



No. 143

N° 143

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 March 2016

Mardi 1^{er} mars 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 416-325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 416-325-3708.

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



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 March 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION
AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY
ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ATTÉNUATION
DU CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE
ET UNE ÉCONOMIE SOBRE EN CARBONE

Mr. Gravelle, on behalf of Mr. Murray, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act respecting greenhouse gas / Projet de loi 172, Loi concernant les gaz à effet de serre.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to begin by saying that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Beaches–East York.

Let me just very quickly set the frame for the need for this bill, if I may. Obviously, a new stand-alone bill is required to set a long-term framework for climate action and a stronger foundation for a cap-and-trade program, and to ensure the transparency and accountability of Ontario's path toward a low-carbon economy and the use of proceeds to support greenhouse gas reductions.

This new bill will replace and expand the existing legal framework to clearly outline the purpose and elements of the proposed cap-and-trade program, setting a much stronger framework. May I also say that, in addition, the proposed bill enshrines the government's commitment to fight climate change by reaffirming emission reduction targets and the need to publish action plans and progress reports, providing the certainty, transparency and accountability necessary for continued progress toward a prosperous, low-carbon economy.

If I may, I will pass on to the member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thanks to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines for moving second reading of this very important bill. It gives me great pleasure to provide the government's leadoff debate, or maybe second position debate, having had the minister start with a very short lead.

I think this is the first time I have had an opportunity to stand in this House and present a bill for an extended

period of speaking time, and I hope to be able to educate the House, to enlighten them on the contents of this bill over pretty much the next hour and get us all thinking in a very positive way about why this bill is so important.

If passed, of course, this legislation will establish a strong legal foundation for Ontario's cap-and-trade program, and will ensure transparency and accountability by committing to reinvest proceeds from cap-and-trade into projects that reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

I'm absolutely honoured to have this opportunity to speak to this bill today. I'm honoured primarily because I think the Premier and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change have shown trust in me that I can present to the House the rationale for why this bill is so important. I'm honoured because, in my view, this bill is absolutely transformational to the province of Ontario and, indeed, to the work that other cities, provinces and countries around the world are doing.

I believe that this bill is probably the most important thing we will do, certainly, in this session and, indeed, in this Parliament because, as Leonardo DiCaprio said the other day at the Oscars—I heard the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change mention this in his remarks on a question yesterday—this is so critical; if we don't get this piece right, in 30 years, we won't be around, effectively, to get anything else right. So it's absolutely critical that we put in place the kinds of mitigation measures now, reducing carbon emissions in the atmosphere, so that we can reverse a trend that will take place in greenhouse gas and the heating of the planet.

We should understand that we are experiencing today the climate change impacts of emissions that happened a generation ago—20-some years ago—and the efforts and actions we take now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions aren't going to show up until 10, 15 or 20 years down the pike. One of the reasons that it's so hard to get our minds around the necessity of acting now is that it's hard to forecast where we will be and what our circumstances will be some 20 years from now. But it is absolutely critical that we get on and start it.

For me, this is an example—a description—of what true leadership is. It's why I think I came into this House: an opportunity to put forward bold ideas that are absolutely necessary to move the province forward. I want to thank the Premier of Ontario for the leadership she is showing on this file, and I want to thank the finance minister for the leadership he is showing on the file to put in place the programs that have been identified by the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change as absolutely necessary for Ontario to meet its commitment

internationally, nationally and throughout North America. This is an absolutely critical thing for us to do.

We also know that previous leaders of the Liberal Party federally—Stéphane Dion, who was elected, I believe, in 2006 to lead the Liberal Party of Canada, got this piece almost a decade ago. He understood how important it was, and he made the pitch to the people of Canada that it's absolutely important that we get ahead of the game on this. He also tied in very carefully the economic opportunities that the new carbon economy, a low-carbon economy, would have for our economic well-being.

He understood it back then, but, dare I say, maybe he was 10 years too early. He was 10 years too early because we hadn't been experiencing the dramatic economic costs associated with the extreme weather that we've been experiencing of late. We hadn't experienced five years of drought in California, which is dramatically impacting the capacity of that state, which supplies to Ontario so much of our fresh fruit and vegetables, particularly off-season. We hadn't experienced that 10 years ago, but we are experiencing it now.

What you can see is that consumers who are out doing simple things like buying a head of cauliflower—the symbolic value that a head of cauliflower has had in the climate change debate is incredible. People were going to the grocery store, and what they used to pay \$1.69 or \$2.69 for—a nice head of white cauliflower coming from California—is suddenly costing upwards of \$8 in places because of the drought and because of shortened supply. So people are experiencing the impacts of climate change in their pockets, and that's why they're now getting the picture.

0910

I'm pleased to say that I think the public is very much on side with us on this measure. I got a tweet yesterday from a good friend of mine, Michael Polanyi. Michael and I grew up together. I knew his father, who you would know as Dr. John Polanyi, a great Canadian, a great scientist, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry. Dr. Polanyi and his wife, Sue—we used to meet annually at a Christmas adventure down in south Rosedale with a friend of mine, Hugh Mackenzie's mother, Sheila Mackenzie. She would put on an annual event called St. Thorlak's. It was basically a hymn sing to celebrate Christmas, to celebrate the season. Sue Polanyi would be on the piano playing hymns and we'd all sing along. Michael Polanyi and I got to know each other. He's somewhat younger than I am, but we got to know each other in those days, and he has resurfaced as a constituent in my riding of Beaches—East York. He's resurfaced with the group known as the Citizens' Climate Lobby.

The Citizens' Climate Lobby have been in to see me and they've seen so many other members. They've had events down here, and I know members on the opposition benches have also had a chance to speak with the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Michael Polanyi shared with me a map with every single riding across Canada, the ones that all of us represent in our own discrete parts of Ontario. It's a riding map where you could push a button,

push on the touchscreen and it will tell you, from a whole series of polling that's been done, the percentage of who is absolutely on side, the percentage of people on side in regions across this country, in regions across the province who are on side with climate change mitigation measures. Most importantly, he showed me how in Beaches—East York, the community he lives in, 87% of people in Beaches—East York—so 140,000 people—believe the world is heating up in a dramatic way and are concerned about it—87%. Well over 70% believe it's absolutely essential to put a price on carbon. They support the cap-and-trade program. I would invite all members of the House to find—maybe you're following me on Twitter and you'll get the link easily that way.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh yeah, we'll go on that right now.

Mr. Arthur Potts: You should. You should go and find out how many in your own community understand the circumstances that we are in, because it is absolutely important that you recognize—I know none of us want to be on the wrong side of public opinion. It's an important political motivator, but we also know that we want to do the right thing.

Sometimes, as we experienced with people's response to us modernizing the management of Hydro One—optimizing, leveraging the assets in Hydro One in order to put it on a sounder management footing, in order to take those assets and reinvest them in a better asset management program—we know that that hasn't been on side with the public but it's the right thing to do, and I'm confident, come the time when people go to the polls in 2018, they will recognize that it was the right thing to do, that they will have seen it. And although I'm concerned when municipalities across the province are putting in resolutions opposing the partial sale, I also know those same municipalities are coming to see me and asking me for infrastructure dollars. They're asking me for everything from bridge repairs to road work and sewage infrastructure upgrades. They're asking me about gas lines in rural Ontario.

I know that it's important to them that they get infrastructure renewal and I think they are finally starting to put together the piece of the puzzle that says it ain't coming if we can't finance it, and we're not going to finance it by extending our borrowing capacity even further than it's at now, so we're going to leverage assets like we did with General Motors shares, like we did selling off real estate that's no longer in the public's interest to hold, such as the LCBO head office. That is money you can reinvest as an asset in a better asset, and whether it's regional express rail or these bridges and stuff, it's absolutely critically important.

I know that Stéphane Dion had a vision, and he was defeated by it. He was defeated by it because the opposition parties made it so difficult, or they sold the simplistic argument that this is a job-killing tax, which it's not. They convinced the people because—and you see it already now, Speaker. You see it in the kinds of questions we're getting from the opposition, that the

4.3% increase projected on the cost of gasoline is a job-killing type of tax, where the reality is that every other jurisdiction, such as BC and Quebec—California I've already spoken a bit about. California put in cap-and-trade measures and lo and behold, yes, there was an increase in the cost associated with fuel, heating fuels, but there was an increase in productivity, in new jobs, in job creation, in GDP growth, and I'll talk a little bit more about that later.

We've seen the fact that it's easy to be critical of this proposal if you take the very simplistic notion that some costs will go up. You've got to frame the debate in the context that a lot of other costs are going to go down, particularly costs associated with renovating your house, for instance. I'm pleased to say that last night I spent my first night in my new house. I know members of this House will be delighted to know that I've finally moved into my own riding.

Mr. Mike Colle: Hear, hear.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you very much.

My partner, Lisa Martin, and I bought a house last June. It's a beautiful old house in upper Beaches. It was built in 1870, and it's a classic, beautiful, old Victorian house. We went in, and it was a disaster inside. It had been a rooming house. So we had to gut it to the walls. Incredibly—well, maybe not so incredibly; it was built in 1870—not a stitch of insulation in the whole thing, nothing. I am convinced that our heating costs associated with that renovation will be reduced, probably by 60%, maybe 70%. So we gutted it to the walls, rebuilt it, put in spray foam insulation, very thick. We put LED lighting in. We did all the things that we can now do with a financing program administered through our funds that will be acquired through the cap-and-trade. We will allow homeowners to go forward. Now, of course, my renovation happened before the program was in place, so I won't be able to benefit from it, but all of you will be when you have the chance to renovate.

Mr. Mike Colle: It should be retroactive.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It should be retroactive. Maybe we could have the opposition members put in a motion or an amendment to that effect, to make it retroactive. I did it because I wanted to live in a house that was solid, secure and environmentally sensible, and so we did all that work. We are still heating with gas. It was a brand new gas furnace, and I really contemplated whether to just scrap an almost brand new furnace—it was the only thing in the house that was decent—and then do something different that would be more environmentally sustainable, like ground-source heat pumping, because there, really, is the solution: to get off gas, which is a carbon-emitting program, and go to something much more passive like ground-source heating.

I actually had to take down a tree that was in the back, Speaker, an old Manitoba maple that was, like, 12 feet in diameter. It was huge. It was all rotten and falling apart. We took it down, and now I've got a big stump, a huge stump in the backyard. We're still waiting for the guy to come back when it's no longer frozen to dig it out. I

recognize now that I'm going to have a hole in my backyard that's going to be about six to eight feet deep once they remove all of this root. If I were to take that and extend that hole, make it a little bigger, I could put—

Mr. Grant Crack: A swimming pool.

Mr. Arthur Potts: —a swimming pool. I was thinking more about a reservoir, where I could put glycol or some other liquid, which could then circulate through piping into the furnace area of my house with a heat exchanger, and for the price of a small circulating pump and the little bit of electricity associated with that, a heat exchanger, I could remove any necessity for an air conditioning system in my house. All the costs associated with air conditioning would disappear because you would be taking the ambient temperature of the earth, which I think stands at about 53 degrees, as a baseload which goes through heat exchange. In the wintertime when it's 20 degrees or 10 degrees outside, it brings it up—heat exchange. So a circulating pump keeps you at ambient temperature. Likewise in the summer, when it's 85 degrees out—I'm using Fahrenheit because I'm not doing the translations, having been brought up in the old system. Younger people like the member from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell can do the centigrade translations faster.

In the summertime, I know that with a ground-source heat pump I could avoid using air conditioning and keep my house at a comfortable temperature without really expending very much energy at all. That's the focus of the flip side of, yes, it's going to cost you a little bit more to use your car; it's going to cost you a little bit more to heat your house with gasoline or with gas. The flip side is that you're going to be able to do other things.

0920

I sat with a number of mayors from the Bruce Peninsula area about three months ago and they were making a pitch to me, as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, in my rural affairs capacity. They were making the pitch to me why that community should be getting gas lines faster than other communities, how imperative it was that we build the gas infrastructure up there. One of the mayors looked at me; he said that he was in a constituent's house, and he said, "It's so expensive to heat with electricity. The cold air is blowing in under the doors. There's no insulation in the walls, so it's expensive to heat with electricity."

I looked and said, "Why don't you put in a renovation program? Why don't you help people reduce their energy costs, the high price of electricity, by putting in a renovation program?" The city of Toronto has done it. They had a free audit program that they did. The city would loan you money against your heating bill with Toronto Hydro in order to renovate your house to reduce the use of electricity, to reduce the use of fossil fuels to heat.

What we know is coming out of this bill is an opportunity, with a large capital pool, to have people apply and put in these kinds of necessary measures. In rural communities, for the purpose of home heating, ground-source heat pump opportunities are a fantastic way to go. It's almost counterproductive for us to be thinking about put-

ting gas in every home across the province because now we're going down this whole route of more emissions. I get the fact that equality demands that rural Ontario should be treated as equally as the downtown urban cores as we possibly can. I get that, and I understand why. But if we could help people in rural Ontario who don't have access to gas to reduce their heating bills by 50% or 60% by putting in proper insulation, by putting in good windows and the rest of it, it would go a long way to solving the concerns that all of you here, on both sides of the House, are hearing from your constituents about the high cost of electricity.

I was really hoping that we could have had a debate in this House on this measure, on this bill, which wouldn't fall into the partisan opposition-government type of framework, because this is, as I said, a transformational piece that we have to get right. I understand how the opposition needs to be there to provide opposition, but what I'm hoping we hear from the other side are ways that we can ameliorate the plan—not be against the plan, but fix it, make it even better.

This is like the War Measures Act, in my mind. This is like people standing up in 1939 in the House of Commons and saying, unanimously, "We need to do what's necessary to stop what's happening in Europe. We need to put ourselves forward." This is in the same vein as that. This is the kind of bill where all of us should be joining together in a rallying cry to support this kind of initiative so that your children and your children's children, and the next generation after that, can live in a community that is not so devastated by climate change initiatives.

I'm really honoured, Speaker, to have the chance to do this. I spent the last 25 years of my life before I came here as a consultant doing government relations work, doing company-to-company work and doing a lot of work in environmental communities. I'm not sure if I mentioned it in, as I like to call it, my rookie speech. I think I mentioned that I used to drive a car, an old Mercedes diesel, on vegetable oil from a restaurant in my neighbourhood. It was a 1981 Mercedes 300D.

As you all probably know, because you're well versed in these things, Rudolf Diesel invented the diesel motor to run on peanut oil. When he was in South America and he was exploring, he saw South American natives taking peanut oil in a bamboo tube, and they would pound it. They would pound the oil, and the pressure of cracking the oil would create a spark. He was like, "My god, I could make an engine out of this," if he could systematize that pounding. That's the origin of the diesel motor. So the diesel motor was designed to run on vegetable oil.

Only with the advent of us digging up and drilling and getting oil out of the ground—that top 1% becomes lubricating oil and the next 10% to 12% is used as gasoline. But the remaining—the crude, the bunker crude, type 2 or 3, whatever—is a bit of a waste product. They determined that a diesel motor will run on almost anything. You can run naphtha in it; you can run regular gasoline in it; you can run bunker diesel; you can run vegetable oil of all different sorts.

I was using used french-fry oil from a restaurant. I literally would go up to the back of the restaurant. Once a week, they'd put out 15 litres from cleaning out their french fryer, and I would take it, take the top off and pour it through a strainer to get the bits and pieces out, because you don't want to run your car on pieces of chicken fingers and french fries and such. It ran beautifully. In fact, it didn't just run beautifully; it ran better than running on diesel. It ran better because vegetable oil has an extra oxygen molecule in it, so it has a higher combustion at a lower pressure rate.

You know when you start up a diesel motor and you get that cloud of black smoke out the back? If you put biodiesel or vegetable oil in your tank, you actually remove that black spurt of smoke coming out. This is why there's a whole effort now to create more biodiesel in the community.

I worked with a company which was out of Oakville, but now they have a plant in Hamilton, called Biox Corp. I was assisting them in their dealings with municipalities at the time. Biox Corp. had a plan to take all the used vegetable oil they could collect across the province and make biodiesel. Taking out the glycerin makes it a cleaner-burning fuel. But I didn't bother taking out the glycerin. I just poured the vegetable oil straight into the car and ran off with it. As a result, the car did smell a bit like french fries and popcorn. I used to joke with my kids that if you drive it down the street, the dogs are going to run after you because they think there's food in it. But it worked, and it worked beautifully.

I worked with Biox, and now they're producing 60 million litres a year of biodiesel in Hamilton, in a continuous process that they invented with the assistance of the University of Toronto engineering faculty. It was difficult to make biodiesel, because it was a batch process which was very time-consuming and very expensive. They do it continuously now, and it makes an incredible product. Again, because it's a renewable fuel from corn, soy or whatever, it is far more sustainable than it is from digging it out of the ground.

I also worked with a company out of Israel, Arrow technologies. ArrowBio technologies had an anaerobic digestion system for garbage separation. What they would do was take mixed garbage and stick it in a vat of water. Plastics would float and heavies would sink. Everything that was left in solution tended to be organic, and you could mulch that up, anaerobically digest it, create methane and use the methane for power. This has an incredible impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, because that material would otherwise get into a landfill stream, where it would degrade and create methane unless you captured it all effectively, and would exhaust into the atmosphere, which is bad. So it was another win.

This is the kind of thing that I was doing as a consultant over the years, so it's tremendous for me to be here with an opportunity where I have a chance to speak to this particular bill.

I've also worked in the Blue Box Program, trying to expand the amount of paper that's collected in the Blue

Box Program so that we're not just collecting magazines and newspapers. We've expanded the blue box now to collect boxboard, cardboard, wrapping paper, and soft-cover and hardcover textbooks, all of which can be mulched and put back into productive paper. That saves trees, and it saves the costs of transportation associated with going to get those trees and bringing the trees and the pulp to the manufacturing. It's a huge saving in greenhouse gas emissions.

Because of that background and that experience, I think that's why the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has asked me to provide opening lead remarks on this bill.

I would like to talk a little bit more about the bill specifically. We know that the costs of climate change are adding up. The costs of inaction far exceed the cost of us taking action, and it's absolutely critical that we get that point.

A 2015 Citigroup study found that the costs, in terms of lost GDP, from not acting on climate change could be upwards of \$44 trillion by the year 2060. That is absolutely staggering, if you put it in context. If you think about what we've experienced so far—and Premier Wynne has said that climate change represents the single greatest threat to our health and prosperity today and for generations to come.

Interjections.

Mr. Arthur Potts: The members opposite can heckle and not want to take this issue seriously, but, Speaker, they need to get and grasp the severity and the seriousness of this situation, because we are seeing impacts in Ontario communities and their local economies.

0930

The United Nations World Meteorological Organization tells us that 2015 was likely the hottest year on record. Certainly, the last five years have been the hottest five-year period on record. Some locations in southern Ontario could see a 3.5-degree Celsius rise in mean summer temperature and a four-degree rise in winter. Models predict that by 2050, southern Ontario's humid, continental climate will feel more like the humid, subtropical climate of the state of Kentucky.

One of the things that we are seeing in climate change is that we are starting to experience climate realities that are more associated with southern climes such as Kentucky. Areas of the midwestern US are becoming arid and drier and starting to have more desert-like conditions.

There's a writer by the name of James Lovelock, a great scientist who understood how CFCs were getting into the atmosphere and destroying the ozone layer. He was the first to blow the whistle on that many, many decades ago. He's been tracking the climate conditions. I read his book a number of years ago called *The Revenge of Gaia*. He identified this concept of Gaia, that the Earth is a living mechanism, almost a sentient being—maybe the prime being—and that the Earth has the capacity to react and respond to climate issues or things affecting it and to take out the detractors.

He has a sort of non-anthropological view of the world, where the human being is not the most important

thing. He will smugly say that the world is going to take care of you guys, because you're the guys that are destroying the climate and the world will take care. He says, in a sense, that it's not so important to even try to get ahead of the climate changing, because we're too far gone. He thinks the most important thing that we should be doing as legislators is to better understand the migration patterns that are going to come with this; to better understand how our immigration from the midwest US states into Canada is going to cause incredible dislocation of peoples. Because their land will not be habitable; ours will be more habitable, but maybe not as habitable as it currently is.

His view of the world is as an organic, responding being. If you think about a tree—those of us who have agricultural interests in our portfolios or in our communities know that when plants don't get the sustenance, the liquids they need, the leaves will start to curl up. They'll respond in a way to try to protect their core being in the hope that new rain will come and that the leaves will open up again. That's kind of how the world is responding to the heat right now. The capacity of the world to control it—it's contracting and holding itself in, and at some point, a critical mass gets hit and you have an incredibly quick, downward spiral, because the plant dies. That's what we need to be guarding against: the plant dying, which is the world dying, and making it uninhabitable for all of us.

The situation is even more dire in the Far North. Mean winter temperatures will likely rise by as much as eight degrees by 2030 due to climate change. The communities in the north, with 24,000 people, mostly First Nations and aboriginal people making up almost 90% of the population—they are in remote communities that can only be reached by plane and winter roads. What we are seeing is that with those winter roads, because the permafrost isn't freezing early enough and long enough, we're not able to get truckloads of supplies into these outward communities, making them unreachable, possibly uninhabitable, or so incredibly expensive to live in because everything will have to be flown in—construction materials in addition to fresh produce etc. Thirty-one of the 34 communities in the Far North—about 21,000 people—depend on about 3,100 kilometres of roads, and these are disappearing.

Churchill, Manitoba, recently announced that they've had a huge influx of polar bears. It's becoming an unmanageable population—a threefold increase in the polar bears coming into the city looking for food. This is a direct result of local climate change, because the ice floes aren't sustained long enough for the polar bears to get seal meat and fatten up for the winter months. They're coming into communities, where they're trapped, housed in polar bear jails and then relocated. It's just another example. Climate change is so real that we have to take action in order to pause it and stop it from getting worse.

There is a widespread recognition among countries that we are running out of time. The global community has identified the objective of holding the increase in

global temperatures to well below two degrees Celsius in order to stop the most devastating impacts of climate change. This is a very conservative estimate. The question is, how many megatonnes of carbon are we going to allow to get into the atmosphere? There is a broad consensus that carbon pricing, such as the cap-and-trade system, is a key tool for reducing greenhouse gases and driving a prosperous, low-carbon, high productivity economy. Now, there are two basic systems that one can look at for pricing carbons. I talked earlier about the Citizens' Climate Lobby. Their push was for what is known as a tax-and-dividend system, more what has happened in BC, where you do put a tax on carbon fuels, gasoline, natural gas etc., and everybody pays that. Then you just give everybody a dividend cheque back, which splits up the proceeds of all the money you got for that and you split it up equally amongst the population, in essence. So those people who are using carbon excessively are paying for it.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You're not doing that.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm not suggesting I'm doing it. If the members want to listen, we'll get to that.

There are two systems; one is the BC system. The theory there is that people are incentivized to get off carbon—maybe instead of taking their car to work they'll take their bicycle—so that they won't be paying that extra dollar, that extra seven cents it actually works out to in BC, on their fuel, but they're still getting the full benefit of it. So maybe those who are driving a car will take their money and invest it in a bicycle. But we are taking the different approach of cap-and-trade because we believe we're going to get far better carbon reductions through a cap-and-trade program. They're guaranteed because you set targets and you reach those targets.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, this is also an extraordinarily economic thing for us to be doing. For each \$100 million that we would invest in Ontario in climate-related technologies, we would generate over \$107 million in gross domestic product increases, \$25 million in federal and provincial tax revenues, creating about 1,400 new jobs—for each \$100 million invested. So it's very important that we recognize that the flip side of us putting a tax on carbon or putting a price on carbon is that we will be creating jobs in the economy.

In 2015, the World Bank's State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2015 report stated that 39 nations, 23 cities, states and regions have now implemented scheduled prices on carbon. In Canada, that includes British Columbia, as I mentioned, Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba, and now Ontario is following. Once these programs are implemented, almost 90% of Canadians will then live in a province with some form of carbon pricing. Globally, jurisdictions with carbon pricing cover seven gigatonnes of emissions: 12% of annual global emissions. That's a threefold increase over the past decade. So it's not like we're the first ones out of the gate on this, although maybe we should have been. This is a trend happening globally worldwide, and we don't want to be the last out of the gate on this. Taking action now, again, is absolutely im-

perative. China, for instance, recently announced that it too will implement a national cap-and-trade program in 2017, building off seven regional pilot projects that have been operating since 2013.

