Thousands upon thousands of seniors are stuck waiting for a long-term-care bed. And the Liberals' freeze on hospital budgets has forced hospitals to cut nearly 1,200 registered nursing jobs in just over a year. Patients are suffering because of Liberal cuts but the Premier will not

even acknowledge it. She's more focused on helping her small group of friends profit off the sale of Hydro One.

It begs the question: Why does this Premier think that private profits are more important than patient care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what I think is critical: the \$270 million that we put into home and community care in the 2015 budget, the \$4.2 million for physiotherapy and the \$138 million that we put into mental health care in the 2015 budget. I would ask the leader of the third party, when the budget comes out in the near future, that she look at the increases to health care funding that will be in that budget.

We know how critical health care is to people in this province. We know with an aging population how critical it is that we get that care right, because there are families who are struggling with their elderly loved ones who are looking for the right kind of care. They may be looking for long-term care; they may be looking for home care, and we need to make sure that we make those investments in order to provide that care for people across the province. That's what we're doing.

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

Andrea Horwath: I would urge this Premier to listen to Ontarians in their consultation on the budget and stop the further sell-off of Hydro One. That's what I would urge this Premier to do.

It's like this Premier doesn't know what's happening in Ontario. It's like she doesn't know that at the start of January hospitals have cut hundreds of front-line health care workers in Windsor, Hamilton, Waterloo and Sarnia. It's like she doesn't think about those patients who have waited months and months for surgery and are forced to watch helplessly as this government cuts the health care system. I try to put myself in their shoes. It must be the most discouraging, frustrating and painful experience.

Will this Premier take just a moment, Speaker—just a moment—to think about those patients who are waiting for care, and tell them why she thinks that they should wait even longer?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of the third party asks that we listen to the people of Ontario, which we do.

I know that the leader of the third party understands that even in a narrow way, in terms of the budget—we listen on all sorts of subjects, but in terms of budget consultations, we have talked to thousands of people across the province face to face, online. We have heard those voices. We understand that there are concerns, and those voices will be reflected in the budget that we bring forward.

I think the other reality is that the leader of the third party doesn't talk about the other part of the equation. She talks about where there are challenges, but she doesn't talk about, for example, the three hospitals—Orillia Soldiers' Memorial, Hamilton Health Sciences, and Ottawa Hospital—that are all advertising positions,

that are looking for nurses to hire. That's the other part of the equation.

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. For most Ontarians, life is getting harder, and this government just isn't helping. People are looking for good jobs that actually pay the bills. Too many Ontarians find it harder than ever to get decent work and good paycheques.

But rather than helping people, we see Liberals facing criminal charges for their conduct, and a Premier who is more focused on helping private investors profit from the sale of Hydro One. Why does this Premier not share the priorities of the people of this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am acutely aware of the concerns that people have about the economy in this country and the economy globally. I know that people are concerned about the future, which is exactly why we are making the investments that we are making. It is exactly why our plan is designed to make sure that we do everything in our power to work with businesses like Chrysler, to make sure that there are more jobs created in Ontario rather than fewer. It's exactly why we are moving on retirement security so that people can look forward to a retirement that is secure. It is exactly why we are investing in people's talent and skills. It is exactly why we're investing in infrastructure that is creating 110,000 jobs a year right now and economic growth into the future. That's why our plan is designed the way it is.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here's what is happening in the Ontario that the Premier doesn't think about. Fewer than half of all workers in the GTHA are in permanent full-time jobs—fewer than half. Windsor has the highest unemployment rate in the country for five months and counting.

Families feel like there are two different worlds in this province. There's an Ontario where the Premier protects her friends and insiders, and then there's one for the rest of us, where families simply cannot keep up. Why is this Premier so far out of touch with the real priorities of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will say to the leader of the third party, there is no doubt that there are concerns about the national economy. I understand that. I understand that we are in a challenging time as a country.

But the reality is that Ontario is leading growth in this country. The reality is that our unemployment rate is below the national average. There are 600,000 net new jobs that have been created since 2008-09, including more than 40,000 over the last couple of months in Ontario. The fact is that we are doing everything in our power—and it is working—to keep Ontario on that track, to keep Ontario as a leader. It is our responsibility, given our diverse economy, given what's happening across the country, that we stay as strong and grow as much as we can. That's exactly what we're doing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When the Premier boasts of opportunity and growth, most Ontarians have one question and that is, "For whom?"

Who is really getting ahead here in Ontario? It's not the men and women who are out of work and too young to retire but too old to start over. It's not the 300,000 families who have lost their good manufacturing jobs in this province, and it's certainly not young people, who are stuck with an unemployment rate well above the national average. Those folks want to know: Why isn't this Premier working for them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Given the rhetoric of the leader of the third party, I would think that she'd be very supportive of the initiatives that we have taken that are bearing fruit. She'd be supportive of the \$565 million in youth employment funding that we put in place, which has found thousands of young people places.

She'd be supportive of Experience Ontario, where young people across the country are having an opportunity to have a work experience that would lead to post-secondary education. She would be supportive of the partnerships with business that have made us the number one jurisdiction for foreign direct investment.

That's a statistic, Mr. Speaker, but the reality is, that means jobs. That means jobs created here, across the province. So I would expect that the leader of the third party would support all of those things and, as the leader of the NDP, that she would support the investments in infrastructure that are creating 110,000 jobs every year.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Premier.

Premier, the Nipigon bridge is a key asset to the province of Ontario. In December, I was able to drive across it with PC Leader Patrick Brown. Little did we know at the time that the two lanes of the bridge would only be operating for less than a month. When the Nipigon bridge failed on January 11, the only detour available was through the United States. Today, people wishing to cross it still face delays to use the single lane that is safe to travel.

Safe winter roads and reliable infrastructure are absolute necessities to the economy of northern Ontario.

The people of Nipigon have a right to know: Can't this Liberal government get anything right? How is it possible that, under the watch of this government, such a key piece of brand new infrastructure was allowed to fail?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the question.

First, Speaker, let me take just a quick moment to acknowledge the leadership shown by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who also happens to be the local MPP for this community. From the very day

this incident took place, that member has shown tremendous local leadership.

I also want to acknowledge that all of the communities in the area—from Nipigon to Marathon to our First Nations partners in the area—whom I've had the chance to meet with directly have all been exceptionally patient and understanding. We work closely with them and will continue to do that, Speaker.

What I've said and what the Minister of Northern Development and Mines has said is that we anticipate that before the end of February or by the end of February, the second lane of traffic will be reopened on this bridge. It's important for us to make sure that we do get to the bottom of what took place, that we provide accurate information to the public, and that we get that bridge reopened and operating safely as soon as possible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Premier:, the Nipigon bridge is as critical a piece of infrastructure as we have in Ontario. It is the single link that connects the Trans-Canada Highway. It is estimated that over \$100 million of goods travels across the Nipigon bridge each day. Uncertainty of travel times is slowing this flow of goods to market, and has a negative impact on the northern economy and, ultimately, the entire province.

The construction of the Nipigon bridge has already been estimated to cost \$106 million, and the bridge failure will only add to the cost.

The government has promised that the two lanes of the Nipigon bridge will be reopened by the end of February. So my question, Mr. Speaker: Will the Premier meet this deadline, or is it simply another stretch goal of this government?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll reiterate at the beginning of this answer, as I said in my original answer, that we do anticipate that the second lane of traffic will be reopened by the end of February.

But what I can't help finding curious from that member, and that question specifically, is that he seems to not remember that over the last 12 or 13 years, we are the government that's invested \$1.9 billion to four-lane highways in northern Ontario, and that in my three years in this Legislature, year after year, as we included more money to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars for highways in northern Ontario, that member and that party have consistently voted against the budgets that have delivered strong futures for the people of the north, Speaker.

We're going to get the bridge reopened, and this year you should join with us to support a budget that will build this province up.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is taking a chance.

New question.

1120

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Climate change is one of the most important and far-reaching issues facing this planet. But by selling Hydro One, this government is making it more difficult for Ontario to take action on climate change. Hydro One is moving into the hands of private owners. They have no interest in conservation, since they make more profit when people use more electricity, not less. Hydro One is now moving into the hands of private owners who have no interest in upgrading the grid and connecting to renewable energy sources unless they're guaranteed fat profit and zero risks.

Why is the government making climate change action more difficult by selling off Hydro One?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm always amazed at the ability of the NDP to spend money but never tell us where it's coming from.

You may have noticed that we're moving forward with a carbon market and pricing program, but we don't have that revenue yet. We just committed to a major home retrofit program to help people reduce their heating costs and cooling costs and create jobs; a major electric vehicle subsidy program; and an electric charging program. Well, that money didn't come from pixie dust and fairies, Mr. Speaker. It actually came from trying to manage out of the difficult recession without increasing the tax burden and reducing services.

Broadening ownership of part of a utility, which is terrifyingly, ideologically fraying for that party, is, in the world of most people, a pragmatic solution to finding money to create jobs and build our economy.

I'd be happy, in the supplementary, to elaborate further.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I guess the minister didn't want to answer that question, so I'll go to the second part.

Germany privatized much of its transmission grid in the 1990s, and now Germany realizes that they made a huge mistake. They now realize that if they're to move towards a low-carbon, renewably powered economy, the public needs to own and control the grid.

The government has often looked to Germany for lessons from its renewable energy transition. Will the government learn from Germany's great mistake and stop the further privatization of Hydro One?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Germany is closing 11 nuclear plants right now, and I don't think we would do that, given the implications that they've got coal coming back online. I don't think we need to take lessons from Germany.

One of the things this government realizes is that the world is changing at a very fast rate. You can go to Barrie, my friend MPP Hoggarth's riding—we were out there the other day. People are now buying homes with batteries, inverters, ground-source heat pumps, solar and

computers. They're buying that because they're net zero, and they're actually called prosumers. They actually generate more revenue.

One of the challenges for government is going to be managing those old industrial assets that we have to for another 30, 40 years. We have to get more life out of them. We have to look at new and innovative ways to get revenues from assets that, quite frankly, in some cases, there is going to be less demand for and put them into assets like transit and other things that there will be greater demand for. To most Ontarians, I think, that's a sensible approach. It certainly seems to be to this government.

GOVERNMENT ANTI-RACISM PROGRAMS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate. Members of this House noted that the Anti-Racism Directorate was eliminated by the Progressive Conservatives in 1995. Over a decade later, I'm proud to be part of a government reinstating the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate.

Canada and Ontario have long been bastions for principles like acceptance and equality. While these values remain at the core of our cultural identity, the reinstatement of the Anti-Racism Directorate by our government indicates our commitment to remove the social and economic barriers inhibiting true equality.

I would like to ask the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate to inform this House on why the new directorate was created.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for the question, and also thank the Premier for entrusting me with this responsibility that I take quite seriously.

As every member of this House is aware, individual, systemic and cultural racism continue to create unfair outcomes for racial minorities in Ontario. The time has come to remove social and economic barriers that prevent our province from achieving true equity.

In order to address racism in all forms, our government is creating a new Anti-Racism Directorate. By creating this new directorate, our government is demonstrating its commitment to building an inclusive province so that everyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity or cultural background, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Thank you to the minister. Under no circumstance should an individual's social status or economic potential be defined by the colour of their skin, their ethnicity or cultural heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the creation of the Anti-Racism Directorate and the objectives articulated by the minister.

With Canada's population growth rate below replacement levels and our continued expansion dependent on immigration, achieving true equality is even more important.

As a member of this Legislature and a diverse Canadian, I believe that this Anti-Racism Directorate is an important next step for Ontario. With that in mind, I would like to ask the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate how the directorate will go about achieving its objectives.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for the follow-up question. I know he's a strong supporter of equity here in the province of Ontario.

The Anti-Racism Directorate's aim is to increase public education and awareness of racism, to create a more inclusive province; and to apply an anti-racism lens in developing, implementing and evaluating government policies, programs and services. This newly established directorate will achieve this by working with key partners from education, community-based organizations, different institutions and, of course, the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Mr. Speaker, racism continues to create unfair outcomes for racial minorities here in Ontario. By creating this new directorate, our government is building an inclusive province where everyone has the equal opportunity to succeed, do well and build the province that we all aspire to.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. The latest Metrolinx numbers have revealed that the near-empty UP ghost express has become even emptier: 170-seat trains rolling with less than six passengers; 2,200 passengers a day in December, well short of the 5,000 goal. All the while, we foot the bill for a botched fare-setting that was designed to pay for the unnecessary luxury, terminal-to-train boutique excess this government insisted on.

Every day that the trains get emptier, the costs grow larger. Until the fares are lowered, people will take the more economical, accessible Uber option.

Speaker, she has seen the numbers. Will the Premier tell us when she will move past assessment and discussion to actually act?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member opposite for the question. Over the last number of days, myself, the Premier and others at Metrolinx have discussed this very topic. We have all said publicly—in fact, just last week we said publicly—that we are currently analyzing the entire situation. We're looking at every option.

We understand that the ridership needs to come up. What we've seen this past weekend is that there is a great deal of curiosity, interest and support for this particular service as it relates to linking Union and Pearson, but also as it relates to providing more service or transit options for people in the west end of Toronto.

Over the coming days, we'll continue to conduct this analysis. We'll complete that work and we will respond accordingly as soon as we are ready.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, when we asked the government to take a look at fare reductions, I didn't think he'd actually take me up on it and make it for free.

However, it's not just the UP Express. Last month, we were stunned to learn that this government oversaw plans for a \$250-million Union Station train shed renovation and forgot to make sure their promised electric trains actually fit. How can you approve a plan for a quarter-billion-dollar train shed renovation and neglect to ensure that the trains actually fit in the shed?

1130

Speaker, this is a classic Liberal plan—spend first and ask questions later—steamrolling ahead with transit photo ops without concern for cost overruns and logistical challenges. This is a project that's already 25% over initial cost estimates.

Will the Premier tell us how much more it will cost to actually get her electric trains in the shed?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course, the team at Metrolinx, working closely with the Ministry of Transportation, has a plan over the next decade to literally transform the GO network. That member, representing the part of the province that he represents, will be well aware that we made a commitment over the next decade to take the existing GO service, which is extremely popular and well-used, and transform that into two-way, all-day GO service, with electrification on core segments and trains running at intervals of up to 15 minutes on those core segments. As part of that plan, we are increasing capacity at Union Station, Speaker.

But as I said to the member from Parry Sound in his earlier question, what I find remarkable is witnessing that member and that caucus repeatedly vote against every undertaking from this government and this Premier to invest in more infrastructure, to deliver more transit. They've opposed it, and now they're complaining that we're not delivering fast enough, notwithstanding their opposition, Speaker. Maybe they can get their story straight—

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

New question.

EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. After having travelled across the province over the last month for pre-budget consultations, it has become increasingly clear to New Democrats that Ontario is divided. We heard some heartbreaking and painful experiences from the people of this province. On the one hand, there is an Ontario where a small group of powerful insiders who have the ear of the Premier are flourishing; then there's the rest of Ontarians, who are struggling to keep up. They're worried about finding good jobs. They're worried about keeping good jobs and retiring from good jobs.

Premier, what does this government have to say to Ontario's youth, who are struggling to find work, to

people who are working three jobs to make ends meet and to people whose jobs are at risk after a lifetime of service?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, what I would say to people who are in those situations, who are struggling, is that I understand that this is a challenging time. As I've said before, it's a challenging time in the national economy. Ontario is leading that economy, though. Ontario is leading in this country in terms of job creation, in terms of foreign direct investment that leads to jobs, in terms of investment that is creating jobs.

We are doing everything in our power to increase the growth in the province and to stay as a leader in the country. It is our responsibility as the largest province in the country, the most diverse economy in the country, to be strong, particularly when there are other economies that are struggling.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, our investments in infrastructure, in people's talent and skills, in their retirement security and in working with business are working. We are creating jobs, working together. We will continue to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Premier, the pre-budget consultations have been a stark reminder that the gap between those who are doing well and those who are falling behind is only getting wider. St. Catharines, Niagara and Sudbury have unemployment rates of 8.6%, two points above the provincial average. Windsor's unemployment rate is 9.3%, the highest in Canada. Windsor also has the highest youth unemployment rate in the country for the last five months and counting. These are not rates that warrant bragging rights.

Unlike this government, New Democrats are listening to families, to students and to seniors, and they're saying that good jobs are hard to find and hard to keep. Premier, what does this government have to say to the thousands of Ontarians who are unemployed, underemployed and precariously employed under the Liberal watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the member opposite that I'm sure that she has listened with interest, then, as Chrysler announced more jobs in Windsor than expected, and that she has heard the job numbers over the last couple of months—with net new jobs of more than 40,000, and that the vast majority of those are full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member opposite is paying attention to those.