Our government has demonstrated leadership and commitment to fighting climate change through a series of very bold measures. We've ended stand-alone coal-fired electricity generation in the province, which is one of the largest greenhouse gas reduction initiatives in North America. The Minister of Finance, in his budget speech last week, talked about the fact that taking coal-fired generation stations off-line has resulted in there being no smog days. The health savings alone associated with that were immense and important and, again, demonstrated why it was absolutely the right thing to do.

0940

We are also, Speaker, as you know, through our regional express rail, improving regional transit networks. I'm pleased to say that today, coming from my new house and location at Main and Danforth, I was able to easily walk up to the subway and across here. It was equally convenient to get on the subway at my last location at Logan and Danforth, but now in my own community it was great to be able to walk up there and meet some constituents en route and come down here by subway. I bought a Metropass today, Speaker, because I know the system is improving and it will be an opportunity for us to go across regional express rail from London and St. Catharines and Uxbridge and Stouffville. That's happening and, once electrified, that will be the most significant change in carbon emissions in our economy. So these are the kinds of bold acts we'll be doing, but we still have much to do.

With this proposed legislation, we will be establishing a stronger, long-term legal framework for climate action in Ontario. The proposed Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act will enshrine Ontario's greenhouse gas reduction targets in law. It will require regular action plans dealing with how we make progress towards achieving those targets and will establish a strong legal foundation for a cap-and-trade program.

I would like to explain some of the key elements in the act in some greater detail. Targets, for instance: We now know that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is vital to fighting climate change, so Ontario will be setting a target for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions relative to its 1990 levels. We have committed to a 15% reduction by 2020, a 37% reduction by 2030 and an 80% reduction by 2050.

The proposed act will enshrine these targets in the legislation. It includes enabling provisions that will enable the Lieutenant Governor to increase the existing targets or to add additional interim targets by regulation, but it will prohibit any future government, without changing the law, from lowering those targets.

Another key element of the proposed legislation is the development of an action plan. The bill requires our government to prepare and publish a climate action plan. The plan will detail actions to be taken that will enable

Ontario to meet our emissions reduction targets. The bill sets out what will be required in the action plan. This will include information about each action, and it requires a timetable for implementation, an estimate of the potential emissions sought to be gained and an assessment of the cost per ton of those reductions. If an action could be funded in whole or in part from cap-and-trade proceeds, then the plan will include the estimated amount of such funding that is being considered.

Under this proposed legislation, the plan could be revised at any time and must be renewed every five years. The bill also requires that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change publish a progress report every five years. So providing detailed descriptions of government actions, including the use of cap-and-trade proceeds and the impact on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as reporting on our progress: These are part of our commitment to transparency in the proposed legislation.

So, Speaker, in April 2015, Ontario announced it will join the cap-and-trade systems under the Western Climate Initiative. By doing so, we will be working with other jurisdictions, including Quebec and California, in making carbon pricing a cornerstone in our fight against climate change. The bill before this Legislature provides a strong foundation for Ontario's cap-and-trade program and establishes its framework for implementation. The proposed legislation provides provisions for agreements to link Ontario's cap-and-trade program with those in other jurisdictions, such as the Western Climate Initiative's.

Our government has included a number of elements in the proposed legislation to ensure accountability and transparency. The act requires an annual report of funds flowing in and out of the greenhouse gas reduction account, a dedicated account of all proceeds from assessments, from our trading of carbon credits, to be used for climate change initiatives. It will also require the government to publish a report on the use of cap-and-trade proceeds, which will be invested in projects that specifically reduce greenhouse gas pollution. It also requires government to develop a climate change action plan detailing how the province will meet its reduction targets every five years.

Now, Speaker, this is not the first time that we put a price or put limits on how much we allow industries to pollute. Years ago, I had the pleasure of working with an incredible gentleman by the name of Gary Gallon. Gary Gallon, one of the founders of Pollution Probe, was chief of staff to the Minister of the Environment many years ago, in the 1980s, when they brought in the acid rain plan. Our lakes, our fish, our livable waters were being destroyed by acid rain. We put a price, we put limits on the amount of acid that industry could spew into the atmosphere, and as a result we have reversed that process. This again is not new, but the scale and the magnitude to which we are doing it with respect to carbon emissions is immense. It's imperative that we get that piece right.

We also want to ensure that there is proper oversight on our cap-and-trade market. Being a member of the

Western Climate Initiative, Ontario has a non-profit corporation which provides administrative and technical services to support greenhouse gas emission trading programs for its member jurisdictions. We have worked with other initiative members, including California and Quebec, and our cap-and-trade oversight rules align with Quebec's and California's to ensure consistency once all programs are linked. The Western Climate Initiative also requires the services of a market monitor to ensure jurisdictions have enough information to ensure that emitters are complying with cap-and-trade requirements. Offenders who don't comply will be prosecuted under Ontario laws and, if convicted, will face fines.

We also have great concerns for our First Nations and Métis people. The bill specifically acknowledged that the First Nations and Métis communities have a special relationship with the environment and are deeply connected, spiritually and culturally, to the land, the water, the air and the animals. This bill includes a provision that requires the minister to consider any traditional ecological knowledge a community may offer in respect to the action plan that the government is required to prepare. So we'll be working in consultation with our First Nations communities in gaining experience and intelligence from how they view and interact with our natural world. The bill also includes a provision making it clear that nothing in the bill is intended to take away from the protections provided for aboriginal and treaty rights in the Canadian Constitution. The provision is intended to signify respect for those rights and is not intended to impact the interpretation or protection of those rights in the context of this bill.

Speaker, taking robust action on climate change will not weaken our economy; in fact, it can serve as a crucial leader for stronger growth in the province of Ontario. Nations around the world are making deep emissions cuts in the coming years, and global demand for cleaner technologies, energy, infrastructure and better low-carbon solutions will rise sharply. Through smart investments and actions, we have an exciting opportunity to take advantage of trillions of dollars—some estimating as much as \$7 trillion in the global economy per year—an opportunity way greater than the technological revolutions of the past 15 years. We will make our province more productive, efficient and prosperous.

We've heard questions from the opposition, again, detailing the costs associated with carbon pricing, the cost of gasoline, the cost of natural gas and such. But what they should also be celebrating is that the impact of carbon pricing will have no impact on electricity rates. You need to understand, critically, why that's the case: because over 95%—95%—of our electricity in this province is generated carbon-free. So putting a price on carbon doesn't affect electricity rates because Ontario, over the past 10 years, has done some very heavy lifting in getting off of carbon-based coal; for instance, reducing the amount of dependency on gas power plants at peak demand by bringing in sustainable programs—wind and energy. And while I appreciate that those programs have

added to the cost of the bills, it is an investment that we've made. We are over the hump of those investments in terms of their impact on electricity rates.

0950

When we look at our competing jurisdictions around North America, in the US, where 60% to 80% of electrical power is being generated by carbon sources, particularly coal, they haven't done that heavy lifting. When they get hit with the costs associated with carbon initiatives, our electrical pricing becomes relatively so much less expensive that we will continue to be able to compete in North American markets far more effectively. It's very important that we understand that as a result of what we're doing here, it doesn't affect the price of electricity. In fact, our modelling suggests that it will result in a very slight downward pressure on electricity pricing.

Speaker, we will be taking robust action on climate change that will not be weakening our economy. We can look to California to see the impact of what implementing cap-and-trade has on the economy, because cap-and-trade has been very good for that state's economy. During the past two years, California's overall economic growth was higher than the national average, and the state's green economy grew even faster. California added almost half a million jobs—3.3% growth, compared to the national average growth rate of only 2.5%—and they have a carbon economy. They are the largest jurisdiction in the US to have implemented a carbon economy, and it's working for them. Gross domestic product increased by over 2%, breaking the link between emissions and economic growth. What's good for the environment in carbon pricing is actually good for the economy.

What's more, California has received more clean technology venture capital since the signing of its Global Warming Solutions Act in 2006. Between 2006 and 2013, clean technology venture capital investments were \$21 billion in California, versus only \$19 billion in the entire rest of the United States of America. In essence, California has cornered the market on green economy investment. This is a very important piece to take note of, because Ontario is positioning itself to be in exactly the same place.

Carbon pricing has also been good for British Columbia's economy. According to a recent review by Duke University and the University of Ottawa, BC's carbon tax has been an economic and environmental success. Models suggest that taxes reduced emissions in the province by 5% to 15%. At the same time, the model shows that the taxes had negligible effects on aggregate economic performance, though certain emissions types have faced some challenges. Studies reviewed differed on the effects of the carbon tax initiative, but agreed the effects are very small.

There are more examples of successful carbon pricing across North America. The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative is a market-based regulatory program by nine northeastern states in the US, and its purpose is to cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the electricity

generation sector. Detailed economic modelling of the initiative's second three-year compliance period found that the program generated a net economic benefit of US\$1.3 billion for the region over this period.

Who wouldn't want to get on this train? We're going to be creating jobs, creating economic wealth and developing technologies in Ontario, for Ontario, by Ontarians. Proceeds during the three-year period were nearly US\$1 billion, and the large majority of this was reinvested by states in programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we talk about carbon leakage, which I know is an issue of great concern to the opposition parties. Leakage refers to the risk that a business would leave a jurisdiction with carbon pricing and set up in a jurisdiction without carbon pricing. Carbon leakage is a concern not just for the economy, but also for the environment, because it just moves greenhouse emissions to a different jurisdiction rather than helping reduce them. We all know the motive: Think globally but act locally. Because global carbon emissions don't know trade boundaries and don't know political boundaries, emissions in the US are just as bad for us as emissions in Ontario.

It is in every Ontarian's interest to have a strong, healthy, clean and robust industrial and manufacturing sector, so the province is now going to provide some free allowances to industries to help them transition to low-carbon technology while they reduce their greenhouse gas pollution. A number of allowances, determined by a declining cap, are not affected if a portion is provided free instead of being sold. It is our way of providing proper balance to assist industry with the transformation that has to happen.

Ontario's proposed approach to cap-and-trade strikes the right balance between reducing greenhouse pollution and fostering economic growth. If costs and timelines of implementing cap-and-trade are too onerous, companies will move production to facilities outside the province. We recognize it and we're taking steps to ensure that doesn't happen.

Our approach is very consistent with how California and Quebec successfully phased in their cap-and-trade programs. During the first compliance period, the province will assess its approach to providing free allowances in subsequent phases of the program. I know that under Ontario's cap-and-trade program design options, fuel suppliers will not receive allowances free of charge. Ontario is only proposing free allowances for business and industries that are emissions-intensive and that are trade-exposed.

Household costs are of great concern to all Ontarians. I've spoken a bit about it in the home renovation program. Let me just say more, though. Ontarians will want to know about the potential impact. While prices of some things such as home heating and gas could increase, Ontarians will take advantage of climate-change-fighting initiatives such as energy retrofits, public transit and electrical vehicle incentives, and this will actually see that their overall costs will go down.

The cost of buying a Chevy Volt is I think about \$19,000, and under the program, it's my understanding that upwards of \$14,000 will be provided to someone buying a Chevy Volt. So you can go out and get yourself a \$5,000 brand new car because it's emissions-free. People should think about that. If you want to trade in your old gas clunker, your big pickup truck—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I think you better check your numbers.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'll check my numbers on that, but that's my understanding.

At the very least, we do know that if you're going to buy an electric vehicle, a good portion of that expenditure will be covered off by the proceeds of our cap-and-trade system.

Ontario is investing \$31 billion into a plan that will, among other things, make public transit an easier and more convenient option for people. We are also putting in place infrastructure to make cycling in our communities safer and more convenient. I know that's of great interest to my colleague from the town of—

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Burlington.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Burlington. I was going to say Brampton.

Drivers will also receive incentives to buy electric vehicles. Those who drive electric vehicles will be able to cut down their commute times by having unrestricted access to high-occupancy vehicle lanes no matter how many passengers are in the vehicle. It's important also to note that recent trends in gas prices have decreased fuel costs so that between 2014 and 2016, average prices in Ontario have decreased by 34 cents per litre. We're adding 4.3 on the estimates of what it will cost suppliers—not a huge amount compared to where gas prices were two years ago.

Through the Green Investment Fund, Ontario is committing \$100 million to help about 37,000 homeowners conduct audits to identify energy saving opportunities and then complete those retrofits.

I talked to you about the happy story in my house. Actually, there's another happy story in my house. In the course of finishing my renovation, I discovered that the federal government has an HST rebate program based on substantial renovations of the house, particularly where you're bringing in all these energy retrofits. So I will be able to qualify for an HST rebate, maxed out at about \$16,000. I'm very pleased with that initiative. Its motive is in the right place: to encourage people to fix their homes up and make them more energy efficient.

The Ontario program will help house owners replace furnaces and water heaters and upgrade insulation. It will also help spur innovation and create jobs in clean energy industries, for instance in ground-source heat pumps.

The province is also investing \$92 million to retrofit social housing buildings and single-family homes. The retrofits could include installing energy-efficient boilers, insulating walls, mechanical systems and installing more energy-efficient windows and lighting. Businesses and consumers that take no action and continue to pollute will

spend more on things like transportation, fuels and natural gas, while those who take steps to reduce emissions will avoid cost increases for carbon pricing.

The money raised through cap-and-trade will be invested in a transparent way into programs that further reduce greenhouse gas pollution, such as public transit, families consuming less energy, and helping factories and businesses reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

1000

We can now look at the experience of consumers in Quebec and California following the introduction of cap-and-trade legislation in those jurisdictions. It's estimated that the price of gas increased between two and three and a half cents a litre in California and Quebec due to their programs. While these jurisdictions have not seen significant increases in natural gas prices, we are sensitive to the cost and we are working hard to deliver a program that works for consumers and industry.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to address the potential impacts to industry under cap-and-trade. Facilities covered directly by a cap-and-trade program will not have to purchase allowances for the natural gas that they use. As I mentioned, our analysts anticipate a slight increase in the cost of natural gas and transportation fuel when the program is implemented. However, recent trends in prices have decreased, leaving industry fuel costs significantly reduced. Putting a price on greenhouse gas pollution is about encouraging businesses and consumers to pollute less by reducing their reliance on carbon-intensive programs.

Our proposed legislation builds on consultation with industry, businesses, environmental and indigenous leaders across the province and the public on how to best combat climate change and implement a cap-and-trade program. As a first step towards the development of Ontario's Climate Change Strategy, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change released a discussion paper in February 2015 proposing a path forward and guiding principles. We engaged Ontarians in a province-wide dialogue. The ministry held 15 community stakeholder dialogues across the province, with more than 1,200 individuals and 200 businesses and organizations attending.

The province also held a series of engagements with First Nations and Métis organizations. We received over 31,000 submissions through an online consultation tool, as well as over 500 comments on the discussion papers. We know we've been out to the public. We've got their feedback. The polling that has been done that I referenced earlier shows that the public wants us to take concerted action on climate change, and we've consulted with them.

So I go back to my initial plea to all members of this House that we rise up in unanimity to the concept of putting forward this cap-and-trade legislation, that we seek the intelligence of all members of this House through your consultations in your own communities on how we can make it better. I challenge every member, on the other side of the House particularly, to give us workable

solutions that fall in line with the general principles of what we're trying to do, because it's the right thing to do, and it's the right thing to do now.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure to offer a balanced approach to the tax—pardon me, a Freudian slip—cap-and-trade scheme that this Liberal government is introducing, because the fact of the matter is, we've heard from stakeholders left, right and centre about their concerns.

I think it's pretty rich that the member opposite is focusing and suggesting that the cost of electricity will not go up. We all know that when turbines are not turning in Ontario, natural gas plants—remember the gas plant scandal—are to replace and help out in peak demand, and if you don't think they're going to pass that cost of production along the value chain to the end consumer, you are sorely mistaken.

I really want to touch on, in my two minutes, something that's very important to discuss, and that is the notion that this government would dare suggest that anyone other than themselves isn't going to do the right thing around climate change. This is where we stand up and say, stop the partisan ways, because we all know climate change is a very serious issue. But guess what? The methodology and the path forward is where we will divide, Speaker. We feel that we need to point out all that is wrong with the Liberal cap-and-trade scheme while balancing the importance of addressing climate change and making sure we listen and consult with stakeholders so that we get it right. We need to care for the environment, absolutely, but in doing so, in tandem we're also going to be treating Ontarians and Ontario businesses fairly, and that is the paramount focus for us.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a joy to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin and hear the comments from the member from Beaches-East York. I'm very pleased to hear that he goes out and talks to his constituents, as he should. As an elected member—there are 107 of us who are here—it's always a privilege being here, and the day we forget that is the day it's time to step away from this place.

A good friend of mine, who served in previous years as a minister and a good representative and MPP for the Algoma riding, as it was then, Mr. Bud Wildman, jumped into my mind this morning. He used to always tease me about using a phrase. I will call a canard on you, my friend, because of some of the stuff that you brought up this morning. You used words like "optimization" and "modernization," as far as what happened with Hydro One. I am sorry; we have different words that we use in northern Ontario in order to describe what the Liberal government did with that, some of them which are not going to go on the record this morning.

But I just want to let you know some of the engagements that I have had with people from across Algoma-

Manitoulin. You talked about having options available to you and to your constituents in your area. Let me talk to you about the options that we have in northern Ontario, particularly with the cap-and-trade that is being imposed. We have always requested that it be fair, that it be transparent, and that it be equitable across the province for people.

Let me talk to you about the options that we have. First, we don't have an option for transit in northern Ontario. Second, we don't have GO trains. The trains that we had, you took them away. The rail that was there is no longer there, and the bus routes are being reduced by 50%. Those are the options that you've taken away from northern Ontario. So when you look at options and when you look at the increases in fuel prices, home expenses and everything, that's the message that's coming to me. That's a reality for people in northern Ontario.

They are not connected to this budget. I am very sorry but you need to listen—as well as being part of government—to the rest of the province.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm delighted to take part in this vigorous conversation this morning about a very important issue; in fact, arguably the most important issue facing humanity right now: climate change. I'm delighted to follow my colleague, the very knowledgeable member from Beaches-East York, and to join the member from Huron-Bruce and the member from Algoma-Manitoulin.

The last member, from Algoma-Manitoulin, was talking about things that we can embrace together. At least, that's what I took from your comments. I know that he is a vigorous supporter of a cycling network in Ontario because in his very riding there are upgrades to same.

Of course, I'm proud to not only have been a cycling advocate prior to arriving in this place, but to have worked to develop the #CycleON strategy. My colleague, my neighbour here, the member for Cambridge and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, led a conversation yesterday among cycling groups and the Ministry of Transportation about the vigorous and continued investment that's going to be required in our province to make cycling easier and more convenient.

Right now, of course, 135,000 people a day, according to estimates, are riding their bicycles in the city of Toronto, and over 600,000 Ontarians, which represents an incredible opportunity for us to give people options about the way they travel every single day, but also to contribute in a very personal way to their own health, to a more connected community, and, of course, to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Cycling is not all about the carbon economy, but the carbohydrate economy. Lowering our consumption of both is an important contribution that cycling makes. I look forward to that continued conversation.

If I may, one last quick point, Speaker: As a former employee of Petro-Canada, I was proud to see the oil industry taking a lead in conversations out west after an announcement by the Alberta government, in fact, in

November. They are showing innovation, and our companies here are going to do exactly the same.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I am pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comment on the member's speech regarding Bill 172. I agree with my colleague from Huron–Bruce. Climate change is a very serious issue and it needs a very serious response from the government.

Specifically on their cap-and-trade plan, I don't know of anyone who has faith in this government to administer a \$1.9-billion fund that, for all purposes, will be used for their waste, their mismanagement and their scandals. This is a government that, in the speech today, talks about working with other parties, but in a by-election we just had in Whitby–Oshawa, specifically, they fraudulently tried to tell voters in that riding that the opposition parties would bring back coal plants, which is, again, a categorically false statement. On the one hand, they say that we should work together—if they really meant that, we should all celebrate the closing of the coal plants equally and we should all work towards measures that would reduce emissions.

In his lead speech today, the member opposite talked over and over, glowingly, about the British Columbia system, yet this government's plan is nowhere near like the British Columbia system. When he talks about the fact that citizens get credits back from the government through tax credits—this bill does not include any measures that are similar to British Columbia's. Here you've got a situation where the government is going to collect funds on the backs of drivers in my riding. I have no Leeds–Grenville transit system. Gas is going to go up, both natural gas and gasoline.

Again, what is this fund going to be used for? Is it for your pet projects or is it actually going to be for something that's going to benefit the province?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Beaches–East York for final comments.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to respond to the comments. I appreciate very much that people were listening. It's such an important first step, that people are hearing what we're saying on this side.

What I think I heard from the member from Huron–Bruce and, to some extent, the member from Leeds–Grenville is an acknowledgement that something has to be done and should be done. I think that's a fantastic change. When the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell brought a motion not too many months ago to discuss exactly this issue, only six members of the opposition party showed up to support the measure. I'm delighted to hear that there are voices within the party opposite that are looking to support this initiative.

Yes, maybe we want to go down a route of product performance standards as opposed to the assessment program we're using now; I don't know. I would love to get more positive feedback. We know that in BC, yes, that was the approach there. But BC, per dollar being

spent, isn't getting nearly as fast a carbon reduction as they are getting in California, as we will get in Ontario, as they're getting in Quebec. Cap-and-trade forces industry, whereas the BC program is far more premised on a voluntary compliance kind of model. Those were the consultations we went out on. That was the feedback we got: that in fact it's better to do cap-and-trade because you can guarantee your carbon reductions.

I also want to respond to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Bud Wildman was a great guy. I had the pleasure of being on Toronto Islands when Bud Wildman was the Minister of the Environment, test driving the very first Mazda Miata hydrogen-powered car. I actually set up the whole event, because I had an involvement. Bud was an incredible guy and a very good promoter of the environment, and I'm glad to hear him referenced.

Of course, my friend from Burlington—and the response back to the member from Algoma is that you don't want to ride your bikes to work, you can't do that, but maybe four-stroke motors on all the boats taking fishers out on the lake would be a great start rather than the two-strokes, which are much more polluting.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's now close to 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to introduce Phil Holst, from the great riding of Oxford. Phil is here at Queen's Park today with his colleagues from Ducks Unlimited. Welcome, Phil, to this morning's session.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm very pleased to introduce my brother Frank Chiarelli and his wife, Marg, who are the proud grandparents of Ottawa page Julia Robertson.

I want to introduce Frances Robertson, proud grandmother of Julia Robertson, and also Maria Chiarelli and Glenn Robertson, mother and father of Julia Robertson.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, with respect to my brother Frank, he is the proud father of Peter Chiarelli, who was the GM of Stanley Cup winners the Boston Bruins, and now is general manager of the Edmonton Oilers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the cause of fairness, I'll turn to the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. Just to echo the Minister of Energy, who represents Ottawa West–Nepean, I'd like to welcome his family from Nepean–Carleton to this esteemed chamber.

I would like to let them know that I had lunch with Julia last week. She's an incredible young lady, and I see her doing well in life. Maybe, just maybe, I'll actually make a Conservative out of a Chiarelli sometime in the near future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The battle is on.

The member from Hamilton Mountain, are you introducing or resting? Okay, thank you.

The Minister of Immigration.

Hon. Michael Chan: I would like to introduce to the House a number of my wonderful locally engaged staff and some of the senior economic officers. Their dedicated work in our international trade offices around the world is invaluable. It is my pleasure to have them join us in the House later on today.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I'd like to welcome Ducks Unlimited to Queen's Park today. I had a good meeting this morning with Lynette Mader, their head of provincial operations; Owen Steele, the manager of conservation programs; and Angus Norman, their volunteer.