In terms of listening to the people in the province, Mr. Speaker, we did pre-budget consultations across the province: nine weeks of engagement of in-person, online, written and telephone engagement, and 20 in-person consultations in 12 cities. We heard from 700 people. So there are thousands of people from around the province from whom we have heard. We have heard their concerns; their concerns will be reflected in the budget.

The fact is, the plan we've put in place, working with the private sector—because government doesn't create jobs—it's working—

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

New question.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

International markets play a critical role in the growth of Ontario's economy. Trade missions are the best way for us to connect Ontario businesses with the international market. To boost Ontario's economy, we must attract new investments, facilitate partnerships and help businesses export globally.

Speaker, the Premier and minister have organized and led a number of international trade missions to do just that. In 2014, the Premier and minister's mission to China secured \$1 billion in investments and 1,400 jobs for Ontarians. Last year, another mission secured an additional \$2.5 billion and 1,700 jobs.

Speaker, in January the Premier departed for the first trade mission of 2016 to India. Could the minister please tell us about that mission and what it will mean for Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you, Speaker, for the question, and I want to thank the honourable member for asking it.

Earlier this month the Premier led a very successful trade mission to India. This trade mission led us to cities like New Delhi, Chandigarh, Hyderabad and Mumbai, and drew on Ontario's expertise in sustainable development and urban infrastructure. We were able to have valuable meetings with key Indian officials and leaders, including the Prime Minister of India, Prime Minister Modi, which will help strengthen our economic ties with states and businesses.

We signed 65 new agreements between businesses and institutions from Ontario and India, valued at over \$240 million, creating more than 150 jobs in Ontario.

Premier Wynne also signed MOUs with five Indian—

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. It is so good to see our government and our business and institutional stakeholders taking our Going Global challenge so seriously. Our natural links to India and the goodwill built up in this mission will improve the trade and investment relationship between India and Ontario in the future.

A number of the MOUs appear to involve investments and opportunities for global growth for Ontario businesses and jobs here in Ontario.

With 700,000 Indo-Canadians residing in Ontario, we should be building stronger ties with India's business community. India may now be the fastest-growing economy in the world and it's time for us to invest and reach out to that emerging economic power.

Minister, can you tell this Legislature how this mission will build a stronger business relationship between Ontario and India?

Hon. Michael Chan: The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Minister of International Trade outlined some of the successful outcomes achieved on this trip in terms of MOUs and investments landed. That's all extremely important.

Also important are the opportunities to build stronger relationships with Indian businesses that will result in even more future investments and jobs. We met with numerous influential Indian companies, including Essel, Tata, Tech Mahindra, Mitra, Birla, Hero MotoCorp, High Tech Industries, ICICI Bank, and Paytm, among many others. We identified many opportunities for future collaboration, investment and partnerships.

And we went to bat, Mr. Speaker, for Ontario companies and communities, from Novo Plastics in Markham, Ontario, to Datawind in Mississauga. They landed significant opportunities, demonstrating how successful Ontario companies can be when they go global.

This mission was very successful, and I look forward to following up on the many leads that we identified.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. After the events this past week, of two violent domestic assaults resulting in the death of four people and severe injuries to a fifth, in Odessa and Almonte, and the three murders of women last fall in Renfrew county, the public is acutely aware that there are grave shortcomings and a failure by police, our correctional institutions and our courts to protect women and their families from domestic violence. However, the many and numerous recommendations by my colleagues from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke have fallen on the deaf ears and the idle hands of this government.

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The government is failing to protect women and their families from domestic violence. What the public wants to know, what my caucus wants to know and what I want to know is: Why?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The minister responsible for women.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I thank the member for raising this very important question.

Violence against women is indeed a very serious problem. It should never be tolerated in Ontario or elsewhere. This is a huge priority for me, as the minister responsible for women's issues. That's why our government continues to take concrete action to make the province safer for women.

I am aware of the cases that the member has raised. I'm working very closely with my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. There are a number of investments being made, not just in our two ministries, but also with the Attorney General and other ministries, to take a coordinated approach to our response.

Our annual funding to combat gender-based violence is approximately \$456 million a year. That includes many

initiatives, not the least of which is our sexual violence and harassment action plan, which was launched last year with the leadership of our Premier. We're acting on legislative and program support initiatives associated with that, and we're taking it very seriously.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, back to the Minister of Correctional Services: Many of those guilty of domestic violence are sentenced with a recommendation to serve their sentence in specialized treatment facilities for mental health and addictions in order to rehabilitate their violent behaviour. However, there are often no vacancies in these facilities, and the offenders are placed in general population, not getting the treatment they need, nor what the courts have ordered. While the court is expecting rehabilitation, in reality this seldom happens.

Our courts and our jails are failing each other and failing the people of Ontario. When will both our recommendations and those of the courts not be viewed with contempt and no longer fall on deaf ears and idle hands, but be heeded by this government?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I appreciate again the member raising the important issue, specifically around domestic violence.

Our Ontario Women's Directorate has implemented many initiatives to raise awareness and provide supports for victims. This has been going on since 2004. We have many programs and policies in response to that. We have training of front-line professionals. We have public education campaigns. We have the employment training for abused and at-risk women. We have a language interpreter program.

But as my colleague the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services has raised before, we are working very closely with our partners in policing and the Attorney General to look at domestic violence, to look at what happens when someone is released from offence and what that means to the community. I'll be happy to follow up with the member directly—

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

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier.

Top Liberal insiders are presently before the courts facing various criminal charges for their roles in both the gas plants scandal and the Sudbury by-election. That's now multiple police investigations into the Liberals' wrongdoing connected to your office, the Office of the Premier.

My question is: Is this a record that you're proud of?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader is going to want to say something on this front, but I will just say that the circumstances around the investigation concerned events that took place before I was the Premier. I think the member knows that. There is a matter before the courts. It would be inappropriate for me to say more at this point, so I will not.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thought the question was pretty straightforward. It was, "Are you proud of that record?" At the end of the day, you're the Premier of Ontario. You're responsible to that office, and I asked you a question. Obviously, you decided not to answer it.

Let me ask you this: Are you going to be forthcoming in working with whomever—the police, the courts, whoever it is—in order to get to the bottom of these things, and be fully co-operative in the investigation of these matters? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I'm surprised that on the first day back in the Legislature, the member opposite is not spending time talking about issues that are important to Ontarians but is mudslinging himself right now. He very much is aware that these issues are before the courts, and any interference from this House will be highly inappropriate.

Speaker, what I want to talk about is how proud we are of the work that the Premier is doing when it comes to building Ontario up by making sure that we are making historical investments in our infrastructure in every single community in our ridings; by making sure that our health care continues to get better and better and our seniors are getting better health care in our communities, and that our education system in this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Our education system in this province is one of the best in the world.

Of course, those are good things, and the member opposite does not want to talk about those, so of course what he does is try to talk about a court case which he knows we should not be discussing in this House.

I say to him, Speaker, that we should focus on issues at hand, to build a stronger economy in our province.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and the newly appointed minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Secretariat.

Today, the minister will be bringing a bill before the House to proclaim Black History Month in perpetuity. While Ontario was the first jurisdiction in Canada to proclaim Black History Month, our government did so annually by passing a proclamation through cabinet.

We have a significant legacy of black history here in Ontario, a legacy that deserves to be celebrated and enshrined into law. Could the minister please inform the members of this House why Black History Month is so important and deserves our support?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member from Durham for the question.

Ontario first proclaimed February as Black History Month back in 1993, and it was an important year

because it marked the 200th anniversary of a law banning the importation of slaves into Upper Canada, a motion enacted into law by our province's first Lieutenant Governor. I believe that this was one of the first signs of a pathway—that Canada would be formally recognized as a very progressive, culturally diverse, multicultural, and a place that's built on equity. These values are important to our identity as Canadians and as Ontarians centuries later.

If this legislation is passed, it will proclaim February as Black History Month, and it will ensure that Ontarians have an opportunity to reflect on the contributions of black men and women here in the province of Ontario to black Canadian history and Ontario's history.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you to the minister. Ontario and Canada have always been active on the global stage in recognizing human rights and denouncing racism and inequality.

Ontario was a beacon of hope to American slaves seeking freedom, and the final destination for over 30,000 slaves who traversed the Underground Railroad.

We honour international figures who further equality, like the late Nelson Mandela, the first living person awarded honorary Canadian citizenship, and a member of the Order of Canada.

Could the minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Secretariat please highlight the legacies left by our black forebears?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank the member for the follow-up question.

I think it's important for us to recognize the contribution of black Canadians here in the Legislature and throughout Ontario: Ontarians like Leonard Braithwaite, MPP, who served in this Legislature and was a civil rights advocate and fought to ensure that equality was brought forward for all people here in Ontario; Charlie Roach, a human rights activist and a lawyer here in Ontario; and of course, Mary Ann Shadd, the first female black publisher and, I believe, the first female publisher in Ontario, when she first—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Alvin Curling.

Hon. Michael Coteau: And of course, Alvin Curling, one of our many friends of many people in the Legislature here.

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Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to remember and to continue to celebrate the contributions of black Ontarians and black Canadians here in Ontario, and I'm very proud that this legislation will allow all of us here in the Legislature to do that.

HOSPITAL FUNDING FINANCEMENT DES HÔPITAUX

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is to the Minister of Health.

The minister is well aware of the impact his health cuts are having around Ontario. My riding of Simcoe North will continue to feel the minister's health cuts if he doesn't stop them. The proposed \$5.2 million in cuts to Georgian Bay General Hospital are atrocious. The Liberals are cutting funding to medium-sized hospitals across Ontario. They are eliminating at Georgian Bay General top-level services like emergency room care, and completely wiping out obstetrics.

Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to turn his back on the residents of Simcoe North and cut these essential services?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that no decisions have been taken by the hospital, first of all.

There was a report as the result of a process—which was an open and public process that involved community consultation and involvement of the local LHIN as well, and of course the hospital—that made a series of recommendations that would ensure sustainability of that hospital and the highest quality of care going into the future. Those recommendations were received by the hospital in December. There have been no decisions by the hospital. There have been no decisions by the LHIN. There have been no decisions by the ministry.

But I do know that the Leader of the Opposition, prior to making any efforts to sit down and meet with the hospital to get a full understanding of the situation, did go out into the public domain and raise a lot of anxiety by suggesting that these changes were imminent, when in fact it was simply a set of recommendations that haven't been considered by those three levels: the hospital, the LHIN and the ministry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the minister: The hospital has said very clearly, as has the LHIN, that these are cuts they have to make because of the health budget that you have presented.

What I find more shocking is that on December 17, the minister released his paper Patients First. He said he wanted to strengthen health outcomes for indigenous and francophone communities. Well, what is more hypocritical than putting out a paper in mid-December saying that you—

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: I will withdraw the word "hypocritical."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No comments. Just simply withdraw, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Well, what is more wrong than releasing a paper promising support, and then cutting health care to those very same individuals?

The chief of Beausoleil First Nation has written you and explained how the impacts of these cuts on Georgian Bay General will hurt indigenous communities. The

mayor of Penetanguishene has written to you saying they will hurt francophone communities.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que le ministre va arrêter de couper les services dans mon comté?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if the leader of the third party is suggesting that we should never review the sustainability of our hospitals, that we should never get expert advice in terms of changes that can be made to improve the level of care and the quality of care that's being provided.

I believe there were more than 100 recommendations made by this review that were received by the hospital in December. We're currently reviewing those recommendations; the LHIN is reviewing those recommendations; the hospital is reviewing those recommendations. Finally, the member opposite did accept an invitation by the hospital to actually sit down and discuss this.

No decisions have been made, Mr. Speaker, and I would implore the Leader of the Opposition not to inflame the situation and create anxiety where no anxiety is required. Of course, the sort of information that he's alluding to, the community input, is precisely what we're looking to see. We want to make sure that the quality of care that is provided is the best possible care. But there were more than 100 recommendations, and the member knows that full well. Nothing has been decided.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Less than three months ago, the \$106-million Nipigon River Bridge opened to traffic. The Minister of Northern Development and Mines described the bridge as the government's crown jewel. But less than two months later, winter came and some bolts snapped in the cold. The \$106-million bridge buckled and failed. The failure of this bridge has literally cut Canada in two.

How is it possible for the government to spend \$106 million without making sure that this bridge could withstand an Ontario winter, and who is responsible for signing off on a bridge that failed upon its first encounter with an Ontario winter?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Niagara Falls for the question.

As I said earlier today, we anticipate that the second lane of traffic will be open on the bridge by the end of February.

It's just really important to make sure that we have accurate information, not only on this topic but on all here in this House. I should mention that the design of this bridge, like the design of all of the bridges that we have in the province of Ontario, is done in accordance with the Canadian Highway Bridge Design Code, which means that it's capable of withstanding the necessary code design parameters for winds in excess of 100 kilometres an hour and climactic conditions including freezing temperatures well below minus 40 degrees Celsius.

For 100 years, the Ministry of Transportation has built a network, a system of roads, highways, bridges and public transit across the province of Ontario. It's these high standards to which we hold ourselves accountable.

We'll have that second lane of traffic open by the end of February.

VISITOR

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I'd like to welcome my friend and neighbour, from North Dumfries township, John Holman to the Legislature today. I'm proud of the work he does as a firefighter.

BRUNO ROMANO

Ms. Eleanor McMahan: I wonder if I might ask members of the Legislature to join me in congratulating a member of our Legislative Security Services, Sergeant Bruno Romano, on his recent wedding.

Congratulations, Bruno. Best wishes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think a more appropriate way to acknowledge Bruno would be to snap your fingers.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr. Patrick Brown: I'd like to correct my record. I originally said that Bill 2 sat on the order paper for 244 days, which is actually incorrect. It has sat on the order paper for 589 days. Bill 2 was introduced in 2014, not 2015.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members have an opportunity to correct their records.

This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to introduce Jeff Turner, who I believe is outside right now. Jeff is with an organization called Kind Canada, which was started by Rabbi Reuven Bulka in Ottawa to promote kindness across Canada, similarly as we have done in this Legislature by declaring the third week of February as Kindness Week in the province of Ontario. On behalf of all members, I want to welcome Jeff Turner to Queen's Park. It's good to see you, Jeff.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'd like to introduce a friend of mine, who has actually just moved back from Alberta to live in Ontario, Allan Rewak, who is here with us again. We'd like to welcome Allan back to Ontario.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I think he's just coming in as we speak. I have Bishop Fisher from the Family Worship Centre in Pickering here to join us today to celebrate Black History Month. He's joined by his lovely daughter.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Gong Hay Fat Choy. Last week's celebrations for the Lunar New Year began for Canadians of Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese heritage. I and many of my colleagues in our caucus have had the opportunity to participate in festivities across the province. It has been a real honour to be a part of celebrating the traditions of Chinese New Year, Seollal and Tet.

From the ringing of the peace bell to exchanging lucky red envelopes to visiting the new year's markets, it has been a pleasure to welcome the Year of the Monkey. February in our great country isn't the warmest or brightest of times, and these celebrations bring a wonderful vibrancy and excitement to our communities.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean Canadians, who are so welcoming and who contribute so much to our culture and economy here in Ontario.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, I offer my warmest wishes to everybody celebrating the Lunar New Year. I hope the Year of the Monkey will bring happiness, health and prosperity for all. Gong Xi Fa Cai. Chuc Mung Nam Moi.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just want to make this comment to the government, both to the Premier and the Minister of Energy, who should be keenly interested in this, and that is the price of gas. If you look at the price at the pump as it relates to what it is at the barrel, there is clearly no connection.

Depending on where you live in this province, the difference could be fairly great. For example, last week, the price difference between Ottawa and northern Ontario was almost 30 cents a litre. Nobody is going to argue to me that that's the cost of transportation. I'll tell you what it is: It's the gas companies gouging the consumers, trying to get as much as they can out of consumers and getting away with it.

I just want to say to the Minister of Energy, and I want to say to the Premier directly, that we have a responsibility, as a province, to deal with this. This is clearly gouging, pure and simple. This is not a question where they're just having a hard time trying to figure out what the price is; this is them wanting to gouge the public and being allowed to do it.

We, as a province, have authority over energy, including the retail price of gas. I just say to the government across the way that what we need to do is tell these oil companies to get themselves back in line with what the price of gas should be at the pump, related to the price of a barrel. If they're not prepared to do that by way of cajoling, then we should do what we have the authority to do, and that is to regulate the gas industry once and for all.