I remind all members that there is a reception this evening in the dining room with Ducks Unlimited from 4:30 to 7 o'clock. I hope to see everybody there this evening.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure today to introduce the family of page Delaney Mastronardi. Present in the public gallery this morning are her mother, Rima Mastronardi; her father, Domenic Mastronardi; her sister, and a former page of about four years ago, Dominique Mastronardi; and her aunt, Rolla Reid. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm absolutely delighted to welcome, in the public gallery, students from the Académie de la Moraine, located in my riding of Aurora. Welcome.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome three of my constituents from Barrie: Kevin Rich, Mike Williams and Kristen Wozniak are here today with Ducks Unlimited, one of our nation's foremost conservation organizations.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It is a great honour for me to introduce Zainab Abu Alrob, who is here in the gallery. She is an intern at Ryerson and will be working with us in our office for one of her classes.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted to introduce the mother of today's page captain. Suzanne Uraiqat is today's page captain. She's from the riding of Mississauga East-Cooksville. Her mother, Raja Rayyan, is in the public gallery. We welcome her.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Visiting us today in the Speaker's gallery is an award-winning producer, writer, comedian and performer, a friend and a member of the Order of Ontario: Mr. Rick Green. Please join me in welcoming Rick Green to the House.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): He's a fairly funny guy.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. I would like to ask a question today from Global's Alan Carter, aka Queen's Park's very own anchorman. I ask

because he couldn't get a straight answer from this government last week during the budget scrum. He asked, "If you drive a car, heat your home with natural gas, you are going to pay more, correct? There will be less money for people at home, correct? There will be less money in their pocket at the end of the day."

Is this correct? Does this budget mean less money for families at the end of the day? We believe Alan deserved an answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's talk about—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Tell Alan. Just tell Alan.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I think Alan is perfectly capable of asking his own questions.

Let me just talk about what is in this budget that is supporting people. Quite frankly, there are enormous supports. I was at a high school this morning, at Jarvis Collegiate, and we talked about the reality that students who live in families who are low-income right through to middle-income are going to get more support for tuition. They're going to have more access to post-secondary, Mr. Speaker. That transformation of student assistance—free tuition for low-income families and more affordable tuition for middle-class families—is incredibly important across the province.

We are continuing to lower auto insurance rates. We are eliminating the \$30 Drive Clean emissions fee. We're lowering hospital parking fees for approximately 900,000 patients and visitors—

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: If the tax increases weren't enough, this budget increases virtually every government service fee. Fees for driver and vehicle licensing are going up. Camping in provincial parks, fishing and hunting licences just got more expensive. Everything from liquor licences to event permits for charity fundraisers will cost people more. And the kicker is that it's not a one-time increase. Fees will go up every year under this Liberal government.

Is there not a single person, family, charity or business that you won't take more money from to pay for your years of waste and mismanagement?

Interjections.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I think the answer is no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not enamoured by some of the comments I'm hearing and so I'm going to start ratcheting up my role here, if it's necessary. Please keep those comments civil.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, it is quite something, and I know that the Leader of the Opposition might not be aware of this, but for many years his party was very adamant that we should look at the Drummond report, that we should look at what Don Drummond said to us about good government and responsible fiscal management. We continue to implement many of the recommendations that Don Drummond gave us. He might want to check with his colleagues about that.

Let me go through, again, the changes that we are making that are going to support families in this province. I talked about free tuition. The biggest investment in infrastructure in Ontario's history: We're in the third year of our \$160-billion investment. That creates 110,000 jobs a year. Surely, the Leader of the Opposition would agree that having a job is a pretty important part of having a high-quality life in the province.

1040

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: There is no one in the province that won't pay more because of your mistakes, because of Liberal mistakes. If you drive a car, you'll pay more. If you heat your home with gas, you'll pay more. If you fish or hunt, you'll pay more. If you are a senior with medication—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Patrick Brown: —you'll pay more. If you're a charity hosting—

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

The moment I say "Come to order," you continue. Don't go for two.

Please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, fundamentally this budget makes life more expensive for everyone in Ontario. What has happened to this Premier's compassion? Why is she making life so much harder for everyone in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, again, let me just reinforce what I have said already, that there are many ways in this budget that we are supporting and lowering costs for families. Seniors between the ages of 65 and 70 will be able to get—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's 65 and 70.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Sixty-five and 70, that's what I said—will be able to get the shingles vaccine for free. We're dedicating \$100 million to help 37,000 homeowners conduct audits in order to reduce their energy bills. As I've said, we're eliminating the \$30 Drive Clean emissions fee. We're providing \$650,000 in matching funding with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to support an innovative program for high school students that will help them with financial literacy education.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General noted in 2009 that Ontario's service fees per capita are among the lowest in Canada. That's the reality. That's what we're dealing with as we continue to support families of the province.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is to the Premier. This government has no credibility in northern Ontario. The Liberals say that they value northern Ontario, but not once did the Minister of Finance mention the north, northern Ontario or the Ring of Fire during his actual

budget speech. This is the third straight budget that in the budget fine print, they have reannounced funding for the Ring of Fire; it's a reannouncement of a reannouncement. But despite three years of these announcements, there is not a shovel in the ground or a single dollar spent.

Will the Premier stop paying lip service to northern Ontario? Will she finally invest in the Ring of Fire? Will she finally stand up and invest in northern Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, I believe that the students who live in northern Ontario will be able to access free tuition as easily as students who live in southern Ontario.

Let me talk, Mr. Speaker, about the \$550 million in northern infrastructure through the northern highways program: four-lane expansion of Highway 69 south of Sudbury and Highway 11/17 east of Thunder Bay; rehabilitation of the Noden Causeway near Fort Frances; resurfacing of 36 kilometres of Highway 144; and replacement of the Valentine River Bridge.

Let me talk about the \$300 million a year to support projects in rural and northern communities through the Ontario—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Don't encourage anyone else.

You have a 10-second wrap-up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund for rural and northern communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The only news that government is making in northern Ontario is their Sudbury by-election scandal.

This budget ignores the importance of the north. Let me quote Nathan Lawrence, the president of the North-western Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce, when he told the pre-budget hearings that "there is a significant component of our northern region that is inaccessible through transportation, through electricity and other means of infrastructure."

For a government that can't say a sentence without mentioning their commitment to infrastructure, the development of northern infrastructure seems to be missing from this budget. The Liberals already cut part of the north when the Nipigon bridge failed.

Is their lack of funding a plan to cut off northern Ontario? Will you support northern infrastructure, yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The premise of the Leader of the Opposition's question is ridiculous. The fact is, the investments we're making in infrastructure are across the province. I just talked about \$550 million in northern infrastructure—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You don't know when I'm going to call you to attention when I'm asking for quiet.

Please finish, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think that the Leader of the Opposition could talk to the folks at the Atikokan General Hospital, where the renovation of the acute and long-term-care beds is taking place. He could talk to the folks at the Alexander Henry High School in Sault Ste. Marie, where \$8 million is going to retrofit that school.

Mr. Steve Clark: He could talk to the nurses in Thunder Bay who are closing down their practice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds–Grenville.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: He could talk to the folks at Confederation College in Thunder Bay where a new technology, education and collaboration hub is happening. He could talk to the people who are involved in the 6,956 projects that have been supported by \$1 billion through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

He could have a conversation with all of those folks and understand the investments that this government has made in northern infrastructure.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm standing.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: The question the Premier called ridiculous was actually a quote from the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. It's nice that that's the way you treat northern Ontario. You can dismiss northern Ontario, you can dismiss their concerns, but the reality is, look at the pre-budget hearings. Your finance minister may not want to pay attention to the pre-budget hearings but you should pay attention.

New Liskeard, in the pre-budget hearings, reported that they had to close their operating room for 50% of the time because one in 10 of their staff got cut. Timmins was forced to cut 26 beds, close their physio and fire 40 staff. And in the Soo, they had to cut 50 beds in acute and complex care. That being said, there is nothing in this budget for northern Ontario except for reduced health care and a higher cost of living.

Why has this Premier continued to, again and again—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was not in any way commenting on the remarks of people from the north, Mr. Speaker. I was—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was challenging the premise of the question from the Leader of the Opposition. This is a member who sat in the Harper government for nine years. We have had \$1 billion invested in the Ring of Fire. There was no support—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—anything to do with the north or the Ring of Fire. We have made investments in the northern economy and we will continue to do so.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. It sounds like the Premier realized her plan to make most seniors pay more for medication was a mistake. Will the Premier acknowledge that we should be expanding prescription drug coverage and protecting universal access to health care, not cutting back the coverage that seniors need?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows perfectly well—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington will come to order and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—that the changes that we made in terms of the Ontario drug benefit were intended to and will increase support for 170,000 seniors, who will now not have to pay any deductible for their prescription drugs. That's 170,000 seniors who will have more support and will have more access. That was the intention and that is what will happen as a result of the changes we're making.

I acknowledged yesterday that, as the regulation is out for consultation now in terms of the threshold for the seniors who will be asked to pay a bit more on their deductible—that consultation is out, and if we can come to an agreement that that threshold should be changed, we're open to doing that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: A senior in Ontario living on \$19,500 will see their drug costs nearly double under this Liberal budget. Yesterday, the Premier said, "If we didn't get it right, then we will make a change," like she just said earlier.

Will the Premier admit today that if she didn't get it right, she will commit today to changing it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health wants to weigh in on this, but I just want to make it clear what's happening here. The third party came to a conclusion. I came to the same conclusion. The third party said, "This is what we think should happen." I said, "I've reached that conclusion. I agree with you. We should be open to making this change." Now they are saying, "Are you going to do this?"

I said yesterday that we were going to have the regulation out for consultation. We're open to making the

change. I would suggest they're having a hard time taking yes for an answer.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The issue is about this consultation. Listen: The Premier shouldn't need another series of consultations to figure out that doubling drug costs for seniors living on \$19,500 is not right.

Will the Premier commit today, admit that she was wrong and cancel her plan to double drug costs for most seniors in this province?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Quite frankly, I can't understand why the member opposite can't take yes for an answer—

Mr. Paul Miller: Half a cup is no good; we want a full cup.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Mr. Mike Colle: He should be in his right seat, too. Get over there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will get a second time if he continues to, first, speak while I get him to pay attention and, second, speak while I'm standing.

Finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I can't understand why the member opposite is not interested in the fact that 170,000 more low-income seniors are going to pay no drug costs on an annual basis, and 30,000 more each and every year.

The member opposite hasn't acknowledged that our out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors in this province are by far the lowest in the entire country. In fact, our average out-of-pocket drug costs for seniors are \$277 a year. The next closest province is over \$600. There are provinces that are over \$1,000.

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The question is to the Premier again. Yesterday, the Premier said that she needed more consultation to figure out if it was the wrong decision to nearly double the drug costs for seniors living on \$19,500. Well, it's clear. I can tell you the answer: That's the wrong decision. You don't need a consultation to tell you that. Anyone who doesn't get that is out of touch with the reality that most people and most seniors face.

Will the Premier commit today to cancel her plan to double the medication costs for most seniors living in Ontario?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite knows we're not planning to double the costs to our seniors. The Premier has been crystal clear: As we put this forward for

consultation, as we draw in an additional 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors who will no longer have to pay any annual deductible, as we post the regulations for consultations, we will look at all seniors and how it impacts them.

The Premier is very open to having that conversation. I would hope that the member opposite would be part of that conversation as we determine what's best for our seniors, but I'm disappointed that he refuses to acknowledge that those 170,000 of the poorest of the poor seniors under our plan will no longer have to pay any annual deductible.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Ensuring that seniors can afford medication means keeping seniors healthy. It means less time in the hospital and more time for seniors to enjoy what they've earned. It also means fewer worries—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —about how they'll pay those bills.

Will the Premier, again, commit today that come this summer, seniors will be able to afford their medication costs?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Let me talk about some of the other things that we're doing for our seniors in this budget: for example, the additional \$250 million that we're investing in home and community care to benefit our seniors; the \$75 million over the next three years in community-based, residential hospice and palliative care—we've heard nothing about that from the member opposite or his party; the 170,000 more seniors who will pay no annual deductible; and the shingles vaccine provided free of charge, a \$170 value to each and every senior between the ages of 65 and 70.

We're removing the debt retirement charge, which will save seniors on average \$70 a year. There's a new \$10 million in behavioural supports for seniors in long-term-care homes who are suffering from dementia. That's 10 million more dollars to support those individuals.

The list is long. I'm happy to talk further in the final supplementary.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Doubling the cost of medication for most seniors in this province is a huge mistake. I hope the Premier understands that. She shouldn't need yet another consultation to tell her what everybody already knows, that doubling the drug cost for seniors, without consultation, without warning, without even asking them, was a mistake.

Will the Premier ensure that Ontarians won't have to pay for her mistake?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member knows that our drug program hasn't been updated in 20 years. We decided that we would actually bring 170,000 more of the lowest-income seniors into the category which allows them to pay no annual deductible at all—to go from \$100 deduct-

ible annually down to zero dollars. I would hope, at least, that the old NDP would have supported that kind of measure. The new NDP has chosen not to reference that whatsoever. It's not a doubling that we propose; it's increasing that deductible from \$100 to \$170.

The Premier has been absolutely crystal clear. She's willing to work with the opposition parties. You've come up with no suggestions. I know you want to spend more and more and more money. We have an incredible drug program in this province. We need to make sure that we get it right for all seniors. That's the commitment that our Premier and this government make. We'll do that as we go forward with consultations.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. We're now seeing the effects of your government bringing forth a budget without proper consultation. Seniors were shocked to hear that, on top of higher hydro rates and driver's licence fees, the prescription drug costs will double. Three quarters of Ontario seniors will be affected by this drug cost increase. However, seniors were not consulted. In fact, even the Ontario Pharmacists Association was taken aback by this decision.

Consultation should take place before the budget is released. This totally exemplifies your government's total mismanagement of our province. Premier, could you not have taken the time to sit down and consult with seniors prior to this budget release?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I have to repeat that 170,000 of the lowest-income seniors in this province are going to be joining approximately 300,000 who already pay no annual deductible because they can't afford to. We're going to have almost half a million seniors in this province who will pay that co-payment of \$2 or less because many pharmacists will waive that cost, and they will pay no annual deductible. It will go from \$100 down to zero dollars.

I would hope that even a party such as the Conservative Party would support that measure, Mr. Speaker. I would hope that the NDP would support that measure, where we're providing significant support to those who need it most. As we go forward, we've committed to looking to see how it impacts all seniors, and we're open to good suggestions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier: You should have looked at what the impact is going to be on all seniors prior to going forward with this budget.

Your government and Minister of Finance were quick to release this budget, so quick that you forgot to include Ontarians in consultations. Our seniors, who are the most vulnerable of our society, should have a say in what's happening in our province. I would have thought your government would have learned to consult after they

embarrassed themselves over the smoking of medical marijuana just a few months ago.

1100

Yesterday, you said that you'd like to get it right for seniors. Why didn't you properly consult with seniors before the budget release?

You're making life unaffordable for seniors. Seniors now will pay more for energy, seniors cannot access long-term-care beds, seniors will pay double for their prescription costs, and seniors still cannot get their knee or hip replaced in January, February or March of each and every year. Premier, why are you failing seniors?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It begs repeating the measures that we've announced in this year's budget that will benefit our seniors. I didn't get an opportunity when I was providing that list to the NDP to reference as well the additional investments we're making in long-term care—a 2% increase over the next three years.

We made a decision, of course, and it was referenced in the budget, the measures that we're taking on hospital parking, which will benefit our seniors across this province, to increase and improve accessibility when they go either as patients or to visit their loved ones. We're increasing our social assistance rates. We're providing the shingles vaccine free of charge. We're expanding, as I've mentioned—I don't know how many times I have to mention it before I get a positive response; 170,000 more seniors are going to benefit.

We're already in an environment where Ontario, by far, by a long shot, is more generous than any other province or jurisdiction in Canada.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Patients and their families were hopeful with this year's budget, and so was I. But seven straight years of squeezing hospitals with base funding below inflation will not undo the damage the Liberals have done to health care in Ontario.

Page 116 of the budget says, "In 2016-17 the government is increasing its base funding for hospitals by 1%." That's less than inflation; 1% is the status quo. It means that the 1,200 nurses who have lost their jobs won't get their jobs back. It means that the long wait-lists will continue. It means that hospitals will be forced to continue to cut programs, services and jobs.

Why did this Liberal government choose to make life harder for patients in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: A 1% increase to the hospital line works out to about \$150 million. The member knows that in this budget we're increasing the hospital line by \$345 million. That's more than 2%. That's more than the CPI or the rate of inflation. It's a substantial increase.

I wish I had the quote in front of me from Anthony Dale from the Ontario Hospital Association, but when I was with him yesterday morning at University Health Network with a whole host of patients, their advocates, health care workers and health care professionals from

that part of Toronto, they applauded the substantial investment of \$345 million and the difference that it would make to patient care and to our hospitals. It was applauded enthusiastically by the head of the Ontario Hospital Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: At St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, they say that the Liberals' budget is not going to change anything; they still have to cut \$26 million and they still have to lay off 136 workers. Family and front-line workers know better than what you're trying to say to us.

Patients are suffering with the government cuts. Nurses are being laid off in Windsor, Hamilton, Waterloo and right across the province. Beds have been closed in North Bay and Timmins. Hospitals in Thunder Bay and across the province are so full that they are forced to open beds in hallways and patient lounges, and none of this gets paid for.

When will the Minister of Health realize that Liberal cuts to health care are hurting patients?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It boggles the mind to understand how a billion-dollar increase in the health care budget this year going forward can be characterized by the third party as somehow being a decrease—a billion dollars more in new funding, \$345 million of that going specifically to the hospital line of the budget.

But we're doing much more: \$12 billion over the next 10 years to build and improve existing hospitals—to build new hospitals and renovate existing ones. In fact, that fund that we have annually that helps hospitals with maintenance and renovations, we're increasing that by an additional \$50 million.

We're investing \$85 million in our nurses through our nurse practitioners, in our community health centres, in our family health teams—hopefully they would support that—and \$75 million as well to fund 20 more hospices, to increase funding to hospices. There are so many positive investments for our health care system. I don't understand how that can possibly add up to anything but good news.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Our health care budget is increasing every year, and in the 2016 budget you see this confirmed. We see an increase of \$1 billion this year, to a total of \$51.8 billion. In my riding of Kitchener Centre and in greater Waterloo region, I recently met with hospital CEOs, LHIN representatives and doctors, who are very pleased to see increases in our local funding.

As our population ages, we need to ensure that our system is ready to care for our seniors. With health equity as a top priority in the minister's Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care, it is very important to address health care for our most vulnerable. Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please tell this House what

the government is doing to support Ontarians through health care investments?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, at risk of repeating myself, let me start with a couple of quotes from individuals who I think, as it pertains to our hospitals, have a tremendous amount of credibility. Anthony Dale, who is the president and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association, his quote about our budget: "This investment will go to support front-line care and help to keep wait times low, maintain access to elective surgery and ensure that important health service programs are maintained." Or, if that's not enough, the Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario, so all the hospitals across the province, the teaching hospitals that do such great teaching and research: "The Council of Academic Hospitals of Ontario ... welcomes the commitments in the 2016 Ontario budget for an investment in Ontario's hospitals, and its overall focus on fostering innovation and building prosperity." We know it's much more than just our hospitals; it's also that transformation that we're undertaking.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the minister for his response. I know, in particular, that at St. Mary's hospital in my riding of Kitchener Centre the staff and the management there were very happy to learn about the investment. But we know that health care extends beyond hospitals, and that's why our government is continuing to increase funding for home and community care by \$250 million this year.

A few years ago when my mother had surgery for breast cancer, she was very anxious to leave the hospital to go home, where she wanted to recover, and she was able to do so with excellent CCAC care that followed. I sat on the pre-budget consultations, we toured the province, and there were repeated calls for expansion to hospice care. Now we're doubling our investment in community-based hospice and palliative care to \$155 million over three years. Can the minister please tell this House what the government is doing to make life easier for those who need end-of-life care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm very proud of the investment that we're making in palliative care and end-of-life care. It's an investment we're augmenting; we're putting in an additional \$75 million, for a total of \$155 million over the next three years. It's in response to what is such an appropriate measure to take, an appropriate support to provide individuals and their loved ones at that very difficult and challenging part of anyone's life. It has resulted, I think, in a response even from members of this Legislature, although of course if they're in the opposition they would refrain from saying it here. Let me quote the member from—Vic Fedeli. I'm sorry, the member from—

Interjection: Nipissing.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Nipissing. I apologize for saying his name. From the member from Nipissing: "I was really pleased to see the hospice money come through. We have a hospice in North Bay and it's such a huge need.... When I saw that, I thought that was excellent."

And the autism money. I sat in my office when I met with constituents and they're just at the end of the road. And so those two initiatives I thought were well announced."

These are the types of things—

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Last week's budget was her government's ninth straight deficit. They have more than doubled the debt. We have a larger debt than all other provinces combined. We have the largest subnational debt in the entire world, forcing their government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. If you don't respond, it makes it easier for me to get there. Thank you.

Finish, please.

1110

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They've made servicing the debt and the deficit the third-largest spending priority of their government. That puts our future generations at risk. I said that last week. It takes money intended for health care and education and gives it toward paying off the debt.

You don't have to take my word for it. Even the Toronto Star said this past week that the Liberal plan "leaves Ontario's poorest children behind." Not only is this budget a fiscal train wreck; it makes life more difficult for everyday families.

For active middle-class families, it's just as bad. They are taking money, namely for the children's activity tax credit, which helps moms and dads give their kids a hand up. I would like to know why this government is trying to take that away and making a bigger burden for mothers and fathers.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as usual, it's difficult, because there's no consistency coming from the opposition. I'm not quite sure whether they think we should be spending more or whether we should be spending less.

We've got a credible plan to eliminate the deficit, but at the same time, we know that investing in people is important. That's why the free tuition and the changes to student assistance are so very important for families across the province, particularly low-income and middle-income families.

We've been very clear in terms of changes on the tax credits. We were going to look at every line in our spending. We were going to make decisions based on the evidence. So if you look at the children's activity tax credit, it was not serving its intended purpose. Its intended purpose was to assist lower-income families with enrolment costs. That's not what it was doing, so we changed that.

We're going to continue to make those kinds of decisions that reinvest and deliver the outcomes that we know people need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If the Premier wants to talk about consistency, she has to look at the last nine budgets her government tabled and see a massive deficit and an even bigger debt that has made Ontario a basket case financially.

The children's activity tax credit is useful to a lot of mothers and fathers I represent in Riverside South and in Barrhaven. They apply it to their children's piano lessons and hockey fees, and even to help them tutor as their children progress, sometimes making an otherwise unaffordable activity accessible to that family.

Even Dalton McGuinty, when he brought in the single largest sales tax increase in Ontario's history, the HST, brought in the tax credit and said, "This is one more way that we can help parents pay for those costs associated with raising healthy, active ... kids." And now you're going to cut it when you bring in the single largest gas tax increase in Ontario's history. What have you got against the next generation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I want the next generation to be at its very best. That's why we are making dramatic changes to student assistance in this province.

You know, the member opposite doesn't get to say "spend more" and "spend less" at the same time. You just don't get to have it both ways—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We promised the people of Ontario that we were going to go through all of the expenditures in government, and we were going to look at what was working and what wasn't.

If you look, for example, at the Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit, what has happened is that that credit has had significantly lower take-up than we had anticipated and doesn't provide support to low-income seniors. That's what it was intended to do. That's not what it does, so we're not going to continue with that.

For the research and development tax credit, we're actually reinvesting the savings from those tax changes into new targeted investments.

So we've made decisions based on evidence—

Mr. Steve Clark: Scandals, waste and mismanagement.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —so that we can get the outcomes that we know are needed, whether it's for seniors or low-income families who need support for tuition—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Education. Last week's budget clearly indicates that the government isn't spending \$430 million already allocated

for education. The minister claims that this is not a cut to education.

Well, Speaker, Ontario families know that less money spent on education amounts to a cut, and cuts always drastically impact our most vulnerable students. The result: Schools in Belleville, Milton and London that provide specialized supports to some of our most vulnerable students with exceptional learning and developmental needs may be forced to close.

Speaker, on this side of the House we believe all children deserve equal access to education. Why is this Minister of Education making life harder for our most vulnerable students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: There are a couple of different issues getting mixed about here. Let's talk a little bit about provincial schools for a minute, and then we'll go back to the whole issue of cuts.

Number one, there's no change in funding, in this budget, that we've made to provincial schools. But what we have discovered when we look at the data is that some of the provincial schools have very low enrolment. Some, like the provincial school for the blind in your hometown of Brantford, have a lot of students. The schools for the deaf in Milton and Belleville have quite healthy enrolment. But we have other provincial schools where there are only 11 children left in attendance. We have another provincial school where there are only 19, and the projections for next year are even lower. At that point, we have a responsibility to look at the programs and figure out how we can best deliver programs for the sake of the children. It has nothing to do with money.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Again to the minister: The minister should know that decreased enrolment does not mean decreased needs. Ontario families are tired of hearing this government scapegoating their underfunding of education, while our most vulnerable students pay the price. This government is taking real dollars out of education and real kids are being impacted.

The potential closure of provincial demonstration schools for students with severe learning disabilities, as well as schools for the deaf, means our most vulnerable kids will be left with few options to gain equal access to an education. We've received emails and phone calls from children with unique needs. They are begging this government to not close institutions designed to help them succeed.

Will the minister finally admit that pulling \$430 million from education is not in the best interests of students?

Hon. Liz Sandals: In fact, Speaker, we haven't pulled \$430 million out of education funding. If you look at our funding, we have increased funding by \$8.1 billion, and that continues to be true.

If you look at the budget documents, you will find that the increase in the budget in my ministry has been 1.2%, on average, each and every year. That's what the budget document says. That will continue to be the case. We are increasing the funding for education.

For example, she's trying to tell us that we cut the money last year for schools. Do you know what we did in this year in which we cut money, according to her? We spent \$498 million for 30 new schools and for 26 additions and renovations—

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

New question.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our government's 2016 budget committed to update the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, the details of which will be shared in coming weeks. There is a commitment for new funding to support our goal to end homelessness in 10 years. There is also significant investment in supportive housing, to help Ontarians with mental health, medical and accessibility needs to live independently and with dignity.

It is my understanding that the minister will develop a new, portable housing benefit which will transform the social housing system. Will the minister explain what this new benefit is and how it will improve the social housing system for my constituents?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the honourable member for the question.

I'm tremendously excited about the infusion of \$178 million in new funding in the budget to support housing subsidies and supports.

1120

Regarding the portable housing benefit, the member is right: Once developed, this benefit could have a huge impact in improving the efficiency of social housing in Ontario. At present, Ontarians in need of housing assistance rely on various programs across the province, but this assistance is usually tied to a particular unit. Through a portable housing benefit, support funds would be tied to an eligible household and not to a specific housing unit. This means that when a person moves, the benefits would move with them. This will mean more consistent support and more choice for people in need, as well as more flexibility for those who deliver social and affordable housing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I know constituents in Mississauga–Brampton South who rely on housing assistance, as well as our municipal partners, will appreciate this modern, cost-effective way to address the province's affordable housing challenge.

I have read in the budget that our government has also committed to run a pilot project that will provide this portable housing benefit to those who flee domestic violence. It is a priority for our government that women in Ontario feel safe in their homes and throughout their communities. Through you, Mr. Speaker, will the minister share with this House how this model of housing assistance will help survivors of domestic violence?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Violence against women is a serious problem that cannot and will not be tolerated in Ontario. That's why our government is taking this action, building on existing efforts to combat gender-based violence as coordinated by the minister responsible for women's issues. Our government will invest \$2.4 million this year in a pilot version of this new portable housing benefit that will focus on those fleeing domestic violence.

We know that these survivors have an acute need for emergency housing. In providing this benefit to survivors, we're empowering them to make safe living choices with peace of mind that their housing assistance will travel with them wherever they need to go. This is a good step forward, one we're proud of and one we're going to pilot. We're going to evaluate it and see if it has implications for a broader system across Ontario.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: I see agriculture is mentioned in the budget papers. It's on page 346, the last page, explaining that after all these years, value-added agriculture is still being assessed at the high-tax, industrial rate.

Where is the assistance for rural natural gas expansion, other than expanding the tax on it? How are far-flung residents of rural and northern Ontario going to deal with the new taxes and fees on home heating and gasoline?

Further to action on climate change, six ministries now have a line item listed as Green Investment Fund initiatives, but not OMAFRA. Farmers also want to help out on climate change. Why has the minister excluded farming from the Green Investment Fund?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Haldimand-Norfolk this morning for asking a question about agriculture. I mean, we're very pleased that the finance minister mentioned agriculture several times throughout his budget speech that he delivered last Thursday.

We do know that farmers across the province of Ontario, 52,000 family farms, over 30,000 of them are involved in voluntary environmental farm plans. They will be a significant player as this government reaches its targets for GHGs. We know that Don McCabe, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture—we look forward to taking those investments that will be generated through our auction of credits to put back into agriculture, which is leading the way and is a real leader in Ontario's economy today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, here's something else we do know: The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs has cut his budget by close to \$28 million. That's a \$28-million cut to one of the smallest ministries.

How will this budget cut help farms and agribusinesses that are not getting their requested farm industrial rate for electricity? How will this budget cut help employers and employees who did not request the added costs, fees and taxes on agribusiness? Speaker, the agriculture minister

cut his budget from \$943 million to \$916 million, close to a \$28-million cut on this minister's watch. Why is this?

We know he's not renewing the \$10-million Local Food Fund.

Interjections.

Mr. Toby Barrett: What other agri-food programs will this minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sir, could I—I'm standing. The deputy House leader is warned.

You have one wrap-up for your question.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker.

We know you're not renewing the \$10-million Local Food Fund. What other ag and food programs will this minister now be eliminating?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the supplementary. Just to provide some education to my friend from Haldimand-Norfolk, the great food fund has been moved over to the greenbelt foundation, and the greenbelt foundation, of course, will be used to fund those projects that are just so important to distribute local food in the province of Ontario—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce, come to order.

Hon. Jeff Leal: With regards, I think the member should take the time to read the budget. The Green Investment Fund is just one tool to help businesses transition to lower GHG emissions right across the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the proof is in the number.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, second time.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I had the opportunity back in 2006 to look at the Tory ag budgets. From 1995 to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm standing. Stop the clock. I remind the minister, when I stand, you sit.

The second thing is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not finished yet; I still have some other people I have to get. The member from Huron-Bruce, second time. If it continues, these shots back and forth, I'll go.

New question.

WATER QUALITY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. Members of the NDP have repeatedly raised in this chamber the ongoing and appalling mercury exposure experienced by the Grassy Narrows First Nation people. In 2012 the Premier said she would rebuild the relationship to the community, yet in 2014 elder Steve Fobister, the former chief of Grassy Narrows First Nation, went on a hunger strike right here on the front lawn. Then, again, this government said they would act, but right now, as we speak, the community feels that they have to appeal to the United Nations for help.

Speaker, my question is simple: When will the people of Grassy Narrows have safe drinking water?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for that question. We take the issues at Grassy Narrows, the mercury pollution, very seriously. I met with Chief Fobister last summer and had a very detailed conversation with him about this issue. I have been to Grassy Narrows to speak with the chief and his community and tour the area.

As a result of that, we've set up a number of working groups. We are working with the federal and the First Nation partners to make real progress in dealing with this. In particular, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs represents the province on the Ontario-Grassy Narrows nation working group. It's a cross-ministry team. It consists of members of the Ministry of Health and members of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

We've also engaged with the new federal government, which is very anxious to work with the province and Grassy Narrows to resolve this issue in a way that the federal government has never participated before.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It has been half a century. The health effects of mercury poisoning are well known. They are horrific and they are affecting so many people in Grassy Narrows. The residents of Grassy Narrows are Ontarians like you and I, Speaker. They deserve safe drinking water. They should not have to go to Geneva, Switzerland, and talk to the United Nations to gain respect for this basic human right.

They live in Ontario. We are not a Third World country. When will this government clean up the English-Wabigoon River, when will they provide assistance to the people who live with the effects of mercury poisoning, and when will they provide the good people of Grassy Narrows with safe drinking water?

1130

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for that question.

One of the ways in which we're dealing with this problem is to review how the Mercury Disability Board works and how it conducts its analysis of the problem, how it determines what assistance it's going to provide and so on. I committed to Chief Fobister last summer that I would visit, and I did that, and as a result of that visit, we have set up a process to review how the Mercury Disability Board goes about its work.

We are engaging the best experts that we can. We are working with the Grassy Narrows First Nation. We are working with the relevant ministries in Ontario and, now, with the federal government. The vehicle of the Mercury Disability Board is one of the key pieces with which we can deal with this problem, by looking at the effects of the poisoning and solutions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

Minister, one of the issues that comes up the most at the doors in my community is the issue of our economy and jobs. As you know, I have a business background, and so we've spent a lot of time talking with you and your staff about this issue and how we can grow our economy.

Last week, we highlighted that we're on the heels of seven years of economic growth in this province. We've seen over 600,000 jobs created since the depths of the recession, and with a lot of anticipated growth coming forward in our economy.

In last week's budget, we introduced measures to preserve and grow the economy. We're doing things like making record investments in infrastructure, reducing the regulatory burdens on businesses, and we're maintaining a low corporate tax environment that will continue to attract investment. These things benefit business, they benefit job creation, they benefit our economy and they benefit the prosperity that the people of my community enjoy.

Minister, many of my constituents are excited about this, but they're also concerned about the volatility in the future. Could you please tell the House what we are doing to prepare Ontario's economy, not only for today, but for the years ahead?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the question. I also appreciate this member's advice on these issues.

We're in a global race to be more innovative, and we need to step it up. Our world is changing rapidly and we need to tap into the best global talent to ensure we succeed in an increasingly competitive global environment. This talent is already available here in Ontario.

Our government, in this budget, is focusing on the fast-paced innovation economy, with significant new investments in everything from quantum computing to advanced manufacturing to clean tech, biotech and automotive innovation. We're doubling down with a new Business Growth Initiative, committing \$400 million over five years to build on our investments and that talent, to scale up our smaller businesses, to drive innovation and to make Ontario the easiest place in the world to do business.

Some of this is economic; some of this involves our infrastructure initiatives. A lot of it is with the leadership of our great Minister of Research—

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Minister. Investing in our economy and ensuring businesses have the tools they need to grow and to create jobs is critical to the future of our province, so I'm glad to hear the minister's answer.

But we can't just focus on reducing burdens in one particular sector over another. I think of one of the conversations I had with the constituents in my riding of Etobicoke Centre. What people are understanding is that to be competitive in a new economy, we have to invest in supporting highly skilled job creation. We have to support R&D, innovation and helping businesses not only start up but actually scale up—

Mr. Paul Miller: How about prompt payment? What are you doing there?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, second time.

Mr. Yvan Baker: —and bring their products to the global market. We don't want to see Ontario's talent leave and travel to the Silicon Valley or Europe or Asia to start a business. We want them to do it right here in Ontario.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you give me some concrete examples of initiatives aimed at fostering innovation and growing to prepare Ontario to succeed on a global scale?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's very obvious by the member's comments that he really gets it, and it's great to see. What the member points out is absolutely crucial to our province, and that's why our Business Growth Initiative includes a number of new initiatives. I'll share a couple of them with you: a new voucher system to help smaller high-growth firms access services like market research, testing, export development and research opportunities; a commitment to open up government procurement to provide a platform for made-in-Ontario innovation and technology, something our smaller firms have been looking for for some time; a centre for regulatory excellence, which will help cut unnecessary red tape in the most powerful, unprecedented way to date; and a strategic investment office that will attract investment to Ontario and help fund commercialization opportunities. These are just a few of the many initiatives that—

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

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Where I come from, talk is cheap, and promises are only as good as the politicians who make them. In the two years since the Premier made a pre-election visit to Kitchener to promise all-day, two-way GO service within five years, a promise the transportation minister admitted was aspirational in nature, we've had nothing but talk.

The 2016 budget provides the latest example, full of shout-outs to Kitchener–Waterloo transit enhancements without once indicating timelines for project completions; just more talk. Speaker, a budget is where governments list their detailed spending plans and timelines, and yet all we get is talk.

Would the Premier tell us why the people of Kitchener should believe her promise on all-day, two-way GO when it did not even make its way into the budget?

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member opposite for his question. I want to begin by saying that of course budget 2016, in many respects, is fundamentally about how important it is for us to build this province up by investing billions of dollars in transit and transportation infrastructure, both in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and beyond in communities like Kitchener–Waterloo.

I should also mention that it's because of MPPs like the member from Kitchener Centre and the member from Cambridge and this Premier and this finance minister that this government is going to get it right—and we are getting it right. That member knows that in April of last year, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that we would invest \$13.5 billion over the next decade to transform the GO rail network on all seven of our corridors, and that member, again, consistently has voted against budget after budget after budget that would help his own community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, Speaker, the talk continues. After waiting—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You can risk. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: After waiting two years for promised essential GO improvements and getting little more than talk, Kitchener residents are still left waiting for the train. We've grown weary watching government transit expansions go forward elsewhere while we're stuck at the back of the bus.

Speaker, we were hoping the budget would provide new direction, but instead, we saw new ways to tax us, with no timelines on our local transit needs. Yet one day later, the Kitchener Centre MPP tried to make amends, telling CTV that there will be “a very substantial announcement” on all-day, two-way GO before the summer. Will the Premier please tell us what was so substantial about this supposed announcement that it didn't make its way into the budget?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I relish questions like this, because of course this Premier and this government and the member from Kitchener Centre and everybody on this side of the chamber understands why it's important for us to invest the money, to invest the billions of dollars to make sure that we build the province up, that we expand GO Transit, that we build highways and roads and bridges and so much more.

I think it might be helpful, maybe even a little bit instructive, for that member who has asked us this question to stroll on down to the front bench and ask his leader, Patrick Brown, why in almost 10 years—

Interjections.

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

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Harris: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to standing order 99(d), written questions are to be answered within 24 sessional days. I have yet to receive answers on two overdue questions submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as well as to the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would refer to the deputy House leader to remind you that you are required under standing order 99(d) to file a response within 24 sessional days.

Your response to one of the questions is now overdue, and I would ask that you give the House some indication of when your response would be forthcoming. That would be the answer to question 485.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order: We would be pleased to take this under advisement and act at the earliest possible opportunity.

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

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture on a point of order.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: If I might be able to correct my record this morning in a response to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, I had asked that legislative research do a review for me in 2006 on the agricultural budgets from the Progressive Conservative governments—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The date is all that's needed. When you correct your record, you don't make any other statements other than to correct your record.

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

The House recessed from 1141 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome to the House, in her second official day with Team Thompson, Alison Brown of the Ontario Legislative Internship Programme. I look forward to reading her statement in a few moments.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kitchener–Conestoga has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Transportation concerning two-way, all-day GO service to Kitchener. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RIDEAU CARLETON RACEWAY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I have long been an advocate for the 1,000 rural eastern Ontario jobs at the Rideau Carleton Raceway and slots. As a major rural Ottawa and eastern Ontario employer, the Rideau Carleton has been under attack by the OLG, effectively since 2012: first,

when the Liberal government went to war on the horse racing industry by cancelling the Slots at Racetracks Program, and now with the OLG unfairly forcing local slot workers out of their jobs.

For the past two and a half months, slot workers at the Rideau Carleton Raceway have been locked out. They make less than at most smaller casinos across the province, and during that time they have been out in the cold, quite literally. It is massively cold in the city of Ottawa. It's minus 42 degrees Celsius on some days, and a blizzard when it's not that cold.

They have seen at the OLG that their revenues during that same period of time have decreased by \$1 million compared to this time last year. That tells me, along with the 2016 Ontario budget, that the OLG and the Liberals are intent on threatening the Rideau Carleton's existence so that they can continue with their ill-conceived modernization plan for gambling and possibly build a downtown Ottawa casino, which is at significant odds with those of us who actually represent the community.

I'm here to remind the OLG and the Liberals that I'm watching and it's time for them to start taking my constituents seriously.

DIMITRA DASKALOS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It has been five long years since the untimely death of my constituent Dimitra Daskalos at Toronto General Hospital on February 21, 2011. The questions to Ministers of Health, inside and outside of this House, remain unanswered. This is the seventh time since 2012 that I've risen in place to recognize the plight of the Daskalos family and their efforts to find answers after the death of Dimitra Daskalos.

This 92-year-old patient was treated as a bed blocker and presented with a bill from a hospital for over \$18,000—a bill that any hospital has no legal ability to collect—an \$18,000 bill which a legal expert on seniors' issues, Judith Wahl, has said is a charge that shows that someone is trying to act in a threatening way.

Dimitra was placed under unreasonable stress after receiving her bill and died in a weakened state shortly after an infected patient was moved into her room. One of Dimitra's daughters, Maria, with the support of her family, has for five long years asked for answers. They've petitioned this Legislature with over 10,000 names over the five years, and still they wait today.

Dimitra Daskalos deserved better. Her family deserved better. Maria Daskalos has been told that her mother's cause would be one of the first to be considered by the new Patient Ombudsman. The family waits to see if this will prove to be the case.

NEWMARKET RIVERWALK COMMONS

Mr. Chris Ballard: I rise in the House today to highlight a great urban asset in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora: Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons. The project transformed an eight-acre downtown parking lot adjacent

to the Holland River into a recreational hub for the town of Newmarket and York region.

The design sought to make local and regional connections by integrating Newmarket's historic downtown with links to the Holland River and Fairy Lake. Riverwalk Commons hums with activity now. The centre is particularly active on Saturdays, when Newmarket's farmers' market is set up. Local farmers show up to sell produce, and the kids are there because of so many activities.

Just beyond the market, you're likely to find locals enjoying a walk along the Tom Taylor Trail. Indeed, Riverwalk Commons has something to offer all ages, whether it's a space for skating on an artificial pad in the winter, cooling off in the water pad on a hot summer's day or simply a place where neighbours can meet at the farmers' market.

The success of Riverwalk Commons has, as planned, spread to Newmarket's downtown core. Main Street Newmarket is becoming a gastronomic centre of York region, offering a variety of culinary experiences.

Riverwalk Commons is everything that good urban planning should be. The famous Canadian planner Jane Jacobs said, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody." Riverwalk Commons embodies this vision. It builds civic pride.

BILL GUTHRIE

Mr. Lorne Coe: I would like to acknowledge with sadness the passing on February 21 of my good friend and mentor Bill Guthrie.

Bill was born on August 18, 1923, on the family homestead in Whitby. He and his wife, Jackie, were married for 62 years, and they raised their family on the homestead. Bill and Jackie were long-standing members of Audley United Church until its closure in 2004.

Bill was a past president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and a lifelong member of the Composite Masonic Lodge, where I was a master. Bill was also a member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

He loved his farm, his family and many travels with Jackie until, unfortunately, dementia slowly stole him from us recently. He was an incredibly loyal friend and a great citizen of my riding of Whitby-Oshawa. He'll be sadly missed. I want to acknowledge the importance of his passing today and his passing to my family as well.

WHIPPET GOOD

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to dedicate my statements today to a horse called Whippet Good—no, not the 1980 number one hit by Devo but, rather, a horse who has done more than just earn his keep at DeChellis Stables in my riding of Welland. The stables are run by constituents of mine: Jim DeChellis; his son, Nino; and long-time friend and activist Michelle Sinclair, who helps to maintain them.

Jim expanded his sideline of owning and training business when Atlas Steels closed in 2003. He took up harness racing when he had trouble finding work early on in his career. He has been a native of Welland for 66 years, and after almost 20 years at Atlas Steels, he and his son, Nino, purchased the horse for just under \$5,000.

Why is Whippet so special? He's fast approaching his 50th career win as well as almost \$1 million in lifetime earnings in 340 starts and 131 top-three finishes. In English, Whippet would have been the equivalent of a 45-year-old baseball player with 500 career home runs or a 45-year-old hockey player netting 500 goals.

After 11 years, Whippet, now 14, is being retired but has become not only a part of the DeChellis extended family but—earning recognition everywhere—a part of my Welland riding. Congratulations to Jim, Nino and Whippet Good.

PAUL PALLESCHI

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I take this opportunity to pay tribute to former Regional Councillor Paul Anthony Palleschi, or "Papa Palleschi," as people in the community called him.

Brampton has lost a friend and a leader with the passing of Paul Palleschi. He was a leader on council, and when he spoke, others listened. He will always be remembered by his large extended Irish, Italian and Canadian family and friends.

He was elected to Brampton council in 1985 and served on a number of boards and committees, including president of Peel Living and as a paramedic services board member.

His sense of humour was always pleasant and regularly appreciated by his fellow council members, community members and fellow elected officials.

In his public life, Paul Palleschi was a champion for the residents of wards 2 and 6, including his long-standing challenge against an OMB ruling that permitted a large condo development in a community of single-family homes within his riding.

1510

In his personal life, he was a fixture at family sporting events, often coaching from the stands. He enjoyed going to Brampton Battalion and Brampton Beast hockey games. He passionately rode his Harley trike in support of Bike Nights and Toys for Tots rides. Paul loved to fish and proudly encouraged his grandchildren to also participate.

Paul worked closely with his colleagues to create a strong foundation for a thriving and sustainable city and region. After he had retired, he continued to be an advocate for the Peel Housing Corp. and Peel Living, where he was very proud of the public housing at present but always wanted to do more for his community.

On behalf of the Legislature, I extend my condolences to his wife, Patricia, his daughter, Michelle, and his son, Councillor Michael Palleschi.

HEATHER EAST

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today, I would like to congratulate Heather East, a young writer from South Huron. She attends the South Huron District High School and she'll be honoured next Monday at Speaker Levac's book awards ceremony. The Speaker's award for young writers celebrates the talents of young Ontarians who have demonstrated excellence in writing.

Last fall, students in grades 7 to 12 from across the province submitted short stories and personal essays on a topic of choice. The selection committee marked entries according to style, originality and general presentation, as well as spelling and grammar. This is the first year that Speaker Levac has launched this award, and I'm proud that a writer from my community is being recognized in its pioneering year.

Heather's submission, a short fictional story titled "Mistakes," clearly stood out amongst the overwhelming number of entries submitted by students from across Ontario. I'm equally thrilled to be celebrating her in terms of the group of artists from the riding of Huron-Bruce. Heather is joining a gifted group of writers, actors, poets, singers, craftsmen and painters from the riding.

And speaking of painters, if you haven't taken the opportunity, I'd also like to encourage you to keep an eye out for the paintings by George Agnew Reid, an artist from Huron-Bruce whose works are prominently featured throughout Queen's Park.

I look forward to welcoming Heather next Monday when she visits Queen's Park and I wish her the very best during the final competition. Have a good day, and we'll see you next Monday, Heather.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I guess I can't throw the member out this afternoon.

Further members' statements.

GEORGIAN COLLEGE

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Speaker, I can't tell you how exciting it was in Barrie and all of Simcoe county when, the day after our government's amazing announcement about tuition for students, the great partnership between Georgian College and Lakehead University made another announcement to make post-secondary education more accessible for students. Georgian leads the way in terms of partnerships with the universities, and Friday's announcement solidifies this fact.

I was thrilled to be present as Georgian announced 20 new degree programs and transfer pathways in partnership with Lakehead University. The degrees being offered over the next five years include business administration, health management, gerontology and hopefully engineering, all programs that will be in demand by the employers of the future. These programs, Mr. Speaker, like all others at Georgian College, are career-focused and will prepare students to contribute much to our great province as we move forward.

I echo Georgian College president MaryLynn West-Moynes when she says, "Georgian College students will graduate job-ready, and our communities will have the workforce they need to grow our economy."

Looking ahead, Georgian College will be assisting some of the students affected by the recent announcement that Laurentian University will no longer be offering programs in Barrie. The college will be accommodating first- and second-year business and commerce students to ensure that they finish their degrees.

I congratulate Georgian College, through the university partnership, for their continuing leadership in education.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and speak about the 2016 Ontario budget. I want to congratulate Minister Sousa on releasing an impressive budget that includes free tuition for low-income families, \$345 million in new hospital funding and more money for affordable housing, all while on track to eliminate the deficit.