SOUPER TIME

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Mr. Speaker, like the rest of my colleagues on both sides of the House, I very much value and enjoy the time we get to spend outside of this chamber back in our constituencies, meeting with folks and visiting with organizations, hearing their concerns and celebrations for their achievements.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I was pleased to be able to visit an event at St. Peter's church in Cobourg called Souper Time. This is a community organization event sponsored by Neighbourlink, a partnership of local churches, which provides a hot bowl of soup and a sandwich, often prepared and donated by restaurants and volunteers throughout the community to support local resident needs.

Parishioners with the "parish nurse" designation are on hand to provide valuable advice and support, such as foot care clinics and blood pressure checks. Oral hygiene specialists with the Northumberland Oral Health Coalition, in partnership with the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit to provide basic oral health care clinics for low-income individuals in need of support and advice.

I'd like to recognize Pat Weller for her vision and courage to start this program by recognizing the needs and reaching out to the community organization to get the ball rolling; Fran Richardson and Kristina Nairn for their professional service and contribution; and the many other dedicated volunteers who serve faithfully five days a week. It is the valuable effort of volunteers like this that truly make our communities a better place to live.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM
FUNDING

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise today with a message for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Like everyone, I was shocked last week when his ministry denied the village of Westport a critical infrastructure grant. I can't emphasize enough the importance of Westport's application for funding to modernize its failing wastewater treatment system.

Two years ago this aging system caused 24 million litres of effluent to be discharged into the UNESCO World Heritage-designated Rideau Canal waterway. This is the very definition of an urgent infrastructure project, one this government should be all over. Anyone with even a passing knowledge of this looming public health and environmental crisis could see why this funding was so imperative. How a government presented with such a comprehensive application, supported by evidence and endorsed by local, federal and provincial officials, could reject it is not just inexplicable; it's unacceptable.

I have written to Minister Duguid asking him to reconsider this terrible decision, and meet to with me and village Mayor Robin Jones at next week's ROMA/OGRA conference. In just over a year in office, Mayor Jones and her council have done a tremendous job

addressing the crisis. Working under tight time frames, they've put a responsible plan in place, but with such a small tax base, it's simply unreasonable to think the village can bear the cost of this project alone. Minister, I'm confident your review will show that the evidence to support funding this project is overwhelming, as are the consequences for the environment and this village's future.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: On our first day back in the Legislature, I want to talk about winter road maintenance. At the north end of my riding are the communities of Ivanhoe Lake and Foleyet, both of them on Highway 101, which is kind of between Chapleau and Timmins. For some reason, some of Highway 101 is classified as level 2 and some of it is classified as level 3. What does that mean? It means that anyone driving from Ivanhoe or Foleyet to Chapleau or Timmins, or vice versa, will drive on clear pavement for a while, then snow-covered pavement for a while, then clear pavement again. This erratic highway cleaning pattern makes the trip really dangerous.

But it gets worse, Speaker, in beautiful Gogama, only three kilometres off of Highway 144. The snow-plowing equipment for the 144 is located in Gogama, but the road that connects the community to Highway 144 does not get cleaned. Listen to this, Speaker: The snowplow drives the three kilometres with its plow up, then gets to 144 and puts the plow down. There is no high school in Gogama. Every morning, the students do the one-way 112-kilometre trip to go to Timmins, and yes, you guessed it, they start off on a road that is not plowed.

I don't know who dreams up these things, but they make no sense. They need to be fixed so that the people of northern Ontario can feel secure on our highways.

1510

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back.

This past Saturday, February 13, I was honoured to join over 1,500 Tibetan Canadians and their friends for a celebration of the Tibetan New Year, Losar. The Tibetan Canadian Cultural Centre in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore hosts all the important celebrations of the Tibetan Canadian community, and this time, an overflow crowd came together to celebrate the new year.

On February 9, the Tibetan year of the male fire monkey—2143—was begun, and, as is tradition, this brings a time of great joy and celebration in the Tibetan community. The year began with a three-day festival that mixes sacred and secular practices: prayers, ceremonies, hanging prayer flags, sacred and folk dancing and, of course, partying. It is the most widely celebrated of all the Tibetan festivals and represents a time for all things to be purified and renewed.

We were all pleased to receive greeting and blessings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama as he extended his Losar message to the Tibetan diaspora worldwide. His Holiness enjoined everyone to create the causes of happiness by leading lives that benefit others.

Our Tibetan community is made up of thousands of hard-working people who seek to live the benevolent, peaceful lives that His Holiness teaches. I extend to all Tibetans my wishes for Losar Tashi Delek.

EARTHQUAKE IN TAIWAN

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I rise to recognize the lunar new year, a major annual event for Chinese communities around the world. Sadly, as we began this time of celebration, Taiwan experienced a large earthquake that caused significant damage.

Just one day before the lunar new year's eve on Saturday, February 6, a 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck Taiwan and caused significant damage, including the collapse of a 17-storey apartment building. The earthquake killed more than 100 people and injured hundreds more.

I want to commend all the rescuers for their extraordinary efforts, especially their work to rescue those who were trapped when the building collapsed. Through their efforts, hundreds of people, including a number of children, were saved.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the people of Taiwan and the families who have lost loved ones or have missing family members. We recognize the strength of the Taiwanese people and assure them that we will stand with them during their difficult time.

KINDNESS WEEK

SEMAINE DE BONTÉ

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It's actually with great pleasure that I'm standing and rising today to recognize this week, Kindness Week. We should be kind every day to each other, but it's a special moment—

Interjection: Every day.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Every day. Yes, every day.

Rabbi Bulka introduced this notion in 2007, and actually, a year after, a motion by the great member from Ottawa Centre passed in the House in 2008. It's always the week after Family Day.

What's most important about Kindness Week is to recognize every single aspect of what human nature is all about. We are generally a kind people, but sometimes we forget to say nice things to each other. So I want to remind everyone in this House and across Ontario that this week is an important week.

We also have a member here, a person who's sitting in the gallery—I think he was introduced a little bit earlier—Jeff Turner from Kind Canada, who's promoting this same concept, especially for Canada 150. I want to recognize Mr. Turner for being here today. Thank you

very much, and thank you for all the work that you do for us in Ontario and across Canada.

Un petit mot en français : n'oublions pas d'être gentils l'un envers l'autre.

CLAUDETTE MILLER

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It is an honour for me to rise today on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge to pay tribute to Claudette Miller, who had a profound influence in establishing the city of Cambridge as a successful municipality. She passed away February 10 at the age of 81.

Elected as mayor of Preston in 1969, she was Canada's youngest mayor at a time when few women ran for public office. She became the first mayor of Cambridge when Galt, Preston and Hespeler amalgamated in 1973.

A year later, in 1974, Claudette shone as an outstanding leader when she helped manage a major flood, gaining national attention. In 1986, Miller successfully wooed Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada to Cambridge, which became an award-winning plant and major employer. It was a very, very important step in securing our future.

At her induction into the Waterloo Region Hall of Fame in 2015, she said that these two were her proudest accomplishments.

She retired as a regional councillor in 2014. Tributes from friends and colleagues have been pouring in. She was known as a feisty, driven personality who was always working for the people of Cambridge and who smashed through the glass ceiling as if it wasn't there.

I will miss her incredibly sharp wit, her larger-than-life, dynamic personality and her strong mentorship in heritage and environmental issues. Claudette Miller leaves an incredible legacy. Truly, Cambridge has lost one of its greats.

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

ANNUAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that during adjournment, the following report was tabled on December 16, 2015: the annual report 2014-15 on the Open Meeting Law Enforcement Team, OMLET, from the Ombudsman.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, our Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated January 27, 2016, 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 GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated February 16, 2016, 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 THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report on e-petitions from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: This report is the culmination of 10 months of work by the committee. At its core is a recommendation that an e-petition system be adopted by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It is the committee's hope that this will expand public participation in the parliamentary process.

As Chair of the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, I want to thank the members of the committee for their dedication to this important project. Members of all parties were very engaged, and we had some excellent discussions at our meetings. I'd also like to thank all those who provided testimony to the committee, including the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Legislature.

Last but not least, I want to thank the staff of the committee and take this opportunity to acknowledge the excellent work of our table research clerk, Joanne McNair.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried. No further action.

Debate adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SAVING THE GIRL NEXT DOOR ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE DES JEUNES FILLES

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 158, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2016 and the Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, 2016 and to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 158, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2016 sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes et modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Human trafficking is an evil practice in our society that can no longer be kept secret. It's right here in our neighbourhoods and our towns, and we know that it's a crime that starts and stays in Canada. It must be stopped.

1520

The girl next door represents the victims, mostly females, who are recruited on average by age 14—some as young as 11. They are strategically lured into a world that they can almost never escape on their own.

The Saving the Girl Next Door Act, 2016, marks some good collaborative work that is meant to spark a long line of discussion, consultation, collaboration and legislation needed to combat this heinous crime, a form of modern-day slavery. The bill addresses significant steps that can be done within our power immediately that just may save the next innocent soul before they become a statistic.

STEPHANIE HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2016

Mr. Tabuns moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr33, An Act to revive Stephanie Holdings Ltd.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

Mr. Coteau moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month / Projet de loi 159, Loi proclamant le mois de février Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

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.

Hon. Michael Coteau: The proposed legislation being introduced today would, if passed, enact the Black

History Month Act, 2016. The proposed legislation would formally establish February as Black History Month in Ontario on an annual basis. If passed, this legislation would recognize and celebrate the important contributions that black Canadians have had in the history of this province.

I'd like to take the opportunity to thank stakeholders joining us here today: Pauline Christian from the BBPA; Rosemary Sadlier, the past president of the Ontario Black History Society; Kofi Hope; Pastor Searles; and many other community members joining us here today. I want to thank them for their continuous work on this file and their contributions to Ontario.

BILL BEDFORD PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION ACT, 2016

Mr. Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr34, An Act to revive Bill Bedford Professional Corporation.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

839255 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2016

Ms. Wong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr36, An Act to revive 839255 Ontario Inc.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

LIFE LEASE ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LES BAUX VIAGERS

Ms. Hoggarth moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to regulate life leases / Projet de loi 160, Loi visant à réglementer les baux viagers.

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. Ann Hoggarth: As you may know, life lease housing is not legislated in the province of Ontario. This will be the first legislation of its kind and it aims to give basic protection to the people who live in life lease housing.

I hope everyone in this Legislature will support this bill and help give those who need it the protections that they deserve.

ELIMINATION OF GROUND CURRENT
POLLUTION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ÉLIMINATION
DE L'ÉLECTROPOLLUTION DU SOL

Mr. Nicholls moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act to prohibit harmful electrical ground current / Projet de loi 161, Loi interdisant les courants électriques telluriques nuisibles.

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. Rick Nicholls: The bill prohibits electricity providers from causing occurrence of objectionable current flow, which is commonly and erroneously known as stray voltage or tingle voltage. The scientifically correct term is “ground current” or “uncontrolled electricity.”

Electrical current flow is objectionable if it is a steady flow of alternating electrical current in the ground or on a grounding conductor or any other conductor that is not designed to carry electrical current. It does not include any temporary flow of electrical current that is caused by a phase-to-ground fault condition and that results from the performance of a grounding conductor’s protective functions regarding faults or lightning.

An electricity provider that receives a complaint about objectionable current flow is required to have the complaint investigated. The person or entity doing the investigation is required to report to the provider and the complainant. Either party who disagrees with the findings of the report can request a further investigation. If the applicable investigation shows that the provider is responsible for an occurrence of objectionable current flow, the provider is required, within five months of receiving the report, to take all necessary steps to eliminate the objectionable current flow and to prevent a recurrence. It is an offence for a provider to fail to do so.

Lastly, Speaker, the government of Ontario has two years from the date on which the bill receives royal assent to develop a plan to eliminate objectionable current flow in Ontario and has 10 years from that date to implement the plan throughout Ontario.

1709542 ONTARIO CORPORATION
ACT, 2016

Mr. Ballard moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr35, An Act to revive 1709542 Ontario Corporation.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BASE2 EBUSINESS SOLUTIONS INC.
ACT, 2016

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr37, An Act to revive Base2 eBusiness Solutions Inc.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

Introduction of bills? Introduction of bills? Last call for introductions of bills.

Today I’m going to check with the Guinness people to find out if it’s a record for introducing bills the first day back.

1530

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF MEDICAL
OFFICER OF HEALTH

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Dr. David Williams as Chief Medical Officer of Health for the province of Ontario as provided in section 81(1) of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing February 16, 2016.”

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that an humble address be—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY
OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice

regarding the appointment of the temporary Ombudsman for the province of Ontario.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion—I'm not that rusty—without notice regarding the appointment of the temporary Ombudsman for the province of Ontario. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the reappointment of Barbara Finlay as the temporary Ombudsman for the province of Ontario as provided in section 7 of the Ombudsman Act, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing March 16, 2016 until March 31, 2016.”

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that an humble address be presented—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF OMBUDSMAN

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Paul Dubé as the Ombudsman for the province of Ontario as provided in section 3 of Ombudsman Act, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act, commencing on April 1, 2016.”

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that an humble address be presented—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we dispense? Dispense.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members’ public business.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list: Mr. Crack and Mr. Potts exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Crack assumes ballot item number 33 and Mr. Potts assumes ballot item number 21; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list: Mr. Crack and Mr. Potts exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Crack assumes ballot item number 33—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing orders 71(a) and 81(b), the order for second reading of Bill 159, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month, may be called today; and

That up to 30 minutes shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 159 be immediately called; and

That the question be put on the motion for third meeting without debate or amendment; and

That the votes on second and third reading may not be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader has put forward—are we asking for unanimous consent first?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We just had it. Okay. Got it.

I believe you will find—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I just want to rise and say it's rather unfortunate that the government House leader used the names in the order that he presented on this particular motion. It would have been much more fitting for him to name the learned member Mr. Potts before Mr. Crack in order to deal with this motion, because otherwise what is he saying about Mr. Crack and Mr. Potts when he puts it in that order?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would leave that point of order to be figured out by all of the learned members in this House. I will not say anything further.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm happy today to rise to celebrate an important milestone. On January 17 of this year, the Ministry of Transportation turned 100 years old.

Applause.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely, absolutely

Historically, of course, the word "milestone" refers to concrete markers that were placed along the roadway to reassure travellers; to let them know how far they had come and how far they still had to go. Though we use the term "milestone" somewhat figuratively today, it's very appropriate for MTO's 100th because this milestone anniversary gives us all a chance to pause and to reflect on our past so that we can see how far we have come and also look ahead to our future, to think about where we're going and how we are going to get there, and also to think a little bit about the legacy that we're going to leave behind. I'd like to talk to you about our plans for that legacy, but before I look ahead, I want to reflect for just a moment as to the MTO's history and achievements.

One hundred years ago, the Department of Public Highways of Ontario, as the ministry was then called, managed almost 3,000 kilometres of provincial highway. Today, the Ministry of Transportation is responsible for almost 17,000 kilometres of provincial highway.

Over the years, MTO has successfully created a vital, multi-modal transportation system that spans the entire

province, a province that is in fact larger than some countries.

The ministry developed regional rail and public transit systems like GO Transit and the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. It helped build 29 remote airports and connect island communities by launching all-year ferry systems like the Glenora ferry service. It introduced #CycleON, a forward-looking cycling strategy to support and encourage cycling here in our province.

1540

MTO has turned a province that at one time was largely populated by dirt roads into one of the largest and safest road networks in the world, by being the first province in Canada to make seat belts mandatory in 1976; by making child booster seats mandatory; by having one of the strictest impaired-driving legislation regimes in Canada; and of course, Speaker, by banning handheld devices while driving. I'm also very proud to point out that we've been at the forefront of innovation with things like advanced bridge replacement technology and the Highway 401 COMPASS Freeway Traffic Management System.

Speaker, looking forward, our legacy will include the commitment to build and to continue to build a seamless transportation network. Our government's Moving Ontario Forward plan commits \$31.5 billion over the next 10 years for priority transit and transportation infrastructure: projects across the province such as public transit, roads, bridges and highways. Our legacy will be built upon a solid foundation of transportation safety.

Just last year, MTO was instrumental in terms of passing the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act to help ensure that this province's roads continue to rank amongst the safest in North America, by imposing even tougher penalties for distracted and impaired driving.