But with International Women's Day right around the corner, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to speak about the progress Ontario is making in assisting women. I recently held a round-table discussion with women's groups from the Halton region. We talked about a range of issues, including ways to help single mothers and women who have left abusive situations. A key component to beginning a new chapter in their lives is education. The budget announcement of free tuition for students with a family income of \$50,000 or less will offer many mature women and single parents a second chance. It will help single mothers send their kids to school, but also allow low-income women to go to school themselves.

In addition, there's the affordable housing piece: Raising funding to \$178 million is important to help these women get the support they need.

Ontario also now has a targeted strategy to end violence against indigenous women. Over three years, Ontario will spend \$100 million, mostly on support of families of indigenous women, who are three times more likely to experience violence and be murdered than other women in Ontario.

I'm proud of the work the government has done to help women, Mr. Speaker, and look forward to keeping the conversation going.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended

appointments dated March 1, 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 SOCIAL POLICY

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

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

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related members.

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

Report adopted.

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

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

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

Report adopted.

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

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: 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 totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Jessie.

ACCIDENT BENEFITS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I also want to quickly acknowledge Qusai Gulamhusein, who is in the members’ gallery, as one of the people integral in making the petition possible.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:”

Whereas “Ontario Regulation 347/13 has made four changes to the Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule (SABS), also known as Ontario Regulation 34/10 effective Feb 1, 2014. These regulations have considerably reduced the dollar amounts allocated for patients receiving assessments and treatment following a motor vehicle accident...;” and

Whereas “the \$3,500 minor injury guideline cap is an insufficient amount of funds provided, since assessments on all patients are required to ensure their safe ability in performing tasks associated with attendant care, house-keeping, and caregiving. Furthermore, repetitive muscular strain as a result of performing household tasks daily can lead to chronic long-term impairment. Accidental slips/falls due to dizziness/vertigo can result in further injuries involving fractures.

1520

“This petition it is to validate that the \$3500 minor injury guideline monetary fund is an insufficient amount to enable auto accident patients with soft tissue injury ... to reach optimal recovery to their pre-accident status. Removing sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule will enable the right efforts for accident victims with soft tissue injury to receive the adequate assessment...”

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:”

To remove the minor injury guideline “sections 18(1) and 18(2) from the Ontario Statutory Accident Benefits Schedule,” and incorporate rebuttal examination reports back into the system.

I agree with the petition, I will affix my signature and hand it to Owen.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here from residents in Welland and Thorold, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for depositions on ... private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41” through to royal assent upon its passage.

I agree with it, affix my name and give it to Andrew to bring down.

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 to the petition, and I’ll send it to the table with page Laura.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Cindy Forster: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I support this petition, affix my signature and send it with page Delaney.

ELDER ABUSE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas today, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under the age of 15, both in Ontario and across Canada;

“Whereas there are currently more than two million seniors aged 65 and over—approximately 15% of the population and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years;

“Whereas Elder Abuse Ontario stated that between 40,000 and 200,000 seniors living in Ontario experienced or are experiencing elder abuse;

“Whereas research showed that abuse against seniors takes many forms and is often perpetrated by family members;

“Whereas financial and emotional abuse are the most frequently reported elder abuse cases;

“Whereas current Ontario legislation incorporates the Residents’ Bill of Rights, mandates abuse prevention, investigation and reporting of seniors living in either long-term-care facilities or retirement homes;

“Whereas the majority of the seniors currently and in the future live in the community;

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will ensure seniors living in the community have the same protection and support as those seniors living in long-term-care facilities and retirement homes;

“Whereas Bill 148, if passed, will require regulated health professionals to report elder abuse or neglect to the public guardian and trustee office;

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

“That the members of the Ontario Legislative Assembly pass Bill 148, An Act to amend the Substitute Decisions Act, 1992 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, requiring health professionals to report any reasonable suspicion that a senior living in the community is being abused or neglected to the public guardian and trustee office.”

I support the petition, and I give my petition to page Dhruv.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here, signed by a great number of my constituents. It is a repeat of the petition I've had here a number of times, but on behalf of these petitioners, I'd like to read it into the record.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and the quality of life for all future generations;

"Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which will have significant human and financial costs for;

"Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents' physical, financial, emotional and mental" health "well-being;

"Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

"Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

"Whereas the county of Oxford has passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on landfill construction or approval;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly" of Ontario "as follows:

"To implement a moratorium in Oxford county on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

"That this review of alternatives would give special emphasis on (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can efficiently and practically be recycled or reused so as to not require disposal in landfills."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that has been signed by over 1,000 people from Nickel Belt. I'd like to thank Ashley Whitnall, who signed this. It reads as follows:

"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;"

They "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, will affix my name to it and ask Sayeem to bring it to the Clerk.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have another petition here. I've been getting these from across Ontario. This one's from Toronto residents, and it's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

"To allow for deputations on ... private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41" to passage "and to seek royal assent" as soon as it does.

I agree with it, affix my name and send it with page Owen.

1530

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," known as 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 ther-

apies, 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” living “with 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 agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the desk with Suzanne.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that comes from all over Nickel Belt and Sudbury, and I want to thank Gisèle Poirier from Chelmsford in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

“Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa have been eliminated;....

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it with—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you.

The member for Cambridge.

WATER FLUORIDATION

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to Charlotte to bring down.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, March 7, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and Tuesday, March 8, 2016, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 163:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 8, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Wednesday, March 16, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, March 21, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and on Tuesday, March 22, 2016, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Tuesday, March 22, 2016, at 4:30 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, March 23, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The deputy House leader has moved government notice of motion 62. To the minister.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much, Speaker. I would like to begin by indicating and introducing, in the gallery, a number of guests who are here to view the proceedings this afternoon: from the Police Association of Ontario, Stephen Reid; from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, Carmen Santoro, Ernie Thorne and Chris Francescone; and from the Ontario Provincial Police Association, Rob Jamieson, Chris Hoffman and Josh Jutras. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly here in the gallery.

1540

This important piece of legislation would provide a sense of security to Ontario's first responders. If passed, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act will create a presumption that PTSD diagnosed in first responders is a result of the worker's employment. This ensures that first responders will not have to go through the process of proving their PTSD, which we know can lead to further stress and delay in treatment. We want to make sure that those who need the help get it, and get it as soon as they can. That is why it's so important we move quickly with this legislation. We need to pass Bill 163 so that more first responders in Ontario suffering from PTSD can get the help they need as quickly as possible.

All parties have stated in the Legislature that they will be supporting this bill during second reading.

During second reading debate, I noted that the member for London–Fanshawe stated, “This is a very profound bill because PTSD is something that workers on the front lines, first responders, have been fighting really hard to make this government acknowledge is a workplace injury, and that it's life-changing when someone experiences post-traumatic stress disorder.”

Also during second reading debate, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound stated, “There is no doubt that first responders deal with harsh realities every day, and they need Bill 163 so that they can get the help they need to deal with PTSD.”

The member for Wellington–Halton Hills stated, “Clearly, I think there's an emerging consensus in this House that this bill, Bill 163, is a good bill that should pass into law.”

He also said, “Certainly, on our side of the House, we believe that this is legislation whose time has come, and we would hope to see it considered on the fast track.”

Finally, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills stated the following: “As a society, it's good that we are talking here today and we have this bill, which I'm sure will pass, because nobody in this House would not support it.”

With all-party support for second reading, it is now time we move forward with Bill 163 and bring it before a committee. Speaker, there has been considerable debate on this bill and the ideas of this bill and we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. It is time, we believe, that we end second reading and we refer the bill to committee. In committee, stakeholders will present their views. We'll be able to hear directly from the public their thoughts on this bill. Committee members will have an opportunity to move amendments to the bill. I urge all members of this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

From time to time—and I understand this when there's a contentious piece of legislation that comes before the House and the government decides to bring forward a time allocation motion to put some definition to the amount of time that would be allocated to debate—there's some considerable opposition to that, and that's understandable when there's a contentious bill before the House. In this particular case, it's a bill which the three parties have agreed to. Indeed, individual members of the parties have over the years brought forward the idea that such legislation, in some form, would be beneficial to the public; the government members have done something similar. There's been widespread consultation that's taken place before the bill was brought before the House. There has been, I think, a good debate on second reading, and I indicated in my remarks that there were a number of individuals on the opposition side who had indicated that they wish to see this bill proceed—some, I will mention, on the fast track.

That is why the government is moving forward at this time to proceed to a stage where the bill goes to

committee. Much of the good work that we have done in this Legislature as a whole has been done in committee. I always like to have the opportunity to hear those who make representations to the committee make those representations in a forthright fashion and be questioned by members of the committee. We're able, then, to glean what the opinion is on individual aspects of the bill. Subsequent to that, there's an opportunity for members from all of the three parties in the House to make necessary amendments that they deem to be valuable in terms of strengthening the bill in one way or another.

Then there's the final debate which takes place on third reading. I can recall that when the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's father was in the House—I served with his father—we did not have third reading debate. It was a formality, a nod. We have determined that it is valuable at the present time that we have that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What about my grandfather? Were you here then?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member is making some indication I was here before the last century. It's true; I was here in the last century.

That is why I suspect—though I can never really predict—that there's a pretty good consensus that this isn't a bad motion to have before us, so that we can proceed with the bill. I want to commend all members of the Legislature who have to this point in time in second reading made an intervention or publicly expressed their views on this piece of legislation. With that, I'll resume my seat and look forward to listening in rapt attention to my other colleagues in the House who will be presenting their views.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the introduction on the part of the deputy House leader, the member from St. Catharines since Moby Dick was a minnow. I agree with almost everything the member said. Some of it was quotes from my own colleagues. Obviously, they must be right.

But I must say that in my time here—it doesn't go back to the beginnings of the—

Hon. Jeff Leal: The last century.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, it doesn't even go back to the last century. You're right, I say to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

I have never once voted in favour of a time allocation motion.

Mr. Grant Crack: And this is the first time?

Mr. John Yakabuski: And there is a first time for everything, I say to the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. However, this all could have been avoided.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, yes. We indicated from the very first day that we wanted to see this legislation move ahead and we wanted to see it passed. I was somewhat surprised yesterday when our staff handed me a copy of the time allocation motion that had been tabled by the

government. I said, “My God, that's unnecessary. Why didn't they just come and say, ‘We'd like to end this debate?’”

We have no reason to continue at all. We would have ended that debate without having to spend two more hours of debate on a time allocation motion. We were prepared to see this end and move forward because, as the members indicated, we are absolutely, completely in favour of the legislation. We will have hearings; we'll see if there are ways we can strengthen it and make it better. But we're absolutely in favour of it because, as the member said, we have come to conclude, based on good evidence and having had a lot of discussions with members of the first responders groups over the years, that it's not a discussion that we need to have anymore from that perspective. We understand the terrible condition of PTSD and how it affects the members of those first responders groups. We want to move as quickly as possible.

I want to point out that since our leader, Patrick Brown, was elected to his seat here in Simcoe North, it has been one of his priorities to move quickly with PTSD being a presumptive illness and that it would be deemed that it was acquired as a result of on-the-job activities as part of their employment. That's something that Mr. Brown has moved consistently since he got here.

I want to thank Cheri DiNovo, the member from Parkdale–High Park, for her Bill 2. That was sort of the genesis of this most recent debate on whether or not we would move with the presumption of PTSD and how we would deal with it. I want to thank her for doing that.

But also, let's not forget that one of his first questions since he got here was on PTSD for first responders.

1550

That's not the debate at all anymore. I can't even imagine having to deal with the situations that our first responders deal with on a daily basis and then to have to wonder what it's going to mean if I'm feeling that I can't do my job properly right now because I'm under such stress because of the things that happened on the job, wondering, “How do I approach that? How am I going to be viewed by my colleagues? How am I going to be viewed by my neighbours?”—all those kinds of things.

Nobody wants to say, “I'm suffering from PTSD.” When you know what world we live in, when you actually come to that conclusion that, “I really think I need to be off the job; I'm really not feeling right,” you must have gone through all kinds of difficult decisions within yourself to come to that conclusion.

When that happens, we've got to be there to support our first responders and to give them the supports that they need to get well again. Because that's what we want for our first responders: We want them to be healthy so that they can do the job to the best of our abilities. But they're not going to be healthy if we're not taking care of them when they're in those situations. So we've indicated our full support for this legislation from the get-go.

Now, Speaker, I do want to read some amendments—an amendment; I only get one—to that motion that was

tabled by the deputy House leader. It affects the witnesses at committee, how much time etc. But it also affects third reading debate because—well, I'll read the motion and then I'll explain it afterwards.

I move that the second, third and fourth bullets in the paragraph that begins “That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair,” be struck out and replaced with the following:

“—That the deadline for requests to appear be 3 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

“—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; or

“—In the event of oversubscription, following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the subcommittee or designate with a list of requests to appear; and

“—That the subcommittee member or designate prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, 2016; and

“—That each witness will receive up to 10 minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and”

And that the paragraph beginning “That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called” be struck out and replaced with:

“That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 15 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate and amendment; and”

I will give that to Andrew to take to the table.

Now, the reason—oh, he has got to read that in? Okay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Yakabuski has moved—

Mr. Grant Crack: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense? Back to Mr. Yakabuski.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much.

So the reason we made those amendments is that we've increased the length of time that a witness has to speak before the committee, because I have found that here in this Legislature, five minutes is—in fact, I've been speaking for almost eight—barely enough time to clear your throat. It is important that the people who do come before committee, who are offering what we hope is enhancing our ability to improve the bill, have adequate time. This still gives the committee members nine minutes for questions, but the deputant has 10 minutes to speak, not five.

Once we are done that committee, and because we are all in favour of the legislation and want to see that it is passed as quickly as possible, it is not necessary for us to be speaking for two hours on third reading debate, because there will be no more amendments. There's not an opportunity for amendments. It is time to move on and pass the bill as quickly as possible. I think the members on the government side will probably be happy—I hope

my friends in the New Democrats will be as well—that we can shorten third reading debate and end this thing after 15 minutes, with five minutes apportioned to each party. Maybe it will even be the leaders who speak to this, because this is a historic piece of legislation that we're all going to be very proud of, and it's going to do the right thing by our first responders and make their lives better and make our province better and safer.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, excuse me; I've got a bit of a cold. I want to speak in opposition to both the time allocation motion and the amendments put forward by the Conservative Party, and give the rationale why.

But before I do that, I want to state the obvious: The New Democratic Party supports this legislation. In fact, it was through our caucus, through our member, that we brought this bill forward not once but five times, and finally we've gotten as far as we have now.

What really is a bit galling about this process—and I'm speaking as a House leader—is that we sat at House leaders' meetings before the House actually started to sit and we had a bit of a discussion about, “What do you think is going to happen as far as the process on the PTSD bill?” We were pretty categorical with Mr. Naqvi, the House leader for the Liberal Party, that we were not looking to hold this up. In fact, what we wanted, which was more important, was less time in the House but more time in committee. We thought it was important that people who are affected by this bill, who either are happy with it or who are happy with it but would like to see changes, have time in committee to propose those changes, and that we have sufficient time to get this bill right. As you know, you are in the line of fire. You are the ones that the people here are visiting, who are in fact the ones having to live with this bill once it's passed.

There are some parts of this bill that, quite frankly, can be strengthened. Why is it that we're limiting people being able to put in claims from a 24-month period before? People have suffered PTSD far before that, and for them to be excluded doesn't make a lot of sense. I know that members of my caucus are going to speak to some of those issues in more detail. I want to talk about the procedure.

What the government is doing is playing a bit of a game here. They want to make it look as if, “Look at us. We're doing something on PTSD. We're so great. We're the Liberal Party. Look over here. Look over here.” But in the meantime, rather than sit down with the House leaders—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You weren't even at the House leaders' meeting, so how would you even know?

My point is that rather than sitting down with the House leaders and having a discussion about how we can move this through in some sort of process that works for the government, because they want to get this bill through the order paper and dealt with as a time management issue in the House—in relation to the mover of the

initial bill, who was Ms. Cheri DiNovo, and those firefighters and police officers and others who are affected, how do we get this through the House with a reasonable amount of debate, but not a filibuster, and a reasonable amount of time in committee to be able to deal with this? That's the question.

The government never came to the opposition Conservatives or New Democrats to say, "How do we do that?" Instead, all of a sudden, I'm standing at my office door yesterday or the day before, and the Clerk walks by and gives me a time allocation motion. That was the first communication we had from the government House leader about how we were going to deal with the process. It seems to me that that's a pretty failing way of negotiating. Imagine: The only way you're able to deal with legislation is to send the opposition House leaders a time allocation motion rather than trying to work out how we're able to deal with this.

I ask you this very simple question: Is there anybody in this House who is going to vote against this bill? No. Everybody is going to vote for it. I say again that all of us agree: Cheri DiNovo, the New Democratic member of this caucus who has moved this issue forward through the House a number of times; the Minister of Labour, who saw fit to bring a piece of legislation in order to deal with it; and the opposition Conservatives. It wasn't as if there was going to be a filibuster either at committee or in the House. It was a question that we need to make sure we get it right.

Here's what we're having to deal with now, and it's an issue and a problem: According to the time allocation motion put forward by the government, the deadline to appear before the committee is 4 o'clock on March 3. There's a whole bunch of people who don't know that. I'll bet you there's a whole bunch of people in this House who don't know what the time set to be a witness before this committee was in the time allocation motion because most people don't read the order paper.

1600

If I'm a firefighter sitting out in Timmins or I'm a police officer out in Leeds-Grenville or I'm an emergency worker of any type in downtown Toronto or wherever you might be in this province, you'd better communicate to the assembly by 4 o'clock on March 3 or else you're not going to have an opportunity to appear before this committee. Is that fair?

Oh, and the Conservative say, "We have an amendment. We're going to fix this." Do you know what their amendment is? Rather than the deadline being 4 o'clock, they're moving it back to 3 o'clock. You'll have even less time with the proposed amendment by the Conservatives. So there's a bit of game-playing here.

The Liberals are trying to shame the opposition parties into fast-tracking a bill and not giving, more importantly, the stakeholders a chance to have their say in committee and, even more importantly—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I'd like to remind the speaker to address the—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —being able to speak to the issue of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd just like to remind the member that in debate, I would appreciate you addressing the Speaker's chair, please.

Continue with the debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you for your guidance, Speaker.

I say again, the issue is that most members would not even know that the timeline was March 3 at 4 o'clock. It doesn't give those people who are here and those people in Ontario who want to speak to this bill and propose amendments the time to be able to do so. By the time people find out, it's going to be too late. I'll guarantee you, there will be people who want to present to this committee and who will find out, to their chagrin, that they can't get standing before the committee because the government, with the support of the Conservatives, by moving a sub-amendment to the time allocation motion, wants to truncate when it is that somebody is able to apply.

The second thing is the list. This is an important issue. They're saying the list will be on a first-come, first-served basis. What we've tried to do before—and when you're able to negotiate these things, it's always better. You say, "Okay, how much time do we have?" We have X number of days, which equals so many spots. Then you say, "Okay, each caucus gets an equal number of people who are able to present." You give your five or your six or your 10, depending on how much time you've got.

The government is playing a bit of a game here. They're saying it's first-come, first-served. So this is how it's played: If they're trying to skew in a particular direction, they'll just flood the lines; they'll flood the emails. They'll tell their people, "Make sure you're sitting with your finger on the 'send' button the moment this time allocation passes."

Is that a fair way of dealing with firefighters and other emergency workers in this province, who have been working years to get to this point? I'm not saying, as a New Democrat and as the House leader for the NDP, that we've got to hold this up, and there are 50 people in the opposition who want to speak to this at second reading. No, no. Nobody is saying that. We actually told the government House leader that we had no intent to drag this in a second reading debate at any real length. We were waiting for the government to come back to us; they never did. I think my friend the Tory whip can confirm that. So instead, we're faced with time allocation. I just think for the process, it makes for bad legislation.

We've waited how many years to get where we are? How many years have we been trying to get PTSD legislation passed in this House?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Eight.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's been eight years we've been waiting, as far as the time that Ms. DiNovo moved it forward. But it's an issue that emergency workers have been working on for many years.

Waiting an extra week so that we can have time in committee is hardly a burden. In fact, we'll probably end

up—secret—with a better bill. But here's the rub: The government has no interest in having more time in committee or giving people more time to reflect, because the bill they want to pass is the one that they drafted, with no amendments. That's what they're up to. I don't believe that's the way the Legislature should operate, and it's certainly not the way we should be treating emergency workers across this province. It should be about, "Let's listen to what people have to say."

And you know what? I was on that side of the House. Je me souviens, as they say. There are times when a government has to dig in and decide that this is what they're going to do. I get it. We've all done it, those of us who served in government.

But what I have noticed over the years I've been here is that when government actually gives an opportunity for people to depute to the committee, to listen to what they have to say, to reflect on what was presented and see if there are amendments that will actually make this bill work better, it's a good thing, not only for the stakeholders, but it's a really good thing for democracy and, I would argue, a good thing for members and a good thing for the government.

So I say now that we will vote against this time allocation, not because we're opposed to the bill—quite the contrary: We think the bill is certainly a step in the right direction. But I can tell you, the little amount of time that we have in committee we will utilize in order to hear what people have to say and hopefully propose amendments. But I say now, given what you've set up in this time allocation motion, there is very little opportunity to do so. It tells me that the government is up to what they normally do, which is, "Hey everybody, look at us. We've got this shiny bauble over here you can all look at," and this is somehow a really, really good thing. But when you look at the details, the shiny bauble can be made into a bill that actually works for emergency workers across this province, and I very much fear that the amendments we need we will not get because of this flawed process.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to have my chance, finally, to speak to Bill 163, the Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, 2016, in terms of post-traumatic stress.

I'd also like to take the opportunity to welcome leadership from the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Police Association of Ontario and the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you so much.

Mr. Speaker, I'm a bit disappointed to have to condense my remarks. I had a full 20, of course, but with time allocation, I've had to condense that down to 10 minutes and unfortunately leave out many of the voices I was hoping to bring with me today to this conversation.

First, I'm pleased to recognize the tireless and committed advocacy and heart that my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo, has invested for

years to bring awareness and support to workers, to our first responders when it comes to mental health and PTSD. Again, thank you to Cheri for the work that she has done on their behalf for seven years until Bill 2 this session.

It is my privilege to act as the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services. I'm pleased to rise today and share not only my thoughts but the voices of first responders. The strength of the front-line workers who have shared their stories with Ontario does so much to not only educate but to break down the stigma surrounding mental health struggles.

We need all of those who suffer from PTSD to have the support that they need, and this bill will allow first responders with a PTSD diagnosis to get a fast pass through the WSIB system because their diagnosis will be presumed to be a result of on-the-job trauma. This is huge.

I would like to remind the Legislature of some of what Minister Flynn said in his remarks. He explained, "Under our current system, a worker that's suffering from traumatic mental stress that has a diagnosis such as PTSD must prove to the WSIB that the injury is, in fact, work-related. What this often asks the individual to do is to relive the incident, sometimes over and over and over again, as the evidence is being collected. That could have the impact of actually increasing the trauma that's associated with the disorder."

The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour also referred to this arduous WSIB process and called it an "inquisition."

Mr. Speaker, I'm reminding the government of their own words and their own convictions, because here we have a piece of legislation that will affect almost all of our first responders but that specifically leaves out a handful. Effectively, by ruling them out, this government is admittedly keeping them in the WSIB inquisition line, which can re-traumatize, and that is wrong and it's avoidable.

I met correctional officer Erich Hunting at one of the first jails that I visited. He suffers from PTSD that made itself manifest after a brutal and traumatizing incident with a ceramic knife—a knife that can only be detected by scanners that haven't been put in jails yet. I asked him about his experience through the system, and I'd like to share what he told me about the system:

"Now that I have the doctor's note and the psych report saying that I have the diagnosis, that it was a workplace injury, it's been very easy to deal with. Getting approved was difficult. Proving that the mental injury came from work and not outside of work was difficult to prove. They went through my entire life ... and were trying to find something else in my childhood or my past that could have triggered the PTSD so that they could decide it wasn't work. I kept second-guessing. Because the threat of the situation wasn't at me; the inmate wasn't trying to stab me.... They were saying, 'You weren't directly assaulted and it wasn't directed at you; then why did that incident make you feel the way it

did?’ The awful thing is that I didn’t ask to feel that way. Trust me, I didn’t ask to be put in that position and I would have traded it for anything, to not feel that way, and now I have to explain why I feel the way I do.”

1610

Mr. Speaker, this is not a process that any of our emergency responders should ever have to endure.

During the winter intersession, I visited 15 jails and correctional centres across the province and half a dozen probation and parole offices. I could talk for days about what I have learned, and any time the minister would like a comprehensive briefing, I would be more than pleased to arrange one. But, for today, I think it more important to hear from our first, and constant, responders in corrections.

You will remember that there was a violent hostage-taking at the Thunder Bay jail that stretched through the night. Murray Butler was the correctional officer taken hostage but not the only officer forever affected. I promised Murray that I would share some of his words today. He says:

“Life in Thunder Bay changed for a lot of people on the evening of December 7 ... and we are all trying to cope with things in our own way....

“I am dealing with my own symptoms of PTSD, such as anxiety, nightmares, guilt, recurring unwanted memories, reliving the trauma, flashbacks, inability to sleep and even thoughts of suicide. The list goes on and on. Unfortunately I am not the only correctional officer/first responder that is dealing with PTSD as a result of this riot and hostage-taking. I can only hope the best for them. I also know that there are many other COs and first responders across the province that have had to deal with traumatic events and are suffering from PTSD. That is why I was overjoyed when I heard that corrections were recognized as part of the PTSD bill!

“I was very fortunate the night of the riot and hostage-taking to be supported by a group of professionals whom I know without a doubt saved my life.... I am so grateful to the people and groups that donated to my GoFundMe campaign. It allowed me and my family to go on a vacation. It was truly humbling....

“I hope that this government wakes up and does everything in its power to ensure that my brothers and sisters have a safe place to work....

“Cheers, Murray....”

Speaker, the government included corrections in this bill, but then arbitrarily crossed off some of the officers on the list.

This is from a letter written by Greg Arnold, a provincial bailiff and MERC team member, who was a correctional officer before being a bailiff and who has worked for MCSCS for 33 years. He says:

“There are 30 classified bailiffs in Ontario that are assigned to various institutions. There are not enough of us to do the work....

“Our bailiffs are critical incident stress managers, ICIT members and incident negotiators.

“By the definition of the bill for correctional officers we meet and exceed the duties and responsibilities.

“In order to compete to become a bailiff you must first be a correctional officer. Our department is comprised of some of the most experienced officers....

“We have been involved in accidents on the highway where our members have provided emergency first aid to members of the public and offenders.... Many times we have been first responders on fatal accidents and have not only done our role but have taken control of scenes and provided emergency services.

“If this bill passed as written, you can have two correctional staff working the same traumatic incident; one would be covered under this bill; the other would be out in the cold....

“This omission is a huge injustice to the dedicated officers that are correctional officers but are classified as bailiffs.”

Speaker, the Police Association of Ontario also feels that this bill ought to be broadened to include special constables and others. I know we will have the chance to discuss this during committee, but basically it does not make sense to leave bailiffs and special constables out of this legislation.

Another group that has been inappropriately excluded are probation and parole officers. Danielle is an officer, and I would be pleased to share her words. Danielle says:

“I have been a probation and parole officer for 10 years. In one year, I lost five clients to overdose and suicide.... Every year, usually around the Christmas holidays, I receive phone calls from clients who are suicidal and attempting to kill themselves....

“I have witnessed victims of domestic violence, battered, bleeding and bruised as they’ve attended my office unannounced and in crisis. I have listened to young children, sobbing as they’ve disclosed sexual abuse at the hands of a family member. I have coaxed car keys out of the hands of a client who was so high on opiates that he was disrobing in my office to scratch the ... lesions that covered his torso. I’ve sat across from a client who had sewn a stab wound on his neck together with shoelaces. I attended a home visit to deliver bad news to a client, when, moments after I left, he shot himself. I remember thinking to myself, ‘What if he had turned the gun on me?’ I have been stalked. I have found sexually suggestive notes on my car windshield as it sat in my work parking lot. I have had to sit with the justice official protection and intelligence service while they educated me about how to safeguard my home and worksite to protect myself from threatening clients and stalkers. I have had clients pull knives out of their socks and waistbands on several occasions. If I, as a probation officer, have not been exposed to trauma, please tell me how you would define my experiences!

“While I have been fortunate enough not to develop PTSD as a result of my experiences, I have not walked away unscathed. This accumulation of these events means that I will now battle an anxiety disorder for the rest of my life. It is difficult to share this admission but at a time where probation officers are being denied mental health support and have been excluded from legislation

that can assist them in securing adequate treatment for post-traumatic stress, I felt it necessary. While I continue to love my job, it has most certainly come at a cost....

“Do the right thing and ensure our inclusion in PTSD legislation.”

Speaker, this shouldn't be an argument about the label of “first responder,” because this legislation is meant to support those who need it most. So I would challenge this government to figure out who experiences trauma the most and cover them. Consider all front-line workers and broaden the reach of presumptive coverage. All 911 communicators—not just dispatcher—police investigative support and forensic staff, nurses, children's aid workers and Ministry of Labour inspectors are among others to consider and support. They, like so many others, need support and care. Factor them in, please.

If you won't do it in this bill, then see this bill as the first step in the journey to supporting mental health needs across Ontario. They look after us; we need to look after them. In considering all that our first responders do for us, the least we can do is get the legislation right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Welland—from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's right beside Welland, yes.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise to speak to Bill 163, the Supporting Ontario First Responders Act, today because it's an incredibly important piece of legislation. The first responders I have had the pleasure to meet over the course of my career have always been some of the bravest and most caring individuals I know. Their support for family and loved ones in times of need, and of course their professional care for those who have been injured, is nothing short of heroic.

We need to do everything we can in our power to ensure that these brave men and women always have the care they need and deserve. Whether that means doing everything we can to protect them while they are on the job or doing everything we can to ensure their continued health and success as they move on from their working lives, we need to do it.

I'd like to commend my colleague the member from Parkdale—High Park for her work on recognizing this incredible need in our community.

When this bill first came across my desk, my first thought was to talk directly to first responders in my riding. They are the ones who deal with these traumatic events every single day and they are the ones who know what they need. I recognize that they are the heroes in my community and I do my very best to bring their voices to this legislation. I do that to thank them for the jobs they do when they are on the clock but also what they do when they're off the clock.

Let me start with the local dispatchers who work in Niagara. At first, some people wonder why they might be covered by something like this, but if you stop and think about it for a few seconds, it becomes very clear. In Niagara, we have about seven dispatchers working

during the day to serve over 430,000 people. So, say, six or seven accidents occur on a given day. It isn't always going to be the same first responder going to these calls. It might be the Niagara Falls firefighters or the volunteers in Fort Erie or paramedics going to Niagara-on-the-Lake. Yet with each of these calls, there's a chance that it could be the same dispatcher on the other end of the line.

My office has had a chance to speak with the president of the dispatchers and paramedics association in my riding, and the local's WSIB specialist, Jim Simpson. Though Jim wears many hats with the local, we spoke with him because he specializes in helping his members navigate WSIB. Jim and Jon see first-hand the struggles that their members have to go through when they are battling PTSD. For years, they have had to watch their members struggle with these issues without support.

I can tell you these two men are dedicated to their profession and dedicated to the safety of the men and women whom they work shoulder to shoulder with each day. Altogether they are looking after 32 dispatchers and 330 paramedics. With numbers like that, it's easy to see the risk of incidents that brave men and women face each and every single day that they walk into the workplace.

What Jon and Jim were able to highlight to our office was even more incredible. These paramedics and dispatchers have absolutely known the risk they have been facing for decades—for decades. In the first six weeks of this year alone, they have had six people in their profession take their lives.

1620

Mr. Speaker, I've also had a chance to speak to my good friend Todd Brunning, who is the president of the local Niagara Falls Professional Fire Fighters Association. Once again, I've worked with Todd on a number of issues. I can tell you that this is a man who deeply cares about the men and women he represents. If Todd is pushing for health and safety, then I absolutely believe it is good for the people who live in my riding. He's a man with a big heart, and he is never quiet when it comes to his beliefs on taking care of his members.

He said something I'd like to quote here. He said to us that seeing these traumatic events is “the nature of our work—it's something that never leaves you.” Mr. Speaker, I really think that quote is important. It shows that these men and women know what kind of stress their jobs can cause them and they know that they will see things that will never leave them—that will never, never leave them. Yet every morning they get up and they commit to keeping our cities and our towns safe because they know that someone has to do it. These first responders are always there for us when we need them, and I'm glad to see that we're finally going to be there for them when they need us.

One of the things Todd highlighted and that I've heard when talking to first responders throughout my riding is that they still need to overcome the stigma. A lot of times, these first responders believe that this is just something that comes with the job and that they don't have the right to say something, or that somehow speaking out makes them weak.

I believe I stand with my colleagues in this House today when I say that they absolutely have the right and that there's nothing weak about it. First responders have the right to seek professional help. There's nothing to be ashamed of. I don't believe anyone here thinks that paramedics, dispatchers, police officers, firefighters, correctional officers or any other first responders have an easy job. Anyone in these professions experiences things that most of us couldn't possibly imagine, and there's absolutely no shame in saying that something is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, there is something else that I realized when my office was reaching out to first responders. Whenever we talked to them, regardless of what profession they were in, they were happy to see each other being included in this bill. It's incredible to see them looking out for one another like this. I think it highlights why they are such an important part of making our communities so great. Yes, they want coverage for their members, but they also care for other people working in stressful industries. They're willing to work together and help one another, and it's a very moving thing.

While I have the time to speak, I'd like to quickly highlight a few concerns they brought up with the government bill.

The first has to do with the WSIB bridging. The dispatchers highlight that right now, when full-time dispatchers are going through the WSIB process for PTSD assistance, they are being paid out of sick time. When it's a part-timer who falls into this situation, they have no money coming in at all. Not only are they struggling to cope with traumatic events they have experienced, but they are running into financial hardship. If we're going to ensure that first responders are properly covered when they are at risk of PTSD, we might as well do it right, and we have the opportunity to include them today.

I'm going to finish by saying that it's my 20th anniversary today with my lovely wife. She was hit by a drunk driver on Lundy's Lane and she was fighting for her life. Guess who came. It was the paramedics; it was the firefighters who dug in there. My wife's foot was like this. Her femur was broken; her shoulder was destroyed; her ribs were cracked. She was this close to dying, and it was the firefighters, paramedics and OPP officers who saved my wife's life.

To this day, those firefighters, when they see my wife, they go up to her and ask her how she is. Now, she does have some struggles today, but think about it. That's just one accident. Look what it did to my daughter, who now has a mother who went from being able to play squash, being able to play softball, being able to go out for a walk, and who can't do it anymore. It affected the whole family. But the one thing you want to remember is that that's just one accident. Those firefighters saw that once. They see it every single day when they go to work. That's why this bill is so important. When my family needed them, they were there. Today, they need us, and we have to be there for them.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, would like to welcome our visitors to Queen's Park from the OPP, from the police association and, of course, from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association, which I have a closer relationship to, given that I'm married to a firefighter.

I was elected eight and a half years ago. I would say eight years ago, I had my first visit from the Sudbury Professional Fire Fighters Association, Local 527. Rob Hyndman, Mark Muldoon and Kris Vopel came to see me. Their request was well articulated. They wanted presumptive legislation. Some of it was for cancer, but some of it was for PTSD. That was eight years ago.

Fast-forward to 2016: We finally have a piece of legislation that will make it to the finish line. So I, like my colleague from Timmins-James Bay, don't understand why we have this time allocation motion. We've waited a long time for this. Finally, this House is talking about mental health. Do you know how many weeks, months and years I've dreamed of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario talking positively about mental illness? Since day one that I've been here. Finally, we are doing this, and what does the government do? They say, "We don't want this bill to run its normal course. We will take our big boots, we will take our power as the party in power, and shut the whole thing down."

Unfortunately, there are people who will feel left out of this process, who have been there from the beginning, who want to be heard and who want to have the opportunity to speak out loud about their mental illness to the leadership of this province. How does that happen? It happens by each of us representing the people of our riding and bringing their voices forward. This is what we are there for. But lots of us won't have the opportunity to do this because the government has decided to pass this time allocation motion, which was not needed and, to me, is very disrespectful when you see things like, "You have until Thursday to put your name on the list."

I represent the people of Nickel Belt. Most of the people in my riding cannot have the parliamentary channel because we don't have cable in Nickel Belt, so they're not going to hear it through the television. By the time I send the email out to say, "Hey, you guys, if you want to be heard, you have until Thursday to come down from Nickel Belt to Toronto"—there's a good chance you'll have to take two days off. To ask your employers for two days off—it sometimes takes more than 24 hours to get permission granted. But this is what the government is doing.

We want this bill to make it to the finish line. Every single MPP in this Legislature agrees. We don't have unanimous agreement very often in this chamber, but on the need to bring PTSD legislation forward, we have that.

1630

But how do we use this rare time of unanimous agreement in this House? We have a Liberal government that says, "It's going to go that way. I don't care what the rest of you have to say, because we are Liberals and we know better." This is wrong. It feels wrong, it is wrong. It is disrespectful.

The people of Nickel Belt, like the people everywhere else in Ontario, have waited for a long time for this to come. This piece of legislation will be going to committee. This is great. I'm really happy, and I'm pretty sure that the leadership that is there today will make it to committee. But committee is for everybody. It is for anybody who lives in Ontario. This is their opportunity to bring their voice to the debate, to be heard, to bring new ideas forward so that we have as good a bill as we can get.

We know, Speaker—all of us know—that a bill is not an incremental thing. “Oh, well, let’s pass this bill, and if we realize that we forgot this group, or that the 24 months back doesn’t work, we’ll change it.” No, no. Chances are, we pass this bill and it will never come again in our lifetime. It will be 50 years from now before we have an opportunity to make changes to that bill again. Let’s take our time and do it properly.

We already know that there are some groups who want changes. We already know that the 24-month limit to go back may be problematic. As much as a lot of people are pushing so that PTSD falls under presumptive legislation—which means that you will be covered by WSIB, which means that not only will you not go into poverty—you will continue to have your wages—but it also means that you will have resources to gain treatment, because PTSD is treatable.

If you have access to the right mental health treatment, you will get better. The anxiety will go away. The flashbacks, the nightmares, all of this will go away if you get treatment. But access to mental health services in this province is horrible. Most people don’t have access to mental health services, but once you’re covered by WSIB, they will pay for you to go and see a psychologist. None of us have access to psychologists unless we have the money to pay, but now that we will have presumptive legislation, they will have access to mental health workers, and they will have access to psychologists, who will help them get better. They will get better. But do we expect a big flow of them? Absolutely not. We will continue to have just a few that come forward. What happens now is that they go through the wringer with WSIB and have a really tough time proving. Now it will become easier.

As some of my members have mentioned before, I think we got it wrong as to the list of people that should be covered. I think there are people within the health care system that should be there. I have a nurse sitting beside me. We have seen that a nurse who works in emerg for most of her career has seen it all. She will see the gun wounds and the stab wounds, and the people that explode. You see it all. This is also very traumatic, and this is also linked to work, but they’re not included in there. So there are changes that need to be done to this bill now in order to get that right.

The normal process of the legislation gets us the best bills at the end. What the Liberals are really saying right now is that they know better, they have got this figured out, and they are not willing to listen. This is a sad day

for me. I’m happy that we’re talking about mental health, I’m happy that we’re talking about giving workers what is owed to them after they have waited for so long. But I am really disappointed in how we will get there, because there is a chance that we won’t have the best bill in the end. It will have done something good, and I’m happy for the good that it will have done, but when you know that it could have done something better on an issue like mental health, which never gets spoken to in this House, what an opportunity lost. It saddens me to see this opportunity lost. We could have done better. We could have let this bill go through and had an extended period of time for people to come and speak and be heard—I’m not talking months; I’m talking maybe one more week—and we would have gotten to the finish line with something way better, that we will have to live with for decades to come.

So I’m happy that this is going forward, but I can’t stand for time allocation.

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

On March 1, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 62. Mr. Yakabuski then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

“That the second, third and fourth bullets in the paragraph that begins ‘That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair’, be struck out and replaced with the following”—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Dispense? Agreed? All right.

We’re now dealing with Mr. Yakabuski’s amendment to the motion.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say aye.

All those opposed, please say nay.

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1637 to 1638.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I have just received a vote deferral:

“To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 62 be deferred until deferred votes on March 2, 2016.”

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Start the bells, please.

The division bells rang from 1638 to 1639.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All right. We will try this one more time:

“To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly,

“Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the amendment to government notice of motion number 62 be deferred until deferred votes” tomorrow; that would be March 2, 2016. This was received by the chief government whip, Marie-France Lalonde.

Vote deferred.

WASTE-FREE ONTARIO ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 FAVORISANT
UN ONTARIO SANS DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 25, 2016, on the motion for 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.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): When this item of business was last debated, we concluded the speech of the members for Northumberland–Quinte West, Burlington and Sudbury.

Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, I'm pleased to be able to lend my voice to this debate on Bill 151, because it's important that we recognize what's working and the areas that deserve some attention in committee. Through amendments, they hopefully can become better.

I just want to state, Speaker, that our position has been very clear. We welcome the policy reversal by this government and we support the elements within Bill 151 that reflect PC proposals to (1) increase recycling, (2) create good, well-paying jobs in the green economy, and (3) protect Ontario taxpayers by scrapping eco tax programs. Those eco tax programs, just to revisit, are e-waste, Orange Drop and the tire stewardship.

We're encouraged to see that the government is finally acknowledging the need for competition in this industry and, as such, they've included provisions within Bill 151 to apply competition rules.

But that's where we kind of draw the line in the sand, because we have substantive concerns that must be addressed once this bill hits committee. They are reasonable concerns, I would suggest, that require simple solutions. I just want to go back and touch on them a notch.

We want assurances that the eco tax programs will be eliminated so Ontario can transition to a producer responsibility framework that encourages greater waste diversion. I ask that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change be very clear. On one hand, he's suggesting that the Ontario Tire Stewardship program is already gone. Well, when you read down into the legislation of Bill 151, they do not have a timeline. There is nothing affirmative in the legislation, as it reads today. We want to make sure that there is a finite timeline.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to offer a couple of minutes on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act. Over on this side of the House, we welcome this legislation. We are pleased to see that, after almost a decade of doing very little to move the province forward on individual producer responsibility, finally we have a legislative

framework in place that's being debated through second reading and that will help us transition to where we need to be.

One of the issues that municipalities have been facing under the current system is the cost of operating a waste diversion program. I know that in my own municipality, London has been doing everything possible to try to divert waste in an effective and efficient way, and yet still we're only at about 45% waste diversion. We are below the provincial target. But it is a very, very costly system to run. The municipality is in the midst of a budget debate and is looking at green bins as another option that would help increase the waste diversion proportion that we're aiming for. It's a significant budget issue. It's looking at a potential cost of \$12 million. So one of the concerns we have about Bill 151 is ensuring that it doesn't download further costs onto municipalities while it moves the province forward in achieving those waste diversion goals that Ontarians all want to see.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, this bill has quite a history. The original bill was introduced, as I recall, in 2014, if not 2013, after great consultation took place.

I remember having the privilege of being Minister of the Environment at that time. I canvassed the views of the opposition at that time. It was the Conservative member for Kitchener who gave me some ideas he thought he would have in the bill, if he could bring forward a bill. I consulted with the NDP critic, who was then the member for Davenport. I consulted widely with industry, with municipalities. I can't think of anybody who didn't get canvassed on this issue.

The Environmental Commissioner took an unusual step of trying to bring people together on this particular issue. He held a round table, because he was the one, to his credit—Gord Miller—who brought this to the attention of the Legislature in one of his special reports, or his annual report. I think it had only one photograph of him in it, which is good, because I can remember that the Ombudsman's annual reports used to have 20 pictures in them.

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Anyway, I'm getting away from the topic at hand; I understand that.

This is a bill that should have been passed two years ago. Well, it's back before the House. It has had debate in this House. It again has had yet another round of consultations. What in effect we have done is lost about two years' time on this particular bill, trying to ensure that it gets passed and gets implemented. If there is a virtue to minority government, I can't think of it right now, because it blocked this progressive piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I wanted to respond immediately after the member for St. Catharines, because I don't see history the way he does. I think there was a benefit, in a

minority Parliament, of taking the previous piece of legislation that the member talks about and having that debate in the Legislature. I believe that this bill, Bill 151, incorporated a number of things that were brought up during debate in this House, so I disagree with him.

I do agree with some of his points, I do acknowledge, and so did our critic the member for Huron–Bruce, about the former Environmental Commissioner Mr. Miller and the points that he brought forward.

We've had a system that has been in place for a long time, Speaker. I spoke earlier on this bill about my experience in the municipal sector. We had great intentions, back in the 1980s, when we started the Blue Box Program. But you now reflect on the numbers, and we didn't have those waste reduction numbers and waste diversion numbers that we had all hoped to have.

Rather than just dealing with this bill—and we support the bill, obviously; the critic has talked about some of the amendments—I think we've got a lot of co-operative work that could be done to try to educate the public on the importance of waste diversion. I think we've failed, in some respects, by having a bill in front of us today that talks more about enforcement. I don't know that that enforcement is the right way. I think there is a tremendous political will in this province to get this file correct and to make sure that we have a system in place that does divert materials that don't have to go into landfill into other projects. I spoke earlier about the fact that when we first had this program, we talked about reduce, reuse and recycle. I think we've missed some of those elements. I think we have a chance to right the wrong.

But I do disagree with the member who just spoke, from St. Catharines, that the bill should have passed in the previous Parliament. I think this bill was improved because of the minority Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for final comments.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to thank the members from Huron–Bruce and London West, the House leader and the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act: I think, as the deputy House leader mentioned, it has been around for a while in this place. I'm sure the walls are tired of hearing all the issues. But, Speaker, I'm glad to hear today, too, that there is some co-operation amongst all three parties and that we need to move the yardsticks forward. We'll have an opportunity, as it goes to committee, to make refinements.

I need to give a plug to Northumberland county, a part of my riding. Folks who travel the 401 east, as they go by Grafton, just before the Big Apple, will see a big recycling plant that Northumberland county, back in the late 1980s—I'm not sure; it was before my days in politics. They established an MRF, a municipal recycling facility. It's still operational today. They do a good job, but on the other hand, it's those municipal establishments that we need to do a refresh on.

1650

When we look at potential recycling material that gets ignored from packaging—I think I mentioned, when I was speaking last week on the bill, Speaker, that I marvel around Christmas time. We have nine grandkids. They are opening Christmas gifts, and sometimes the pile of packaging—I mean, it fills half of my garage. Although, when the kids were younger, they'd rather play with the packaging than the toy that was inside.

I'm encouraged that we're going to get to a place where we all agree, hopefully, and we'll have something to protect the environment for my kids, grandkids and great-grandkids.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm very pleased to have a few minutes in which to put on the record a few comments regarding Bill 151.

First, I would like to recognize the work of my caucus colleague the member for Huron–Bruce, who has been an advocate of this particular initiative for some time, and recognize the contributions that she's made over the time that this bill has been seen and the kind of work behind the scenes to bring it to the point we have today. Our caucus has made it very clear that this will be a bill that we support, but we recognize that there's a point where there is more to do.

The goals that we are looking for in this bill are very clear: firstly, to increase the total recycling across Ontario; to be able to put in place methods that will protect our environment for today and into the future; and, as an important by-product, to stimulate further the economy by creating good, well-paying jobs throughout the green economy.

For far too long, Ontario's waste diversion rate has been stagnant at 25%, actually showing negative growth since 2010. At the same time as we appear to be in this holding pattern, other provinces like British Columbia and Saskatchewan are increasing their capacity for waste diversion while Ontario falters and falls further behind.

By taking a further look into this issue, it is clear to see why Ontario has once again been left behind. A major factor which influences the growth of waste diversion in Ontario is the further encouragement of private businesses to invest in the recovery and recycling of new products. Yet, as a result of Liberal mismanagement for more than a decade, this government has relied on failed anti-market policies that have stopped Ontario from becoming the environmental leader it should be.