Finally, Speaker, we hope that today's MTO is remembered for embracing innovation. In 2015, MTO announced that it is investing \$20 million to build more public charging stations for electric vehicles, and early this year, Ontario became the first of Canada's provinces and territories to allow testing of automated vehicles on its roads.

As we celebrate 100 years of hard work and innovation, we should remind ourselves that our story is still being written. One hundred years from now, a future generation of Ontarians will proudly be remembering the initiatives that we are collectively working on together today.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all past ministers of transportation and all current and former ministry staff for their dedication and hard work in helping to build one of the largest and safest transportation networks here in Canada and around the globe. I am proud to serve as Ontario's Minister of Transportation for the people of this province, and I'm delighted to celebrate our 100th anniversary. Thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

Mr. Michael Harris: You know, Speaker, 100 years ago, when the Act Respecting Public Roads and Highways in Ontario came into effect and Findlay G. MacDiarmid was named the first minister of transportation, over the Department of Public Highways, no one could have imagined where those highways would take us. They just knew there was a role to play for government to help the people, workers and businesses of Ontario to get from point A to point B. That's really what the ministry has been about over those 100 years: getting from point A to point B.

Now, 100 years ago the options were somewhat limited. The automobile was just beginning to be enjoyed by a mass audience, driven by motorists who had never seen a traffic light, owned a driver's licence or even traversed a provincial highway. That's because there were no provincial highways.

A lot has changed in those years. Dirt and macadam roads have given way to an interconnected paved road and provincial highway system, north to south, west to east, that every resident in this great province depends upon for everything from their daily commute to critical emergency transport to the transfer of goods and resources vital to our everyday lives and our economic well-being.

While roads and bridges continued to improve and expand across the province in those early years as both population and technological advances moved forward, investments in rail and air provided further interconnectedness, giving commuters options in the south while providing vital airborne connections to remote airports in the north.

Soon after the ministry's birth, progress really began to get rolling in the next decade as the Roaring Twenties ushered in the first formal road systems, resulting in a total of just about 10,000 miles of county roads and 1,825 miles of provincial highways, the first provincial Highway Traffic Act and the first traffic lights introduced in Toronto and Hamilton.

As coloured safety signals expanded throughout every community in Ontario, the road network multiplied as well, connecting us from one corner of the province to the other. That network saw one of its crowning early achievements toward the end of the Great Depression as King George VI and Queen Elizabeth helped to welcome the 1939 unveiling of the Queen Elizabeth Way in St. Catharines, becoming the first intercity divided highway in Canada, featuring the first cloverleaf interchange in our country, at Highway 10.

While the divided highways and cloverleaf interchanges would become commonplace as road-building pushed us forward, the ministry continued to look to other opportunities to get our people and goods moving right across the province. To that end, it was Progressive Conservative John Robarts's government that planted the seeds for a GO Transit initiative along the lakeshore between Oakville and Toronto. It was 5:50 a.m. on May 23, 1967, that the first GO train trip was taken. While not yet at the two-way, all-day frequency that many areas are

still waiting for this government to deliver on, trains soon began operating between Oakville and Dunbarton, also known now as Pickering, with rush-hour service between Hamilton and Pickering at 14 stations on 94 kilometres of track. On the first day, the system carried 8,000 riders, and in that first year, some 2.5 million people used the service, with millions more set to line up over the coming decades as GO trains and the soon-to-follow GO bus service helped meet consumer demands for transportation options.

While the overriding goal has been to oversee provincial initiatives and investments that ultimately help people get from A to B, the ministry has understood that its success at achieving that goal is wasted if it can't ensure that people can make that trip safely. So while better and newer technology has been introduced on roadways and automobiles to enhance safety, the ministry has worked to implement safety-based initiatives aimed at curbing the frequency and/or impact of accidents.

From speed reductions to paved shoulders, there has probably been no more impactful initiative to promote safety than the introduction of seat belt laws under the Bill Davis government in 1976. By the end of the year that the new seat belt laws came into effect, traffic-related deaths dropped to their lowest level in more than a decade. That was 40 years ago; imagine the number of lives that have been saved or protected in those four decades.

In our lifetimes, we have all seen the Ministry of Transportation continue to move us forward through highway expansion, essential bridge work and continue to pursue advances in technology that provide new and safer transportation options that we all need to get us from point A to B. While we could never have imagined the continued progress we would take on as a province over the past century, there is little doubt that the ministry has accomplished much to be proud of in pursuing the dual goals of pushing Ontario forward, whether that be on wheels, water or air, while overseeing safety for all who travel in and around our province.

So I join people across the province in recognizing the achievements made over 100 years of MTO in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak about the 100th anniversary of the Ministry of Transportation. When the MTO was first formed in 1916, it was known as the Department of Public Highways of Ontario, or the DPHO. The DPHO had 35 staff and exactly zero kilometres of provincial highway to oversee. That's right: When it was formed, Ontario had 90,000 kilometres of dirt and gravel roadway, along which 54,000 registered vehicles travelled, and none of it was considered a public highway.

You may ask yourself: Why was the Department of Public Highways of Ontario created if there were no public highways? The answer to that question is, unfortunately, a problem that we're still dealing with today: gridlock. More specifically, it was formed as part of the

response to a request from the municipalities of Hamilton, Burlington, Nelson and Oakville. These municipalities got together and asked the government of Ontario to build Ontario's first public highway, running between Hamilton and Toronto, and to help get rid of bumper-to-bumper traffic on Lakeshore Road.

The DPHO did just that. In April 1917, a little less than 18 months after it was formed, the DPHO officially opened the Toronto-Hamilton highway to the public. The highway would go on to serve as a prominent figure in developing southern Ontario, including my riding of Niagara Falls.

1550

I wanted to tell you that little story because it has some shocking parallels to the world we live in today. In today's world, the drivers of Ontario still face massive gridlock when they try to drive from Niagara Falls to Toronto through Hamilton. The drivers of Oakville and Burlington still have to crawl in bumper-to-bumper traffic to get to downtown Toronto. All of this is far too close for comfort to the truths of today, given how long ago those problems started and are still happening today.

In the last month, St. Catharines—I know Mr. Bradley would like to hear this—Niagara Falls, Fort Erie, Niagara-on-the-Lake and the rest of the municipalities in Niagara region came to the government of Ontario and the MTO to ask for a solution to some of the gridlock that costs our economy \$6 billion a year.

In 2016, when municipalities from the Niagara region come to the government of Ontario and the MTO, they aren't requesting another highway. Instead, Niagara regional municipalities are simply requesting a timeline for when they can expect the expansion of GO train service to Niagara Falls. Unfortunately, these municipalities are having to wait a lot longer than the 18 months the original five municipalities waited 100 years ago.

Of course, over the last 100 years, the Minister of Transportation has taken on many other roles as the transportation needs of Ontario have changed. In the 1920s, the first Highway Traffic Act was passed and beginner permits were made available to Ontario's young people.

In the 1930s, the Nipigon River bridge was opened as the only paved route linking eastern and western Canada. Unfortunately for the ministry, that is not currently the case; I'm sure we're all aware of that.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Tell us more.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm going to.

In the 1970s, we saw seat belt laws come into effect, the first commuter parking lot opened and, very importantly in my opinion, the option to customize your own licence plate was introduced as well. I have one myself. It was a birthday present from a year that I won't mention.

Over the 35 years after the 1970s, the MTO would continue to expand and, in many cases, enhance transportation across Ontario. Of course, not everything they did has been successful. We still have gridlock problems, and are having more trouble resolving them

than 100 years ago. There are still problems keeping our roads clear and clean, especially in the winter. In fact, there are even problems with contractors as well.

While I stand today to offer my congratulations to the MTO for 100 years of service, I would also like to offer some advice: Use this opportunity to look back and learn. Learn from our past successes but, more importantly, from our past mistakes. Let's learn, and let's move forward.

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

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the price of electricity has skyrocketed under the Ontario Liberal government;

"Whereas ever-higher hydro bills are a huge concern for everyone in the province, especially seniors and others on fixed incomes, who can't afford to pay more;

"Whereas Ontario's businesses say high electricity costs are making them uncompetitive, and have contributed to the loss of hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs;

"Whereas the recent Auditor General's report found Ontarians overpaid for electricity by \$37 billion over the past eight years and estimates that we will overpay by an additional \$133 billion over the next 18 years if nothing changes;

"Whereas the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants costing \$1.1 billion, feed-in tariff (FIT) contracts with wind and solar companies, the sale of surplus energy to neighbouring jurisdictions at a loss, the debt retirement charge, the global adjustment and smart meters that haven't met their conservation targets have all put upward pressure on hydro bills;

"Whereas the sale of 60% of Hydro One is opposed by a majority of Ontarians and will likely only lead to even higher hydro bills;

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

"To listen to Ontarians, reverse course on the Liberal government's current hydro policies and take immediate steps to stabilize hydro bills."

Mr. Speaker, this has been signed by a substantial number of my constituents, and I am pleased to support it as well.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I've been reading this petition for seven years. You'll hear why.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

“Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

“Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

“Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

“That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

“That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

I couldn't agree more. It's pretty obvious why we have this petition. I'm going to give it to Charlotte to be delivered to the table.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a 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'm pleased to affix my signature, and I'll send it to the table with page Micah.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mr. Fred and Mrs. Millie Grosklag from Richmond Avenue in Sudbury. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” to:

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Ryan to deliver it to the Clerk.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by numerous residents of the town of Clarington from the fantastic member for Durham's fine riding.

“Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

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

“That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018.”

I fully support this petition because those people will be coming through my riding of Beaches–East York and getting off the GO train and going onto the subway system.

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 will affix my signature to this petition and send it to the table.

1600

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Wayne Gates: “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.”

I agree with this petition and I’ll sign my name.

EHLERS-DANLOS SYNDROME

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

“Whereas the Canada Health Act requires provinces to fund medically necessary treatment for Canadians; and

“Whereas a growing number of people in Ontario suffering from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) have to seek out-of-country treatment at their own expense because doctors in Ontario don’t have the knowledge or skills to understand EDS symptoms and perform the required delicate and complicated surgeries; and

“Whereas those EDS victims who can’t afford the expensive treatment outside of Ontario are forced to suffer a deteriorating existence and risk irreversible tissue and nerve damage; and

“Whereas EDS victims suffer severe dislocations, chronic pain, blackouts, nausea, migraines, lost vision, tremors, bowel and bladder issues, heart problems, mobility issues, digestive disorders, severe fatigue and many others resulting in little or very poor quality of life; and

“Whereas despite Ontario Ministry of Health claims that there are doctors in Ontario who can perform surgeries on EDS patients, when surgery is recommended the Ontario referring physicians fail to identify any Ontario neurosurgeon willing or able to see and treat the patient;

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

“Require the Minister of Health to provide the names of Ontario neurosurgeons who can—and will—perform surgeries on EDS patients with equivalent or identical

skills to the EDS neurosurgeon specialists in the United States, and meet the Canada Health Act’s requirement to afford equal access to medical treatment for patients, regardless of their ability to pay for out-of-country services.”

I’m pleased to support the petition, affix my signature and send it to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition from the constituents in my riding of Windsor West.

“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.”

I fully support this petition. I will sign my name to it and send it to the table with page Micah.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I’m pleased to present this petition on behalf of a number of people from the area. I’m pleased to see them raise their voice. To that end, here is a 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.”

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

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

“We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

Can we please get this done? Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a 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.”

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

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition for better mental health services.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas mental health affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures; and

“Whereas one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime and only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them; and

“Whereas mental health is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death in Canada; and

“Whereas the cost of mental health and addictions to the Ontario economy is \$34 billion; and

“Whereas the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions made 22 recommendations in their final report; and

“Whereas the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, seeks to implement all 22 of these recommendations;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, which:

“(1) Brings all mental health services in the province under one ministry, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

“(2) Establishes a single body to design, manage and coordinate all mental health and addictions systems throughout the province;

“(3) Ensures that programs and services are delivered consistently and comprehensively across Ontario;

“(4) Grants the Ombudsman full powers to audit or investigate providers of mental health and addictions services in Ontario.”

Speaker, I wholeheartedly sign and support this petition and give it to page Erin to deliver to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

Mr. Coteau moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month / Projet de loi 159, Loi proclamant le mois de février Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Coteau.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am so proud to be here today for second reading of Bill 159, the act to make Black History Month official here in the province of Ontario. I will be sharing my time with MPP Mitzie Hunter from Scarborough—

Guildwood and with Bas Balkissoon, the MPP for Scarborough–Rouge River.

1610

I wanted to acknowledge first that we're on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. I also wanted to acknowledge that we do have some special guests here today, and I did mention some names before, but there are a few more people here and I'll just mention everyone.

We have Nikki Clarke, who is from the Ontario Black History Society; Pauline Christian—I introduced her earlier; Rosemary Sadlier; Kofi Hope; Grant Morris; Gwyn Chapman; and Pastor Searles and his wife, Janice. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature, and if I missed anyone, I'm so sorry. Welcome, everyone, here. I'm delighted that members from the community are joining us here for the second reading of this important bill.

I wanted to also acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that back in 2007 and in 2009, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, Bas Balkissoon, actually brought forward a proposed bill to recognize Black History Month formally. I just want to say thank you to him for his work and advocacy on behalf of the community and Ontarians.

Twenty-three years ago, Ontario first proclaimed Black History Month here in the province of Ontario. It was on the 200th anniversary of the law banning the importation of slaves into Upper Canada, and every year since then we have recognized Black History Month here in the Ontario Legislature. This process, if passed, will formally recognize it on an ongoing basis so we don't have to come into the Legislature each year to proclaim it.

I wanted to just take a few minutes, because I will be sharing my time, to say how proud I am to be a black Canadian, a black Ontarian. I know that many people know the stories in the past of the contribution of black people here in the province of Ontario.

You know, when I think of those great stories, I always talk about interesting people like William Hubbard, a former politician here in the city of Toronto. These are not the kind of stories that I received in my education here in Toronto. In fact, I was asking some of my colleagues around me if any of them had black history taught at school, and no one responded yes. So I think that by having Black History Month—and I need to thank the Honourable Jean Augustine for her work in bringing this forward back in 1995 federally; we're proud of the work that she's done. But going back to my point, there are so many wonderful stories about people like William Hubbard, stories that are just incredible. I don't know if the member from St. Catharines knows this, but William Hubbard actually saved George Brown's life. He was in the Don River, he was drowning, and William Hubbard, this young man, saved his life. He became somewhat of a protégé to George Brown, the abolitionist and founding father, and he worked and became the first black city councillor and the first black acting mayor of Toronto 115 years ago.

That's the type of rich history that we have here in the province of Ontario. I know that the Ontario Black Hist-

ory Society, some of our educators and different organizations are constantly getting out there so that people understand that since the very beginning of this country and its past 400 years ago, there has been a black African presence in this country. We need to continue to tell those stories so that we can continue to grow as a province and as a country.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I am honoured to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills and on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus. This Bill 159, the Black History Month Act, is an important one because it enshrines in statute for all time the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's recognition of the month of February as Black History Month. This act of Parliament gives Black History Month the distinction it deserves.

On the evening of February 2, earlier this month, the Leader of the Opposition, my colleague the member for Simcoe North, hosted a very successful reception here at Queen's Park to kick off our Black History Month recognition. I was glad to be there to welcome our guests, and it was great: interesting conversations, good food and wonderful fellowship. I want to thank everyone who joined us, and I hope we can turn this into an annual event.

Earlier this month, I also had the opportunity to visit Father Henry Carr Catholic Secondary School in Etobicoke, home of one of the top-ranked high school basketball teams in Toronto, the Carr Crusaders. I met with senior staff and some of the students and learned about an extraordinary youth community support program called Trust 15. Founded by Marcia Brown, Trust 15 is a not-for-profit organization that provides youth in the Rexdale–North Etobicoke area with programs that promote and facilitate positive behaviour, creative expression and co-operative working skills. These programs exist to give kids the social and educational tools they need to succeed in society. This is accomplished through mentoring and positive role model intervention.

Every week, Trust 15 opens its doors to 120 youth in the community through their Ladies on the Rise, Girls on the Rise and Men of Distinction after-school drop-in programs. They provide safe, nurturing space for these young people to discuss and find solutions for real-life issues surrounding self-esteem, conflict resolution, abuse, violence, peer pressure and family life.

It goes without saying that Ontario's black community has a long and proud history in our province. In fact, black history is Ontario history. The two are inextricably linked. The Ontario Black History Society reminds us that black Canadians fought valiantly alongside English, French and aboriginal Canadians in the War of 1812, including in the Battle of Queenston Heights and the Battle of Lundy's Lane.