Our plan was based on a foundation that the recycling industry is a business, not a government program. In this industry, government is to have a limited role. Governments are to set measurable and achievable targets for business, set environmental standards and enforce regulations. It is an industry in which the private sector has encouraged competition, increased efficiency and advanced environmental protection.

In saying this, we appreciate that the Liberal government has acknowledged our previous attempts and

adopted many key points of our recycling plan that we first introduced four years ago. Even though we are happy to see the government's policy change, we remain opposed to unnecessary regulations, bureaucratic red tape and government intervention that lie hidden within the bill.

I want to speak for a moment about how this impacts on individuals as well as their neighbourhoods. As many would know from the name of my riding, York-Simcoe, I have a great deal of the shoreline of Lake Simcoe in my riding. It's remarkable when you see the concerted effort of all people—neighbours and friends, organizations, private donation and the kind of opportunity—that the problems of a place like Lake Simcoe, where we saw aquatic weed growth, where we saw phosphorus loading—these have been reduced. They have been reduced through things like this government's Lake Simcoe Protection Act, funding from the federal government, the conservation authority and many, many people—many volunteers, who have made time to plant trees, to work on shoreline or stream restoration. So it's a demonstration that there's a wide base of support, particularly when people can see benefits coming from that.

To go back, then, to the bill itself: This proposed legislation reflects many of the positions that the PC caucus has advocated for in previous legislative attempts and in many other submissions to government over the past few years, which focused on promoting the elements of a circular economy. It also mirrors many of the policies brought forward by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who have all strongly advocated for this legislation to be introduced—and certainly, reference was made to him a moment ago.

While I'm sure that Minister Murray should be commended today for finally introducing our recycling strategy in this legislation, we should also pay tribute to the environment critics of our parties—the NDP critics—and Mike Schreiner, the leader of the Green Party of Ontario, all of whom have had a role to play in pushing for this particular legislation.

At the same time that we have looked at the process, we have been concerned by the kinds of programs—for instance, the stewardship programs—that in fact pushed extra costs onto people without necessarily providing the kind of strength and opportunity that the bill deserves.

Recycling generates much more employment than disposal. It's estimated that with every 1,000 tonnes of recycled waste, it creates the equivalent of seven jobs. This is at the same time when 5% of Ontario's greenhouse gas emissions, a main contributor to climate change, come from waste, mostly as methane from landfill sites.

While municipal blue box programs are largely successful, keeping out two thirds of all residential printed paper and packaging from landfills, only 14% of such waste from commercial, industrial and institutional sectors is diverted. That's why, in 2012, our party brought forward a bold, new plan to increase waste diversion.

Certainly, that's the situation as we go forward with this bill. But I want to take a moment to look at a part of the population that is left out of this piece of legislation—and that's individual responsibility. I want to comment on the fact that we still have teams of people who go out every spring to pick up garbage along the roadside. We still have people who think it's okay to throw something out of their car as they're moving along. There are still people who feel that they have no obligation to sort their garbage, to be able to make the best of it. I think it's something that needs addressing, even though it isn't strictly in this particular bill. Personal responsibility is key to recognizing—whether it's on the side of the road or it's having a composter in your backyard.

1700

In the municipality in which I live, we began a buck a bag for garbage years ago. Everyone said, "This will never work," and of course, it worked. There were a few people who tossed their bag aside and then discovered there was a \$100 fine if you were caught doing this—generally, within that bag was something that identified you, whether it was an old bill or a piece of mail. But it pointed out, and it worked. Today, the buck a bag has made a huge difference.

Someone was talking about Christmas wrap and all the garbage. I can tell you that the first year it was in place, there was a bag or a box of recycled paper. Everybody had carefully folded their wrapping paper and put it in a box, like a rewrapped Christmas present. It's those kinds of things that I think will also go a long way.

I'm looking forward to the passage of this bill, although I take the title of the bill, "waste-free," as perhaps being a stretch objective. Nevertheless, in this particular case, I think it won't do us any harm if we stretch to reduce landfill.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise to offer some thoughts on the comments by the member from York-Simcoe. She made some excellent points, particularly her final point about the stretch goal of Bill 151. It's interesting that the bill is called the Waste-Free Ontario Act, and yet, in the list of provincial interests that are identified in the legislation and the strategy that is required by the legislation, nowhere does it explicitly and specifically state that one of the goals of this bill is zero waste in this province.

We welcome this legislation. We definitely believe that Ontario needs to move to individual producer responsibility. In fact, we should have been there years ago, so we're pleased to see that we're moving in that direction now; we've turned the corner and are sort of heading in the right direction. But we're very concerned that this bill is vague on details; there are no targets, no timelines. It's an optimistic kind of look at what the province could be, but without some meat on those bones, it's going to be very difficult to achieve what the bill is supposed to achieve.

When this bill is brought forward to committee, Speaker, you can be assured that New Democrats are

going to be seeking amendments to introduce more accountability and hold the government responsible for delivering on the aims this bill is supposed to achieve.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 151. I listened to the comments made by my colleague from York–Simcoe with respect to this proposed bill, but I also heard her colleague from Leeds–Grenville talking about the fact that the bill only focuses on enforcement. I'm going to remind the members opposite that in schedule 2, it is very explicitly stated: "The purposes of the act, as set out in section 1, are to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste, to provide for the operation of waste diversion programs approved under the Waste Diversion Act, 2002."

As you can see, Mr. Speaker, it is pretty explicit that it's not just about enforcement. It talks about promotion, educating the public, reducing and reusing and, if possible, recycling. The act focuses on three parts: increasing waste diversion, keeping valuable resources out of landfill—we know that we have to do better—and then, more importantly, addressing the issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our waste stream.

The proposed legislation, Bill 151, if passed—this was clearly also discussed in the proposed budget that the Minister of Finance tabled last week. I know that the members opposite may not agree with the government. We all agree in this House and out there in the community that we have major concerns about climate change. The proposed legislation, if passed, will address part of it.

I know the member from York–Simcoe briefly mentioned the blue boxes. I want to pay tribute to the biggest supporters of the blue boxes, our children and our youth in our schools. They have led the way when it comes to reduce, reuse and recycle. I know that the members opposite would like to see us continue to expand the program.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise and comment on the member from York–Simcoe, who always has a way of putting things and a way of bringing it back to common sense. I think it's something we don't do enough of around here.

Waste recycling, being the mayor of a township, was a huge issue. If you made it tough for the residents to get their waste to the landfill, you ended up picking it up on the road, and there's far too much of that. You have to have something that's practical.

I hear the member from Scarborough–Agincourt talking about the need to reduce and the greenhouse gas. It's interesting: We have a resident with a business in my riding who has been trying to get a permit to increase the amount of greenhouse gases that he's forced to flare off and let into the atmosphere. He would like to be able to turn that into electricity. He already does some of that. I'm not sure why the applications are tied up for so long.

It seems you might say, "Well, maybe they don't need the electricity," but at the same time, they are looking at establishing another 150 windmills in the area. So what would be wrong with taking this methane gas and turning it into electricity? It would solve both issues and maybe take the pressure off the need.

It was interesting, also, the talk about amendments. I sat on a committee for Bill 135 where we had 30 or 40 amendments by both of the opposition parties, and not one was taken on by the government. Those amendments of all the deputants we saw all had the same message. It was the fact that we were putting in a new plan that has no expert oversight in this case, and this government changed the rules so they no longer have to put in place an open and transparent process. These amendments were heard numerous times through the committee, and of course they were ignored and voted down by this government.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I thought you were going to say "Niagara Falls," Speaker, and I was going to say, "Tell me it's not so."

Just briefly, one of the members—I think it was the minister without portfolio—talked about this bill being in front of us two years ago, and he maybe in some way insinuated that it was someone's fault that we've been waiting all these years to actually deal with waste diversion and changes to this act.

We have great research staff who actually work for all of us in all parties. I had a look at this document, and it says that the Liberal government has been talking about reforming this act for over a decade. After a five-year mandatory review in 2007, nine years ago, they released a discussion paper in 2008 that proposed zero waste. The report was called *Toward a Zero Waste Future*, and here we are still talking about that waste. I can tell you, as a former municipal politician, we've spent a lot of time at every level of government talking about waste diversion, but we don't seem to make a whole heck of a lot of progress.

The member from Leeds–Grenville, though, spoke about enforcement, and I think that piece is missing out of this legislation. We certainly have enforcement for the people that are recycling. For all of our constituents who recycle, you have to cut the cardboard up to this size and you have to make sure you wrap it in string and you have to separate the bottles and the cans from the paper. You have to do all of those kinds of things, and if you don't, they leave it there. If you put out more than one bag of garbage, they leave that there as well. So if there's enforcement for the constituents who are paying the tax bills and the waste bills, then there should also be some good enforcement for those making the waste.

1710

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from York–Simcoe for a final comment.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you to the members from London West, Scarborough–Agincourt, Stormont–

Dundas–South Glengarry and Welland—quite a range of comments that came about as a result of this, but I think I there are some messages here when we look at the accumulation of comments that were made a moment ago.

First of all, Bill 91, the bill from some time ago, provided the catalyst for what we are looking at today in Bill 151, because this is a very serious issue. There was a time not so long ago when all of what we are talking would be called “garbage,” and then it suddenly started to percolate that we needed to reuse, recycle, reduce and recover. Then, from that, we started to see garbage not as garbage but actually as a resource. So this kind of process has meant that we are where we are today in looking at managing it and how best to do it and being able to look at the economic opportunities that it provides, as well as the provision of the environment. When you have a story such as we heard from the member from Stormont-Dundas, where greenhouse gas could be contained and used, we have a long way to go. We are not at waste-free yet.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a pleasure to join the debate today on behalf of the people I represent in London West and to add some comments to what has already been said here in this House about Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

Certainly it is heartening that we are seeing some consensus around this Legislature about the need for this legislation. We would have liked to have seen it earlier, but nevertheless, we are pleased to see it being debated here today and hopefully to see it move forward through the passage of second reading vote and into committee.

We are really moving through a moment of time when there is a real opportunity to make a difference. People are becoming aware of climate change in a way that they never had before and are committed to taking action. That extends to issues around waste diversion and resource recovery. People want to do more to reduce the packaging they use and divert products at their end of life away from landfill and into recycling plants and other places for diversion.

We know that in this province currently we are not doing very well on waste diversion. The government itself, when the bill was brought forward, admitted that only 15% of Ontario’s waste stream is diverted, and that, overall, waste diversion rates have stalled at about 25% for the last 10 years. As I mentioned earlier, in my community of London, the municipality, like municipalities across the province, in fact, has been doing an excellent job in running the municipal Blue Box Program. They’ve been doing everything they can to optimize efficiencies and really divert as much of the waste stream as they can, but still, on the residential side, we’re looking at only about 45% of residential waste being diverted in my community, which is far below the provincial target of 60%. That’s because the system that is currently in place isn’t doing anything to create incentives for businesses to

look at producing more sustainable products. The current system hasn’t done enough to stop the flow of garbage into landfills. The result is that municipalities are footing the bill.

As I said, we are pleased to see this legislation. After a decade of talking about reforming the Waste Diversion Act, it’s good to see that action is finally taking place. Some of the members in this House, I know, were here in 2008 when that discussion paper was released by the Liberal government that proposed a goal of zero waste and an extended producer responsibility framework. That was in 2008, Speaker.

The following year, in 2009, we saw a report issued by the Minister of the Environment that was entitled From Waste to Worth: The Role of Waste Diversion in the Green Economy. Again, that report recommended a system of individual producer responsibility that would make producers fully responsible to meet waste diversion requirements for waste discarded within both the residential and ICI sectors.

Five years after the release of that report, in June 2013, we saw some legislation to create this individual producer responsibility framework, and that was Bill 91, which was the Waste Reduction Act. That bill was actually being debated at the time that I arrived in this Legislature, in August 2013, after the by-election. That bill was in the midst of second reading debate. I know that it was called 16 times. On 16 different days, it came forward for second reading debate, but for some reason, it was never voted on. When the election was called in June 2014, the legislation just died on the order paper.

Speaker, it has taken eight years to get us to where we are today—eight years since the government first proposed a zero waste future and first recommended a system of individual producer responsibility.

I mentioned the failure of the current system, because it shifts the costs of waste away from producers and onto either consumers, through eco fees, or municipalities, through the Blue Box Program.

I mentioned London’s Blue Box Program. In 2010, the net cost of the program was \$10 million, but \$2 million of that was paid directly by municipal taxpayers, because that is what it costs to run the program. It’s supposed to be 50-50, but it doesn’t work that way. Municipalities end up carrying a much greater share of the costs of running the system.

Speaker, when people who are generating the waste don’t have to pay their fair share of the costs of dealing with the waste, there is no incentive to reduce, reuse or recycle. We have heard many concerns from the Ontario Waste Management Association, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, the Auditor General and others who have talked about the failure of the current system in not effectively promoting waste reduction and not incentivizing better waste diversion or moving closer to waste diversion targets.

The purpose of Bill 151 is to eliminate industry-funded organizations and the industry stewardship plans that were set up under the current Waste Diversion Act,

and to replace those with a new model for individual producer responsibility.

One of the primary concerns of the NDP caucus with this legislation is that it is enabling legislation. It includes very few details as to how this transition to individual producer responsibility will be achieved. There are no timelines about when these industry-funded organizations will be phased out and no timelines for when the new model of individual producer responsibility will be implemented. So much of this bill relies on regulations, and those regulations have not yet been written. We have no way of knowing how effective they will be, and, to some extent, that has tempered people's enthusiasm for the bill. This is a great aspirational statement about achieving a waste-free Ontario, but we really need to see some more details as to how the avowed goal of the bill will be achieved.

1720

Earlier I spoke about the first iteration of this bill, Bill 91, which was introduced in 2013. One of the most significant differences between that legislation and the current bill is around identification or recognition that there is a provincial interest and there should be provincial policy statements to move the province closer to waste diversion targets.

This is important. There's a great list of provincial interests that are set out in Bill 151, but, surprisingly, zero waste is not one of those provincial interests that are identified in the bill. Similarly, the bill requires the minister to publish a strategy as to how it is going to support the provincial interests that are identified in the bill, but nowhere is waste-free Ontario identified as one of the specific goals of the strategy.

This causes us some concern because we know that without specific targets, timelines and goals it is very difficult to achieve the vision that is outlined in this bill.

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm pleased to respond to the member from London West. I talked about general transition the other day, and I would like to speak about the blue box transition today.

As we all know, Ontario's recycling programs have been recognized internationally. Almost all Ontarians—97% of our households—have access to the Blue Box Program. When this legislation was being developed, we heard very clearly from people from across Ontario that the transition should be smooth and orderly.

This bill would ensure that everyone, whether they live in the northern part of Ontario or the southern part of Ontario, in rural or urban areas, would have the same level of convenient access to the blue box services that they have today. It will be overseen by a new oversight body, the Resource Productivity and Recovery Authority, which would be responsible for enforcing these service standards.

The member from London West raised an issue that there is no clear timeline. If this proposed legislation is passed, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate

Change anticipates that the transition of municipal hazardous or special waste, waste electrical, electronic equipment and used tire programs could be completed within two to four years. The transition of the Blue Box Program may take longer because it needs extensive discussion and extensive consultation among municipalities, government, producers and consumers.

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

Mr. Lorne Coe: I thank the member for London West for her comments, but I have to agree with my colleague Lisa Thompson that one of the concerns we've heard over and over again from stakeholders is specifically the uncertainty of Bill 151. Municipalities from which I've come and from across the province must be at the table and must be partners in how we move forward.

Ontario must continue to escalate its diversion rate. Over the last number of years—in fact, years that parallel the time that the Liberals have formed a government in this province—diversion has stalled here in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. As Ms. Thompson rightly pointed out, diversion of 25% is inadequate. It's certainly inadequate.

We need a market-driven solution. The government of Ontario should set targets and standards and then get out of the way—get out of the way. It should let industry innovate and create market-driven solutions.

We all agree that packaging alone creates an enormous amount of waste. Again, my colleague Lisa Thompson summed it up best in an earlier debate: The PC plan will set targets and then let industry move to innovate. She said, "Get government out of the way. Get government out of the way and let industry be the innovators." I couldn't agree more.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting to listen to my colleague from London West, who basically put on the record some really troubling issues with the bill. It has a very cool name though, eh? Waste-Free Ontario Act, but nothing in the act talks to a waste-free Ontario, just the title. So we have a cool title that says "waste-free Ontario." This is something that people can get excited about, this is progressive, this is where we should get to, but there's nothing in the bill that talks about a waste-free Ontario.

Basically, it talks about bringing us to a system where producer responsibility will become feasible at a time yet to be determined and in a way yet to be determined. Did I say that we have a cool title? Yeah, I think I already said that, eh? But as far as the meat and potatoes of the bill, it leaves a lot to regulation. It leaves a lot to the day that we will do all of this work, go through first and second readings, committee, third reading, royal assent, and nothing will change. It will stay exactly the same as what we have now, with a hope that we have now enabled the Liberal government to actually put forward regulations that hopefully may move us somewhere yet to be defined.

Interjection: And sometimes they don't.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And sometimes they don't. Everybody will remember that 10 years ago we passed legislation for an anti-racism secretariat. We are 10 years later and we have yet to see any movement.

I think this has a cool title, but that is pretty well where it ends.

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

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted to speak to Bill 151, which indeed has a really cool title: Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. I won't spend any of my two minutes addressing concerns or philosophical debate about whether we ensconce things in legislation or regulation. I think it's understood by most legislative bodies in the world that the world is changing so fast that regulation is the way to go.

What I wanted to do for my remaining time was just to talk about some of the economic benefits of the act, because I know, as a municipal politician myself, I've seen the costs continue to increase with regard to waste recovery, with regard to landfill. So it is nice to take a step back and look at some of the economic benefits of this act, because they are profound. If passed, the Waste-Free Ontario Act would boost the economy by recovering more resources from more waste materials, creating jobs. That's the overarching philosophy behind this.

But some stats: Over eight million tonnes of waste is sent to landfills each year. That represents about a billion dollars of recoverable material currently lost to landfills across Canada—absolutely unacceptable.

1730

We're told by the experts that if we recover just 60% of waste materials, that would create 13,000 jobs and contribute \$1.5 billion in gross domestic product to Ontario—nothing to be sneezed at with those stats. The proposed framework would also propel investment by the waste management industry in expanded services and recycling facilities which, right now, I think we can all agree are sorely lacking.

Thank you for the time to speak to this bill, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from London West for her final comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to respond to the comments by the members for Mississauga–Brampton South, Whitby–Oshawa, Nickel Belt and Newmarket–Aurora.

I want to start where the member for Newmarket–Aurora left off, and that is about the jobs that could potentially be created by moving forward with more effective waste diversion. It's interesting that at the same time the government has introduced its Waste-Free Ontario Act, it is also proposing a new energy-from-waste program that will require new garbage incinerators to have a guaranteed 10-year supply of burnable garbage. We have data that shows that between 85% and 90% of municipal solid waste is recyclable, is compostable, and yet the municipalities that are hosting these energy-from-waste incinerators will have to decide whether to divert that municipal solid waste or burn it.

One has to question what the government was thinking when they decided to move forward with the garbage incineration project. Not only has there been no coordination between the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change and the Ministry of Energy, but I think this new garbage incineration program is going to directly contradict the stated goals of Bill 151, vague as they are.

The NDP welcomes this legislation, but we will certainly be moving a number of amendments to it.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a great pleasure to be in the chamber today to discuss the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015. Obviously, I want to congratulate the hard work of our critic, Lisa Thompson, the member from Huron–Bruce, who has put forward our thoughtful response to this piece of legislation.

That said, Speaker, I do have some reservations when speaking to any Liberal bill that talks about waste because, at the end of the day, the waste that I see with this government, as accountability critic for the Treasury Board, is the waste at eHealth, the waste of a billion dollars with cancelled gas plant scandals or the waste at Ornge air ambulance. That's the type of waste I think of when I see a bill entitled the Waste-Free Ontario Act. That would be a bill I could get behind, when they're eliminating waste in government.

That said, this piece of legislation is, I guess, one in a long line of other pieces of government legislation dealing with waste reduction, littering, recycling and reduction that this province has seen in the decade I have been elected to this assembly. By the way, this month, I and Mr. Tabuns, who I believe is the environment critic for the third party, celebrate 10 years in this chamber—that will be toward the end of the month.

I remember, when first being elected, that the government was going to reduce IC&I; they were going to eliminate it. Their target at the time was about 60% under Dalton McGuinty, and I don't know if they ever actually broke 30%. It's a sad state of affairs when you're in government for 13 years and you always have moving targets. It's like dangling carrots forever and ever in front of a horse, but they're elusive. The targets of this government, when it comes to reduction of waste, recycling and the like are, again, elusive. They're elusive targets. They're never met. They are targets that look good on paper, that look great as a visual when the Premier or the environment minister is speaking and they have a press conference, but they mean absolutely nothing to the people of Ontario, to the municipalities within this province. All they seem to do is get it wrong with our stakeholders.

The Waste-Free Ontario Act, the Waste Diversion Act, the Resource Recovery and Circular Economy Act and a number of other acts like the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Environmental Protection Act, the Municipal Act—and a number of municipalities have their own acts—will be changed and they will allow for government policy statements to be included.

But what I would ask, as a member from the city of Ottawa who at one point had every single landfill in the city of Ottawa contained within her boundaries, and that was quite significant: In fact, we would challenge the government to stop the expansion at Carp Road. The smell in all of the city of Ottawa and the west end would be terrible. I don't represent that community of Stittsville anymore, but they need a strong champion because the entire air quality in that community goes downhill because this government was unable to reduce the amount of waste going into the landfill and encourage recycling at a sustainable rate.

I look at, for example, the waste recovery site that they want to build in a community close to mine in the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell's riding. I hope, in fact, the member brings that up when he's speaking, because the residents in that community are very opposed to this resource recovery area. They are fearing it's going to turn into a landfill and not actually separate waste. I'd like that kind of debate to hit the floor of this assembly.

I come here, as I've talked about many times, from the great community of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, a town of 10,000 when I left; 9,000 it's grown to since then. But I was very proud: My father was the chair of Pictou County Solid Waste for a number of years, meaning he chaired the local dump. He was the chair of the police commission, so he was a police commissioner. He was the deputy mayor. He did a lot of things in the community on a volunteer basis. The member from Welland is nodding. Our families are actually a bit connected in that sense because of our roots from that community and the relationship my father had with her cousin. They were best friends, so I call her my cousin.

My father was somebody who was always on the forefront of bringing his community into the next century. In fact, he was the person who led the first municipality in North America to become smoke-free. He fought like that because his brother, my uncle, died at the age of 42 from cancer.

Then he took on this goal of making their community more environmentally friendly. I'm talking 10 or 15 years ago and garbage bags about this big. I'm talking about a round, ball-size bag that would be the only thing that would go out to the curb. They were so effective at reducing and reusing and recycling that you would see everything neatly out there on separate days. They would collect your garbage, but a lot of people weren't sending garbage out; they were sending recycling out. He did such a good job that they became a world leader.

I always wish, in times of debate like this, that my dad was still around. He died just seven days before my second election, when I was 32. But there are days like this where I wish I could call him up and say, "Dad, we've got this great piece of legislation in front of us," or a bad piece of legislation in front of us, "and I'd like your opinion on it."

I think about earlier today—and I'm going to go off topic, Speaker, but I'll quickly get back on—when we talked about PTSD in this assembly, and his time with

the police commission. He was the president of the Canadian Association of Police Boards. He would have wanted me to talk about that bill, and I'm happy that I had at least two minutes to talk about PTSD and our front-line responders. Again, I'm a bit off topic, being a bit nostalgic here talking about my father. But it talks about a record and a legacy that he had and one I wish that this government could actually emulate on waste reduction and waste diversion.

When I think about some of the initiatives that they have put forward where there has been a tremendous amount of not garbage waste but a tremendous amount of resource waste in terms of money, that concerns me. We have seen, for example, with this government, an eco tax that came in without anybody knowing it was going to come in. On July 2, 2010, I believe, it came out. We weren't expecting it, and there it was. Ontario consumers had to pay for it, but it really wasn't going into anything to do with environmental sustainability, which kind of reminds me of what we see now as a new tax being brought in by this government on our gasoline with respect to the carbon tax.