Thousands of escaped slaves fleeing the oppression and scourge of slavery in the southern United States

arrived in Ontario via the Underground Railroad. They established early settlements in towns such as Windsor, Chatham, Guelph and St. Catharines, as well as Owen Sound.

I was reminded today by my colleague the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound that Owen Sound was the most northerly point for the Underground Railway, offering refuge for the slaves fleeing from the southern states. To mark this part of its heritage, Owen Sound has celebrated Emancipation Day every August 1 for the past 182 years to recognize and celebrate those individuals and groups who made the Underground Railroad journey possible and to remind our young people of this important story.

Fleeing the United States, they became Canadians and raised their families in freedom. They and their descendants went on to become farmers, teachers, business owners, doctors, and lawyers. Their contributions were fundamental in helping to build the Ontario that we know and celebrate today.

Today, I want to highlight the outstanding contributions of two particular black Canadians: Richard Pierpoint and Lincoln Alexander.

Historica Canada, Canada's largest independent organization devoted to enhancing awareness of Canadian history and citizenship, recognizes the story of Richard Pierpoint, whose long life straddled the 18th and 19th centuries and included a chapter in what is now Wellington–Halton Hills, and whose courage, public service and insistence that blacks should be treated fairly and equally should inspire us all. This is how they relate the historical importance of Richard Pierpoint:

“Richard Pierpoint was born in Bondu (now Senegal) in 1744. In 1760, he was captured and brought to America where he was sold” as a slave “to a British officer. After more than 20 years in America, he won his emancipation by fighting as a member of Butler’s Rangers in the American Revolution.

“His support for the British in the conflict meant he was rewarded with a land grant in the Niagara region. After 1783, Pierpoint settled in Niagara, where he served as a griot (storyteller) for the local black community. In the Senegalese tradition a griot listens to stories and associates them with a particular stone. The griot retells the stories by pulling a stone out of his bag and recounting the associated story. Before and after the War of 1812, Pierpoint travelled around Upper Canada listening to and retelling the stories of the black community.

“In 1794, Pierpoint and a number of formerly enslaved men petitioned the government of Upper Canada to grant them land adjacent to each other rather than dispersed among white settlers. The Petition of Free Negroes, as it was known, aimed to create a black community where members would help and support each other....

“In the War of 1812, at age 68, Pierpoint petitioned the military for the creation of an all-black unit, by producing a list of black men in the region who had sworn to fight. The petition was initially rejected, but leadership of the unit was eventually given to Captain

Robert Runchey, and the unit was named Captain Runchey’s Corps of Coloured Men. The Corps fought at Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812 (they were among the first reinforcements to arrive on the Heights in support of Mohawk Chief John Norton’s Grand River warriors)....

“These courageous men were instrumental to the war effort throughout the Niagara region. In 1813, they were reassigned to the Provincial Corps of Artificers and served throughout the war, building and rebuilding important strategic posts.

1620

“After the war, Pierpoint stayed in Niagara, but found life difficult. In 1821, Pierpoint petitioned the government again, this time asking to be sent back on a ship to his homeland in Senegal. Pierpoint’s petition was again rejected, but he was given a new land grant in Garafraxa, near modern-day Fergus. He took up his land and became a leader in the black community, helping formerly enslaved men and women move through the Underground Railroad. In addition, Scottish settlers, in particular James Webster”—who is commonly understood to be one of the founders of the community of Fergus”—relied on Pierpoint for help when they arrived in the Fergus area in the early 1830s. Pierpoint died around 1837, aged about 93. He was one of the thousands of black Loyalists who came to Canada after the American Revolution, and while many faced significant hardships, they nonetheless formed an important part of early Canada.”

In October 2012, Canada mourned the loss of Lincoln Alexander, one of our greatest Canadians, who made a meaningful and lasting contribution to both our province and our country. He was a man who shattered barriers and led the way for the next generation of leaders to follow in his footsteps.

Members will recall that in November 2013, we debated a bill, which I had introduced, that was co-sponsored by the member for Scarborough–Rouge River and the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to recognize January 21 as Lincoln Alexander Day in Ontario. We worked together across party lines to secure the passage of the bill, and it was passed into law with the unanimous consent of this House.

Lincoln Alexander grew up in an Ontario that was far less tolerant and inclusive than the province we know today, but as Sandra Martin wrote in the *Globe and Mail* shortly after his death, he was a man who had the capacity to “turn rejections and despicable slurs into a personal challenge to excel.”

Lincoln Alexander was first elected to the House of Commons as a Progressive Conservative in 1968, becoming Canada’s first black member of Parliament in the House of Commons. He held his Hamilton riding through five consecutive elections and in 1979 was appointed Minister of Labour, earning the distinction of becoming Canada’s first black federal cabinet minister.

After he retired from partisan politics in 1980, he served as chair of Ontario’s Workmen’s Compensation Board, and later broke new ground by becoming

Canada's first black Lieutenant Governor when he was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in 1985. That was the position he held when I was first elected to the Legislative Assembly 25 years ago in 1990. When he came into this chamber for a throne speech or some other special occasion, he had a regal bearing and a manner that ironically seemed to be down to earth at the same time.

Lincoln Alexander inspired thousands of young Canadians with his life story and example of overcoming discrimination, pursuing excellence and working for a better Canada. He also served as the longest-serving chancellor in the history of the University of Guelph. He inspired a new generation of leaders who continue to help shape our country and our province today.

As some members of this House may remember, in 2008 I introduced another bill honouring the history of Ontario's black community, this one recognizing August 1 as Emancipation Day in Ontario. This was to commemorate the day in 1834 when slavery was abolished in Canada and throughout the British Empire. That bill also holds the distinction of being the very first bill ever introduced into this House to be jointly sponsored by members from different parties. I had approached then-Lambton-Kent-Middlesex MPP Maria Van Bommel, and she graciously agreed to work with me on the bill.

The idea for the bill was brought to my attention at a ceremony that I had attended in the community of Glen Allen and Mapleton township in Wellington county in 2008 to unveil a plaque commemorating the Queen's Bush settlement, which had once been a thriving community of more than 1,500 people who had escaped slavery in the southern United States and made their way to our part of Ontario in the 19th century. As I was leaving the ceremony that day, a man whom I had never met before approached me. He told me that he thought there should be a bill in the Legislature recognizing August 1 of every year as Emancipation Day in Ontario.

As I was driving home, I kept thinking about what he had said. Shortly afterwards, as a result of that conversation, we asked legislative counsel to draft the legislation that was eventually passed into law by this House, with support from all three parties.

While working on this bill, I had the opportunity to get to know Rosemary Sadlier, who was then the president of the Ontario Black History Society. I want to acknowledge her extraordinary leadership in this province. Rosemary served the society for more than 20 years as president. Through my involvement in a number of legislative initiatives to recognize significant turning points in black history, I have come to know Rosemary very well. A teacher, Rosemary has received numerous awards, including the province's highest honour, the Order of Ontario.

As she wrote in an essay published on the Ontario Black History Society website, the annual observation of black history is important for young African Canadians, who "need to feel affirmed ... be aware of the contributions made by other blacks in Canada ... have role models

[and] understand the social forces which have shaped and influenced their community."

In the same essay, she argued that Black History Month is also important for helping the wider community get a clearer perception of their culture. "One needs traditional history to engender a common culture; one needs black history to engender a clearer and more complete culture," she wrote.

Rosemary has spent countless hours volunteering with the society, because she firmly believes in the importance of educating Ontarians about the history and significant achievements of the black community in building our communities, our provinces and our country. This is a chapter of our history that should make all of us very proud.

I want to express my sincere thanks to everyone who is involved with the Ontario Black History Society: their new chair, Nikki Clarke, the other members of the board and the many volunteers who have worked so hard to promote this important part of our past.

Black History Month is an opportunity to pay tribute to the legacy of countless individuals, including Richard Pierpoint, Lincoln Alexander and all the rest, and the lasting contributions they have made to our province and our country.

It should come as no surprise to members that this bill has our unqualified support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus, it is my pleasure to rise to speak to the Black History Month Act.

Black History Month is a crucial opportunity to honour the people and the movements that have shaped positive and transformative change in our province, across our country and around the world. It is a time to celebrate more than 400 years of rich African- and Caribbean-Canadian history and to recognize the black community's tremendous accomplishments and achievements. Today, New Democrats join with members from all parties to celebrate the vital contributions of the black community in Ontario.

There are inspiring events happening in communities across this province to mark Black History Month, and I encourage all Ontarians to take part. At the same time, marking Black History Month also demands that we take a hard look at the history of our own province.

In pre-Confederation Canada, slavery existed. Of course, it was eventually outlawed, generations too late, but it was the first sign that racism and discrimination against African and Caribbean Canadians would come to shape the lives of far too many people in this country and this province.

So, along with the achievements and accomplishments that we honour during Black History Month, we must also acknowledge the pain, suffering and injustice that black Ontarians have endured, and the sacrifices that have been made by untold women and men in Ontario. But perhaps most importantly, it would be a mistake and

a lost opportunity to think that Black History Month is only about the past. In fact, Black History Month is as much about the present and the future: a better future that we are determined to build together.

Today, we must recognize that inequality and injustice continue to exist in this province, and that anti-black racism is still a reality here in Ontario. It takes different forms, but it hurts people; it hurts families; it hurts our province. Sometimes anti-black racism is overt; sometimes not. Sometimes it is confronted; all too often, it is excused. But no matter what it looks like and no matter what it sounds like, racism is always unacceptable, and it needs to be stopped.

Before I was elected, I had the opportunity to work with our community legal clinic in Hamilton. Everyone who came through the doors of that clinic needed help with the struggles they were facing, whether it was the impact of poverty, environmental concerns, work-related injuries or problems with their housing. More often than not, the people who came through our doors were living every day with the impact of racism. Years later, too many African and Caribbean Canadians in Ontario continue to face the same discrimination. That's the reality.

1630

The government has a duty to acknowledge the persistence of anti-black racism in our province. And we all have a duty to take real action, in full consultation and partnership with the African-Canadian and Caribbean-Canadian communities, to eliminate racism in all its forms.

We cannot simply accept that black families in Ontario should continue to be so much more likely to live in poverty. According to the African Canadian Legal Clinic, fully two thirds of African Canadian families in Toronto live below the poverty line.

We cannot simply accept that black children should be far more likely to be in the care of children's aid. An estimated 42% of children in care in Toronto are black.

We cannot accept that any policy should be applied in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner. That's why this Legislature passed the motion last October, from the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton and the deputy leader of the NDP, to stop arbitrary police street checks—carding—in Ontario.

We cannot accept that black and aboriginal men and boys should be jailed disproportionately.

We cannot accept that black Ontarians should earn less and be more likely to be unemployed in Ontario.

We cannot simply accept that the barriers and struggles should be even greater for black women, black members of the LGBTQ community and black Ontarians with disabilities.

There are many dedicated and tireless Ontarians who do not accept these facts and do not accept that they should define our future. Those leaders, activists, organizers and ordinary citizens work hard to create positive change. Many of them are with us today, and I'm sure that many of them are watching this debate. Those leaders, those activists and those organizers work hard every day to make that change happen in this province.

But, frankly, there's more that the provincial government can do to help and to stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight against systemic racism and discrimination in Ontario.

That's why the Ontario NDP joined with the African Canadian Legal Clinic and numerous community groups to call on the government to re-establish an Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat, a body dedicated to working proactively to eliminate systemic discrimination here in Ontario. C'est le moment. Now is the time to take this important step.

We actually had an Anti-Racism Secretariat in this province in the early 1990s, under the last NDP government, and it did important work. Unfortunately, it was shut down by the following government, the Conservative government. Then, 10 years ago, the Ontario Human Rights Code was amended to call for the Anti-Racism Secretariat to be re-established.

Now, at long last, this morning the government indicated that they would move forward with this important initiative, and I'm glad. I am glad that the government is finally listening to the thousands of Ontarians from across this province who joined with us to call for action against racism. This is an initiative that is a decade overdue—some folks over there think it's a laughing matter; I do not. The establishment of an Anti-Racism Directorate is an important step towards building a future where no one is left behind and where all Ontarians can share in the opportunities that we create. This is a vision that Ontario's NDP will continue to push as the new legislative session begins.

I want to thank the many people who shared their experiences and stories with me:

—the U of T students who talked about streaming in school—still, in this day and age, streaming in school because of skin colour—about the lack of black professors and academic mentors they had in university, and about the daily micro-aggressions that they face in their lives because of the colour of their skin; and

—the agencies who shared stories of the support that they try to provide daily—like the woman in Hamilton who relayed the story of a black teenage boy who was walking on the sidewalk and was hurt and confused when the woman approaching him from the opposite direction clutched her purse to her chest and crossed the street rather than pass him on the sidewalk; like Rahim Thomas at a group called FYI in York South-Weston, who told me about being questioned by police just for sitting on a park bench even though the older white fellow on the next bench was not approached by police.

I want to thank the more than 7,000 Ontarians who have signed the petitions calling for re-establishment of the anti-racism secretariat, and I want to take a moment to thank the remarkable community leaders and organizations who have led this campaign with us. Together, we got results that we can be proud of, and together we're going to keep working to tackle racism, make life better for all Ontarians and eliminate systemic injustice in this province. That's exactly what Black History Month should compel all of us to do.

Yes, we should celebrate the tremendous achievements of African and Caribbean Canadians; my colleagues on both the government benches and the opposition benches have mentioned a number of them. We should take the time to learn more about our shared history and make sure that that shared history is embedded in our kids' school curriculum.

Most importantly, we should focus on the future we want to build in this province: a future in which we eliminate racism and discrimination in Ontario; a future in which the opportunities people have are no longer limited or defined by the colour of their skin or by where their family came from; a future in which Ontario is more fair, more equal, more just; a future where, when we talk about important issues like this, people actually have the courtesy to listen to one another, and where we can all share in the benefits this province has to offer.

Merci beaucoup; thank you very much. We support this legislation 100%, and look to do even more here in Ontario.

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

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to rise in this House today and join my colleagues the honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and newly appointed minister responsible for the Anti-Racism Directorate, and MPP Balkissoon, to support of Bill 159 to formally designate February as Black History Month in Ontario on an annual basis.

I want to echo Minister Coteau in welcoming the special guests to Queen's Park as we debate this important legislation. Thank you all for your ongoing work for behalf of the black community here in Ontario. As an immigrant myself who came to this country at the age of four, I'm proud of the rich history of black Canadians and our stories that have helped to shape this great province and the country since its inception.

Last year, I travelled to Birchtown, Nova Scotia, and heard the stories of the black Loyalists who came to our shores in the 1700s. Black Canadians have had an important impact across all fields: in the arts, entertainment, sports, education, science, business, finance and, of course, politics. I stand here today, proud to represent the people of Scarborough–Guildwood, 14% of whom are of Caribbean descent. This is a community where I grew up and where I attended high school and university. It's an honour and a privilege to follow in the footsteps of those who committed their lives to public service: people like Lincoln Alexander, Leonard Braithwaite, Jean Augustine, Alvin Curling, Mary Anne Chambers, Margaret Best and Zanana Akande.

I can't overstate how critical it is for young people to have role models like these in the community. It is so important that they see themselves in all aspects of society. Role models inspire us all to do better, to take advantage of opportunities, to achieve our true potential and to ensure that others have those opportunities as well. They encourage us to believe in ourselves.

Last week, I visited Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood and met with the

Black Students' Association and their teacher, Winston McCallum. I was touched by their questions. Many of their questions were about how they could succeed: What are the opportunities that are out there for them? What I told them was that they can do anything—they could be anything—in Ontario. Speaker, I was elected on August 1, 2013, Emancipation Day. As members of this Legislature—as lawmakers—we have a responsibility to ensure that we're removing barriers and building a fair and inclusive society. Lincoln Alexander once said, "It is not your duty to be average. It is your duty to set a higher example for others to follow."

We look to our leaders as role models and examples of what black Canadians can achieve and have achieved. At the same time, we need to remember that black Ontarians travelled a long and often hard road to get their chance. Those who escaped slavery and found their way to Canada via the Underground Railroad still had to struggle for decades against segregation in education and in other areas of society. A recent *Historica Canada* video of Viola Desmond illustrates that a black woman could be arrested for just watching a movie in the wrong part of a theatre where blacks were not allowed in the 1940s.

1640

We also need to acknowledge that while we have made important progress, we have a long road ahead. We have more to do to uphold the values of tolerance, inclusivity and equality here in Ontario. As we embark on the UN decade for African people, we need to strive towards their goal of "working toward the full enjoyment of human rights, full participation in society for people of African descent, and toward better understanding of, and respect for, their culture and contributions to social development."

We need to remember that black people's struggles, dreams and achievements—past, present and still to come—are a vital and vibrant part of what makes us one Ontario.

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It is a pleasure of mine to add a few comments to those of the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and my colleague from Scarborough–Guildwood. As the minister mentioned, I tabled bills in this House on two previous occasions, in 2007 and 2009, proposing that February be formally recognized as Black History Month in Ontario on an annual basis. I thank the minister for that acknowledgment.

I want to take this opportunity to call on all members of this House to acknowledge the significant contributions black Canadians have made to our province and our country over the many years of our history and to support this bill.

I stand here today representing Scarborough–Rouge River, a riding with a very diverse population. Many of my residents are of African descent, from the continent and other parts of the world, as well as the beautiful Caribbean islands. I am proud to serve a constituency once represented for two decades—and I repeat, two

decades—by the Honourable Alvin Curling. He was the first African Canadian appointed Speaker of this Legislature. When I succeeded Mr. Curling as MPP for Scarborough–Rouge River in 2005, I took over from a friend whose legacy cannot be replicated. His legacy needs to be remembered, along with the legacy of all black Canadians who have made and continue to make contributions to our great province and our country. It is a story that needs to be celebrated with the many other stories of black Canadians.

I would like to remind members of this House that only a few years ago, a motion was put forward by a member of the Toronto District School Board to get rid of Black History Month celebrations in their school. Hopefully, the action of this bill will never see that repeat itself, because that was one of the motivating factors for me bringing forward a piece of legislation. I never understood why we would deprive our children of learning about a significant part of our Ontario history. The many young black people in my riding need to know those of their race who came before them and who have made a contribution to our great province and country. That's something I said in this House six years ago, and it bears repeating.

The history of black Canadians and their struggles against slavery, racism, exclusion and inequality is a significant part of Ontario's history. Black History Month is exactly what the young people in my riding and the province need.

I hope all the members of this Legislature will support this piece of legislation. Hopefully, it being a government bill, I will finally be here to see it in legislation and enacted in Ontario, and the black community in our province can celebrate proudly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Coteau has moved second reading of Bill 159, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

Mr. Coteau moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 159, An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month / Projet de loi 159, Loi proclamant le mois de février Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a

change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Madame Lalonde assumes ballot item number 25 and Ms. Vernile assumes ballot item number 63.

HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 10, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Halton and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I will have a few words to offer on this legislation.

To begin with, the legislation is certainly designed to improve transparency and accountability within the health system. It requires custodians to report privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner as well as to the regulatory colleges when breaches result in HR action. It removes the six-month limitation for the prosecution of offences and doubles the maximum fines for individuals to \$100,000 and organizations to \$500,000. It modernizes the definition of "privacy breach." It establishes rules and regulations for the shared EHR—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I'm having difficulty hearing the deputy House leader in his debate, so I would ask that conversations be kept to a minimum, please. Thank you very much.

Minister, back to you.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much.

I think we saw a high-profile case that took place. I won't get into the details of it, but a former mayor of Toronto—it was in the media that information about his personal privacy, in terms of the health care he was receiving and the circumstances he faced, became public as a result of someone leaking that information. That was totally inappropriate, and it has happened in other circumstances over the years. That is why it's necessary for this legislation.

It certainly strengthens the process to prosecute offences under PHIPA by removing the requirement that prosecutions must be commenced, as I mentioned, within

six months of the alleged privacy breach. That gives more time, in case someone wants to come forward at a future time.

I think the increases that I mentioned, from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals breaching that confidentiality and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for an organization, will be a deterrent to those who might be contemplating such action.

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It clarifies the authority under which health care providers may collect, use and disclose personal health information and electronic health records. I think we recognize that there has to be sharing of this information by appropriate professionals within the health care system. Everybody understands that.

Using electronic health records, which promise to make things better in the future in terms of health care—it's fine to have that, but we have to ensure there is confidentiality that is maintained, except in cases where it is necessary to have information go from one medical practitioner to another, for instance, so that the appropriate action can be taken to deal with the affliction that the patient is facing.

Last year, the Ministry of Health established a committee to review and provide advice on the implementation of the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004, and related legislation. Earlier this year, the committee provided their recommendations on strengthening our culture of transparency and quality improvement in Ontario's health care system, and we want to thank the members of the committee who provided that advice. Again, they were people expert in the field, and the advice was accepted by the Ministry of Health and is contained within this legislation. The minister reviewed the report and, in fact, accepted all of the recommendations. He indicated that people deserve to know that they are protected by a health care system that is accountable, first of all, transparent second, and ensures the highest-quality care.

The minister continues to believe that the default in our health system should be disclosure and transparency whenever there's a question that arises in that regard. He indicated that he intended to introduce legislation that, if passed by this House, would affirm the right of patients to access information about their health care, and we see that now manifested in this particular piece of legislation that is being debated in the House this afternoon.

I can't anticipate how others in the Legislature will react to this. From time to time I try to guess what the opposition might have to say about legislation of this kind. I suspect, if I were taking a good guess, that in fact there would be some considerable support for this. There's always discussion of details, but I think that in principle we will see a good deal of support for legislation of this kind. It is one place where I think that all members of the House have encountered circumstances where they recognize a need for this legislation.

Ontario is carrying out a number of the recommendations of the expert committee to improve that trans-

parency in critical incidents. This includes ensuring that patients or their representatives are interviewed as part of a critical incident investigation and are informed of the cause of the incident if that cause happens to be known. Protecting patient privacy and strengthening transparency is part of our government's plan to build a better Ontario through its Patients First action plan for health care, which is providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information they need to stay healthy, and a health care system that is sustainable for generations to come. So I welcome this particular legislation.

I note that Brian Beamish, who is the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, had the following to say: "As the health care sector transitions to shared electronic health records, the privacy of patients and the confidentiality of their personal health information must be protected to ensure public confidence. I am pleased that the government is moving forward with necessary amendments to Ontario's health privacy legislation, which were developed in consultation with my office. The introduction of mandatory breach reporting to my office and strengthening the consequences for those who violate patient privacy will bring increased accountability and transparency as well as instill trust in the health system." That, of course, is Brian Beamish, the new Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, so I think that appears to be a very good endorsement.

I know that Angela Morin, co-chair of the QCIPA Review Committee and patient and family adviser at Kingston General Hospital, said: "I applaud the government's decision to accept the QCIPA Review Panel's recommendations. This will help promote a culture of continuous improvement in health care facilities across the province and will better inform patients and their families who have been affected by critical incidents."

I indicated that I wanted to share time with my two colleagues, the member for Halton and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, who will want to elaborate on this legislation, so I will yield the floor. I don't know whether you're going in a round or whether we're doing it all at once, but I know they will be agreeing to continue this debate.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise and speak today on Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act. As Minister Bradley said earlier, the Health Information Protection Act would amend existing legislation to protect the personal health information of patients. Some of these changes would include making it mandatory to report privacy breaches as defined in regulation; strengthening the process to prosecute offences under the Personal Health Information Protection Act by removing the requirement that prosecutions must be commenced within six months; and doubling the maximum fines for offences from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for organizations.

In addition, the Health Information Protection Act would also update the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, or QCIPA, to help increase transparency and maintain quality in Ontario's health care system. If passed, this new bill would affirm the rights of patients to access information about their own health care, clarify that certain information and facts about critical incidents cannot be withheld from affected patients and their families, and require the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to review QCIPA every five years.

With these amendments introduced by the government in September, Ontario patients can be confident in the privacy of their health records. I'm sure that all of us here would be terribly upset if our health information or that of our loved ones became lost or stolen. If passed, Bill 119 would not only improve the safety and security of Ontario health records; it will also be a strong deterrent to anyone in a position to commit a privacy breach. Among other things, the amendments will make it mandatory to report certain breaches, remove any time limit for prosecutions and double the maximum fines for offences.

Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Halton, we are making significant upgrades and improvements in local health care. The new, state-of-the-art Oakville-Trafalgar Memorial Hospital opened in December, offering care and services to as many as 180,000 people. Currently, there are large-scale redevelopment projects under way at both the Joseph Brant and Milton District hospitals. Together, these improvements wind up being in the billions of dollars.

I am proud to be part of a government that is making significant investments in health care. But it would give me great pleasure to assure Halton residents that they're not only getting improved care but also improved information security. As the health care sector moves into widespread use of electronic health records—something that we know must happen—people want to know that their personal health history is being properly protected, and Bill 119 does just that.

Mr. Speaker, my 17-year-old daughter just recently, about a week ago, had an emergency appendectomy while I was away. I want to know that her personal information is protected. If Bill 119 moves forward, I will be confident and comfortable knowing that that is the case.

It also strengthens the rights of patients to access their own health information, and allows certain health care practitioners to share data if it means improving patient care. The changes the government is making will go a long way in increasing accountability and transparency. I am pleased that Bill 119 has so far been well received by all parties. I hope that, for the benefit of Ontario residents, this support continues until it is passed.

1700

Mr. Speaker, a person's health history is among the most personal information about them. It is of the utmost importance that we do everything we can to make sure it is protected and that anyone who violates patient privacy

is prosecuted. Bill 119 gives Ontario patients the peace of mind they deserve, which is why I'm pleased to rise today and speak about this bill. I am, of course, in support of it. Thank you so much for giving me the privilege to speak on this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Over to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to join this debate. I think it's probably a fair thing to say that the issue of privacy or personal information security is something that's incredibly important to all of us. The deputy House leader and Chair of Cabinet, the MPP for St. Catharines, referenced, without going into details, one example of when personal security was breached and the impact that can have on people's lives. It's very important that we are actually moving forward to put this legislation more firmly in place so that we can indeed protect it. The protection of personal health information is one of those things that I think is something we view perhaps as a given but one that needs to be legislatively enshrined. I am working on the premise of my colleagues that indeed the opposition will be supporting this as well.

Certainly, the aspects that are in the two big pieces—the first section, of course, does introduce amendments to strengthen the Personal Health Information Protection Act as well as introduce rules and governance for shared electronic health records. That's pretty important. The second amendment focuses on proposing amendments to current legislation to clarify the use of the Quality of Care Information Protection Act as well as setting requirements that I think are absolutely vital to improve transparency towards patients when a critical incident occurs. These are all great aspects of this legislation. The amendments ultimately, particularly in terms of the Personal Health Information Protection Act, very much—almost without question—increase accountability and transparency by making it absolutely mandatory to report significant privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and, in certain cases, I guess, to relevant regulatory colleges.

I think it's important that one of the aspects in this as well is strengthening the process to prosecute offences under the Personal Health Information Protection Act by removing the requirement that prosecutions must be commenced within six months of the alleged privacy breach. Again, without me in any way betraying confidentiality, particularly when we're speaking about privacy issues—there have been instances when more than six months have gone by before the issue was raised in terms of the privacy breach. So that's an important part of the legislation, and I'm glad it's in there.

I think it's also important to find a way to more strongly discourage—I guess “snooping” is a term we can use—snooping in patients' records by, under this legislation, doubling the fines for offences under the Personal Health Information Protection Act, from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for individuals and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 for an organization. All the figures I've used

are significant ones. It's something that certainly I support: to make it more punitive to those who might choose to consider trying to do that.

It's also important that the piece is in particularly the first part of the amendments clarifying the actual authority under which health care providers may collect, use and disclose personal health information in electronic health records. We are in a different time—certainly a different time in terms of our society—in terms of the access to records, and that's where privacy, I think, becomes even more important. Again, I think this legislation more strongly reflects that reality.

The other aspect of the legislation—I know that the minister asked his ministry to establish a committee sometime last year to review and provide advice on the implementation of the Quality of Care Information Protection Act and legislation related to that. The information that came forward in terms of the recommendations from the committee was important. They were about strengthening our very important culture of transparency and quality improvement in Ontario's health care system. Certainly us moving forward on those aspects of it is really, really important.

There's no question that, when you look at the summary of the amendments to the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, it does affirm the right of patients to access information about their health care. It makes clear that that particular legislation does not interfere with the health facility's duty to disclose information to patients or interview them as part of a critical incident investigation. It does provide very important regulation-making authority for the minister, if needed, to mandate a uniform approach as to how and when the Quality of Care Information Protection Act can be used.

May I say, I think another piece that's important—we understand, again, how the world has changed from the point of view of technology, let alone social media. The legislation requires that the minister review the act every five years. I think that's pretty important. When one looks at how things have changed in terms of technology, I know that I'm continuing to make my own adjustments to the reality. I've been in the Legislature long enough to well recall the time when I wasn't getting the number of emails I'm getting on a daily basis, let alone the kind of information that comes across from a technological point of view.

The long and the short? This is important legislation. It's important that we are moving it forward. It's important that we are debating it today. Certainly I stand here in strong support of it and trust that our colleagues on all sides of the House will be supporting it as well.

I appreciate having a chance to speak to the legislation. Thank you.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to offer my remarks on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, in the brief two minutes I have, regarding Bill 119 with respect to medical records and the privacy that patients across this province expect.

Of course, the Progressive Conservative caucus indeed supports this piece of legislation, and it is necessary, but I would be remiss not to point out the fact that this is yet another piece of transparency and accountability legislation in this assembly, after 13 years of this government being in office, that has caused a breach. In fact, we think of privacy laws which are very stringent in this nation. The fact that we're even debating this today says that there are still very valid concerns and the government hasn't been doing its job.

I would also like to point out the fact that the first speaker, the deputy House leader for the government, refused to name the former Toronto mayor whose records were breached through his cancer treatment. I think we, regardless of how one feels about that individual, must point out that it was former Toronto mayor Rob Ford whose cancer treatment and health challenges led to this being exposed. I think that's important.

I would also be remiss not to point out that when the government opposite talks about significant investments in health care, in the past couple of weeks they've gotten it tremendously wrong with teenagers in this province. For example, Lori—I don't have a last name—17 years old, from my constituency in Nepean–Carleton: eight days in a local hospital in Ottawa on suicide watch and she was released, never getting the mental health treatment that she desperately needed. Then we look at Laura Hillier: 18 years old, dying of leukemia, has numbers of donors willing to give her a transplant for bone marrow. But despite that, this government didn't have a bed for her, and she died at 18 years old.

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We have a lot of work to do. So before people start to congratulate themselves on the other side of the aisle for their so-called investments in health care, they may want to start getting that right before they move on to other initiatives.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll use my two minutes to respond to some of the comments.

The bill says that we will review it in five years. Hallelujah. This is perfect. But I can name you a string of bills that say we have to do a review every five years, but yet we don't do it.

Let me start with the bills that created the LHINs, the local health integration networks. They haven't exactly all been stellar in their performance and use of taxpayers' money, according to the Auditor General. But right there in the bill, it says it has to be reviewed every five years. That five years came around in 2012. I wrote and asked, "When are we going to do the review?" I asked again in 2013. I asked again in 2014. While we had a minority government, we started to do a review. Oops—an election; another majority government; no more review. So is it good to review? Absolutely. Do I believe that it's going to be done? Not so much.

Then they talk about how important it is to be able to trust, and I fully agree. Health care is based on trust. You

have to be able to trust the person you talk to, trust the person who is going to provide you the care, and the feeling has to be mutual. But when you keep reading on the first page of the paper of those massive breaches—I mean, we're talking about 12,000 patient records that were gone in 2011; then Montfort, 25,000 patients; then Peel region, 18,000 people; not to mention Mr. Ford, who had his records looked at. Because you know, Speaker, this entire bill rests on technology that would allow your caregiver to have access, but not others. That technology does not exist because eHealth spent a billion dollars for nothing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? I recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: And?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Women's issues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls):—and the minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, John. You should be up there.

Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to speak for two minutes to this bill. I think a lot of excellent points have been raised. I think we can all generally agree that the purpose of the legislation and the intent of it is a good one, which is to protect the personal health information of patients and respond to greater transparency and appropriate disclosure of information to patients during critical incident reviews. I think we've talked somewhat at length about the amendments to PHIPA.

I want to talk about the piece that affirms the right of patients to access information about their health care specifically. Sometimes people think that their health care data belongs to an organization or to someone else, like their doctor or a hospital. My view is that health care information belongs to the patient, so I'm very glad to see that this principle is in here.

When I've been through the health care system—and my husband, most recently in January, who had major surgery—we were both provided with an opportunity to access a patient information portal that allowed us immediate access to test results, surgical results, lab results and all those kinds of things, which I think was very empowering and very important, because, first, it enforced the principle that patients own the information about themselves. Secondly, I think it's empowering because it allows people to take charge of their own health care treatment. Of course, they need to discuss the results they get through these kinds of things with their caregiver or doctor. But just being able to see the same information that your doctor gets is an incredible thing. It's incredible progress.

There has been great progress on electronic health, but I'm just highlighting this one example because it's real to me, and I'm very appreciative of that, as is my family.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It is my pleasure as well to join in the debate and add comments to the act that we're

discussing currently right now, the Health Information Protection Act.

I stand up because during my time here at Queen's Park, locally in Huron–Bruce, I have had constituents who have had their health care records looked at and accessed, and the constituents have been absolutely violated in that regard. So this discussion today, and the ultimate passing of the act, are very, very important.

One thing I want to talk about is that, as has been mentioned, the world has changed with the use of technology. Technology is changing very, very rapidly. I would like to offer just one word of caution: When we hear about a review every five years, there's a bit of a flag that comes up for me because, as I said, technology changes very, very quickly. We may need to revisit when that review happens because new tools will become available, new ways of accessing information and records may evolve, and we need to be open to that as well so that we can assess, as new tools are accessed, the risk associated with the new tools.

I would just share with the government opposite that we maybe don't want to tie ourselves too tightly to a five-year circular review. I would suggest that we need to build in flexibility that, as technology evolves, a review of the risks associated with the new technology needs to evolve as well.

As I mentioned, in my riding of Huron–Bruce, we have had constituents who have had their health records accessed, and they did feel totally violated. We need to do what we can to protect those records on their behalf. But in terms of a wholesome approach to quality health care, we need to make sure front-line health care is protected as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for final comments.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: This is really an important subject, and that's reflected very much in the comments that have been made by the members. I thank everyone for their comments: the members from Nepean–Carleton, Nickel Belt, Huron–Bruce and my colleague the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

There are a couple of things I'd sure like to go on about. Certainly, in terms of the five-year review, I think it is important. It's an interesting point about technology changing so quickly that we might want to be looking at that time period obviously not necessarily being an end point so much as an early point. It is fascinating how the world is changing.

I guess I am sort of sharing some personal information. Without getting into some detail, I'm about to go through a procedure. It's nothing particularly significant, but I was speaking to the patient navigator myself this morning at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. What was fascinating to me was that I'm going to have the procedure and we got the date picked—which is incredible. We had a long, good conversation. But what she said in passing was that when they had the results of the procedure, I would have access to it. I would be able to access it with—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Yes, it's online.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's great. That's patient information. I stand here somewhat startled, because quite frankly, my history, as a guy of a certain age in a certain generation, is: "I'll wait to get the results and my doctor perhaps may contact me if there's something to be worried about."

But this also speaks to the fact that the world is now changing in terms of accessing. We have the right to that information, and it's important, but even I found myself thinking a little bit about, "Wow. What will happen if I read these results of a certain kind?"

The long and the short is that it's an important discussion and very important legislation, making sure we get it right. Fair game, certainly, about the point about the review, and all the more reason why I think it's important that we move forward to get this legislation passed.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join this debate today. I'm going to take the whole 20 minutes. I'm not going to share the 20 minutes. My colleagues on the other side are in a sharing mood. I know this was—what was this, a kindness day and they're passing out cookies? Apparently, they're sharing their debate time in the Legislature as well, but that's entirely up to them. I, on the other hand, have a responsibility to my party to use up the whole 20 minutes.

1720

Anyway, there have been some interesting points made. I want to say to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines—he spoke about a medical procedure. You put that out on the public record. In fact, in spite of any privacy legislation, when you live in this House, or in another public domain, it's very difficult to keep things private. If there's a procedure of any significance—like what happened with the former mayor of Toronto. The challenge is not only the fact that someone within that institution failed and released that information, which was absolutely wrong—it should be the privilege of the person themselves to decide whether that becomes public. But when you live a public life—if I wasn't here for several weeks, people would ask questions. Hell, if I'm not here for a day, people ask questions. So even though we're coming out with new legislation, when you live the life of a public figure, and even more so—I say it with respect to members of the cabinet, because when they're not around, people are wondering, "What's going on?" We all have the right to privacy, but I think it all depends on what you do in your life as well. When you live in a fishbowl, people are always staring through the glass. They want to know what's going on. Even if you're not interested in revealing that information, in some ways you'll almost be forced to because the question will remain: "Why are you not here in the House debating this legislation?"—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Guys, why don't you take this over somewhere else?

"Why are you not in the House debating this legislation and being part of what takes place in this House?"

Having said that, there are changes here that are positive, and I think it's important that we acknowledge that, on the part of the government, they are making changes, but it also speaks to what my colleagues have said about reviewing this in a more timely fashion.

Every one of us today has BlackBerrys, and there are people here are with iPads. I'd better not put this one on the desk because if it goes off, it's going to bother those folks up in the broadcast booth; it rings in their ears. We don't want that to happen. But some people have iPads in here. They've got different technologies. Think of the technology in your offices and in your homes and how fast it becomes obsolete. There are still some members of this House who have flip phones. No matter where you go, there are some people that will buck a trend no matter what that trend may be.

Technology has a very short shelf life today. It's about the shelf life of a quart of milk. I'm not even talking about Lactantia fine-filtered milk—just regular milk. Technology changes so rapidly. So why are we looking at something that reviews something that is so technologically connected on a five-year basis? We need to be looking at this, quite frankly, even more frequently to ensure that we're keeping up with the Joneses.

If you go into a hospital and you're talking about a patient and you're asking, "Is John Yakabuski in here?" I'm just wondering. I wanted to go visit him," they'll type him up on the screen. You may even be able to see that screen. You may see stuff on there that perhaps you shouldn't see.

Mr. Arthur Potts: He's in the psych ward.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's not very nice, quite frankly. In fairness to the people who are dealing with mental health issues in this province and in this world, that comment should be withdrawn, to be fair. We have so many people who are fighting mental health issues in this world today, and to make a joke about it in this chamber—quite frankly, Mr. Potts, I think you should apologize to everyone.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member appropriately to withdraw.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I withdraw, with my apologies.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I lost my train of thought for a moment.

Let's talk about mental health issues for a minute. Let's talk about the fact that we're here talking about privacy legislation. I think that's important. There is no question about it. Legislation protecting the privacy of patients is hugely important. But what good is protecting the privacy of treatment that you're getting at a hospital or an institution if you can't get it because the government has cut back the funding for that particular program?

It's all wonderful for someone to be able to protect their medical records, but if their medical records are "postponed, delayed, postponed, delayed, cancelled,"

that's not much to protect. So with respect to protecting the privacy of individuals and the medical records of people, we also have to make sure that the funding is there to provide that medical care that is so desperately needed for so many people in this province here today.

The one thing I did want to also speak about today was the access to information for the patients themselves. I think it's hugely important. Years ago, you couldn't get squat out of a doctor. Basically, you got your visit. Hopefully, things were dealt with. But if you ever went to a doctor's office and said, "I'd like to have—" the response of the medical profession would be "Are you kidding me? I own those records," and it was accepted basically that, okay, that was the way it was.

Thankfully, that has changed. I know that the minister talked about having instant access to the results of any and all procedures that may or may not take place. That's a positive move. I know that my own physician, Dr. Cybulski, in Barry's Bay, gives me a full report if I have a physical or an examination or something like that—a full report on all of my levels of cholesterol and sugar and all of that kind of stuff. At one time, if you went to the doctor, he might tell you your sugar is high or he might tell you that your cholesterol is low or your cholesterol is high, but you'd never ever get the numbers because, quite frankly, you weren't smart enough to know what they meant anyway, or that would have been basically the assumption: that you're not smart enough to know what they mean anyway.

But today, people do take ownership of their health in a way that they never did before, and technology has helped with that. Technology has allowed us to understand what a healthy cholesterol number is, what an unhealthy cholesterol number is, what a healthy sugar level is, what an unhealthy sugar level is, and all kinds of other numbers that are pertinent and determinant of your general health.

So we're far more involved in our health today than we were at any time in the past. We used to go to the doctor maybe if we felt sick. Now we keep track of our health in a way that we've never done before. People walk around with fitness bracelets on their wrist, making sure they monitor how many steps they have taken. If you do, you're able to monitor how many steps you've taken that day, how many stairs you've climbed and how many calories you have burnt. They can also set them so that they have fitness goals, so that as they progress, the goals change. Let's say your goal was you had to do 8,000 steps—

Mr. John Fraser: I'm already there.

Mr. John Yakubuski: You're already there. Then that little fitness bracelet that my colleague there is pointing out—I can't say who it is just yet because he hasn't revealed that. I'm protecting his privacy. But a colleague from across the way is displaying one of those fitness bracelets and he's already saying that he has met his step goal for today. Well, that bracelet will set you a new goal now, correct? There should be a new goal set automatically by that bracelet because you were just too

good. We're going to give you a new goal to see how you measure up tomorrow.

That's the kind of a thing I'm getting at, Speaker, where people are taking more and more ownership of their own health. In order to be able to do that in a comprehensive way, they have to have access to all of those records from the health professions out there. That's a positive change on the part of the government with this bill.

1730

I have to put my glasses on to see a couple of things here. I'm disclosing that I need reading glasses; I'm not worried about protecting that privacy.

I know that the deputy House leader, the member from St. Catharines, talked about how this will make it mandatory to report privacy breaches, as defined in regulation, to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and relevant regulatory colleges. That's an important aspect of this bill or any other piece of legislation. Anyone who is considering doing something that would be contrary to the legislation knows that the bill makes it mandatory, if someone is aware that a breach has taken place, that it must be reported.

Somebody is not going to commit a breach and it's going to be, "Listen, bud, you were wrong. You breached the act, and you shouldn't have done that." No, it goes much further now. It's going to ensure that there is a mandatory reporting provision in the bill, so it can't just end in a conversation over the water cooler, "Don't let that happen again." No, it moves up a level to the privacy commissioner and to any relevant regulatory college. If that person is a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, it would be elevated to that college.

What it does is create another roadblock or impediment to someone. It discourages someone from breaching the act. That's strengthening the legislation, from that perspective, and that is something that I know all of us here in the House would quite eagerly support.

The act was reviewed, I remember, back in 2004. I think it was Bill 8 then. We had extensive hearings throughout the province on that act. I know that my colleague from Simcoe-Grey, who was here at that time, would recall that when Bill 8, I think it was, went through the Legislature, we travelled across the province. There were multiple days of hearings here in Toronto. It was big—the changes at that time.

This bill doesn't seem to be getting quite that kind of attention. I'm always disappointed when the government doesn't take a bill out to get full input from the people who are most broadly affected by it. But we live in majority times, and from time to time the government decides that it's not necessary. In fact, most times they decide it's not necessary.

I don't want to be too hard on them today. It's the first day back, and they're just getting over things, you know. But I'll warm up over the next couple of weeks, I'm sure, and probably will be able to be a little more harsh from time to time.

Ms. Soo Wong: Kindness.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is kindness day—I think I heard the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, it is kindness day. Some people bring in cookies; maybe she could have brought in some rum cake and been really kind to everybody, and we'd be kind in return.

Let's not forget about the challenges that are facing us in health care here in Ontario today. I'm not saying it's always easy, but you must be concerned over there, on that side of the House, on the government side, about all the hospitals that are facing severe budget problems as a result of a failure by your government to meet their fiscal needs. All across the province, we're finding cutbacks being forced upon hospitals.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Remember the 100,000 cuts you guys wanted to do?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say to the Associate Minister of Health responsible for long-term care, this is not about any previous government. This is your watch. You are in charge. You've been in charge for nigh on 13 years. Don't try to lay this on any other government at this point. This is very important, and you need to consider the effects that your health cuts are having here throughout the province of Ontario. And I say to you, Speaker—yes, through you—that they should be very concerned about the effects of health care cuts in the province of Ontario.

We recently went through a by-election in Whitby–Oshawa. I'm sure that many of the people on the other side of the House were campaigning in that by-election, as were many of my colleagues; I was there myself at least five times. And one of the biggest things that kept coming back from people—two big issues: your abject failure on the energy file, and the cutbacks in health care and how they are hurting people.

Ms. Soo Wong: What's it got to do with the bill?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, here is the issue, I say to my friend from Scarborough–Agincourt. Keep smiling. Here's the issue: This bill is important. And she's saying, what do the health care cutbacks have to do with the bill? Health care cutbacks were a huge issue in that election. Maybe you should review the numbers. I say to the member for Scarborough–Agincourt—and I say it through you, Mr. Speaker, because all debate goes through you, as you are well aware. I say to the member, through you, Speaker, that this bill, while important, does absolutely nothing to salve the fears and concerns of all of those people who are wondering, “Is the health care I need going to be there in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario? Is it going to be there when every time I turn around, I go to the hospital and they tell me there's going to be some cutbacks on these procedures?” We're going to be losing, as we heard, a whole obstetrics ward in a hospital; it's disappearing. I mean, you have to ask yourself, where does this lead us down the road, not this year, next year—and then the finance minister is out there today telling the world that next year we're going to balance the budget. And by the way, we're going to have a

budget on February 25. What is going to be in it for health care on February 25?

Mr. John Fraser: You'll have to wait and see.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I guess we'll have to wait. But the reports from the committee that travelled—the finance committee hasn't even tabled its reports. On the one hand, the finance minister is saying he's waiting for the input from the committee, waiting for the input from the hearings, but now he's going to have a budget on February 25? That's next week. I think something is fishy in Denmark, as they say. I think that budget is written and we're going to find out next Thursday just how hard it's going to be on the people of Ontario, not only in health care, not only in transportation, not only in natural resources, but in every ministry that you people are responsible for. We're going to find out next Thursday just how much harder it is to get around and to live in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario in 2016.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I would ask that those being attentive to the debate would show some self-control and not be as loud or as vocal as one has demonstrated at this point in time. We're doing really well so far.

Now I'm going to move to questions and comments. I recognize the member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Our colleague has a knack for being able to end on a crescendo, but he puts a lot of emphasis on his points by doing so. I won't take that approach. I'll simply stick to some of the points that I think I heard him make.

1740

We are in an innovative era that is ever-changing on this planet, minute to minute. Technologies are around us; data is floating around us. What is interesting, Speaker, is that it presents an opportunity for commerce, of course, but it presents an opportunity to be used potentially in nefarious ways. Ultimately, that's what this bill is looking to prevent and to protect patients from.

If anyone has ever googled anything on the Internet medical-wise—how to get rid of a toothache, let's say—you'll find a whole host of remedies, some scientifically backed; some potentially not. But what you will find for certain is that for the following week or month, you'll be followed by ads trying to sell you remedies for toothaches. It's opportunistic. It preys on people. That's what this data—that's the value that it has, and people are looking for it. Unfortunately, people are willing to sell it and to offload that data in massive blocks, as we've seen before. That's what we have to acknowledge; that's what we have to ensure that we protect and look into the future to understand what systems are out there, what systems are in place, and make sure that we're doing it with good value. Let's not blow the kitty on something that may not potentially protect us in the future, especially given the status of our primary health care system as it is. We need to get the fundamentals right. Nurses, doctors, health care practitioners that are being laid off—let's ensure that the system works as a whole first before we go blowing a whole bunch of money on unproven systems.

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

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I do want to say one thing about health information: It is our personal information. I'm glad that the member across agrees that this piece of legislation is very important to protect very personal information, the misuse of which can have a very profound impact on people's lives: their ability to work, their ability to obtain insurance—a wide variety of things.

We did mention these little Fitbits here. I have surpassed my goal for the day, and I'm glad the member across is going to set me another one. But the interesting thing about these Fitbits—and the member from Essex alluded to this—is that this sends a message back to a server that says what my heart rate is every day; it sends back a message that says how I slept. So it is personal information—

Interjection.

Mr. John Fraser: Yes, how well I slept. I slept very well last night. It was about eight hours. It doesn't measure while I'm in here. It doesn't work for that effect.

We don't realize that when we google, people can follow our searches. So if we're googling a certain condition, that could be something that at some point people could use against us—an insurer, for instance. So the protection of personal information, and also realizing how we protect our own personal information, is really a very important thing.

I'm supportive of this legislation, and I'm glad to hear of the member's support. I totally disagree with his assessment of what we're doing in health care and hospitals. Every year we've provided more funds. We've had to flat-line because of our economic circumstances, but I know that we're investing more money in primary care, and that acute care—we have to balance out need for primary care and acute care so that we get it right, so that we keep people healthy as opposed to having to intervene in their lives because we haven't been able to keep them healthy.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to rise and join this debate and offer my congratulations to my friend and colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. As you all know, and as I could tell by the reaction to his passionate and eloquent messages around this particular bill—Bill 119—this member has really hit a nerve when it comes to how we can do better. Of course, we all need to be mindful of protecting our electronic health records, but it can't stop there. When we talk about proper health care, it just can't stop at protecting electronic records. We do need to take a full assessment of health care and how it's being delivered on our front lines.

We heard earlier in this debate that, unfortunately, some of the lack of oversight and some of the lack of transparency that lead to actual funds quickly getting to

the front line are impeding the hopes and dreams of young people.

As much time and as much effort as is being spent on electronic records, to fix that mess that has happened in the first place, we need to be addressing and applying that same time and that same effort to fixing what's wrong in our front-line health care system as well.

We all know of and are saddened by the passing of Ms. Hillier, who was on a wait-list, waiting for and hoping for her future to be valued and worked upon and addressed by having a needed operation. But unfortunately, that did not happen.

We have to live and respect her legacy and hope that all front-line health care can be addressed and fixed, just like the eHealth issue.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's always a pleasure to get up and represent my constituents of Windsor West and add their voice to the debate.

I find it interesting that the member from Essex brought up toothaches, because I was a dental assistant before I came here. I can tell you that even in a dental office, the protection of a patient's information was of the utmost importance, to the point where if we had spouses in for an appointment at the same time, we weren't even allowed to say we had done an extraction on one of the spouses. We weren't allowed to then give care instructions for home in front of the other spouse, unless the spouse we had treated had signed a release form and we knew it was okay to discuss that in front of their spouse. So I certainly understand the importance of protecting a patient's private information.

We know, in this age of technology, how difficult it is becoming to take care of people's private information and make sure that it's not getting out there in cyberspace and shared with others.

I wanted to touch on something the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brought up. Members from the other side were yelling at him to get his facts straight when he was talking about health care cuts, because apparently they believe these aren't happening. I'd just like to point out a fact, because you were asking for facts. You can call back to Windsor, or you can drive to Windsor, and you can talk to the nurses in Windsor: 169 RNs were given pink slips yesterday.

Interjection: On Valentine's Day; on Family Day.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: On Family Day and Valentine's Day weekend, 169 RNs were handed their pink slips. There's a health-care-cut fact for you, so you can't dispute what the member from Renfrew–Nipissing was saying. We are seeing cuts across the province.

In order to have this personal information to protect, we need front-line workers in these hospitals and health care facilities to take care of the patients coming in. Otherwise, they're going to die waiting for care, or they're going to leave a hospital without getting care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the members from Essex, Ottawa South and Windsor West, and my colleague from Huron–Bruce, for their comments.

It was certainly never my intention, but apparently I must have hit a nerve over there. I was just trying to point out some facts, and I've been met with significant resistance from the government side. But the member from Windsor West points out that in her community, 169 nurses received their pink slips—

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yesterday.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —yesterday, on Family Day. This is what the crux of the problem is: How are we supposed to deliver the health care that people's privacy is supposed to be protected in if we're making cutbacks in all our hospitals and all our institutions because of the budgetary mess that this province is in under this government?

Speaker, if they hadn't blown \$1.1 billion on gas plant cancellations and if they hadn't blown over \$1 billion extra on smart meters, do you think maybe those 169 nurses might not have gotten their pink slips?

This is what has come back to roost for the government. The chickens have come home to roost, because of all of the scandals and all of the mismanagement.

There is only so much money. When you spend it on relocating gas plants, you can't spend it on nurses. When you spend it on a smart-meter fiasco, you can't spend it on front-line health care, mental health initiatives or for the operation for that young lady who passed away on a wait-list. When you spend it on scandals and wasteful plans, you don't have it for the vital services that Ontarians want, need and deserve. What they don't need is more of this government.

1750

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House, particularly to talk about issues that I might know something about, like Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act.

I only have a very few minutes here, so I want to zoom in on what people actually had to say here today. To start off, we had the member from Halton, who had a few minutes and spoke about her daughter's health care issues. That's actually how breaches happen. The first question that came to my mind when I heard her talking about her daughter—this isn't to criticize her, but the first thing I thought was, "Your daughter is 17. Has your daughter given you permission to talk about her health care issues here in the Legislature?" Because the legal age is 16 or, in some cases, only 14 years old.

Those of us who have worked in the health care field see breaches happen. Some of them happen purposefully, and some of them happen inadvertently. We had the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talking about the importance of protecting medical records, and absolutely, that is important. Trust is paramount in health care between patients and health care providers.

At the end of the day, as this government continues to cut the bucks—although they say they have flatlined, the end result of that is that, over the last four years, that has amounted to a 7% or greater cut to the hospitals in the province, which is why we're seeing 169 jobs cut in Windsor. Twelve hundred registered nurses and registered practical nurses lost their jobs in the last year in the province of Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And 400 last month.

Ms. Cindy Forster: And 400 just last month.

At the end of the day, we're talking about improving health care's protection of medical records, but where is that funding going to come from to actually improve the software that may have to have different layers of access for different people? I say that the Liberal government is actually going to put that, once again, on the backs of the hospitals and any agencies that will be required to improve this protection. At the end of the day, there will be even less front-line care because hospitals will be required to pay for that, and more nurses will be laid off in the system.

Then there's the issue of paper, phone and electronic health records. We had an example from the member from Windsor when she was a dental assistant, and how she couldn't verbally tell a husband that their spouse had an extraction that day. We have reports of people receiving information where somebody calls and says, "I want you to come back for a second mammogram," when your family didn't even know that you'd gone for a mammogram. Those things will not be captured by this legislation. This legislation is actually a half-measure at best.

We had a minister without portfolio talk about how everyone who was consulted is in favour and that all of their recommendations were actually put in the bill. But in fact, we've talked to the OMA, the Ontario Nurses' Association and other agencies who have said that they weren't consulted. There was no fulsome consultation. They were probably at a round table where they had five minutes to make a case, but they wanted to have a fulsome discussion about how this is going to not only impact patients' privacy but their practices, whether or not it be in the hospital.

I remember when Deb Matthews was the Minister of Health and talked about the Liberal government not wanting to privatize any more health care, but in fact they continue to privatize clinics for colonoscopies, for eye surgery, for pain management, that actually used to be in the hospital. We continue to see dialysis patients going out into the community. They're no longer in the hospital sector. None of these are covered by this legislation. As we continue to privatize—when we said we weren't going to—more of the health care in the private sector, we're not ensuring that this legislation is actually going to protect those patients who are not in the hospital.

I can tell you, from my experience representing nurses across the province when the PHIPA legislation was first brought in, that there are some grey areas. If somebody is on purpose being nose-y and looking at people's medical

records, that should absolutely not be tolerated. But, in fact, the legislation now is going to make it more rigorous in a caring profession, where nurses and doctors care about their patients and, sometimes, want to or need to follow those patients. In fact, we've had nurses suspended and fired because the legislation that was in place, which was less rigorous, put them in a position where the legislation said that they had breached and they hadn't.

I had one situation where a mother who was a nurse was looking at her child's records online because her child was at a hospital in Hamilton while she was in Niagara. She was terminated from her job. At the end of the day, we were able to get her job back, but the legislation was such that her child wasn't in her circle of care, so she didn't have any entitlement to be looking at the records.

So I was actually happy when the Minister of Children and Youth Services said that she, at least, now could look at her own record on file, but that wouldn't help a nurse who was terminated in the system. If I go back to the member from Oakville, had she been a nurse in the hospital who had shared the information of her 17-year-old daughter with someone else without her consent, she would have breached the current legislation and the new legislation and she actually could have lost her job in a hospital setting or in some agency where this legislation, in fact, may apply.

So there are lots of reasons to have some more consultation on this bill. Certainly we support patients' privacy with respect to their health records, but I think that it's important that we make sure that we do it right. We haven't reviewed the legislation in 10 years. It was supposed to be reviewed five years ago. But let's not be hurrying to fix something until we're sure that every piece of it that needs to be addressed is. Let's make sure that we're not firing health care workers unjustly because the legislation is so rigorous that it doesn't even allow them to do their job.

I'll just use my last minute to give you an example of that. A patient is in the emergency department. A nurse works in the emergency on Sunday but also works in the intensive care unit on Monday. That patient he looked after doesn't show up in his intensive care unit on Monday. He wonders why. He came in with chest pain. He wonders, "What happened to that patient? Did that patient pass away? Did that patient get transferred to another facility? I really wonder." He has a look—or she has a look, whatever the case is—at that patient's record and he loses his job because that patient was no longer in his circle of care the next day. And there wasn't anything we could do to give that person their job back.

Think about physicians who work in the emergency but tomorrow they want to follow up on that patient who isn't their patient any longer. As this legislation starts to grow and make sure that physicians are also following the legislation, physicians could be disciplined for looking at a patient's file because that patient is no longer in their circle of care the next day or two days, after they were in some other department.

1800

I wish I had more time to actually give you some concrete examples, but there is certainly more work to be done on this piece of legislation.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. You will have more time when this bill is debated again in this House.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to proclaim the month of February as Black History Month / Loi proclamant le mois de février Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

TAXATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Leeds–Grenville has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes. To the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Here is what I hope happens this afternoon. I know both the minister and the parliamentary assistant are here. I hope one of them is going to stand up and tell me that they're not going to proceed with implementing a municipal car tax. I didn't hear that when I asked the minister a question on December 10, which is really why I'm back here this evening.

What I heard from the minister that day sounded a lot like what he told me when I first asked him about a municipal land transfer tax, or MLTT. You will recall that there was a lot of bluster and denial by the minister back in October and November, and it wasn't until thousands of Ontarians bombarded government MPPs with emails demanding they support my motion opposing the MLTT that he then came clean.

Just days before we were set to debate my motion, the minister was being forced to get on his feet and declare the MLTT was dead. It was quite a revelation, Speaker. For six weeks, he claimed I was making it up, but there he was suddenly fessing up. This regressive land tax, one they insisted never existed, was being taken off the table.

I have to say, it was a great victory for the Ontario PC caucus. I want to thank all of our members and all members across the way for all their initiative on this issue.

But if you know this government, Speaker—and I do, I think, after six years of watching them up close—you know that raising taxes is in their DNA. It's who they are. So while we got them to scrap the MLTT, I had a feeling that there might be something else up their sleeve, and that was using the ongoing Municipal Act review to slip in a new tax on car owners by authorizing municipalities to collect a vehicle registration tax.

Currently, only the city of Toronto has the power to levy a tax on vehicle owners. You'll recall that it was the opposition to that hated car tax brought in by Mayor Miller that helped drive Rob Ford into the mayor's office in 2010. He followed through on a campaign promise to scrap the car tax, and ever since any attempts to rev it back up have stalled.

Let's be clear about the cost implications for the owners of Ontario's 11 million registered vehicles if the minister puts a municipal car tax in gear. Toronto's car tax dinged vehicle owners to the tune of \$60 annually. If a similar tax was implemented across Ontario's 444 municipalities, the cost to drivers would be a jaw-dropping \$660 million.

Remember, Speaker, these motorists already send in about \$10 billion every year to the provincial treasury in various licensing fees and taxes. I think they pay enough and that a municipal car tax would be yet another burden on families whose budgets are already stretched to the breaking point.

I know that the minister or the parliamentary assistant—I'm not sure which is going to respond—is probably going to stand up and tell you that I don't trust municipalities because I'm against giving them these new taxing powers. That is not true, Speaker—not true.

Look, I'm a former mayor. I'm a former CAO. I'm actually a former president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. So I know a thing or two about municipalities and their concerns with sustainable funding. I also know that it isn't about trust; it's about whether you believe this problem only gets solved through new taxes. The Wynne government would love nothing more than to hand new taxing powers to municipalities and force them to put them into place. After all, it saves them from doing the hard work of curbing their own wasteful spending, so that interest on our debt isn't the third-largest expenditure in the budget. Doing that hard work would allow us to adequately support municipalities. Instead, the government wants to do what it always does: just create a new tax. And it's the perfect tax, because they don't have to be the bad guy in collecting it. They'll let municipalities do the dirty work, and if they don't, well, they can kiss provincial funding goodbye.

Speaker, none of the mayors I've talked to in the past couple of months—none of them—are eager to start charging a car tax. That's because they know that they

will be wearing a bull's eye when it comes to the next municipal election in the province of Ontario. We all know vehicle owners don't want a new car tax.

So to my friends across the aisle, I say that you can avoid a repeat of the municipal land transfer tax debacle and save the embarrassment of having to back down after several weeks of denial. Do what the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, which represents more than 1,000 new car dealers, said to the minister in a February 2 letter: Tell us clearly you're not going to expand a municipal vehicle registration tax.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Over to the minister. You have up to five minutes to respond.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm truly disappointed in the party opposite, and in particular the member for Leeds–Grenville—disappointed, but not at all surprised, because the PCs, if nothing else, are at least consistent in their lack of respect for Ontario's municipal governments.

It's one of the reasons I stand here today. I was mayor of a small rural town when the previous PC government turned their backs on local communities. Instead of having a Minister of Municipal Affairs, they had a minister of municipal downloading. They dumped more than \$3 billion in costs on local governments which were not equipped to absorb them. And when municipalities complained, they said, "Well, just raise your property taxes."

The member for Leeds–Grenville is now proudly carrying on the tradition of his party's contempt for municipal governments. Mr. Speaker, I believe in partnerships. Unfortunately, after their party was in power, we had to walk through the rubble to pick up the pieces, and it's clear that the member opposite doesn't want to help out here. I consider our municipal partners as a mature, responsible level of government; he obviously doesn't.

As minister, I'm committed to listening to and seeking the advice of our municipal partners, to help them grow strong and vibrant communities.

Mr. Steve Clark: They don't want new revenue tools.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: So if AMO asked for new revenue tools, you'd respect that? Would you respect that? You don't care what they ask for. There: You've got it all in a nutshell. You respect them, but you don't care what they say.

Mr. Speaker, since I became minister—

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, I did not say that. He put words in my mouth that are untrue. I respect municipalities. He knows that. He knows.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. That's not a point of order.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: He had his shot.

Mr. Speaker, since I became minister, I've met with more than 200 mayors and councils. Local governments want to remain financially sustainable and accountable, and they want the flexibility to respond to the very people they serve. They are asking themselves: Is the property tax base sufficient to meet the long-term needs

of our residents? Is it the best tool? Should it be the only tool?

During the municipal legislative review, we received many requests from the municipal sector, business interests, advocacy groups and the public regarding access to new revenue tools. We received submissions on revenue tools from almost every municipal organization across Ontario: AMO, MARCO, LUMCO and OGRA/ROMA.

It's important to point out that most of the municipal requests for new revenue tools referenced the taxation authority available to the city of Toronto. And I don't hear the members opposite talk about taking that authority away from the city of Toronto.

For months now, MPP Clark has been making unfounded comments regarding the government's work on this. In fact, he should write a book. He could call it *A Farewell to Arms*, because he has broken both of his arms patting himself on the back.

Here's the truth of the matter: The member for Leeds–Grenville wants municipalities to be hog-tied. He doesn't think they need any new tools, and he wants to systematically close the door, to shut down any conversation that might lead to greater flexibility and more sustainability for municipal finance.

Speaker, I trust our municipal leaders to make decisions that are in the best interests of the people they serve, and to be accountable to those citizens. Perhaps the member opposite will come to the OGRA/ROMA meeting next week, tell the city of Toronto that he wants to take their taxing powers away, and explain why his party is so opposed to any reform of municipal finance. I think they'd appreciate hearing from you and hearing your rationale for that.

Mr. Steve Clark: I never said anything about the city of Toronto.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Okay. Why don't you just come and tell them generically, then, without referencing Toronto, that you don't favour any new revenue tools, that they can do quite well with what they've got, notwithstanding the fact that you dissed them in terms of the downloading and the dumping of costs—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister, I would ask that—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —social housing and all those other costs—

Mr. Steve Clark: I trust them. I don't trust you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please.

Minister, I would ask that comments made—which I appreciate—are directed through the Speaker. Okay?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: You're welcome.

I just want to say that the history is very telling. They tell municipalities something. I invite the member opposite to come out to OGRA/ROMA, either he or his leader, and tell them exactly where they stand. Tell them they've got all the revenue tools they need—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —and they don't need any more help from the provincial government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. The time allotted for the late show has expired. This House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1812.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	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	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	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) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	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) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) 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
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	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) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) 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) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	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) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
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Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
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Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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