1740

We've seen changes to bottle exchanges, for example, to reuse our bottles. We had issues with that back when I was first elected. John Tory was very concerned with how that bottle resource recovery was going to take place. You look at other provinces, for example. They have different models and, sometimes, I think it would behoove us to look at what's working in the private sector elsewhere, and we could do that.

To this bill in particular, I think that, obviously, it's something that our party, the Progressive Conservative caucus, can support, but we do have to advance some changes and we do have to champion those stakeholders who feel like they have been left behind. We have long championed an increase to recycling and reduction of waste through innovation and competition among businesses in the private sector, and that's what I just talked about when it comes to bottle recycling. There are opportunities there that may actually be very lucrative for our communities.

Under our plan, as Progressive Conservatives, we would set measurable and achievable recycling targets for business, establish environmental standards and enforce the rules. Speaker, if the target was over 60% reduction when Dalton McGuinty took office 13 years ago, why have we not even met that today? We've stalled. We've stalled at 25%. If we've stalled at 25%, it means the government isn't doing enough with those targets, it's not doing enough to enforce their rules, or their rules are unworkable.

Our plan in the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus is also to understand that businesses can advance innovation and improve efficiency more effectively than government ever could. We had a group—maybe I shouldn't bring them out onto the floor of the assembly—called Plasco. They were trying to use plasma gasification in order to effectively boil garbage and turn it into gas. It never really worked. The company has, I believe,

filed for bankruptcy, but it was in my community. What they were doing was trying to take waste and put it onto the grid. That was an innovative experiment. It may not necessarily have worked, but maybe the next group that tries this initiative will.

In essence, we do support this bill. We do want some changes to it, and we want to see further elements of our plans to be included in Bill 51, but we are pleased with some that are there. In essence, we remain opposed to all instances of unnecessary regulation, bureaucracy and government intervention, but we do encourage this government to set reasonable targets that they believe they can achieve—not like their budgetary stretch goals; not aspirational goals; real ones.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to be able to add my comments to the thoughtful remarks from the member from Nepean–Carleton on the bill before us, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, which I will remind the House is an enabling piece of legislation.

To the member's point about moving targets: I think she had said that they were elusive and never met, but that they looked good on paper. It's very interesting to think about targets with this government, because sometimes they're moving targets and sometimes they just aren't there at all. I think that that's disappointing for Ontarians, because if you don't have a goal, how will you know when you've achieved it? If you don't have clear targets, how will we know when we have met them? So I don't think we should be afraid to be clear about where we're headed.

We talk about a waste-free Ontario, and that's quite a vision. But if you can imagine a government-waste-free Ontario, to the member's point about scandals—imagine a true government-waste-free Ontario. If we think about Ornge and eHealth and the gas plants money, imagine that we could have made such a great difference and not just made great headlines. When we think about education and health care, and imagine how much stronger they would be were we not so laden down with government waste, it would be a very different kind of waste-free Ontario.

Again to the member from Nepean–Carleton: I appreciated hearing her talk about her father and her journey to this place. I think it's always interesting for us as members to appreciate where others have come from. I think it's a reminder that we are here on behalf of those who are going somewhere and other people's children. When we're talking about a waste-free Ontario and the kind of future we want to hand to our children, we should have real targets. We should have a clear vision for them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I like how you say that, Mr. Speaker.

I'm pleased to stand this afternoon and respond to some of the comments from the member from Nepean–Carleton on Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act.

As a former municipal councillor where so much of our time was spent on trying to find strategies to achieve the goals that both the province set and our municipality set for itself for waste diversion, I welcome this act and the changes it brings about.

It brings about some key changes in terms of ensuring that there are ongoing reviews of the strategies that are implemented, whether the targets are being met and giving that flexibility to alter course when something is working or not working.

As a consumer, I'm also quite happy to see the elimination of the eco fees, changing that system. Certainly, going into a store, purchasing a television or a computer monitor, you saw that fee there and you really, as a consumer, wondered where the money goes. As a city councillor, I understood the mechanism by which some of that money ended up being transferred to my municipality to help assist with waste diversion, but it wasn't clear in consumers' minds. So that is also a welcome part of it.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to put more onus on producers to deal with their products. I can tell you of a recent success story in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, where an organization called Brands For Canada actually secured an agreement with a major clothing manufacturer that previously took new product and sent it to landfill, rather than have their brand show up at discounts in stores. Now this charitable organization redistributes this brand-new brand clothing to Syrian refugees and others in need of good clothing. This is an excellent example of a manufacturer taking responsibility for what otherwise would be waste. This act will support more activities like that.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to offer comments and reflections upon the debate that was added to Hansard by our member from Nepean–Carleton. First of all, I congratulate her for taking a moment to reflect on the legacy that her father has left not only in her home community but clearly with her as well, striving to reduce waste and come forward with good, thoughtful policy. It's always wonderful to hear how members of family have impacted our members who are here today. So, thank you very much for doing that.

The other thing that I reflected upon when she was speaking was her focus on the "waste-free" title of this particular bill and how ironic it actually happens to be, because we're not getting rid of wasteful bureaucracy, and the member from Nepean–Carleton pointed it out very well. Just to go back and revisit that: We have too much red tape, and we have programs—in this particular case, eco programs—that have not improved the status of reducing, recycling and reusing. We need to move on to recovery, but that's a discussion for another day. We have a layer of bureaucracy that has handcuffed and stalled the diversion rate at a dismal 25% here in Ontario over the last decade, or the reign of this current Liberal government.

With that said, we need to think about how we can get better. We'll get better if we we're actually strong

enough to stand up and recognize mistakes—I'm speaking on behalf of the government—and totally get rid of WDO, instead of sliding it into this new authority that is going to be hand-chosen. Again, Speaker, we have a concern here about the new authority. In the manner in which the bill is written up, five members will be selected by the minister and they in turn will select another six. It's very dangerous territory.

1750

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is always a pleasure to stand in this House and bring the voice of my constituents of Windsor West to the debate. Today, we are debating Bill 151, the Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2015.

When my colleague from Oshawa got up to add comment to what the member from Nepean–Carleton had spoken to, she had helped summarize what the member from Nepean–Carleton was talking about, which was Liberal waste, government waste and the scandals and the misspending. She talked about how that affects our education system. We have seen funding cuts to the education system, and those cuts affect some of the great learning opportunities for our students, such as recycling programs. Many schools have top-notch recycling programs. Many of them are going for the designation of eco schools, which is a big designation. It's a real honour for students to receive that designation on behalf of their school.

In this bill, there's no guarantee that municipal blue box costs will go down. The provincial government has already downloaded too many costs onto municipalities. This bill might add more burdens to municipalities.

When we're talking about school boards, where their budgets are already stretched, and we want our future generations to be actively involved in and enthusiastic about things like recycling and waste reduction, we need to make sure that there aren't any unnecessary costs downloaded onto them and onto the city councils in our various areas. We need to make sure that they have the resources they need in order for our students to learn that they need to take great steps forward in reducing waste going into landfill. These are our future leaders, and we need to make sure that they have all the supports in place to support great programs like the Blue Box Program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Nepean–Carleton for her final comments.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to start off by saying thank you to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for his contribution in the debate.

To my colleagues from Windsor West, Oshawa and Huron–Bruce, I'd like to say a special thank you to the three of you. Not only did you acknowledge my father and how important he was to me, and his contributions to waste management, but what I really liked about your speeches was that you actually talked about the future.

I had a question today in question period about the next generation. We may not agree, in our two parties,

about how to get there, but at least we're talking about it. We're talking about the legacy we're going to leave the next generation, and how important it is, for example, that the resources we have today are handed down to them in a sustainable way, whether that is the budget and how it pertains to education, or whether that is our environment and how we make sure it's clean. You all spoke about that, and I really appreciated it.

This will be my somewhat plug for women in politics. It's always interesting, as we go—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Of course, my colleague beside me—your riding is the longest, so I'm saying your name; I know that's not the rule—Randy Hillier, has been I think one of the biggest champions for females in this assembly, especially with his fight against domestic abuse in rural Ontario, where it is most prevalent.

It was meant as no slight, but next year, we celebrate 100 years of women having the right to vote in Ontario. I think that's a significant thing, and I think it behooves us to mention that all the way.

I see my friend from Niagara Falls pointing, and he wants to be known as the man who's sitting between two women. We call him Wayne, the ladies' man.

Ladies and gentlemen, it was a real pleasure to be part of this debate. I always enjoy my Tuesdays. I know that I'm so far out of order, Speaker, that even the Clerk wants me to sit down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate the fact that the member from Nepean–Carleton finally decided to address the Chair in her comments. Thank you so very much for that.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now close to 6 o'clock, pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the Premier or the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Having said that, I turn it over now to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you, Speaker. Last week, I questioned the Premier on domestic violence, and women and their families living in fear in rural Ontario. We're here tonight because of the Premier's failure to address this crisis and this question. I had thought that this would be of such significant interest to the Premier that not just the parliamentary assistant would be here to respond.

However, in the Premier's response to me, she stated, "But I will not"—and I emphasize "will not"—"take lessons from this member on how to invest in and how to support the women of this province."

She also stated that it is in the DNA of her government to put protections in place for vulnerable people.

Speaker, let's take a look at how that's going, their protection of women and children living in fear.

A one-day snapshot survey found 3,459 residents in Ontario shelters that offer services to abused women. Some 54% of these residents were women, and 46% were dependent children of those women.

In 2010, there were almost 31,000 admissions of women and children to the shelters in Ontario that provided services for abused women.

Every six days in this country, a woman is killed by her intimate partner—one every six days.

Some 41% of abused women in shelters in Ontario stated that their most recent abusive situation had been brought to the attention of the police, but of these cases, in only 61% were charges laid.

In 2010, the rate of intimate partner homicide committed against females increased by 19%, the third increase in four years.

Every year, over 40,000 arrests result from domestic violence. That's 12% of all violent crime.

Some 53% of women escaping abusive situations were admitted with their children, and 65% of those children were under the age of 10.

Speaker, is this what the Premier meant by saying it's in her DNA to protect women and vulnerable people?

The Premier responded to me that she would not take lessons from me. She emphasized she would "not take lessons" from me.

Speaker, I've sat down many times with the executive director of the interval house in my riding. We've worked together and we've come up with a number of recommendations on how to address these failings. Let me read off some of these recommendations.

(1) Statements given by victims that are to be used for court processes should be reviewed, clarified and discussed so that victims are in a more confident position.

(2) If a court is double-booked or overbooked, it is critical that the victims be engaged before an alternate decision is made. The conditional discharge that often happens frees up court space, but it demonstrates no consideration for the victims.

(3) There must be an increased opportunity for police services and victims to influence the outcomes, based on the risk assessment and their knowledge of the accused, especially given rural realities and complexities.

(4) There should be a greater understanding for victims and offenders related to conditions. Will there be active monitoring, passive monitoring or no monitoring at all? There should be non-negotiable conditions for which a breach will result in arrest or re-arrest.

(5) Sentencing and outcomes must better reflect the seriousness of the offence.

Speaker, those are a few of the recommendations from the Lanark County Interval House. I know the Premier won't take lessons from me. Will she take lessons from the Lanark County Interval House even when I'm the messenger?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. The parliamentary assistant may have up to five minutes for a reply.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm, first of all, pleased to be able to speak in this special session and, as well, salute many of my colleagues on this side, including Minister MacCharles, Minister Jaczek, the MPPs for Cambridge, Burlington, Scarborough–Agincourt and Barrie and others who are here lending support.

Monsieur le Président, merci pour l'opportunité de discuter de cet enjeu important. Notre gouvernement reconnaît que la misogynie ancrée dans notre culture requiert que nous agissions. Nous devons changer la façon dont les gens sont sensibilisés face à cet enjeu. C'est un enjeu qui requiert que nous nous élevions au-delà du débat partisan.

It is incumbent on all of us to ensure that we elevate the dialogue around this issue, particularly as we are facing more and more challenges with regard to violence against women.

As the member opposite knows, the issue of violence against women is something that our government takes extremely seriously, and we are taking action.

C'est pour cela que notre gouvernement mène les efforts pour prévenir la violence basée sur le sexe de la personne. Pour s'assurer que toutes les femmes en Ontario vivent libres de menaces—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Deputy House leader, come to order.

M. Shafiq Qadri: —et de la peur de subir de la violence, nous avons lancé notre plan d'action. Ce n'est jamais acceptable, et nous investissons 41 millions de dollars au cours des trois prochaines années.

We have launched, for example, an advertising campaign that has tangibly improved attitudes and has been viewed over 84 million times. We've introduced legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing and through the civil claims process. We've increased funding for 42 sexual assault centres by approximately \$1.75 million; and for hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres by \$1.1 million.

Speaker, as you and Ontarians and my colleagues will appreciate, our 2016 budget will also invest \$100 million—I repeat, \$100 million over three years in our long-term strategy to end violence against indigenous women.

Our government is also taking real steps to address human trafficking by working with community groups that are already on the ground working hard to combat this issue. Building on the work of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we are bringing

together a multi-ministerial advisory panel, co-headed by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the minister responsible for women's issues. They will work closely with the experts on the front lines to bring forward a strategy that will benefit and deal with this particular area.

Monsieur le Président, enfin, comme je l'ai déjà dit, notre gouvernement considère la violence envers les femmes comme un problème extrêmement sérieux, et nous continuerons d'agir sur cet enjeu important.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank both members.

GO TRANSIT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Kitchener–Conestoga has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Transportation. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

We now turn it over to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker. I asked for this late show debate due to my complete dissatisfaction with the response I received relating to questions to the Premier on her all-day, two-way promises for GO service to and from Kitchener-Waterloo.

Specifically, I was seeking clarity as to why the people of Kitchener should believe the Premier's often repeated promise on all-day, two-way GO when there was a complete lack of timelines and details in the 2016 budget.

As well, I asked for further clarity as to the post-budget remarks made by the member for Kitchener Centre, indicating to CTV's Abigail Bimman that there will be a very substantial announcement on all-day, two-way GO before the summer.

Again the question was, Mr. Speaker, what was so substantial about this supposed announcement that it didn't make its way into the budget?

Not only did the minister make no attempt whatsoever to answer my direct questions, he chose to muddy the waters even further by referencing (1) transit initiatives across the province when we in Kitchener continue to wait, (2) my voting record against tax-and-spend Liberal budgets and (3) our own leader's record.

First, I would ask the minister not to keep heaping insult on top of injury by continuing to remind us in Kitchener of the fact that while his government continues to invest in transportation needs in other parts of the province, we remain waiting in line, receiving empty words after empty promises that move us no closer to all-day, two-way GO enhancements that our commuters require.

Second, I don't vote for Liberal debt and deficit budgets that jack up taxes and wasteful spending and completely fail to deliver on services that we've been promised for years. Get back to me when you have a

budget that doesn't continue the woeful and wasteful trend of the last decade.

Third, we should be thankful for our leader's record in working as part of a previous Harper federal government to control spending and balance budgets to ensure there's more to invest in the vital priorities we all share, like health care and, yes, infrastructure among them. Just like our major infrastructure announcement in Kitchener-Waterloo, the LRT: The federal government fulfilled the promise of one-third commitment. Of course, the Liberals—a two-thirds promise—"Oh, but we're going to pull a third, sticking it to local taxpayers."

But look, I've got to get back to the background that brought us here today and the questions that I'd voiced earlier this morning. Speaker, it has now been close to two years since the Premier came down to Kitchener to make a pre-election promise, re-announcing the addition of Kitchener GO train service after having cancelled it in 2010 and committing to all-day, two-way GO. A few months later, she formed government, and she stated that more trains would be added immediately, adding that the full two-way service will take a couple of years.

Her then-Minister of Transportation, now the Minister of the Environment, doubled down on that commitment, but in the true spirit of Liberal stretch promises, stretched the timeline to five years.

Since that time, we've seen the Wynne Liberals make countless visits down to our area, speaking to the importance of talks and discussions, even as the transport minister admitted to me in committee that there are a lot of announcements and commitments that governments and MPPs make during elections that are aspirational in nature. That's a stretch in every sense of the word.

Then in November, we learned what a stretch it was when the member for Kitchener Centre reported that all-day, two-way GO was not five but actually more like 10 years away, accompanied by a sob story about federal jurisdictional hurdles in their way, as if they weren't aware of those issues when they first made their commitments to garner votes. Then, instead of the enhanced services that we were promised, we were hit with the highest fare hike in the province for the inadequate service they've left us with. It's the old pay more, get less, Speaker.

And so it goes on. While we in Kitchener continue to wonder if the trains will ever pull into the station, we see other areas receive their regional express rail expansions as we continue to wait, which brings us back to the 2016 budget, a budget that the Kitchener Centre MPP told reporters knocked her socks off due to the series of mentions of Kitchener-Waterloo in the text.

Well, as I indicated this morning, talk is cheap, and I would advise the member to keep her socks on because empty words aren't bringing the trains to Kitchener any faster. The budget does absolutely nothing to move us closer to the delivery of this vital transit upgrade we were promised years ago. You would think that after two years, they would have gotten around to an agreement with freight partners that the budget says is key to

delivering all-day, two-way. It's one thing to make promises, but a budget document is where a government spells out detailed plans and timelines. I thought that we would have seen more than discussions and hoped-for agreements that continue to leave us at the curb.

Today's lack of clear response leaves me believing that it's more the latter: all talk, no action.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation has up to five minutes to respond.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to address the member's question.

As the minister has said on many occasions in this House, we know how important public transit is to managing congestion, connecting people to jobs and building communities. That is why our government is making the single largest transit and transportation infrastructure investment in Ontario's history through the Moving Ontario Forward plan.

This is a plan that will invest \$13.5 billion in improvements across the GO Transit network to both increase ridership and reduce travel times. Over the next 10 years, commuters can expect more than a doubling of peak service and a quadrupling of off-peak service, compared to today. Weekly trips across the entire GO rail network are expected to grow from close to 1,500 trips to nearly 6,000 trips.

Speaker, as a representative of the Waterloo region, as well as the parliamentary assistant, I would be remiss if I didn't take a minute to stress the importance of the government's plan to deliver on GO regional express rail, especially and particularly on our promise to deliver two-way, all-day GO service to the Waterloo region.

We're already delivering on this commitment. In 2014, we acquired 53 kilometres of track between Kitchener and Georgetown because we know that ownership of the railway corridor gives the GO trains traffic priority and supports our ongoing expansion and improvement plans.

This past August, Minister Del Duca announced that we would be adding 14 additional midday, off-peak trains on the Kitchener corridor from Mount Pleasant station to Union Station. We will continue to find ways to work with CN, who owns a portion of the Kitchener line, to meet our two-way, all-day commitment.

The member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who at every opportunity has voted against budgets that support growth in his community, is fond of believing that major infrastructure projects can be built in the blink of an eye. But we continue to deliver on a promise that we have always said would take a certain period of time.

What I find most ironic, however, Speaker, is that the member opposite continues to criticize our government—a government which has a bold and ambitious plan—instead of asking his own leader a few fundamental questions.

Time and again, the opposition neglects to tell Ontarians exactly how they intend to fund transportation infrastructure. This leads me to believe that they're also neglecting to tell Ontarians exactly which projects they would be so willing to cancel, if they had the chance.

Instead of criticizing a bold plan that will transform his community, the member from Kitchener–Conestoga should be asking his leader, "What is your plan?" Because day after day and debate after debate, in questions asked during question period, what the opposition continues to do, time and again, is to make it abundantly clear they have no plan.

Speaker, our government believes in a strong plan to build Ontario up. We will continue to deliver tangible results to the communities across this province, including the communities in Waterloo region.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1813.

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
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
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 Anti-Racism 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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	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)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Continued from back cover

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Rideau Carleton Raceway	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	7711
Dimitra Daskalos	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	7711
Newmarket Riverwalk Commons	
Mr. Chris Ballard	7711
Bill Guthrie	
Mr. Lorne Coe	7712
Whippet Good	
Ms. Cindy Forster	7712
Paul Palleschi	
Ms. Harinder Malhi	7712
Heather East	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7713
Georgian College	
Ms. Ann Hoggarth	7713
Ontario budget	
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	7713

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

Standing Committee on Government Agencies	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7713
Report deemed adopted	7714
Standing Committee on Social Policy	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	7714
Report adopted	7714
Standing Committee on General Government	
Mr. Grant Crack	7714
Report adopted	7714

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Health care funding	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7714
Accident benefits	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	7714
Lung health	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	7714
Health care funding	
Mr. Steve Clark	7715
Privatization of public assets	
Ms. Cindy Forster	7715
Elder abuse	
Ms. Soo Wong	7715

Landfill	
Mr. Ernie Hardeman	7716
Health care funding	
Mme France Gélinas	7716
Lung health	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	7716
Ontario Drug Benefit Program	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7716
Ontario Northland Transportation Commission	
Mme France Gélinas	7717
Water fluoridation	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	7717

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Time allocation	
Hon. James J. Bradley	7717
Mr. John Yakabuski	7719
Mr. Gilles Bisson	7720
Ms. Jennifer K. French	7722
Mr. Wayne Gates	7724
Mme France Gélinas	7725
Vote deferred	7726
Waste-Free Ontario Act, 2016, Bill 151, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2016 favorisant un Ontario sans déchets, projet de loi 151, M. Murray	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7727
Ms. Peggy Sattler	7727
Hon. James J. Bradley	7727
Mr. Steve Clark	7727
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	7728
Mrs. Julia Munro	7728
Ms. Peggy Sattler	7729
Ms. Soo Wong	7730
Mr. Jim McDonnell	7730
Ms. Cindy Forster	7730
Mrs. Julia Munro	7730
Ms. Peggy Sattler	7731
Mrs. Amrit Mangat	7732
Mr. Lorne Coe	7732
Mme France Gélinas	7732
Mr. Chris Ballard	7733
Ms. Peggy Sattler	7733
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	7733
Ms. Jennifer K. French	7735
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	7735
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7735
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	7736
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	7736
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	7736

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE / DÉBAT SUR
LA MOTION D'AJOURNEMENT**

Domestic violence / Violence familiale

Mr. Randy Hillier 7736

Mr. Shafiq Qadri 7737

GO Transit

Mr. Michael Harris 7738

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry 7739

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 1 March 2016 / Mardi 1^{er} mars 2016

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act, 2016, Bill 172, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2016 sur l'atténuation du changement climatique et une économie sobre en carbone, projet de loi 172, M. Murray

Hon. Michael Gravelle	7689
Mr. Arthur Potts	7689
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7698
Mr. Michael Mantha	7698
Ms. Eleanor McMahon.....	7698
Mr. Steve Clark	7699
Mr. Arthur Potts	7699
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	7699

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman	7699
Hon. Bob Chiarelli	7699
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	7699
Hon. Michael Chan	7700
Hon. Bill Mauro	7700
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	7700
Mr. Chris Ballard	7700
Ms. Ann Hoggarth.....	7700
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	7700
Hon. Dipika Damerla	7700
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	7700

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Ontario budget

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	7700
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	7700

Northern Ontario

Mr. Patrick Brown.....	7701
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7701

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	7702
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....	7702
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7703

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Mr. Jagmeet Singh	7703
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7703

Ontario Drug Benefit Program

Mr. Jeff Yurek.....	7704
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7704

Hospital funding

Mme France Gélinas.....	7704
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7704

Health care funding

Ms. Daiene Vernile	7705
Hon. Eric Hoskins	7705

Ontario budget

Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	7706
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	7706

Education funding

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky.....	7706
Hon. Liz Sandals	7707

Affordable housing

Mrs. Amrit Mangat.....	7707
Hon. Ted McMeekin	7707

Assistance to farmers

Mr. Toby Barrett	7708
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	7708

Water quality

Mme France Gélinas	7708
Hon. David Zimmer	7709

Economic development

Mr. Yvan Baker.....	7709
Hon. Brad Duguid	7709

GO Transit

Mr. Michael Harris.....	7710
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	7710

Answers to written questions

Mr. Michael Harris.....	7710
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7711
Hon. James J. Bradley	7711

Correction of record

Hon. Jeff Leal.....	7711
---------------------	------

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	7711
----------------------------	------

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	7711
-------------------------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover