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(Hansard)**

Thursday 24 March 2016

Jeudi 24 mars 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Thursday 24 March 2016

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 24 mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S TRAILS
ACT, 2016**

**LOI DE 2016 SUR LE SOUTIEN
AUX SENTIERS DE L'ONTARIO**

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 18, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi édictant la Loi de 2016 sur les sentiers de l'Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Good morning, everyone. As the Ontario PC critic for tourism, culture and sport, it's an honour for me to rise on behalf of Her Majesty's official opposition to give our leadoff speech on Bill 100, An Act to enact the Ontario Trails Act, 2016 and to amend various Acts, or as the bill has been more commonly referred to, the Ontario Trails Act, 2015.

Off the top, I just want to say that it's really with mixed emotions that I'm standing here today. On one hand, as the MPP for Leeds–Grenville, I'm always so very eager to raise awareness about the hundreds of kilometres of year-round trails that run through my riding. I could spend an hour speaking about these trails and why everyone in Ontario should take some time, visit my riding and experience these wonderful recreational opportunities. But I can't do that, Speaker.

I can't do that because I have a responsibility as a member of this Legislature to discuss the very serious concerns I have with Bill 100 and how the bill is actually a threat to Ontario trails. I'm going to outline why the bill's method of establishing easements for trails on private property—this is very important—actually overshadows some of the very positive aspects that are in the Ontario Trails Act.

I want to acknowledge right off the top—right at the very beginning of the speech—that there are some very good things in this legislation. As my leader has said many times, if there are some things that are good for Ontario—no matter who brings them up in the Legis-

lature—we should mention it, and I want to acknowledge that there are some good things in this bill that we want to support. However, there are some things that I think are raising very valid concerns.

Our party, I think most people acknowledge, is a very strong advocate of the incredible trail system that our province boasts today. In Ontario, the system is made up of some 2,500 individual trails that stretch over 80,000 kilometres through some of the most beautiful scenery we have in this province. Our caucus supports initiatives that would enhance and expand this network of trails. We understand that these trails can play an important role in encouraging Ontarians to lead healthy, active lives.

When we talk about our ability to control health care spending, there's no question that prevention measures are absolutely the best investment we can make. A healthier, more active population is something that we all want to see. And if we want to talk just straight economics, we all know that trails are so very good for our economy. Already, Ontario's network of trails help to generate an estimated \$2 billion—that's billion with a B—in economic activity in this province.

Whether they live in Ontario or are coming from another part of Canada or from somewhere else in the world, people are eager to get out and explore our province and our province's trail system. There's no better way to do it than by hiking, biking, skiing, riding a snowmobile or an ATV or a horse, or even paddling a canoe or kayak on one of our world-class trails, especially—I have to give a plug—in my great riding of Leeds–Grenville, because we've got some great things happening in the riding.

I'm going to speak later about how Bill 100 can benefit Ontario's trails, and those outstanding organizations and individuals who maintain and promote them. The minister mentioned last month in his lead-off that there are almost 1,000 clubs in every corner of the province playing an active role in looking after our trail system. I want to take this opportunity this morning to personally thank these volunteers for their dedication and for their tireless work to make sure those 80,000 kilometres of trails are accessible and are safe for all Ontarians to enjoy.

In fact, the reason that I have such mixed emotions about this bill is based on what I'm hearing from some of those volunteers. Over the past few months, they've been telling me that Bill 100 is actually a threat to the future of our trails network.

When we debate legislation in this House, usually we're talking about the impact a bill is going to have if it

gets passed into law. That's what we usually talk about. As opposition MPPs, it's our job to outline the possible problems we believe legislation will create if it gets passed as is. Maybe some of the government members might even rise today to tell us how unfounded some of my concerns or my colleagues' concerns are, and that they're going to be okay. But what we're seeing, and this is what the crux of the issue is today, is something completely different with Bill 100. Even though we're in the very early stages of debate on second reading, the bill has already had an impact on trails in this province, and for reasons I'm about to get into, unfortunately the impact is not a good one for those who maintain and enjoy using Ontario trails.

We can think of any trail network as being like the links in a chain, so think about that when I'm speaking this morning. If those links are intact, the bond is strong. We know that in Ontario, many sections of trails run on private property. That means the links in that chain are held together by a relationship between the property owner and the trail group. The fact that we have such an incredible network of trails linked in Ontario is all the proof that we need to know that the system's working. But Bill 100 changes the dynamic in the relationship between property owners and trails groups. It's a dramatic change.

What we've seen already happening is that the links in the chain that are trying to hold this trails network together—some of them have gone missing. The chain is broken, and what is happening with these relationships is a direct result of concerns that property owners have with schedule 1 of the Ontario Trails Act that we're debating this morning.

I'm asking you, Speaker, and I'm asking members this morning to think about that. We've only had one hour of debate—well, we'll have two hours after I'm finished this morning—and we've already had concerns about this bill that have shut down some trail sections. In many other cases, trail groups have been put on notice by property owners that if Bill 100 does pass as is, they'll be locking their gates too.

That's not idle speculation from the opposition benches about what might happen; it's the reality. It's what's happening right now in Ontario. Snowmobile and ATV clubs in my riding of Leeds–Grenville and other parts of the province are dealing with this issue today, after just one hour of debate, and it all has to do with the fact that schedule 1 of Bill 100 creates a process for the establishment of easements and covenants.

0910

Before I get into any detail on the specific concerns with those easement provisions, I want to recap, because I think it's very important for the debate today, how we got to this point.

Most of us in the Legislature know that the Ontario Trails Act was tabled for first reading almost a year ago. In fact, it was May 12, 2015. Bill 100 languished on the order paper without much notice throughout the fall session. It wasn't called for debate by the time the House

rose in December. Certainly it was a bit of a surprise to me. After all, the bill was prominent. It was featured prominently in the minister's mandate letter from Premier Wynne. Introducing trails legislation is listed as the very first priority for the minister: "creating a healthier Ontario through sport and active recreation." But as I said, this bill was flying under the radar throughout the fall session.

It wasn't until we were preparing to come back to Queen's Park after Family Day that I began to receive the first rumbles of concern. In late January and early February, my office was hearing daily from snowmobile and ATV club officials about the increasing number of property owners who were threatening to tear up trail access agreements. As I mentioned, some were actually notifying the clubs that they were closing off access immediately. That is not perceived; it actually happened.

This e-mail from Greg Potvin, who is president of the Thousand Island ATV Club in the Gananoque area, was typical of what I was hearing:

"As president of the Thousand Island ATV Club we are being bombarded with requests from landowners to shut down our trail system...."

"The landowner agreements for the Ontario Federation of All Terrain Vehicles can be a delicate one. Most of our agreements come with a one-year trial.

"Luckily we have not had an issue and have not lost a single part of our trail due to abuse. However the minute Bill 100 was presented to us in a newspaper article, we are struggling to survive.

"The bill will not only make it hard to keep what we have right now but it will make it impossible for us to create a much larger trail system.

"With the ATV and power sports industry growing with much-needed trails that you yourself have played a part in will be gone forever.

"I understand what the bill is trying to do but it is more damaging than good. Our goal is to have one ATV trail system across Ontario for the enjoyment of the outdoor enthusiast.

"This bill will bring that goal to its knees.

"As a small club in a rural farm community if this passes the second reading we will be done. I know of a few other larger clubs who might be in the same situation, but I will let them speak for themselves.

"So I ask you to think about your stance on this issue and realize the negative impact it will have on all trail systems.

"Any encouragement you can give to stop Bill 100 would be appreciated by myself and our club.

"Yours truly,

"Greg Potvin, president,

"Thousand Island ATV Club."

As I said, that was one of the many e-mails, calls and letters I received. The bottom line from each of them was that Bill 100 may be well-intended, but as Greg wrote, "it is more damaging than good."

There's something else that jumped out at me in Greg's e-mail. That was the fact that his club hadn't even

heard about the trails bill until a newspaper article appeared in late January. Local snowmobile clubs told me the very same thing, exactly the same thing. Not one of the property owners who were calling and stopping into my constit office knew anything about Bill 100 either. I know the minister in his lead-off talked about the consultation process that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport undertook before the legislation was tabled, but let's take a closer look at just what this consultation looked like.

First off, those discussions the minister referred to in his lead took place way back in the fall of 2013. Based on what the clubs and property owners in my riding were reporting to me, they obviously weren't part of them. I certainly don't recall meetings at the Athens snowmobile club or the Grenville snowmobile club to let their club members and the property owners whose lands their trails cross know that they were going on. Nobody knew. Of course, even if they were brought into the conversation back in 2013, what good would it have done? They weren't discussing a bill and its specific provision to fundamentally alter the relationship between trail groups and property owners.

What they were discussing was the concept of legislation to promote and enhance the Ontario trails network. So of course ministry staff were going to return with plenty of reports that groups were supportive of a concept to raise awareness and public support about trails. In the absence of something specific, who is actually going to disagree? Who is actually going to disagree at one of those consultations?

I'm always frustrated with this government and their view of what meaningful consultation actually looks like. Taking a vague idea for a bill to promote and enhance trail usage out for a tour and then posting it for comment doesn't represent consultation. People can't provide comment until they actually know what you're proposing.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: The minister can have his two minutes to comment after I'm done. I can't wait to hear what he has to say.

The government's approach to consultation would be bad enough at any time, but it's absolutely shameful when it's combined with the arrogant way this Liberal government manages the legislative process once a bill is introduced. We see them invoke closure more and more often to choke off consultation and debate in this Legislature. What they actually do is deprive our members of a chance to tell the government what our constituents are actually saying about pieces of legislation. Then, after they've programmed a bill at second reading, the government schedules a few days of hearings at Queen's Park. Holding them here in Toronto, once again, makes it almost impossible for Ontarians outside this bubble to be involved.

Let's use Bill 100, which is in front of us today, as an example of the process this government is following. Its so-called consultation took place two years ago. We've started debate, and I expect we'll get notice shortly that

the bill is going to be programmed. I suspect the minister has already had a chat with the government House leader, and the motion is probably drafted, for all I know. Even though this legislation is having a huge effect on rural Ontario, they'll probably have a couple of hearing dates scheduled for Toronto. They certainly won't agree with what I want to see. I've said it many times: I want to see a committee that travels to some parts of this province where the actual legislation is causing concern.

We had a short meeting with the minister the other day after question period, with my friends from Parry Sound–Muskoka, from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and from Nipissing. I'd really love the government to actually have some meaningful travelling hearings dates where this bill is actually causing concern. But, you know, the very last thing this government wants to do is provide an opportunity for Ontarians to validate what I'm saying.

I'm going to wait and see. I'm still convinced that the government will operate like they do with every other bill. There will be coffee-cup type hearings—there will be a couple of days; it won't be very much. Then, after we table our amendments—they'll probably get shot down; I hope they won't—the bill will come back for third reading, it will get programmed and off they go, just like that. The minister can sit back and check a box in his mandate letter that he has done it, without any concern for snowmobile clubs and ATV clubs, and they will be left to deal with the fallout.

It's a shameful process, and it completely excludes the voices of rural and northern Ontario on an issue that concerns them greatly. If government members wonder why they have such a huge credibility problem, I suggest that I've outlined a way they can deal with it in rural and northern Ontario. I really hope that we start having some meaningful travel and meaningful discussion at the committee level on some bills.

Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to return to the fallout from Bill 100 that happened as MPPs were preparing to come back for the spring session. I said earlier that ATV and snowmobile clubs in particular were facing a major problem. Their trails were being shut down right at the very point when we were starting to get some actual winter weather conditions in eastern Ontario. Suddenly, property gates were being locked. As a result, sections of trails in Leeds–Grenville were closed for public access. Instead of being out there grooming trails, club volunteers were forced to talk to property owners, to plead with them. There was a lot of pleading going on in rural Ontario for those property owners to allow clubs to be able to access those trails.

0920

As the opposition critic, I was being contacted by clubs in other parts of Ontario that were experiencing the same thing. The member for Nickel Belt actually mentioned that this was happening in her riding during the questions-and-comments section of the minister's lead-off. I know, and I mentioned earlier, that my colleagues from Parry Sound–Muskoka and Nipissing were dealing with the same issue I was.

That's why I felt I had to act, Speaker. That's why on February 8 I wrote to Minister Coteau. I told him he had a problem on his hands with Bill 100, and I asked him to take it off the table. Given that we were talking about a piece of legislation that clearly hadn't been a priority for the government, I didn't think that was an unreasonable request, given what was happening in rural Ontario. This bill had sat on the order paper throughout the fall session and had not been called. It seemed reasonable, in my opinion, to ask the minister to take a step back, to get out there and meet with these groups, these snowmobile and ATV clubs, these property owners who were concerned with the bill.

Taking that initiative to have some meaningful consultation would have been a sign of good faith. It would have shown both sides of the issue, both property owners and trail groups, that the minister took it seriously. I truly believe that if the minister had chosen to take my advice and had decided to do what I asked, those questions and concerns on Bill 100 could have been addressed. The people would feel like their voices weren't ignored and that they weren't shut out of the process during that so-called consultation process two years ago on Bill 100.

I just can't for the life of me understand why the ministry would not want to take that advice and would not want to try to stop those gates from being locked. So, you know, it is what it is, Speaker. He didn't take my advice; he didn't take my suggestions. Those property gates in many cases are still locked, and others are threatening to follow suit if this bill does pass.

I've read Bill 100 so many times, and I know what schedule 1, section 12 says about easements. In fact, here's exactly what subsection 12(3) states, and this is very important to the discussion we are having this morning. Subsection 12(3): "An owner of land may grant an easement, with or without covenants, to one or more eligible bodies." To the minister, the word "may" is the key word here; it means that a granting of an easement is voluntary. So, in his mind, as minister, he thinks the problem is solved. I understand that no property owner who currently has an access or a land-use agreement with an ATV or a snowmobile club or any other trail organization will wake up one day with an easement suddenly in place. I know that that's not going to happen.

I want to stress that I'm not only saying it in the House today. When the trails in my riding were threatened with closure, I was doing what I could, I felt, to keep them open for the season. In fact, I wrote a letter to my snowmobile clubs in the riding and asked them to take it to property owners who were locking their gates. I'm going to read the letter that I sent, because I think it's important to know that outside of the House I was saying the same thing that I'm saying this morning. Here was what I said in my letter at the time:

"It is my understanding that Bill 100, if passed, will not automatically convert existing land-use agreements a property owner has with your club into an easement registered on title. That process would be voluntary.

"Nonetheless, I remain concerned that questions about this legislation threaten to put even more of Ontario's trail network at risk....

"Legislation to establish in law a new process to create trail easements represents a fundamental change to the relationship between property owners and trails groups.

"Clearly, the government should have recognized the potential for these concerns before tabling Bill 100 last May.

"Unfortunately, Minister Coteau has failed to heed my request to delay second reading, which began on February 18.

"As the opposition critic on this file, I'm going to continue to press the minister to hold direct consultations with those affected by this bill.

"We will also be proposing amendments to clarify the parts of Bill 100 that have caused property owners to terminate access agreements with your club and others.

"In the meantime, Minister Coteau has offered to have his ministry staff connect directly with property owners or trail groups to address their questions.

"I'd be pleased to put any of your club members or land-use-agreement holders in touch with the ministry."

It's important that I say that, because I was saying the same thing to property owners who were coming into my office, who attended my constit office in Brockville. They wanted me to tell them what to do about access, and my response was the same: "The bill won't force an easement, so give me some time. Give me some time to work on this with the government."

I told them that if I couldn't get the bill taken off the table, I'd fight to make sure there were some changes. I certainly wasn't trying to stoke the fear of property owners, so I can stand here today and tell the minister that even more trails in my riding were closed down.

But even if we all agree that easements are voluntary, the minister has failed to recognize why there is such a concern out there. They begin—and I said it before—with the word "may." In my opinion, this leaves this section of the bill far too open for confusion. It's all well and good for the minister to say that the word "may" is clear enough in his mind, but it's not his property we're talking about.

At a minimum, we want to keep those trails open and reopen the sections that were shut down. If we want that, we need to rewrite this section of Bill 100. The legislation must clearly state that any easement agreements will be voluntary: not "may," Speaker, but "will."

Even better, the minister could incorporate the same language into the bill that he used in a statement he released in an attempt to quell the fears of property owners. That is, "an easement pursuant to Bill 100, if passed, would be a voluntary agreement between a landowner and an eligible body or bodies. No property owner would be compelled to provide an easement unless they agreed to do so." That's the minister's own words, Speaker. They should be incorporated in the bill.

I'm pleased the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs has also recognized the problem with this section

of the legislation. In a March 10 letter to the minister, Mike Clewer, director of strategy and business development with OFSC, wrote:

“We do, however, believe that Bill 100 would be much more palatable to our important landowner partners should section 12 be amended to provide greater clarity to the areas that are causing concern.

“As a consequence, we would be very supportive of any process for consultation and action that would accomplish this.”

The letter also makes clear what I've been talking about this morning: There is just so much at risk with this bill. OFSC notes that it manages 32,000 kilometres of groomed trail in Ontario, 60% of which is under land use agreements. Writes Mr. Clewer, “The threat caused by uncertainties about Bill 100 is all too real and it risks our ability to continue generating the \$1.7 billion in economic activity snowmobiling brings to Ontario each year.”

The OFSC is right, Speaker. Those land use agreements are the backbone of the trails network in Ontario, and they exist only because of the years of trust and mutual respect that have developed between those property owners and those trails organizations.

These agreements are not negotiated with lawyers or real estate agents representing the parties. They're worked out over a cup of coffee at the kitchen table, and they're sealed with a handshake, representing both parties. Property owners open their gates. They allow trails to cross their land because they know and they respect these organizations, Speaker. Property owners maintain their trails and work together with trails organizations, and for the most part, they are their friends. They are their neighbours. They want to provide access and they're comfortable doing it because if there's a problem, they can just pick up the phone and they can just deal with it.

Bill 100 fundamentally alters the dynamic, because it introduces the government into the picture through a formal process to create easements—and not just any government, Speaker: this Liberal government, one with a well-established track record of running roughshod over rural Ontario and the people who live there in the pursuit of their agenda.

0930

Don't take my word for it; just visit any rural community that has had an industrial wind farm forced on it after declaring themselves an unwilling host. We saw this happen once again with the recent latest wind farm contracts that were announced.

Here's a quote for you, Speaker. Here's what Mayor François St. Amour of the municipality The Nation had to say about this government's lack of respect for rural Ontarians. Here is His Worship's quote:

“Since we declared ourselves unwilling hosts, we thought we had it made ... Because there was some talk in the last provincial election that they would honour municipalities that declared themselves unwilling. But I guess that was just another electoral promise.” Mayor St. Amour was responding to the fact that his unwilling municipality will now get a 32-megawatt wind farm.

Another eastern Ontario municipality that declared itself an unwilling host is North Stormont—there's my friend from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. North Stormont is getting a 100-megawatt wind farm. That's the kind of behaviour that causes rural property owners to distrust this government and what they're doing. It's why they fear what's lurking in sections of this legislation that hinge upon the word “may.”

Postmedia's Jim Merriam, whose columns on rural Ontario appear in many, many newspapers, examined this distrust when he wrote about Bill 100 this month. He started out by noting Bill 100 isn't a conspiracy by the government to confiscate private property, but he continues. Here's his quote:

“If Bill 100 ... was not hatched out of a conspiracy it must have resulted from incompetence, breathtaking incompetence.

“Who in their right mind would gather 250 organizations together to begin crafting a bill to support and sustain the vast system of trails throughout Ontario and not include a single landowner?”

It's true. Jim is very much in touch with what's on the mind of rural Ontarians. He knows the fallout that's going to happen if Bill 100 passes the way it is. That's why he called on urban Ontarians to speak out. Here's his quote about that:

“The residents of cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, London and North Bay should be just as upset as rural landowners about Bill 100.

“Many of those landowners are likely to start closing trails across their land, up to and including sections of one of Ontario's greatest assets, the Bruce Trail, if this bill isn't repealed.

“With help from city folks who have an interest in trails as well as an interest in what's best for the province; rural Ontario might have a chance to get through to Queen's Park on this critical issue.”

I've discussed the problem with the wording on section 12 that deals with the granting of easements. However, that's not the only part of the section that's a concern to property owners. Subsection 8 states:

“Assignment

“(8) An easement may be assigned by an eligible body to another eligible body, but the assignment must be in writing and must be registered....”

Again, this has a major impact on property rights, and it's a big change in the relationship between property owners and these trails groups. Under the legislation, eligible bodies are defined as including some of the following: the crown; an agency, board or commission of the crown; a municipality; a school board; a conservation authority; or a charitable organization. There are many other groups on the list, too.

Let me be clear about what this section means. If a property owner enters into an easement agreement with one organization, that agreement can be transferred by the organization to another. You can understand why this would have alarm bells going off among property owners. Many feel comfortable formalizing an easement

agreement with an organization like a snowmobile or ATV club, but there's no way they would have that comfort if the easement was suddenly transferred to a municipality or a conservation authority, for example.

They like their agreement the way it is, but, ultimately, many have expressed to me that they would be uncomfortable with a transfer. Again, I simply fail to understand why the transferability is included in the legislation. If any member from the government side wants to clarify that, I'd be more than happy to listen to their explanation. I can't imagine anyone agreeing to sign an easement with such unpredictability about who might end up holding it.

On that basis, I see no reason to include assignment provisions in the legislation. In fact, I call on the minister to agree with me that the entire section dealing with easements should be removed from Bill 100. That would provide the assurance to give property owners the comfort to restore those land use agreements and it would ensure that the links in Ontario's chain of trails stay strong and stay connected.

I have to say I was disappointed, given the controversy expressed about easements, that the minister didn't really address the issue in any form of detail during his lead-off. That left the work to his parliamentary assistant. I mean no insult to my neighbour, the member for Kingston and the Islands. We work together on a number of issues, but Ontarians deserve to hear directly from the minister about why easements were included in this part of the bill.

We certainly didn't hear it either from his PA. In fact, her remarks, in trying to defend the inclusion of section 12, ended up proving why it's such a problem. She said that we need to provide this method of establishing easements because, without them, "trail managers may lose access to the land. or face costly rerouting." Well, Speaker, I can tell you exactly what those trail managers are dealing with right now. They're having to deal with rerouting; they're having to deal with sections that are closed. Exactly what she said it should be there for is what's causing the absolute opposite effect.

She went on to say, "Setting out a mechanism for trail easements would help address this issue." No, it's not going to address the issue. As I've explained, if the bill passes, it's going to make matters worse. We're trying to fix a problem with this bill that doesn't exist. The bill has caused trail sections to be closed down. It has caused those friendly agreements to be cancelled.

There are some other things that troubled me in the remarks that day of the government's lead-off. The PA dismissed the concerns expressed by property owners about the bill as merely confusion based on what she called "misinformation." At the same time, she noted that the easements were necessary because they align "with stakeholder requests for a legislative mechanism to allow trail easements."

The message here is that during the government's consultation, some trail groups and organizations thought easements would be a good idea, but what about the other side of the equation, Speaker? The people who actually

give those agreements on their land, the people who actually have those trails cross their private property, weren't the ones who were consulted. I think most people on the other side acknowledge that those property owners weren't consulted about this easement provision in the legislation. The government now says that they must be confused, but they were never consulted. I ask you: Is it any wonder why there's this level of distrust when those voices were not part of the consultations two and a half years ago?

Before I move on, in the time I have left I want to discuss some of the other details in Bill 100. I want to be clear what I wanted to see in order to give this bill my support: First, we need the minister to accept the invitation of my caucus to attend meetings. We spoke to him again yesterday about meetings in Nipissing and Parry Sound–Muskoka, so I take him at his word on the floor of the House that his staff are going to have those meetings. There are concerned ridings, there are public meetings and we think the ministry needs to deliver on their promise to see those people.

We need to revisit section 12 in schedule 1 of the bill. As I've said, I'd like to see that section removed entirely, but at the very least the language needs to state clearly that any easement is voluntary and that no property owner would be compelled to sign one.

Finally, I'd like a commitment from the government that the minister is going to support my call to hold committee meetings in rural and northern parts of Ontario.

I'm going to take a significant amount of the time I have left to talk about some of the things we support in the bill. As I said at the outset, I'm largely supportive of what I see in schedules 2 through 6. The schedules contain amendments to five separate pieces of legislation: the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act, the Occupiers' Liability Act, the Off-Road Vehicles Act, the Public Lands Act and the Trespass to Property Act.

I want to particularly say that I was pleased to see that Bill 100 does strengthen the Trespass to Property Act to give more protection to property owners. The bill does incorporate measures that my caucus colleague the member for Dufferin–Caledon, Sylvia Jones, put forward in her private member's Bill 36, the Respecting Private Property Act, 2014.

0940

If passed, Bill 100 would eliminate the current \$1,000 limit on compensation for damages. There's no question that that \$1,000 limit, set in 1980, was completely inadequate in compensating property owners for damage caused by a trespasser. If passed, it would raise the maximum fine for anyone convicted of trespassing under the act to \$10,000. Currently, the maximum level is set at \$2,000, a figure that was established, I was told, in 1989, 27 years ago. Again, I think we all agree \$10,000 is a more acceptable deterrent, and it's overdue that we establish this higher ceiling. It's a message that an offence of trespassing is one that is taken seriously by the courts.

I know that farmers I represent in Leeds–Grenville have questioned—we met with the Ontario Federation of

Agriculture yesterday in our caucus lounge for a breakfast meeting. I think most farmers wanted more of Ms. Jones's Bill 36 to be adopted. The OFA, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, has called for a minimum fine of \$500 to be set, something that the member for Dufferin-Caledon included in her bill. In our meeting yesterday with the OFA, they also pushed for the Trespass to Property Act to give police broader powers to focus on farm safety and biosecurity implications associated with trespassing.

Under section 5 of the bill, there are actually some significant updates to the Public Lands Act in order to enhance the protection to crown lands and strengthen enforcement. The bill adds section 69.2 to the act, which states that any person who causes prescribed damage to crown land or crown property on crown land is guilty of an offence, but it's important to note that the prescribed damage isn't defined. That's being left up to regulation. Again, these updated protection and enforcement measures are necessary, but it shows that the government is going to deal with at least part of this bill through regulation. It's going to ensure that those who cause damage to our treasured public resources are going to face, I believe, more appropriate consequences than before this bill was tabled. It would include not only the fines but it would also empower the court to order someone convicted to rehabilitate or repair the damage.

If the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry were required to do the work, the amendments would allow the government to recoup any cost in court. Further, we see amendments to increase the majority of penalties for offences under the act, including maximum fine for first-time offenders and higher fines for repeated convictions.

There is one other change with regard to penalties under the act that I want to mention. In addition to higher maximum fines, the act is amended to allow that anyone who gained a monetary benefit from an offence on public lands would be handed a fine equal to that benefit. In terms of enforcing these new provisions designed to protect crown land, we see two major changes being brought in: First, MNRF officers empowered under the act will have new authority to stop vehicles and conduct inspections on crown lands; and it would give the officers the authority to arrest an individual without a warrant if they suspect that an offence under the act has been committed.

In terms of the changes to one of the other sections, the Occupiers' Liability Act, it's trying to reduce the risk of liability on trails groups and property owners. It clarifies that payment of a fee incidental to entering the trail or participating in an activity such as parking does not prevent the free-entry standard of care from applying to the individual. In other words, someone coming onto a trail under those circumstances, if the organization maintaining the trail has received public funding, does so at their own risk. So there's that liability risk factor that's there. Of course, the requirement of a trail organization to not intentionally injure a trail user or act with reckless disregard for their presence remains.

Having spent so much time earlier on the portion of section 100 dealing with easements, I should also high-

light some of the other components of schedule 1. I think most people will agree that, if passed, having the opportunity to proclaim an annual Trails Week in Ontario, which begins on the Monday before the first Saturday in June—it would coincide with International Trails Day. I think most people realize that a proclamation section of the bill—pretty warm and fuzzy, Speaker; I don't think you're going to get much anger on the opposition benches over that. The bill also would authorize the minister to recognize a trail as an Ontario trail of distinction, as well as establishing a trail classification system and best practices.

So, in general, these schedules of the bill move us in a direction that's going to allow us to create awareness and use of the trails. Listen, I said before those sections are pretty warm and fuzzy. It's an admirable goal that we're trying to accomplish. This is a great economic driver, our trail system.

We all like to boast about the scenery we represent. I'm going to take a few minutes to talk about some of the trails in my riding; I'm pretty proud of them. This stretch of highway has some of the most impressive vistas you'll ever see, so I want to give a shout-out to the stretch of Ontario's waterfront trail that's a 36-kilometre stretch. The Thousand Islands Recreational Trail is just east of Gananoque. It runs along the St. Lawrence River, offering incredible views of the Thousand Islands. Our local municipalities, the united counties of Leeds and Grenville, along with the former Harper government, teamed up with the St. Lawrence Parks Commission two years ago. They gave this trail an incredible facelift. It was repaved, it was widened at a cost of \$2 million, and the results, Speaker, can be seen on any weekend; almost every day you'll see the results. In the spring, summer and fall, cyclists of all ages, horseback riders, hikers, runners and rollerbladers flock to the trail. In the winter, snowmobilers and skiers show that it's truly a year-round facility.

It's far from the only destination in my riding for those looking for a trail adventure. Brockville's scenic Brock Trail has an incredibly dedicated group called the Friends. The volunteers have already worked with the municipality to expand the trail and reinstall a bridge over one of the most picturesque sections. Hikers of every level of experience will find a trail to suit their tastes at the Charleston Lake Provincial Park, and Limerick Forest, managed by the united counties of Leeds and Grenville, celebrated its 75th anniversary last year. It features incredible trails for cyclists, ATV-motocross drivers, horseback riding, skiing, snowmobiles and hiking. The northeast corner of my riding is the municipality of North Grenville, and it has an extensive and well-identified trails network that covers an incredible 150 kilometres.

In every corner of my riding there is something for hikers to explore. I want to give a shout-out to Foley Mountain Trails. They get a bird's-eye view of the village of Westport and the UNESCO world heritage Rideau waterway. For anyone interested in paying us a visit, there are two great resources they can turn to for

more information. The united counties of Leeds and Grenville's website at leedsgrenville.com has a great listing of the trails and links to trails in Leeds and Grenville. I also want to recognize a wonderful group, the Frontenac Arch Biosphere. The Frontenac Arch Biosphere has a FAB trails tour section. They maintain a very detailed listing of trail experiences on their website at frontenacarchbiosphere.ca.

I hope that in my time this morning, I've explained why I can support some of what's in Bill 100, but when it comes to what I call the poison pill—and I believe very, very strongly that this bill does contain a poison pill. By introducing the process of establishing easements, the government has taken, I think, a step too far, particularly having done so much work on this bill without properly consulting property owners. I think it's very important that we take those property owners' views to heart when it comes to crafting a bill of this magnitude.

We're going to spend a lot of time during the debate on this bill, I hope, praising the thousands of volunteers who give so freely of their time to maintain our trail system. I welcome that opportunity and I heartily join in praising those men and women who work so hard to keep the trails open in my riding. But you know, Speaker, this debate is too important, and I think we cannot lose sight of what property owners contribute to Ontario being able to boast such a world-class network. We have to listen to what those men and women who allow access to their property have to say in this debate. I've told this to the minister; I've told it to the minister's staff.

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I remember, during the Pan Am Games, the minister chastising our former critic, saying, "You didn't show up for the briefing." Well, I actually asked to have a briefing on this trails bill, because I wanted to meet with the staff to let them know what they were doing and let them know the concerns. I let them know, that day, the same thing I'm letting the House know today. That was weeks ago, and I haven't seen a meaningful recognition that those concerns are valid.

The minister stated in the House that he would meet and that his staff would reach out to those that felt disenfranchised by this bill. We did see some of that, but there were some significant players—northern Ontario. When I look at the trails system that the member for Nipissing, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke have—the amount of trails that they have—when they have a public meeting, and they read the minister's words in Hansard, there's an expectation that that word is going to be significant, and that the ministry is going to take it seriously.

I believe very strongly that without those property owners, without that agreement, we're going to lose so much of our system that we've worked so hard to maintain and that we've worked so hard to enhance. The problem here, once again—I hate to it keep saying it—is that this government is ignoring that very significant part of the debate, the side of the coin that I think is very important. The government has focused so much on what

trail groups want that they haven't spent any time talking to property owners about their concerns.

I think the minister is missing a real opportunity to generate some goodwill by doing the amendments and by having those public hearings that I'm suggesting. Instead, his decision to rush ahead—and I say rush ahead—by calling for second reading debate really stirred the concerns that I had farmers talking to me about when I attended the annual Leeds Federation of Agriculture banquet in Lansdowne last Friday night.

I had one gentleman in particular who engaged me on this bill. He is far from an activist or an anti-government individual, but you know what? He's genuinely tired of what he sees happening all around him: All levels of government, along with an assortment of agencies and organizations, are dictating what he can and what he can't do on his own property. As he put it to me, "They're trying to control our lives, Steve." That's what he said to me.

Again, he wasn't an activist, and he wasn't someone who I would categorize as anti-government, but he looks at Bill 100 and, with all the other red tape he has to put up with, he doesn't have time to ponder what the word "may" really means when it comes to his property rights. He knows that this is just one more thing for him to worry about. So in his case, he just said to me, "You know, I might just as well just cancel my agreement on April 1. I'm not going to worry about it. I'm just going to jump away." He knows that there's already a process in place to allow trails to go across his property, so why would the government then introduce the concept of easements if they weren't up to something? That's honestly what he feels.

What is he going to do if this bill passes as it's written today? You know what he's going to do if it passes exactly the way it's written today, if we have what I said is going to happen, if we have a closure debate and the bill goes to committee for a couple of weeks in Toronto? He's going to call up the snowmobile club, and he's going to say, "I'm out." He's going to close his mind to it. Then we're going to have a situation that I believe no one in this Legislature wanted, where we're going to have significant chaos, frustration and confusion over a bill that languished on the order paper. Let's face it, Speaker: The government has bills that they rush through. Regardless of how this was placed in Michael Coteau's mandate letter and how much of a priority, if you read it—and I invite anyone listening today to go on the website, read his mandate letter, see how prominently this bill was placed as a priority for him and then go back and think of a consultation that took place two and a half years ago. Not one single property owner was part of the discussion.

When the minister did his lead-off, he introduced me to all the stakeholders who were sitting in the government gallery—and I'm looking around. There are not too many people in the gallery this morning to hear my comments, but—

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm here.

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate it, Gatesy.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate it, guys.

Again, it just fundamentally changes people's faith in the government by not having meaningful consultation, by not having all voices at the table on a bill that significantly changes a relationship.

Speaker, I talked about it earlier. These aren't agreements that are drafted by lawyers. They're friends; they are neighbours. They sit down and discuss what they're doing to the trails that season and how they're going to access property. The minister can write all the letters to the editor he wants; it's not going to change the fact that trails were shut down in this province because this bill was brought for second reading. No one on the government side can argue with my comments that just the simple tabling of this bill, without the proper consultation for those individual clubs—and don't take my word for it. Call a club yourself. Have members call clubs in other members' ridings and ask if they were part of the consultation. Maybe the parent organization was. Maybe they were involved in this high-level discussion about promoting trails.

I even said that there are sections of this bill that I call "motherhood and apple pie." Who's going to be against proclaiming a trails week? Who's going to disagree with the government taking on a priority to promote all of the good things that 80,000 kilometres of trails provide our residents in the province? No one is going to say they don't agree with that, but I'll tell you what they're going to disagree with: They're going to disagree with property owners not being part of the conversation. Again, it just feeds into the cynicism that's in rural Ontario and feeds into this concern that this government doesn't care about their voices.

This is a very significant part of rural recreation in my riding. This is a big deal for ridings like Leeds–Grenville. To have individual agreements basically torn up because the government couldn't get out of the bubble in Toronto and actually explain to people and communicate to people what's going on is ridiculous, Speaker.

Do you know what? They need to basically listen to property owners, they need to listen to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, and they need to listen to me. If they were listening, they'd make a commitment to, first of all, amend the bill, to look at those sections of the bill that I spoke about this morning, to go out to those property owners, those ATV clubs, snowmobile clubs and those other trails organizations and make an effort to communicate to them on what they would like to see changed in the bill, how they would like to see that relationship continue for many years to come. They would not continue to do what they've always done and call the legislation—because this hour this morning by myself is a signal to rural Ontario and northern Ontario that this government doesn't care.

I would ask members of the government side—I see a number of members here today. I would ask you to talk to Minister Coteau about this bill, about ensuring that the voices of those men and women who allow access on their private property for snowmobile clubs, ATV clubs

and trails organizations are heard, and not just allow 10 hours of debate and a closure motion or a time allocation motion or two days in Toronto for hearings to try to fix this problem, because the problem won't be fixed.

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I want the problem to be fixed. I want those trails in Leeds–Grenville to reopen. I want trails in Leeds–Grenville to expand. I see the benefit of these trails in my community, but what I get very angry about is the government ignoring those rural voices. This is a big change—perceived or otherwise—in how trails are being managed in the province.

I will tell you something: If we only have eight more hours of debate and the minimum amount of time at committee, this is going to be a disaster. You know, Speaker, if I see that the government isn't going to take any of my amendments, maybe I'll try to amend the title to say the "Ontario trails disaster act," because that's what it's going to be. There will be more trails shut down, there will be more frustration, there will be more anger in rural Ontario.

So my message today—and I'll close up with just this. My message today is: We need the government to listen. We all talk about the things that are inscribed here on the wall: "Hear the other side: Audi alteram partem." I think that's the right term: "Hear the other side." This is a bill that they need to hear the other side of. They need to bring in those property owners involved in this.

I want to thank my caucus for indulging me in my speech this morning, and I really, truly look forward to comments and questions by all three parties.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm just sitting here reading a letter from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. It doesn't look to me like they're asking for tons of amendments, but what they're really looking for—and we often see this with legislation that is introduced in this House: a lack of real consultation in the beginning, before the bill is tabled, and then a lack of enforcement at the end of the day once the legislation is passed. We see that in all ministries. I have over the last five years.

We have a great trail system in Niagara, a trail system through Welland, and I can tell you that the issue of enforcement there as well is a problem on the trails. It's 140 kilometres of trails between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. They run along the Welland Canal and the Welland River as well. They're non-motorized trails for the most part. Unfortunately, motorized vehicles like ATVs and, in the winter, snowmobiles try and use these trails. Early on, when the 10 kilometres or so was built right in the city of Welland, it wasn't open for very long when an ATV actually ran down a woman on rollerblades who was very, very seriously injured; she had to be airlifted to a critical care hospital outside of the region of Niagara.

The problem always comes down to the fact that there's no enforcement. We've put up signs saying, "No motorized vehicles," but it if there is no police presence at any time on these trails, if it no one is ever receiving a

fine, if it's never in the local media that somebody has been fined for using trails illegally, then people just continue to do those kinds of things.

I invite people to come and bike or walk or rollerblade along the Greater Niagara Circle Route. It is amazing. You can hit 96 wineries and breweries along that trail, all kinds of museums, and of course the great activities in Niagara Falls. I invite people to come and enjoy them, but I ask the government to pay attention to the amendments that the Federation of Agriculture is looking for.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was listening to the member from Leeds–Grenville carefully, with a grain of salt, Mr. Speaker.

First of all, the minister is out consulting regularly. I know he's been talking to members opposite regularly. I saw him within the gallery with the member opposite and those concerned parties. The minister has agreed to attend public meetings. This is hardly arrogance. As the environment minister, I am going out across the province on climate change. The member from Leeds–Grenville is being absurd, calling it a disaster. The disaster for trails in Ontario is climate change. Over 30 years, our mean temperature in most of the trail areas will be eight degrees warmer, and four degrees warmer in the south, and that's based on two IPCC reports.

How much snow do you think there's going to be in eastern Ontario in 15 years for ATVs? Almost none. This is one of the great casualties of climate change: that we are going to lose a large part of our winter trail system.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Now they're all jeering me. Why are they doing that? Because they don't have a position on climate change. They're posing on climate change. You can hear it when you hear them on topics like this. They don't understand that what's at risk here, what the disaster is, is that we're losing our cross-country ski trails.

This is the party that forced amalgamations on cities, completely redrawing boundaries—no consultation. When I was mayor of Winnipeg, which they like to tease me about, I watched them download health and social service costs onto municipalities without compensating revenue, while in Manitoba they were uploading health and social services costs because the municipal property tax couldn't bear it. In the member's own area, his own party—after being a mayor in an area where 42% of highways and provincial roads were downloaded unilaterally without consultation on those municipalities, he talks about arrogance? That's the pot calling the kettle black.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I guess I was going to have a different tone, but I think the issue about this is the arrogance of this government. Just listen to them.

We're of the opinion that the bill was probably put there for good reason or good intentions, but look at the way people are responding to it. Listen. It's not like this

government ever listens, but we're going to lose these trails. Rural areas have been very happy to have their neighbours come out and cross their land, but now they're looking at this and they've been threatened by it, at least by perceived issues in this bill. The OFA is coming back. Obviously they weren't talked to; landowners weren't talked to.

Regardless of that, our comment is: Let's get out and fix this bill. We have some amendments. If we sit there and talk about climate change as an issue—we're talking about trails here, and people getting out. I heard our member from Leeds–Grenville talk about trying to get people out to exercise. That's the basis of this bill.

This government has the idea that if we don't do it, we don't go out and purchase easements and create these vast trails, it's not good enough. We have many times more of these private trails out there, or public trails, that don't belong to the government. The landowners in rural areas have been very good about creating these and giving a place for these people to go. I enjoy them myself. But to think now that we're going to lose them—just in my own township of South Glengarry, we have numerous trails across properties.

I encourage the government to get off their high horse and get out and listen to people and see why they're upset and why they're concerned, and reassure them. If there are some issues—the OFA have amendments; consider them. I've been at too many meetings where we go through amendments and, without even looking at them, they're voted down by this government because of the majority. Sit down and listen to the people, or we're going to lose a great natural resource that's not costing the government anything.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'll take some of those high horses down at the Fort Erie Race Track, if you want to send them my way.

It's always a pleasure to stand up and talk about my riding, particularly around trails in Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie. One of the things that makes my riding so incredible is that it's very vibrant, it has exciting cities, but it's beside some of the best-preserved nature and historic trails in all Ontario.

For example, you can come down to Niagara-on-the-Lake and take a stroll through the beautiful old town and then find a trail just a few minutes up the road in Queenston Heights. While exploring the Bruce Trail, you can walk through a historic battlefield from the War of 1812 and still experience the natural beauty of Niagara. It has incredible history with our trails. You can explore the Niagara River. I know that some people in the House have been down to Niagara-on-the-Lake, using many of the exciting trails that take you around the Niagara Gorge. You can walk, you can bike—and my colleague from Welland had an interesting comment. She said that you can bike through six wineries. That's interesting to me, because if you stop at every winery, I don't know how the biking's going to go, but that's something that we can look at.

Or you can go to Fort Erie and explore the Friendship Trail, which takes you to historic Fort Erie and Ridge-way. It's what makes Niagara so unique. You can literally walk through our nation's history, while at the same time explore our beautiful, preserved nature. I encourage everyone to come down this summer and come to Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Having said that, we have an opportunity to continue to grow the tourist industry through trails, for locals, for tourists and for jobs, so I'm looking forward to continuing this debate. What's important under Bill 100 is that we have to make sure we have that debate, we have that consultation, and that the bill doesn't hurt our trails, it doesn't hurt our tourism, it doesn't hurt our jobs. That's why we need to make sure that we don't cut off debate on this very, very important bill for all of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Leeds–Grenville for final comments.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to acknowledge the comments of the members for Welland, Niagara Falls and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

It's interesting with the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. I really hope that the government does not continue the rhetoric to deflect back to the mid-1990s. This is an issue that's happening today in Ontario. There is a great opportunity for this government to make a connection. I'm just a little worried that with some of the rhetoric I heard this morning—and it may have been just that member—we're not going to get where I think we need to be.

I know the government members think that those land use agreements based on a handshake are an outdated notion in today's world, but let's look at what those old-fashioned agreements they mock me for supporting have accomplished. They're the basis for the trail system that we have in Ontario right now, which I think is the envy of many in the world. What has this government done with its ham-fisted attempt, I suggest, to modernize these agreements? And I'll use the word again: I know that the minister doesn't agree with me, but they've created chaos. They've put those trails in jeopardy.

Speaker, with all due respect, I've laid my comments on the record. I've laid, I feel, some reasonable amendments and suggestions on the table. The member from Welland echoed some of the concerns that the OFA has expressed to both of us. I'll take those handshake deals anytime—anytime—over what this government is offering today with Bill 100. It needs to be changed, and again, I'll take those handshakes over what they've given me today.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

VISITOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order?

Mr. Chris Ballard: A point of order: I'd like to introduce Patrick Connor, who is the CEO of the Ontario Trails Council. He's in the members' gallery. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a delight to have Zachary Gan's family here in the public gallery: mother Patricia Gan and sister Zoey Hodgins. They will be in the public gallery this morning.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome two friends from my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham who are in the east members' gallery: Ming Man and Lisa Lai.

Hon. Mario Sergio: We have a nice young man in the House today who wants to pay some attention to our question period. He is from Revera retirement living: Adrian Kupesic. Welcome, and I hope you enjoy your stay with us this morning.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I wish to introduce a committee of delegates visiting us from Portugal this week on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the Peniche Community Club in my riding of Davenport. With us today are Dr. Antonio José Correia, mayor of the town of Peniche; members of the musical group Os Nemanus; their host, João Freixo, president of the Peniche Community Club of Toronto; his wife Isabel; and Diana Maria, a volunteer. Welcome all to Queen's Park. Bem-vindos.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm delighted this morning to welcome Chris Neal, Peter Neal and Theresa Laird from Neal Brothers Foods, and also Nick Saul from The Stop, in the members' gallery. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I would like to welcome Carol Barltrop, who helped out in our office the last little while, and Steve Hyndman from the great riding of Northumberland–Quinte West, the former CAO of the city of Belleville. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to introduce two very important people who are visiting in the House today: Tom and Dawn Davidson, who are visiting from Thornton, Ontario, and are the parents of my very hard-working chief of staff, Drew Davidson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to be sure to introduce page captain Chandise Nelson's parents, Rose Nelson and father Chris Nelson. They are in the members' galleries this morning. I know them well; I am so happy to have them and welcome them to Queen's Park. Thank you.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us in the west gallery today is a staff person in my constituency office, Andrew Green, and joining him are Naveed Tagari and Virginia Tucciarone. Welcome.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe you will find unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear purple ribbons in recognition of Epilepsy Action Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to wear purple ribbons for Epilepsy Action Day. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, this government's attack on doctors continued. The Minister of Health blamed so-called out-of-control billing by doctors as a reason for his mismanagement. He said doctors are overbilling hundreds of millions of dollars.

Is the minister insinuating that doctors are creating patient demand? Is it not true that doctors are billing for services they have delivered? If the minister's implying that doctors should deny service to patients to balance the budget, is that not rationing? If the minister wants to ration care and prevent patients from accessing care, then why does he just not do that and stop blaming the doctors?

Mr. Speaker, why is this government blaming doctors for their inability to manage the health care system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to weigh in on this. I just want to say that we very much hope that the Ontario Medical Association—the OMA—will come back to the table. We want to have that conversation. This is a conversation about physician compensation. That's what it's about. I know that there are some who would like to make it about something else, but it is about physician compensation. It's entirely appropriate that the minister would talk about physician compensation, because that's what the discussion is about. We look forward to a productive discussion with the OMA.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Premier, we understand that managing costs is a challenge, but your minister needs to take some leadership, stop playing the blame game in the media and sit down with doctors and come to an agreement.

Back to the Premier, Mr. Speaker: The government has been trying to divide this profession. It's been two years since these doctors have had a contract and, in these two years, this government has unilaterally slashed doctors' fees to a tune of \$815 million. Because of this, clinics have closed, practices have shut down and doctors have left the province. This government is trying to divide and conquer, rather than sit down and negotiate.

Mr. Speaker, there are a handful of doctors sitting over there on the government side. Why are they letting their government slander doctors and cut services to patients?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, our position hasn't changed at all. What I did yesterday is I implored our doctors, through the representation to the OMA, to come back to negotiations with us, as I have done many, many times over the past one year—more than one year, Mr. Speaker. It's important that we get back to formal negotiations so we can work out an agreement which treats all physicians fairly.

What I was speaking of is how technological changes, for example, have resulted in procedures and services being done much faster, in a much more expeditious way than in the past. With cataract surgery, for example, it used to take more than an hour; now it takes less than 20 minutes.

We need to make sure that we're being fair to all physicians and that the compensation that we're providing to them reflects the work that they're doing and values that work. What happens is, if we've got certain high billers who are billing in advance of those technological adjustments being made, it's unfair to other doctors, like our family doctors, our pediatricians, psychiatrists or medical officers of health, who are working just as hard.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier: The Minister of Health is in charge. If he thinks that doctors are defrauding the system, he has the power to fix that, not to attack them in the media.

Back to the Premier: When the Minister of Health and the government re-launched their attack on doctors yesterday, I found it pretty rich. This is the government that gave us Ornge; it gave us eHealth; it overspent on smart meters. It's a government that budgeted \$40 million to cancel a gas plant that ballooned to over a billion. This is a government that has run nine straight deficits. This is a government that launches baseless attacks to smear doctors. It's disrespectful, but this government just doesn't get it.

Will the government tell us what the billions of dollars squandered in scandal, waste and mismanagement could have done for our health care system?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As I mentioned, our position has not changed. We continue to implore the OMA to come back to the negotiating table. We need to, and we want to, work with them to get an agreement that is fair to all doctors and also helps us continue to provide the excellent care that our primary care physicians and our specialists across this province provide. It's important that they come back to the negotiating table and, to date, over the last year, they've refused to do so. I have

repeatedly asked them and my ministry has repeatedly asked them to come back to the negotiating table.

We believe that there's an agreement that can be found, an agreement that provides us with a sustainable, predictable increasing budget, year after year after year, for physician services, but we need the OMA at the negotiating table. I don't know if the member opposite is suggesting they shouldn't come back. We need them at the negotiating table so that we can reach agreement on a fair deal for all doctors.

1040

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. There was a time in Ontario when families looked forward to their golden years. They worked hard, they provided a better life for their kids than they had growing up, and they were looking forward to looking back on what they have. But today, that Ontario is very different for our seniors. They now worry about being able to pay their bills, the ones brought on by this government: skyrocketing hydro bills, doubling costs for medication, gasoline taxes, increased natural gas, and the list goes on and on, all because this Premier cannot control spending.

My question is, when will the Premier stop making seniors pay for her waste, mismanagement and scandal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's talk about—just in our most recent budget—what we have put in place to support seniors. We put in place an additional \$250 million to expand capacity to deliver high-quality home and community care, and an additional \$75 million over three years in community-based residential hospice and palliative care, for a total of about \$155 million. We're expanding access to a low-income seniors' benefit for 170,000 more seniors. That means that 170,000 more seniors will pay no deductible on their drug costs. We're making the shingles vaccine free for eligible seniors between the ages of 65 and 70. That saves \$170 each for each of those people. We're removing the debt retirement charge on electricity bills, which will save Ontarians and seniors—and an additional \$10 million annually in behavioural supports to help long-term-care home residents with dementia and other complex behaviours. We understand that serving seniors is our responsibility.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: This government has made life more unaffordable for families, especially seniors. In my office last week, a large group of seniors gathered to talk about what life in Ontario has become under this Liberal government. Bonnie Beam was one of those seniors in my office. She told the media how she only turns her heat on in her bathroom because the hydro costs are "astronomical." She said she cannot turn the heat on in her bedrooms, and when the temperature falls below minus 30 degrees, she might turn a little heat on in the kitchen. This was a real story from a real person. All this is because the government has bungled the energy sector and sent her hydro bill soaring.

Does this government realize just how unaffordable they've made life for seniors?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just went over some of the things we have done in our budget to actually make life more affordable for seniors.

I hope that when the member opposite has constituents in his office, he's very clear about the programs that are in place to actually help people with their electricity bills. Whether it's the Ontario electricity support program or whether it's the particular program that is targeted at seniors and property tax credits—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I don't want to get to the point where—I would loathe to start your Easter break early. But I also would suggest to you that when questions are put and answers are put, neither side provoke each other while the answer is being given or the question is being put. The people on your own sides: Don't engage, please.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is the job of every MPP in this House to make sure that constituents have information. It is the job of government to make sure we put those supports in place. But it is the job of the MPP for Nipissing to make sure that people in his constituency have all the information that is going to help them—programs that our government put in place.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No matter where he sits, I know where the member is from. Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

Carry on.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A large group of seniors gathered in my office last week. Their prime concern was rising drug costs. They're angry with the Liberals' decision to double drug costs for the vast majority of seniors. At the finance committee this week, Debra Cooper Burger, chair of an Ontario seniors' group, told this government that seniors will be forced to choose between food or buying their medication. That's the reality of what we have in Ontario. Our seniors rely on that medication to stay healthy and out of hospital. Our most vulnerable deserve better.

Will the Premier commit today to cancelling the planned increase to seniors' drug costs as outlined in the budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: The Premier was quite right, telling the member to pass the information that's available to our seniors. It doesn't matter where they live, if they live in York West or if they live in the member's riding.

Some 173,000 low-income seniors don't pay anything for drugs anymore. There is a lot more, Mr. Speaker. In

order to help the seniors that live on a single pension—very low incomes—this budget is great for the seniors who can't afford to pay the \$70 hydro. We have eliminated that. For the low-income seniors who go to the hospital, we have reduced the parking fees by 50%. The \$30 emissions test: We have eliminated that. There's a \$170 savings for the shingles vaccine.

This is all to help our seniors who can't afford the high costs, if you will, Speaker. And when we say—

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier whether she had listened to the nearly 60 organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of Ontarians, who wrote to her and asked her “not to respond by merely slightly increasing the user threshold at which the higher deductible will be charged but to cancel the fee increase entirely and uphold the principle of universality.”

Will the Premier listen to them and cancel her plan?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear that we're very pleased that 173,000 more seniors in Ontario are not going to have to pay any deductible going forward on their drug costs. We have said that we want people to give us feedback on the regulation that is out for consultation right now. We will be listening to that feedback very intently. I've said that if we didn't get that part of it right, then we will make a change.

I hope that the people that the leader of the third party is speaking to hear from her that they have the opportunity to give us that input right now, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, these organizations went on to say that “universality and equity principles were written into the Canada Health Act....”

These are the fundamental principles that ensure the health care services in this province and in this country serve everyone. So why is the Premier abandoning that principle, Speaker? Why is she abandoning a principle which is written right into the Canada Health Act and leaving most of Ontario's seniors paying more for prescription medication?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, that's just not the case. It's just not the case. As many times as the leader of the third party would like to say it, it is not the case.

The fact is that 173,000 more seniors in this province will pay nothing. They will have no costs associated with their drug care. I would have thought that that would be something the leader of the third party would support.

We've said, Mr. Speaker, on the other part of the initiative, that we will be seeking input. The regulation is out for consultation. The decisions have not been made. We're still listening to people's commentary, and we will be looking at the action going forward.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's not just my opinion that this act in the budget that the Liberals put forward is eroding the principle of universality. Sixty organizations that range from health care advocates to seniors' advocates are the ones that are naming exactly that.

Yesterday, the Premier made it clear that, for her, this is about rhetoric and politics. It may be for her, but for New Democrats, it's not. It is about people. It's about making sure that our health care system is there for people—

Interjections.

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

Please finish, Leader.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —no matter who they are or what their income. It's about building and protecting a system where seniors can actually afford the prescription drugs that they need.

Will this Premier explain why she is more concerned with politics and deficit reduction than she is with the protection of universality of health care and ensuring that seniors can afford the prescriptions that they need?

1050

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The leader of the third party knows that the regulation is posted and we are consulting, including consulting with the organizations that she referenced.

Let's remind ourselves of their principles of universality, because they cut the number of drugs offered through the drug program of the province by 10% when they were in power—over 230 drugs. They closed 24% of acute care hospital beds in the province. They closed 13% of mental health beds in the province. They reduced hospital funding by 1% in their last year of office—that was, in fact, the second year of a budget which decreased health care funding for two years running. And they delisted home care from OHIP as well. That's their concept of universality.

Our concept is to defend this health care system, to defend the Canada Health Act. We have a Premier who believes in universality and believes in defending that act, and I'm working with her to make sure we support it.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Premier accused people—sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is my next question to the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier accused people who are worried about the cost of medication for seniors as setting “a fire where there isn't one.”

Earlier this month, I met a senior named Grace who lives in Toronto in community housing and who earns

about \$25,000 a year. She was already worried about how much she'd have to pay for her hydro bill, and now she's worried about how much she's going to have to pay for her prescriptions.

Speaker, as I said before, it's not rhetoric. It's about real people, and that's what this government has to get their heads around. Does this Premier really believe that this issue is no big deal?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I hope the leader of the third party, when she engages seniors about this, that she does—in fact, I'm happy to share this chart with her that demonstrates that Ontario by far across this country has the most generous drug program for our seniors, more than the NDP province. In Ontario, the average cost is \$277, the out-of-pocket cost for a senior in this province. If we look at Alberta, the average cost is \$613. If we look at BC, it's \$615. It's \$982 in Manitoba, the average out-of-pocket cost for seniors.

We have by far the most generous drug program for seniors. I'm happy to provide her with this information so that when she does consult with those seniors, she's completely transparent and holistic in her approach, that she shows them just how generous we are being.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The fact is that universal health care is a principle that has been upheld by governments of every political stripe. In that way, it's a bit like the ability to build infrastructure at the same time as running a public hydro system. All parties have been able to do that, except perhaps now.

But here in Ontario, we have a Premier who's undermining the fundamental principle of universality. Will this Premier do what leaders from every political party before her have done and actually stand up for the principles of universal health care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I hope by now the leader of the third party understands how much this Premier and how much myself as the Minister of Health believe in and are defending the principles of universality when it comes to our health care system.

Let me give another example of what we've done for our seniors. I've had many seniors come to me and complain that they get a prescription for a chronic medication. They might have been on it for years—for high blood pressure, perhaps. Speaker, they take that three-month prescription to their pharmacist but they only get a month's supply back. Part of the reason is, we've incentivized our pharmacists up till now that they get paid—in fact, the senior pays that co-payment—every single time. Our pharmacists no longer do that. It's a maximum of five times a year. You take that three-month prescription to your pharmacist, you're going to get three months' worth of drugs. You're saving tens, if not hundreds, of dollars—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I hope by now that the Liberals understand how their budget bungle actually abandons the principle of universal health care. That's what everybody is telling them, Speaker. They need to admit it if they're going to make a change.

Anyone in Ontario, in fact, who wants to tell the Premier what they think of her plan to double the cost of medication for seniors can actually call her right now. They can call her at 416-325-2228. That number again, just to be sure the Minister of Health heard it—because he's asking whether we're telling people to get engaged in the process, and we are. Call the Premier at 416-325-2228, because apparently it isn't enough that the Ontario Health Coalition, local chapters of CARP, the Council of Canadians, the National Pensioners Federation, the Raging Grannies, the Alliance of Seniors, major newspapers and worried seniors from across Ontario have already weighed in.

The Premier said yesterday that she's listening to the people. The question is, how much more does she need to hear?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Since we seem to be in this position of exchanging information, I'll reciprocate. As I mentioned, I'm happy to provide this chart which is very illustrative of comparisons across the country, demonstrating that we have by far the most generous drug program for seniors. No other province even comes close. For the next one, the out-of-pocket costs are twice that.

I'm happy to sit down and have a discussion about the Canada Health Act. They know—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We also have Liberals who don't know what "universality" means.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We know what "universality" means; you don't, because you delisted home care and took it out of OHIP.

Mr. Speaker, we've got the regulation posted. We're committed to taking 173,000 so they no longer pay any annual deductible; they'll join about 300,000. So about a quarter of all seniors will pay no annual deductible whatsoever. That's even more generous for a program that is the most generous in Canada.

DANGEROUS OFFENDERS

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The minister, along with the Attorney General, met with me last month to discuss the failings of the justice system and what we can do to correct them. One thing that came as a shock to all of us, as I'm sure it will be to every member in this House, is that there is no electronic monitoring in Ontario to ensure that dangerous offenders, upon their release, are tracked by the authorities. In Ontario, the best protection we can offer is a piece of paper.

Why has this government continued to leave victims living in fear by not investing in simple, affordable, electronic monitoring technology for our most dangerous and violent offenders returning to our communities?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member opposite, first of all, for taking the time to meet with the

Attorney General and me. We had a very constructive meeting. It was a very detailed meeting, going through how the system works when it comes to inmates who have been returned to the community and things that we need to do.

Speaker, as I have been working along with the member opposite, I assure him that we have embarked on very significant work around transforming our correctional services, both in terms of our institutions and the services that are provided in the community as well. As a result, in order to learn even more, I have been travelling and meeting with probation and parole officers to better understand the services provided. I would love to share more details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: I've sent a letter to the minister further expressing my concerns about our province's inability to track our most dangerous and violent offenders. Electronic monitoring isn't expensive, it isn't new, and it's being used in many places such as Calgary, Edmonton, PEI, and even by Canadian border services. There are numerous options providing cost-effective, proven results with this technology. One of these companies already does all the monitoring for the country right here in Ontario, in Sudbury.

Speaker, will the minister commit to this House today to bring a pilot project forward to equip our police and corrections officers with electronic tracking devices so they can monitor dangerous and violent offenders upon their release into our communities?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I thank the member. He gave me a letter just a few days ago, and I spoke to him in person and undertook to look into it, and to have a subsequent meeting, as well.

1100

I also want to make sure that I make it very clear that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services have policies and procedures in place for the supervision of sexual and other high-risk offenders. Probation and parole officers receive specialized training to aid in risk assessment, supervision and monitoring. Where an offender has a court order requiring treatment or intervention, or chooses to participate in treatment, probation officers work with the offender to access the appropriate programming. Information-sharing protocols with local police are also in place. Police also have policies and procedures in place for monitoring high-risk offenders in their jurisdictions.

We need to continue to work on these issues. We need to make sure that victims are always safe in the community and that we do provide appropriate rehabilitation services to offenders. I look forward to working with the member opposite in working those strategies.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, can the Premier explain why the sunshine list will have a huge hole in it this year where Hydro One used to be?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am pleased to say that the salaries of the executives of Hydro One will be posted continuously in the public record for all to see at any time of the year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: An entertaining finance minister. The Premier—this question is back to her—was elected on a platform that read, “The kind of abuses uncovered at Hydro One must never be repeated. We will ... insist that they disclose significant expense claims by board members and executives.”

That was that 2003 Liberal platform, page 9. Just because Hydro One is no longer public, the salaries for all the top executives still come from the same place as they did in 2003: you and me and every other ratepayer in Ontario. The only difference is that now Hydro One executives won't appear on the sunshine list, making it far more difficult to uncover any abuses.

Again, can the Premier explain why Hydro One is not on the sunshine list?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me be clear: It's a publicly traded company. They have different oversight mechanisms. It's required for the members and the executives to be displayed. That would be available on public record at any time. The disclosure is there to be seen at any time of the year.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Providing excellent community health care is an extremely important matter for constituents in Beaches–East York, and indeed for all Ontarians. It was a pillar I ran on in 2014.

Yesterday the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care outlined the progress that our government has made on our Patients First Action Plan for Health Care. Those achievements include reducing the cost of parking at Ontario hospitals for patients and their families and loved ones. They include \$1 billion in new health care spending this year, which will help improve access and include more than \$245 million in new funding for our hospitals. It also includes appointing Ontario's first-ever patient ombudsman.

But Speaker, the minister also reiterated his request that the Ontario Medical Association return to the table and work with our government to negotiate a new deal. Will the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please tell this House why he is asking the OMA to come back to the negotiating table to help us improve our system—

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

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It is immensely important to me as the Minister of Health that we resume negotiations and find that negotiated agreement together with the OMA, so we can continue to build upon the success that, quite frankly, our doctors are so proud of, as they should be: The success that they've been part of in making sure that

they're providing the best quality of care for their patients but also the fact now that 94% of Ontarians have access to a primary care provider. We couldn't have done that without the help and the hard work of our doctors and others in the front lines.

But, Mr. Speaker, our position has never changed. After a year of negotiations, when the OMA walked away from the agreement that it was advised that they accept from the facilitator, we want to continue to work with them. We want to come back to formal negotiations. I've implored them to do that repeatedly. I ask them to come back to the table now.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I thank the minister for that response. Indeed, I would congratulate the minister and his entire ministry for the great work that they are doing transforming health care in the province of Ontario.

I know my constituents deeply appreciate the care and the support that Ontario doctors provide on a day-to-day basis. For most Ontarians, family doctors are who we immediately turn to when we are concerned about our health or find ourselves sick. They're the ones we turn to first.

Yesterday, I saw a press release from the OMA that seemed to call into question—and I think most Ontarians would agree—whether they are prepared to come back to the negotiating table and work with our government to negotiate a long-term deal that would provide stability for Ontario's doctors and patients, and improve conditions for Ontario's family doctors.

Will the minister please clarify for the House what the government's position is on returning to the negotiating table so we can reach a deal for fairly compensating Ontario doctors?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, while I continue to implore the OMA to come back to negotiations, we continue to increase our health care budget. It went up this year by over \$125 million. It will continue to increase each and every year.

But right now, because most doctors in the province bill for every service they provide, they effectively set their own salary. Over the past three years, this has resulted in an over-budget, above and beyond what we've budgeted in the ministry, of hundreds of millions of dollars. A large part of this overspend has come from high-billing specialists, who continue to be able to bill high amounts despite technological changes. I gave the example of cataract surgery that used to take over an hour and now takes less than 20 minutes.

These high-billing specialists often earn two, three or even more times as much as an average doctor or a family doctor might earn. It leaves less money for our family doctors, less for our pediatricians, our psychiatrists, our community health centre doctors, and it squeezes our ability to invest in other areas.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. Premier, we warned the government repeatedly that it

was a bad idea to authorize the construction of wind turbines in the Great Lakes. They went ahead and signed contracts anyway, specifically with WindStream. When they got flooded with opposition, no pun intended, and in order to save Liberal seats, they abruptly reversed their position and said there would be no wind turbines in the Great Lakes. As a result, WindStream is suing, and taxpayers could be on the hook for \$568 million.

I would ask the Premier: If WindStream is successful in their suit, will the Liberal Party of Ontario reimburse the taxpayer for their incompetence and for once again showing that your government can't get anything right?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm not going to pre-empt a legal process. Obviously, I don't have knowledge of what those decisions will be. What we know is that we need to make decisions that are based on science, that are based on evidence. There was a concern about the impact of offshore turbines.

But let me say that the fact is that Ontario has taken the largest step in North America in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by shutting down coal-fired plants, by investing in renewables, by jump-starting an industry. That means we are taking a leadership role not just in this country, but internationally. We're going to continue to take that role, and that will include the implementation of our cap-and-trade system.

Part of the work that we've been doing is about renewables, and we're very proud of that work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the Premier: Taxpayers always pay for your incompetence.

The Premier would know that the star witness supporting WindStream's case is none other than her former colleague Mr. George Smitherman, the architect of the disastrous feed-in tariff program. While the government states in its defence that it was not prepared from a regulatory perspective to deal with offshore energy developments, Mr. Smitherman testified that when he was minister, no one discussed with him that they were unable to accommodate offshore wind developments. In fact, he stated that the Ministers of the Environment and Natural Resources expressed strong support for the program.

Speaker, I would ask the Premier: If she is not going to reimburse the taxpayers should the WindStream case be successful, perhaps she can sit down with her ex-colleague and find out why George Smitherman is testifying against his former government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Two major points here: one, this is a legal case. The member may be new to the House, but he knows neither the government nor he should comment—

Interjections.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I know you didn't.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: He knows that none of us should be commenting on a legal case on this side or the other side of the House. Second—

Mr. Bill Walker: You won't be able to talk about anything pretty soon.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Second, the question is entirely hypothetical. The third piece: Can the member point to any large inland body of fresh water that had wind turbines on it prior to those decisions? No, they can't. There was prudence taken by this government to make sure that there was good science in place before they were deployed. That's the sensible thing to do.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Education. Yesterday I met Scott Myers at a Sagonaska parent council meeting in Belleville. Scott is a single father from Petawawa who is trying desperately to enrol his daughter Jayna in this specialized school. His family worked on her application for over a year. Scott and I sat patiently as we heard testimonials from graduates, current students and their families about how Sagonaska dramatically improved their reading and writing and boosted their confidence. But the minister's decision to freeze enrolment next year is creating chaos for families like Scott's, who now face an uncertain future. For students like Jayna, it means that this Liberal government is pulling the rug out from under them and they will not be given the same opportunities to succeed.

My question is simple: Will the Minister of Education open enrolment and give students like Jayna the school year they deserve?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to assure everyone that we are committed to the success of all of our students. That includes students who have severe learning disabilities and, in this particular case, students who are struggling to learn to read.

We agree with the parents and with the students whom I talked to privately last evening that these programs at the four demonstration schools have made a tremendous impact on their life. In fact, children who have been struggling their whole life to learn to read have been successful in learning to read through these programs. There's no dispute about that. The challenge for all of us now is to figure out how we can support more students with similar needs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yesterday, the minister said that she is accountable for the actions of her department, so will she please act on her claim and answer a direct question?

Back to the minister: The families gathered in Belleville last night witnessed how out of touch this Liberal government is with the realities of students with exceptional needs. The minister asked what went wrong with students at their home school boards. If the minister was listening, she would know that it's not about what went wrong at district school boards but what is right about provincial and demonstration schools.

Despite the proven track record of schools like Sagonaska, the minister has capped enrolment and frozen applications for next year. Yesterday, the minister didn't answer a single question from parents or students. Will she please answer one now? Is the closure of Sagonaska or any provincial or demonstration school a potential outcome of this year's consultations?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I beg to differ with the member opposite. When I talk to a student and their parents and they tell me that a student with a severe learning disability who has an average or above-average intelligence is in grade 8 or 9 and reading at a kindergarten or grade 1 level, something went wrong. Part of my job, through this consultation, is to figure out what went wrong. We know that there are thousands of students all over the province for whom the services that we already have in place didn't click. We need to figure out what went wrong so that we can put in place services that do click and so that students do learn to read when they have the capacity to do so. That's my job.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. When it comes to how we shape our communities and how we work to create better access to affordable housing for Ontarians who need it most, I've always believed in giving municipalities the tools they need to make important decisions at the local level.

One of these powerful tools is inclusionary zoning. As members of this House are aware, I've advocated for inclusionary zoning in my own private member's bill.

In many communities, increasing house prices and rent costs are making it difficult for people to find housing they can afford. At last week's new Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy announcement, our government took action to achieve a fairer society. It was announced that we intend to introduce legislation that would, if passed, make inclusionary zoning a reality in communities across this province.

Mr. Speaker, through you, will the minister tell us about the thinking behind this decision and the next steps ahead?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, as well as the member from Parkdale–High Park, who have been tireless in their efforts to advocate for inclusionary zoning.

At the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, we don't have a construction office down at the end of our wing, filled with bricklayers and carpenters and electricians and plumbers who wait for a call from Schreiber or Peterborough or Hamilton to come and build eight, 18 or 100 units. It doesn't work that way. It works by partnering together with our municipalities and the private sector—

Interjection: Not-for-profits.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: —and not-for-profits, to try to encourage, incent and plan for the provision of social and affordable housing.

I've come to believe, thanks to some of the advocacy efforts of other members in the House, that inclusionary zoning is a good way to go. We're meeting with our partners. We're going to come up with something very comprehensive, and it's going to work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to congratulate the minister on his tremendous leadership.

I'm also very proud of the action our government has taken in the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy to make finding a home easier for low- and middle-income Ontarians and to empower municipalities to address their communities' needs.

Some people see inclusionary zoning as a magic wand, thinking it will be sufficient on its own to solve housing challenges. I'd like to urge the government to pass existing legislation as urgently as possible.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister explain why simply passing one of the existing private members' bills on inclusionary zoning that are already before the House wouldn't achieve these larger objectives for affordable housing?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, inclusionary zoning has, in some jurisdictions, proven to be an effective tool if it's done right. We want to make sure we get it right.

I recognize and our government recognizes that it's now time to take action beyond section 37, which could have done a lot of this kind of thing if properly applied, but it wasn't. That's why we're developing a broader set of legislative changes that will go beyond inclusionary zoning.

That's why we want to talk to our partners, because, believe it or not, the development industry and our municipalities and some of my colleagues in this House have got some great ideas that need to be rolled into that legislation. We're going to make sure that happens because we're going to make sure we get it right.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, I've written to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing about the challenges some of my constituents are facing in land-lease communities where they live in Wasaga Beach. I've also questioned the minister in this House.

These developments are managed by Parkbridge's Adult Lifestyle Communities. Three of these communities are petitioning the province to update the Residential Tenancies Act, 1991, to bring in better oversight and transparency of the fees they pay.

Right now, residents in these communities have no protection and many, including Mr. Bill Dee, say the annual land-lease increases they face are too high. Another resident, Mr. Tony Brady, told local media, "They can raise it to whatever they want. This year, it's 4.2%; it could be 6.2%, or 10.2%, and we have nowhere to turn, we have absolutely no recourse."

My constituents need the government to come up with a creative solution. Will the Premier please commit to tackling this issue?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: The Premier will commit to tackling this issue, I can assure you. I appreciated getting a copy of the letter from the honourable member opposite.

There are situations where this is a serious problem. We need to have serious people sit down and look for some serious solutions. I can commit to the honourable member that we're doing exactly that, and I hope that in the not-too-distant future, we can together come up with a solution that will work for your constituents and others who are in these situations.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I certainly appreciate that answer from the minister. The residents are particularly concerned about transparency. They see steady increases in maintenance fees, for example, and the company unwilling to give them explanations. If they bought new lawn mowers or something like that, they'd understand the fees going up, but they never seem to get an explanation.

There are about 40 of these land-lease communities, I believe, across the province, so a lot of us are affected by it. I'd just ask the honourable minister, do you have a time frame in mind of when we might come to a solution?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If it's anything like inclusionary zoning, it will be a long time.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: And if municipalities used section 37, we could have had this solved a long time ago too.

I don't have a timeline. I can assure the member opposite that we're looking at it. We're looking at it seriously. We do think it's something that needs to be addressed. There are different ways to address it. You may know that the Landlord and Tenant Board and how that operates is in fact a function of the Attorney General, so we're working inter-ministerially to look at the potential answers.

To the honourable member: I'll get back to you—hopefully, as we quick as we can—with some action.

CROWN ATTORNEYS

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: Speaker, as this Liberal government is aware, the residing Rainy River district crown attorney is retiring. Rather than immediately undertake a search for a replacement, the Ministry of the Attorney General has decided to hire a rent-a-crown from a neighbouring district hundreds of kilometres away, despite the fact that the statistics show that the Rainy River district crown attorney has the highest caseload per capita in northern Ontario.

My question is simple: Can the Premier tell us when there will be a permanent resident crown attorney for the Rainy River district?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't have the time frame on that. I'm going to ask the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services to look at that.

But what I can say is that it would obviously be very critical that services would be in place, that there would be access to those services at any time, given the severity of cases. So the fact that there hasn't been a permanent appointment does not mean that the services would not be available to the member's residents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: All Ontarians deserve fair and equitable access to justice as a basic right. This latest blow to access to justice in the Rainy River district comes on the heels of a decision to not replace the resident judge, and serves as a further erosion of services and a further marginalization of the area.

A resident crown attorney has the knowledge of the area, including the knowledge and sensitivity to First Nation issues, as identified by the Gladue principle, and, just as importantly, is available and accessible.

No community should have to settle for whistle-stop justice. Will the Premier commit today to hiring a permanent replacement for the crown attorney who resides in the Rainy River district, without delay?

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member opposite for asking the question. I appreciate very much the Premier's responses. Of course, we take access to justice very, very seriously. A fundamental tenet of our judicial system is to make sure that all citizens have timely access to justice.

I'm confident that the Ministry of the Attorney General is doing everything in its power to make sure that the services that are needed in all communities across the province, especially northern Ontario, are available in a timely manner. I know there has been a significant effort that has been put in place to ensure that we continue to modernize our justice system, to better utilize technology in the delivery of the justice system, and of course, to ensure that services are also being provided in the French language, which is also an essential aspect of access to justice.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. We are greatly involved in supporting communities and businesses in northern Ontario, recognizing that through strategic investment, northern Ontario is on the right track to prosperity.

Investing in the north is a critical part of our plan to build Ontario up by supporting the construction of modern infrastructure and creating a dynamic and innovative business climate.

I understand that one of the ways that our government contributes to northern communities is through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell us more about this fund and the support that it is providing to people in the north?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much to the member for Kitchener Centre for this question. Through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund program, our government is investing \$100 million each year in this economic development fund that supports new projects across the north that are certainly strengthening northern communities, creating jobs and helping more northerners live, work and build careers in this great part of the province.

I wish I could go into all aspects of the fund, but I am proud to say that it was a Liberal government, under René Fontaine, that first introduced the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. back in the late 1980s. It's our government that increased the NOHFC funding to an unprecedented \$100-million level, a program that has created or retained over 25,000 jobs, that has actually brought forward investment—tripled in terms of the amount.

We're very excited, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to talking about one of the announcements we made recently. Perhaps I'll be able to get to that—

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I want to thank the minister for his answer. Clearly he is a very strong advocate for the north through the work of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. It's great to hear that our government is making such important investments in northern Ontario, and that we're exploring innovative ways to help Ontarians who are living, working and studying in the north.

I hear that the minister was recently at Lakehead University to announce that they are making several investments through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please tell us more about these investments at Lakehead University?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I was indeed at Lakehead University with my colleague the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to make a great announcement. The university was here yesterday, actually, with us all, and they continue to be a beacon of education in the north.

What we were able to provide was an \$814,000 Northern Ontario Heritage Fund investment to establish a five-year industrial research chair position in green chemicals and processes. Additionally, through another investment of \$470,000, we invested towards the development of a fire-resistance testing laboratory at Lakehead University, of great interest to my colleagues.

Certainly, we are very proud to support cutting-edge research conducted at Lakehead University and all across the north. By supporting that development and commercialization of new technologies, we're contributing to future prosperity in northern Ontario.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Premier: We debate a private member's bill today. Ontario's black market, illegal trade and trafficking continue to grow in scope and sophistication. Ontario, as we know, is a major hub of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Cocaine, amphetamines, heroin and other narcotics like fentanyl have long financed organized crime. Cash is king. We now see money laundering through online gambling, e-commerce and bitcoin. Contraband tobacco tax losses are at between 30% and 40%. Illegal weapons pervade.

Premier, as you would know, much of this crime is organized. My question: Do you feel that we as a society are suitably up to date and organized to fight back?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. It is certainly something that this side of the House also recognizes as important. It is why we have already taken action on a number of items that he seeks in his bill, and we're seeking to address them positively.

It is why we're working very closely with First Nations communities, in a balanced and respectful approach, to try to find compliance measures to the issues that we face. We have taken action in the 2016 budget and in the 2015 fall economic statement. We have four pilots already in regard to raw leaf, labelling and compliance, including an OPP detachment for fine enforcement. And Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the underground economy, over \$930 million has now been retrieved last year as a result of the measures that we're taking. So we will continue.

When it comes to community safety and human trafficking, I will defer to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you for that. I'll point out that Ontario does not have a strategy for human trafficking, and, as with tobacco, drugs and illegal weapons, there's a lack of tracking data. There's a lack of statistics. I agree: We do have task forces and ad hoc initiatives, and this is good. However, we're told there's a lack of information-sharing and a lack of collaboration among those who are fighting the criminal underworld. Again, organization is lacking.

My question: Would you support the establishment of a one-year, time-limited commission of inquiry—not an inquisition; nothing like that, but a research-based inquiry, drawing on facts and expert testimony to assemble the necessary knowledge, the understanding and best practices to provide further advice and recommendations to this government with respect to future action?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I was going to focus on the issue around human trafficking that the member raised in his question, which I think we all recognize in this House and in our society is a deplorable activity, and we have to do everything in our power to stop it.

Just yesterday, the minister responsible for women's issues and I attended a national anti-trafficking forum that is taking place in Toronto. It's being hosted by the Canadian Women's Foundation and Public Safety Canada. They have brought in stakeholders, survivor groups and police services to come together to look at the best possible strategies to combat human trafficking. In fact, Speaker, as we speak, my ministry and the Ontario Women's Directorate are hosting a working lunch, sharing with them what we have learned in our consultations as we develop the strategy to combat and end human trafficking in the province of Ontario.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, as you know, I've been across my riding from Fort Erie to Niagara Falls and into Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the message is the same: Seniors are worried about your Liberal government's plan to increase the cost of their prescription drugs. It's unacceptable that they already struggle to pay their hydro and their food bills. They simply can't afford increased prescription drug costs.

But don't take it from me, Minister; take it from the more than 60 seniors' organizations that have raised this issue with myself and you. Will your government reverse this decision and tell the seniors in Niagara that they don't have to worry about higher co-payments and increased annual deductibles when it comes to their medications?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As always, I appreciate the question from the member.

As I said earlier, the intent—I don't think I said this portion of it. The intent of this action in the budget was to take 173,000 of the poorest seniors in this province and move them from a category where they currently pay \$100 per year as an annual deductible towards their drug costs into a category where they will go from a \$100 deductible to zero dollars deductible. They'll join a category, which already exists, of about 300,000 individuals who pay no annual deductible.

That was the intent of putting this in the budget, and I would think—I expect—that the member opposite supports and would even perhaps applaud that move to provide better access for those individuals.

We've indicated that we want to make sure we get this right for all seniors. We posted the regulation. We're engaged in consultation, including, I'm sure, with many of the groups that he has referenced.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Here's the problem with the 170,000. It's good that we're heading that way, but here's the reality, Minister: One million seniors will have to pay more, and that's a fact. So let's be clear about that. That's the issue.

This budget is going to nearly double the annual deductible for seniors' prescriptions and cause higher co-

payments every time they fill prescriptions at their pharmacy. I know this. The members of this Legislature know this and the seniors in my riding know this.

Seniors made their communities great and they deserve better. Will you give the seniors in my riding and across Ontario an answer about your plan? Will this government reverse its decision and move towards universal coverage for all our seniors' prescription medication for the one million people who will have to pay?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm happy to continue the consultation, including with seniors' groups.

FLOODING

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Rising temperatures and April showers bring spring flowers, but rising temperatures and heavy rains also bring spring flooding.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, along with conservation authorities like the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in my riding of Etobicoke Centre, monitor surface water levels, weather forecasts and watershed conditions at locations across the watershed. These measurements, weather forecasts and radar information on temperature and rainfall predictions along with historical data are compiled to develop a flood forecast. In 2013, flooding hit our province and hit our community in Etobicoke Centre very, very hard, so I know my constituents are keenly aware of the importance of this type of service and these types of forecasts.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister please explain to the House what his ministry is doing to ensure that communities in Ontario are prepared to respond to potential flooding emergencies?

Hon. Bill Mauro: The ministry monitors watershed conditions 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is able to contact stakeholders immediately with updates. We work with communities, conservation authorities and Environment Canada to forecast where and when flooding is likely to occur. Together with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, we work to ensure that Ontarians are prepared for floods.

MNRF has an information website to inform the people of Ontario about potential flooding, provide real-time information about weather and flooding risks, and provide tips on what to do in the event of a flood.

In areas where there is no conservation authority, MNRF district offices are responsible for providing local flood messaging to municipalities and First Nations. Our Surface Water Monitoring Centre performs a daily assessment for flood hazard potential, and this assessment considers many dimensions such as weather, water levels, and snow pack.

VISITORS

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce a few special guests who are here today: Dr. Jean Augustine, former MP for Etobicoke–Lakeshore, is here today; Nancy Coldham, co-chair of Equal Voice Toronto; Thelma McGillivray, vice-president of the Provincial Council of Women Ontario; Maide and Hatice Yazar from the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario; and Joan Bismillah, a champion of human rights in South Africa and member of Equal Voice Toronto, joining us today for my motion debate this afternoon.

Finally, it is a distinct pleasure to introduce Mr. Lloyd Luckock and his wife, Alice. Lloyd is the grandson of Rae Luckock. Rae was one of the first female MPPs elected to this chamber. Welcome.

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MPP beat me to it. My former MP Jean Augustine is here, and also a wonderful student intern from Ryerson University who worked in my constituency office, Eric Muetz.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It's really not a point of order. I would just like to wish happy birthday to my seatmate, who will be turning 29 on March 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're right: It's not a point of order. I'm going to have it stricken from the record.

The Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I have a point of order: I would also like to join my colleague in recognizing the presence of the Honourable Jean Augustine, who was the first black woman elected as a member of Parliament. We're so honoured that you're here.

Also, I notice my friend Nancy Coldham is here as well, and I would like to welcome her.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not to be outdone, the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Speaker, I'm really afraid to say that this is not a point of order, but if I may beg your indulgence for a moment, I would like to wish my seatmate from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell in front of me whose birthday will be on April 2 next week—we won't be here, but I'd still like to wish him a happy birthday.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Speaker, I hope you'll entertain some generosity towards me as well with another birthday wish to my seatmate, our colleague Kathryn McGarry from Cambridge. The member from Cambridge has a big birthday coming up, and we just want to wish her all happiness and best wishes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This feels much better, actually, so I don't mind doing this.

DEFERRED VOTES

SUPPLY ACT, 2016

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2016

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 / Projet de loi 166, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2016.

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

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members, please take your seats.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That was a protest.

On March 23, 2016, Mr. Gravelle moved second reading of Bill 166.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Potts, Arthur
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Scott, Laurie
Campbell, Sarah	Horwath, Andrea	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Hudak, Tim	Taylor, Monique
Coe, Lorne	Jones, Sylvia	Thompson, Lisa M.
DiNovo, Cheri	MacLaren, Jack	Vanhof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	McDonell, Jim	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff
Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras	

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 52; the nays are 35.

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

Second reading agreed to.

SUPPLY ACT, 2016

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2016

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Ms. Matthews, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 166, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 / Projet de loi 166, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2016.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 166. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 52; the nays are 35.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes.

I would like to make a quick comment to each and every one of you that you have a safe and happy Easter and spend some time with your families. Thank you very much.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great honour to introduce a number of guests who here today to celebrate someone's special birthday. Suzanne Mason is turning 80, and she and her friends are here to have lunch at Queen's Park: Catherine Copeland, Elizabeth Fedorkow, John and Peggy Barnard, Kathryn Kowal and David Alles. Welcome to Queen's Park, and happy birthday, Suzanne.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: On behalf of the PC Party, I'd like to introduce Paul Raymond and Sean O'Malley, here from Epilepsy Ontario.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' business such that Mr. Hatfield assumes ballot item number 29 and Mr. Natyshak assumes ballot item number 71.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PURIM

Mrs. Gila Martow: Just this week, we saw people down here at Queen's Park celebrating Nowruz, the holiday which means "new day" and commemorates the Persian new year. Well, we've got another Persian holiday, and it's the Jewish holiday of Purim. It's considered one of the most joyous days in the Hebrew calendar. It celebrates the survival of the Jewish people against an anti-Semitic villain once again. This time his name was Haman.

In the year 369 BCE, King Ahasuerus of Persia ascended the throne in what is now Iran. The villain of the story, Haman, was the arrogant, egotistical advisor to the king. Haman hated a Jew named Mordechai who refused to bow down to him, so Haman plotted to destroy the Jewish people. The king gave the fate of the Jewish people to Haman to do with as he pleased, so Haman planned just to exterminate all the Jews. The word "Purim" means "lots," and refers to a lottery system that Haman used to choose the date for the massacre.

The story of Purim is told in the biblical book of Esther. The heroes of the story are Esther, a young beautiful Jewish woman living in Persia, and her cousin Mordechai. Basically, Esther was taken into the harem and the king chose her to be his queen. She managed to convince the king not to exterminate the Jews, so instead he decided to exterminate Haman and his family.

Of course, now we eat cookies in the shape of Haman's hats. It's called hamantaschen—a triangular shape. One of the mitzvahs—the good deeds—is to get drunk to the point that you can't tell the difference between Mordechai and Haman. Now, some people interpret that to mean drunk on happiness, but many do not. So everybody stay safe. Don't drink and drive tonight, and remember, the RIDE checks are out there around the synagogues, believe it or not. So be careful, be safe, and happy Easter to everybody else this weekend.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. You learn something new every day.

SEARCH-AND-RESCUE HELICOPTER

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm proud to say that after \$30 in fees and months of waiting, I finally received the report that is supposed to tell me why the OPP helicopter has been moved from Sudbury airport to Orillia. Well, the only thing in that 30-page report that talks about this—listen to this, Speaker—is it's because there are more people in southern Ontario than in northern Ontario and therefore all of the resources should be in southern Ontario. According to them, we should not have a university or a hospital or a cancer treatment centre because—you know what?—there are less people in northern Ontario than in southern Ontario. This is the only rationale that they could put forward.

A lot of people have said that moving both helicopters to Orillia is dangerous because of the bad weather effect. Well, they actually, in the report, looked at the weather stations at Borden and Muskoka. Both of them are more than 40 kilometres away, as opposed to the Orillia base, which is right beside the lake, gets lake effect, is in a snowbelt and is often grounded.

People of the north are not taking this. I have been copied on resolutions from Charlton and Dack, the Manitoulin Municipal Association, the city of Greater Sudbury, the town of Hornepayne, la ville de Mattice-Val Côté and the township of Billings. They're all telling the minister the same thing: Bring the helicopter back to Sudbury Airport to protect the lives of northerners.

TRILLIUM HEALTH PARTNERS

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: In November 2011, the Credit Valley Hospital, the Mississauga Hospital and the Queensway Health Centre came together to form a new entity known as Trillium Health Partners. Four years in, the merger is delivering positive results for patients. Through partnership, working in a coordinated way across the system has helped to meet the needs of the patients and provide outstanding, sustainable, quality patient care. Each location focuses on the patient care they specialize in.

Trillium Health Partners is now managed by one management team ably led by the presidency of Michelle DiEmanuele, and is fully committed to improving patient care and delivering cost-effective solutions. Some of the key benefits of this merger have been: The centralized registration centre has made registration faster and easier for patients. There has been a 28% improvement in emergency department wait times for admitted patients as a result of managing patient flow across the hospital as opposed to within individual sites. This is also helping patients who urgently need beds to get them quicker. There has been a 20% decrease in wait times for cancer, cataract, hip and knee surgeries, as well as for CT and MRI scans.

As a merged hospital, Trillium Health Partners has turned out to be one of the most efficiently run hospitals in the province. This model has proved to be very effective in Mississauga and maybe needs to be explored in other regions of the province.

EPILEPSY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I stand in the House today to welcome Epilepsy Ontario and to announce Purple Day. Today, MPPs are wearing purple ribbons to promote epilepsy awareness in honour of Purple Day, which falls on March 26. Founded in 2008, Purple Day was created to get people talking about the disorder and to help fight the stigma attached to seizure disorders by educating the public and empowering the epilepsy community.

Epilepsy Ontario is the voice of epilepsy across the province. Since 1956, the organization has been raising

public awareness and improving education across the province through publications, conferences, outreach initiatives and, of course, its website. Thank you to Epilepsy Ontario for the great work that you do across the province to improve the lives of people living with epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a common brain disorder characterized by recurrent seizures. Today, approximately 90,000 in Ontario have epilepsy. There remains no cure for this complex neurological disorder; however, proper treatment can help control seizures, assisting the person to live their life to the fullest. Given that Saturday is Purple Day, I encourage people to visit the Epilepsy Ontario website to learn more about this disorder and how to help someone having a seizure.

Additionally, stigma is one barrier that people with epilepsy face, and advocacy is an equally important tool for improving people's lives. Spread awareness, educate yourself, educate others and eliminate the misconceptions related to epilepsy. Together, we can make a difference for many lives throughout this province.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Unfortunately, I rise again today to bring awareness to a situation that continues to evolve in rural Ontario across the province. It's the closure of small, rural, remote schools. Constituents in my riding of Essex and specifically Harrow continue to fight the closure of the Harrow high school there, a school that has been a hallmark of that community. Generations of families have sent their kids there, and it continues to be a hub of community spirit and, of course, educational resources for the kids that attend that school.

However, the provincial government continues on their path to destroy rural schools in Ontario. I've met with the parents. I've met with students and alumni who are continuing to collect signatures to fight the provincial government on their efforts.

However, today the government announced that life would once again get harder for parents and families in rural Ontario. The Grants for Student Needs funding announced today includes deep cuts to the Geographic Circumstances Grant, a lifeline for rural schools in my community and, I would imagine, rural schools around the province of Ontario.

1310

This is a continuous dismantling of rural education in the province. You are breaking apart communities. You are forcing kids to travel long distances to go to schools that are outside of their home communities and, again, affecting the livelihood of small, rural Ontario. I hope the government changes their direction, because it's affecting our communities.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak about Greek Independence Day. Today, Greeks all

across Ontario, and indeed the world over, are celebrating the 195th anniversary of Greek independence. It's the day that the Greeks said no to the Ottoman Empire.

Today, Speaker, I had the privilege to join you, the Premier, consul general-elect Alexandros Ioannidis—who I see is in the crowd, and welcome to Queen's Park—and the Greek community of Toronto to commemorate Greek Independence Day. I look forward to seeing everyone again very soon at the Danforth parade.

Ontario is home to about 140,000 people of Greek descent. This is a momentous occasion to come together as Ontarians and honour what Greece has given to the world, but also honour the significant contributions across all fields that the Greek community has provided right here in the province. Toronto, including my riding of Beaches–East York, is home to one of the most vibrant Greek communities outside of Greece. I look forward to working with the community and enhancing our productive relationships.

In 1982, I bought my first home in Greektown, on the Danforth, and developed excellent relations with the community at that time, including resurrecting and saving their wonderful delicacy known as kokoretsi.

On this day, as we come together to celebrate 195 years of Greek independence, we give our thanks to everything the Hellenic community in Ontario has given our province. Zito É Ellas.

GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure today to take the opportunity to recognize the presence of the consul general of Greece, Alexandros Ioannidis, and his wife; and other members of the Greek community of Toronto who are here today with us at Queen's Park. We just had a flag-raising and there are some more celebrations going on.

On March 25, members of the Greek community from around the world will celebrate Greece's National Day of Independence, which is observed both as a national and religious day of celebration by Greeks. It is a national holiday commemorating Greece's war of independence from centuries of Ottoman rule.

The Greek revolt was precipitated on March 25, 1821, when Bishop Germanos raised the flag of revolution over the Monastery of Agia Lávra. The cry for freedom became the motto of the movement. It is also considered one of the holiest days for Greek Orthodox Christians, celebrating as it is the Annunciation of the Theotokos.

The Greek community here in Ontario has thrived for about a hundred years or more, contributing immensely to the political, economic and social fabric of our province. Be it in business or in academia, the Greek community has always played an important role in shaping our province's civic and cultural institutions.

Today at Queen's Park, we had our Greek flag-raising ceremony. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all members and visitors to the Greek Independence Day reception in room 228 at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, using my best Greek possible, Zito É Ellas, Zito to Ontario and Zito O Kanadas.

NUTRITION MONTH

Mr. Granville Anderson: Every year, Dietitians of Canada and thousands of dietitians working here in Ontario help promote healthy eating through celebrating Nutrition Month in March. This year, Dietitians of Canada is challenging Canadians to take a 100-meal journey by pledging to make a small change to their eating habits and to stick with it, one meal at a time.

March 16 was marked as Dietitians Day to recognize the work of dietitians and the value they bring to the health care system right here in Ontario. By preventing and managing chronic diseases and promoting recovery, dietitians are a cost-effective investment in health care. Promoting access to dietitians' care and supporting them to work at their full scope of practice helps achieve good health.

I would like to thank the team of dietitians who met with me in my office for their education and passion, and I would like to congratulate everyone as we come to the close of a very successful Nutrition Month.

INSURANCE FRAUD

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to remind everyone that March is Fraud Prevention Month. Throughout this month, the Ontario government and other organizations have been encouraging Ontarians to recognize, reject and report fraud.

Today, I'd like to highlight organized insurance fraud. It's a serious problem that impacts the cost of insurance for all consumers and is estimated to cost upward of \$1 billion in Ontario alone.

Only a few people commit insurance fraud, but it costs everyone. One specific example I'd like to mention is an Aviva Canada investigation that has been recently covered in media reports on W5 and by Paul Bliss on CTV News. The coverage shows video footage of staff at both a health care clinic and a law firm encouraging and counselling undercover investigators to commit fraud.

The responsibility of these professionals is to protect accident victims, but instead they encourage the role players to lie so that they could submit phoney forms and collect insurance payments for services never supplied. The Toronto police have since laid charges on all these three professionals.

Auto accident victims rely on health care providers to help them recover, as well as restore their lives. Unfortunately, in instances like these, these innocent victims are targeted when they are most vulnerable, and their pain and tragedies are manipulated. This needs to stop, Mr. Speaker. Let's continue to work together to fight fraud.

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

Just as he's exiting—as Speaker, I have always welcomed and thanked our consular corps for being here—I want to bring attention to the consul general of

Greece and his boss, his wife, for being here and also our guests today for the flag-raising. Welcome to the consul general and to our guests.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I beg leave to present the first report 2016 from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Naidoo-Harris presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Yes, Speaker. I would like to thank the committee and support staff for all their hard work and diligence in preparing this thorough report. I know you have all put a great deal of time and effort into this, and it's fantastic to see that it culminated in this important document. It makes several recommendations that will be key to our progress, moving forward.

Thank you, and I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Naidoo-Harris moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I have a petition from the Ontario Medical Association.

"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."

We have 2,000 signatures on this petition. I affix my signature to it. I agree with it and I give it to page Sohan.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario faces an affordable housing crisis; and

“Whereas one in every three renter households lives in housing that is unaffordable, inadequate, or in serious need of repair, and more than 165,000 families across Ontario are waiting for rent-geared-to-income housing; and

“Whereas inclusionary zoning laws have helped create affordable housing and alleviate poverty in more than 200 communities across the United States; and

“Whereas research by the Wellesley Institute, ACORN Canada and the Furman Centre have shown that inclusionary zoning could create thousands of affordable housing units a year in Ontario, without significant impact on the production of market housing, and without any cost to the taxpayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact a law empowering municipalities across the province to pass inclusionary zoning bylaws, which mandate that a specified percentage of new residential developments include affordable housing units.”

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to affix my signature and give it to Harry to be delivered to the table.

DORIS WARD

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Scarborough Southwest resident Doris Ward celebrated her 90th birthday last Saturday, March 19, 2016;

“Whereas she first volunteered in a federal election in 1935 with her grandfather by delivering election pamphlets by horse and buggy throughout the riding of Provencher, Manitoba;

“Whereas Doris Ward became an active community member in 1979 by opening a beauty salon and creating the second business improvement area in Toronto in the community of Cliffside;

“Whereas Doris Ward continues to be a very active community member in the riding of Scarborough Southwest;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize Doris Ward as an outstanding person.”

I agree with this, and I affix my signature to it.

HYDRO RATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Wayne Gates: “Petition to Stop the Plan to Increase Seniors' Drug Costs.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1st, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

“Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher co-payments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

“Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

“Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

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

“Stop the government's plans to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians.”

I'll sign my name. I agree with the petition.

ELDER ABUSE

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

“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 will give my petition to page Ariel.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: A petition from the Ontario Medical Association to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with the content, I’ll affix my signature and provide it to the page.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition to preserve community schools that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is right for Ontario youth to be educated in their home communities;

“Whereas accessible schools that students can walk, bike or take a short ride to promote healthy lifestyles, a cleaner environment and emotional well-being;

“Whereas the economies of smaller rural towns are directly strengthened and vitalized by high schools in their own communities;

“Whereas community schools best serve special populations;

“Whereas rural high schools more than 15 km from the next high school should be considered eligible for enhanced top-up funding;

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

“To direct support and resources to Ontario rural community schools, such as Harrow District High School, so as to provide and sustain accessible education for youth within their home communities, preserving and sustaining rural town culture that diversifies the fabric of the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my name and send it to the Clerks’ table via page Jack.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to read this petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal

dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

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

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province....”

I agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Christina.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“The recent decision by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services to put an end to funding for sheltered workshops and special employment services for people with special needs in Ontario. Community Living Chatham-Kent now supports 475 people and their families and employs more than 250 people. The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides 90% of the funding with the remainder coming from donations, fundraising activities, grants and foundations.

“We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now and put a stop to this decision and reinstate the funding and programs to their previous state.”

I approve of this petition, sign it and will give it to page Joshua.

ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board is a provincial agency composed of unelected members unaccountable to Ontarians; and

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board has the power to unilaterally alter local development decisions made by municipalities and their communities; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto is the largest city in Ontario; and

“Whereas the city of Toronto has a planning department composed of professional planners, an extensive legal department and 44 full-time city councillors directly elected by its citizens; and

“Whereas Toronto’s city council voted overwhelmingly in February 2012 to request an exemption from the Ontario Municipal Board’s jurisdiction;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recognize the ability of the

city of Toronto to handle its own urban planning and development; and

“Further, that the Ontario Municipal Board no longer have jurisdiction over the city of Toronto.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign it and give it to Barton to be delivered to the table.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Chris Ballard: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lung disease affects 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario;

“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;

“One in five Ontario schoolchildren has asthma;

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

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s 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, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I regret to inform the House that the time for petitions has expired.

However, I would also remind the members—because there are times when members want to get a petition on and don’t get the opportunity; we’re all in that situation at times—that you don’t have to read the entire petition. If you think about other members who might want to do petitions during the course of an afternoon and who didn’t get a chance, you might want to think about them when you’re reading a long petition, because you don’t have to read the whole content—just a reminder.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016 / Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2016.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**ALBANIAN HERITAGE
MONTH ACT, 2016**

**LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS**

Mrs. Albanese moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month / Projet de loi 145, Loi proclamant le mois de novembre Mois du patrimoine albanais.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: It is a privilege to rise and address this House and lead the debate on Bill 145. I would like, first of all, to welcome the numerous members from the Albanian community who have joined us here in the legislative chamber. Among them is the formidable honorary president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association and chairman of the ACCA Albanian heritage group, Dr. Ruki Kondaj. Ruki and I have worked together to propose this bill, which would recognize November as Albanian Heritage Month in the province of Ontario.

I would also like to acknowledge the chargé d'affaires of the Republic of Kosovo in Canada, Mr. Lulzim Hiseni—welcome—and members of the media, such as Albania Reflections; the lovely dancing group Little Eagles; and the representatives of the various associations that are here with us today. Welcome to all of you. Mirëdita.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides our province with an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the Albanian-Canadian community living here in Ontario. I think it would be fitting if November would be proclaimed Albanian Heritage Month in our province, as during this month this community celebrates two important dates: Albanian Independence Day, or flag day, which falls on November 28, marks the date when, in 1912, Albania proclaimed its independence from the Ottoman Empire; and November 29, which is recognized as Albanian Liberation Day. The Albanian-Canadian community celebrates these dates in Ontario by raising the Albanian flag here at Queen's Park, as well as by organizing cultural performances and banquet dinners throughout our province and the rest of Canada.

I'd like to say something about the history of this resilient community which now lives in our great province. As many would know, Albania is a small country nestled in the Balkan peninsula in southeastern Europe, with coastlines on the Adriatic and Ionian seas, just above Greece and east of Italy. Albania today is a beautiful tourist destination that offers enchanting landscapes and sites. In 2015, it was listed as one of the top 10 most visited destinations in the world; but it was not always so. The country has had a long and troubled history.

First, we need to clarify that Albanians in Canada came from different European countries: Albania itself, Kosovo, Macedonia, Greece, Serbia and Turkey. This is explained by the geopolitics of the beginning of the 20th century, mainly characterized by Albanian territories being annexed by neighbouring Balkan countries.

Second, it is very important to understand the national identity of Albanians. Again, we have to look back in history. Albanians are a very ancient people, descendants of the ancient Illyrians. During most of their history, they have been conquered and ruled by three big empires: Romans, Byzantines and Ottomans. These long occupations brought significant anthropological and social changes; most important, the introduction of three major religions: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam. However, their national identity has remained strong through the centuries. Their patriotism is rooted in two pillars: their common land and their language.

Albanians began coming to Canada after the First World War. The first wave of immigration consisted of immigrants leaving the country mainly in search of better economic opportunities.

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The second wave of immigration occurred after the Second World War. These were mainly refugees escaping the Communist rule in Albania and Yugoslavia and from the Republic of Macedonia.

The third and largest wave saw about 20,000 people, predominantly skilled workers, leave the country after 1990, together with at least 5,000 Kosovo Albanians, who were accepted as refugees in 1999 by the Canadian government.

Today, according to ACCA, there are about 40,000 Albanians who call Ontario home, and another 20,000 live in other Canadian provinces. The majority of Albanian Canadians living in our province have chosen to live in the greater Toronto area and in other cities such as Hamilton, London, Kitchener, Ottawa, Peterborough and Windsor. They have a vibrant community life. Nowadays, Albanians in Ontario count on several community associations, and within our school system there are seven different elementary schools that offer language classes where the children learn the Albanian language and study history and traditions.

One unifying force within the community is the Albanian Canadian Community Association, or ACCA, which was established on August 11, 1989. This was an important milestone for the whole Albanian community in Canada, accomplished through the hard and commend-

able work of the founding committee, which succeeded to establish and make it legally viable on November 4, 1990.

The Albanian Canadian Community Association of Toronto is one of the nerve centres of the community's social activities. The association is developing a greater awareness and pride amongst its members and within the entire Canadian community as to who Albanian Canadians are, where they came from and their aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a minute or two to share my personal connections with the Albanian community. As you may be aware, I was born and raised in Italy before coming to Canada. I was born in a seaside town called Taranto, in the region of Apulia. Apulia, in southeastern Italy, encompasses the heel of Italy's boot, right across from Albania. My last name is Albanese, which literally means "from Albania." Although I have never explored the personal history of my family name, there is an ethnic and linguistic Albanian minority community that has long lived in southern Italy. They are the Arbëreshë, or Italo-Albanians. They settled in southern Italy between the 15th and 18th centuries, in several waves of migration, following the death of the Albanian national hero George Kastrioti Skanderbeg. Their culture is determined by the main features that are found in language, religion, traditions, customs, art and gastronomy, still jealously preserved. Today there are about 50 Arbëreshë communities and villages scattered throughout southern Italy.

During my previous career in multicultural broadcasting, I had the opportunity to meet, interview and get to know representatives of the Arbëreshë community living in Toronto. It is a community I have long been familiar with.

During my election campaigns, I have been frequently stopped and have been asked many times by members of the Albanian community here in Canada if my roots are Albanian. They may be, Mr. Speaker. One day I will endeavour to find out.

Mr. Speaker, in my capacity as MPP for York South-Weston, I came to know and grew very fond of Dr. Ruki Kondaj. We spoke about how the presence and the contributions of Albanian Canadians could be better recognized here in the province of Ontario. Hence, we started working closely together on making this bill become a reality.

Albanian Canadians have contributed greatly over the last century to the social fabric of our country. Their capacity to integrate well in Canadian society reflects their strong family and cultural values. They have a strong work ethic, recognizable in the numerous success stories in the community, the great many individuals who have distinguished themselves, whether in business, science, the arts, and the great number of Albanian-Canadian youth who attend our universities and colleges.

Albanians have remained proud of their rich cultural heritage. Albanian Canadians have held onto their traditional customs, songs and dances, musical instruments, stories, legends, oral histories and literature, all so dear to

them. They have held onto the code of Besa, a collection of principles which regulated Albanian social, economic and religious lives, together with traditional customs and cultural practices of the Albanian society between the year 1400 till today.

"Besa," for example, means taking care of those in need and being hospitable. During World War II, Albanians saved over 2,000 Jews from Nazi persecution. Rather than hiding the Jews in attics or in the woods, Albanians gave them clothes, gave them Albanian names, and treated them as part of their family. The concept of Besa is incorporated into their culture.

Albanian Canadians honour interreligious harmony and hold onto their language, which is without a doubt one of the oldest in the world.

On the day I presented the first reading of this bill in the Legislature last November 2015, we had the honour to hear in this very building an Arbëreshë song that is more than 500 years old and is sung by all Albanians everywhere. "Moj e Bukura More" was brilliantly performed here by soprano Mirela Tafaj.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention in my speech two of the most prominent Albanian national heroes, held in great esteem by this community.

The first, whom I have previously mentioned in my speech, is Gjergj Kastrioti Skanderbeg, Albania's national hero, who fought against the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century.

The second is Mother Teresa, the Catholic humanitarian well known all over the world for her missionary work, first in Ireland, then in India, where she lived most of her life. Mother Teresa, winner of the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, is a model for all modern Albanians—and, I would say, beyond. Just last week, Pope Francis announced that she will be made a saint of the Roman Catholic Church at a ceremony that will be held in Rome next September 4.

Mr. Speaker, the contributions of the Albanian community are clearly felt not only in Ontario, but across the world. As a country, Canada has been built on the value of recognizing and respecting our rich cultural diversity, celebrating the traditions and values of the people who have immigrated here and the contributions they are making today as Canadians.

I therefore hope and ask all of my colleagues here in this Legislature to help me recognize November as Albanian Heritage Month in the province of Ontario. As I said at the beginning, I think it would be fitting; it is the month that the community would like the best for recognizing its heritage.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Falemenderit.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month. It was very, very quiet in the room, which for a Thursday before a break is somewhat unusual; usually people have a lot to talk about and ask each other what they're doing for the Easter

weekend or whatever holiday is coming up. But people were very quiet. Why? Because the member from York South–Weston gave such a beautiful speech, and it was so interesting. We all learned a lot; I know I certainly did.

I didn't know that much about Albania or Albanian history, and I reached out to one of my team members up in Vaughan. His name is Ariel Sahatcija. I want to make sure I say his name. He's here with his mom; her name is Dhurata Sahatcija. We can all say hello. I want to really thank Ariel, because he helped me put together a little bit of what I'm going to read to you to start off with today.

Albania is also known as Shqipëri—I'm sure I'm not saying that right, but I try—which means “land of the eagles.” Albanians are also known as Shqipëtar, or “sons of eagles,” and early on identified with this noble symbol, which became their national symbol and is proudly displayed on their flag. I recall seeing their flag with the eagle on it; it's very distinct.

Albania is one of the smallest countries in Europe, and yet it is filled with exceptionally beautiful landscapes: mountain peaks covered with snow in the summertime, incredible sea cliffs and green plateaus, tall forests, rivers and lakes known for their crystal clear waters and home to an abundance of flora and fauna. The Albanian Riviera harbours the best untouched golden beaches, from the coastal lowlands lapped by the Adriatic Sea to the rugged mountainous coastline of the Ionian Sea, which is an elongation of the Mediterranean.

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It really sounds like someplace we all want to visit. I know that I sometimes get to travel to francophone destinations, so I'm hoping to hear very soon that there's a francophone community somewhere in Albania.

A country located in the Balkan peninsula, as old as the land itself, through its rich and ancient language has inherited, generation after generation, the names of mountains, rivers, heroes, myths, legends, divinities and traditions.

Albanians are a courageous people who have fought throughout the centuries for their existence. The 15th century marked one of the most painful yet glorious chapters in Albanian history. As the invading Ottoman armies were pushing through what was left of the Byzantine Empire and advancing menacingly toward western Europe, Albanian resistance, under the leadership of Skanderbeg, Albania's national hero, halted the invasion and repelled the Ottomans for a quarter of a century. The member for York South–Weston mentioned their hero, and you can certainly see why they worshipped him.

In the early 20th century, as the Ottoman Empire was falling apart, Albania was once again in peril of being partitioned and wiped off the map of Europe. Brave Albanian patriots from all Albanian regions convened an all-Albanian assembly and declared the country's independence. Even as independence was declared, Albania's sovereignty and statehood was uncertain. Only after US President Woodrow Wilson interceded on Albania's behalf at the Paris Peace Conference did

Albania subsequently receive international recognition from the League of Nations.

In World War II, Albanians overwhelmingly listed their support on the Allied side, resisted the invasion and fought to liberate their country against occupying Axis forces. At the conclusion of the war, Albanians emerged victorious, with casualties estimated around 28,000.

After the war, a Communist regime was installed in Albania. The regime successfully mobilized large parts of the population in order to rebuild the country after the war. Hope for a better future prevailed among the youth. The massive mobilization efforts, especially popular among young people, resulted in improvements to infrastructure, health and education. However, because of political oppression and an inefficient economic model, the system's shortcomings became visible not only in Albania but in other European countries with similar regimes.

After the collapse of communism in Europe, a pluralistic system and free market economy replaced the old one in Albania. Albania became a full member of NATO in 2009, and since 2014, Albania has become an official candidate for accession to the European Union.

The character of Albanians is marked by values such as tolerance and hospitality. During World War II, Albanians demonstrated to all that their love of fellow humans was stronger than fear and doubt in murky times. They sheltered and protected all Jews who lived or landed in Albania despite placing their own families at risk. At the conclusion of the war, the Jewish population in Albania had at least doubled, which means that people came from other countries to be protected. I'm now going to have to look up if there are any Righteous Among the Nations listed for Albanians.

Albania's religious landscape is noted for its tolerance and respect of different faiths. This virtue has been cultivated through hundreds of years and has become an admirable standard of peaceful and respectful coexistence. A great example, as we heard just before, is Mother Teresa, who will be canonized on September 4. She founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation that was active in 133 countries, thus making her a citizen of the world and promoter of peace. Her commitment to assist the poorest of the poor, the ailing and the disabled is a higher model of service to humanity. Former Secretary-General of the United Nations Perez de Cuellar has said of her, “She is the United Nations. She is peace in the world.”

In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She refused the ceremonial banquet to be given in her honour and asked that the prize funds be given to the poor of India. In 1985, US President Ronald Reagan awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He described her as a “heroine of our times.” Although this award is traditionally given to US citizens, Reagan explained that “the goodness in some hearts transcends” all national boundaries.

Her house has been visited in her time by many dignitaries, such as Queen Elizabeth, George Herbert

Walker Bush and Princess Diana. When once asked where she hailed from, she responded, “I am Albanian by birth, Indian by citizenship, Catholic nun by faith, and by profession I belong to the world. My country is a small country; it is called Albania.”

This demonstrates, I think, to all of us the passion that many Canadians have for their country of birth, their cultural heritage and their religion.

As the new associate PC critic for culture, the new PC critic for anti-racism, the PC critic for francophone affairs—I also represent francophone women’s issues for all three caucuses, and I’m the liaison for the Jewish community for the PC caucus. I think there is a little bit of symbolism there as to why I enjoy going to all the events: the flag raisings, the receptions, meeting all the communities and learning a few words. There is a limit to how many languages I can cope with. I find that when I learn a new one, I forget some of the words of the other ones that I knew. I really enjoy meeting people from the different cultures and communities.

I think that I can speak on behalf of all of my colleagues on all sides of the House when I say how much we enjoy everybody when they come and visit us. Oftentimes, there’s food involved, and that’s not the only reason we go. We really do enjoy learning about all the cultures and history and traditions. Really, it’s what makes our job fun. So we really salute all of you who take time out of your busy days to be here with us and to celebrate with us. Oftentimes, people thank for me for being at their reception or their event, but really it’s us who wish to thank all of you. So thank you very much for being here today.

Of course, I think it’s very clear that, on behalf of the PC caucus, I’m happy to say that we support November—and we’ve heard from the previous member, who presented her private member’s bill, why November should be the heritage month for the Albanian community.

I just want to mention to people from the Albanian community here that we have quite a few months celebrating different communities, and I think it’s wonderful. If we have to start doubling up the months, I think we’re all prepared to do that. May is Jewish Heritage Month. That private member’s bill was put forward by my former colleague for Thornhill, as well as the present member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the present member for Parkdale–High Park, who’s here. The member for Davenport just presented not that long ago, this past year, for Spanish heritage month. We had a presentation for Ukrainian heritage month. June is Italian Heritage Month. April is Sikh Heritage Month. Just today, we are welcoming people from the Greek community for the Greek flag raising. I’m not aware of a Greek heritage month—there’s a little bit of a hint going on there.

How do kids learn to remember the traditions, the language, the values and even the food in their community? Well, the families do their best to teach them, but it certainly does help when there’s a school in the community with a certain ethnic group. It helps if there

are afternoon programs, and if the churches, synagogues and temples host programs to teach the kids. It’s nice when the kids can come down and join their families at Queen’s Park, but we mostly see children at all the cultural centres and banquet halls.

Until I got elected, Mr. Speaker, I wasn’t aware of how many banquet halls there are across the GTA. Every two weeks, it seems like there’s another one that you have to get on your GPS.

I often say to myself, as I’m sure the other members do, “Am I dressed right for the event? What colour should I be wearing in this community?” In your invitations to us, feel free to say, “We like it when it’s red for Chinese New Year.”

We really want to be part of your community. We really relish the special scarves we’re given or things to wear to fit in. And we love the pictures that we’re given. Oftentimes, the communities will email us those pictures. Just to let the community members know today, those pictures get put on our websites; they get put in our mailings and our newsletters; they get put on Facebook and Twitter and all over social media. We really enjoy celebrating with all of you.

I want to congratulate the member again for her presentation today, and I want to thank all of you for coming down and celebrating with us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Niagara Falls.

Applause.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you for that applause. I don’t know what I did to deserve it.

1400

First of all, I want to welcome the Albanian Canadians here today to Queen’s Park. Instead of us standing, why don’t you stand so we can recognize you?

I’m very pleased to be able to rise today and speak to Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month—which we all hope will be in November.

The history and the heritage of Albania is long and very complicated. It’s a mixture of stories about the best of what we can find in people and, unfortunately, sometimes the worst. It’s also a story of keeping one’s language and culture alive. It’s a story of strength and community. I think it’s a story that we can all be proud to remember.

Niagara Falls is one of the oldest parts of the country, and for centuries—centuries—people have come to Niagara Falls to visit and to work. Because of that, we see an incredible mix of cultures in my part of Ontario. I understand how important their language and their culture are, and I’m also proud of their efforts to keep those ties very much alive. I’ve seen first-hand in my riding the power of community and the power of keeping culture alive. It’s a beautiful thing to see and it’s an equally beautiful thing to celebrate. That’s why I’m happy to see this heritage recognized.

Mr. Speaker, the history of Albania is a long and complex one. I won’t be able to go into every detail here.

I'm sure many of you realize that I am not a historian, so I doubt I'll be able to do justice to this wonderful country's heritage. We do know that some of the first Albanians to come here came at the beginning of the 20th century. They settled across Canada, but mostly in places like Montreal and Toronto—Toronto because they wanted to see the Leafs. Why did they come? Well, they, like so many others throughout our incredible history, were seeking a better life. They were strong people who were fleeing violence or uprisings in their home countries. They wanted to take the best of their culture and make a better life for their kids and their grandkids. They wanted a chance to work hard and to make a life for themselves. I think that's what every Canadian story is all about.

I want to look at my own family. I'm married to an Italian. My father-in-law, Mr. DeLuca—I wanted to mention his name today because he has been sick for a while—I see the same story in him. My wife's father came to this country so that he could give his children—very similar, like you—a better life. He wasn't looking for favours; he was looking for an opportunity. With that opportunity he was able to raise his family and help build the great community that Niagara Falls is today. He was able to build two houses and raise four kids—all well-educated, all university-educated. I know that this is a story that applies to the Albanians who came to Canada and to so many others that we celebrate throughout the years. I believe it's one of the things that truly makes this province and this country great.

As more and more Albanians came to Canada, they began to set up associations to help new immigrants. They were helping them with their language skills, making sure they had what they needed to succeed. In the spirit of community, that's what we can celebrate. That dedication to one another is something that's worth celebrating. These were people who had come across an ocean and they were still dedicated to their neighbours—they were dedicated to making sure Albanian Canadians could succeed here in Canada and in Ontario.

I'm just going to give a little bit of history that I believe helps explain why this act is important and why it deserves our support. On November 28, 1912—I want you all to remember this in November—the All-Albanian Congress created the Assembly of Vlorë. In their first meeting, they declared Albania an independent country and set up the provisional government of Albania.

The first government of Albania would serve until 1914, when a monarchy was re-established, which would then become the first Albanian Republic in 1925. Just reading through the history of the country, you can see that times have been tough. In the 91 years since Albania declared independence, the people have come under both Nazi and then Soviet control. The horrors in those times are known to us and do not need repeating in this House.

I'll close by saying that the strength and the will of the Albanian people to make a country, a culture and a heritage for themselves are truly inspiring. They have kept alive a language and a culture unique to their people

in the face of huge opposition, and they now deserve to be recognized for their tremendous effort.

They came to Canada to seek a better life, and did so while never forgetting where they came from. Their heritage is part of our heritage, and it's worth remembering.

Mr. Speaker, there may not be as many Albanians in my riding as some other cultural groups—I do have a lot of Italians in Niagara Falls—but they are just as important in everybody's eyes. Albanians are a part of our history and a part of the spirit of Canada and of my community. As I have mentioned, I have seen this spirit in my riding, and it's part of what makes Niagara Falls so great.

On behalf of the people in Niagara Falls riding and the people of Ontario, I am proud to celebrate this continued spirit of acceptance and stand today to support Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and Albanian Canadians for giving me a chance to speak.

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

Hon. Brad Duguid: I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this debate today—a debate that I think brings us all together on all sides of the House. This is the second reading of the Albanian Heritage Month Act. You might wonder why, as a kid from Scarborough whose last name is Duguid—it doesn't mean I come from Albania—and whose riding has some Albanians but not a huge number of Albanians, it was so important for me to get up and speak here today. I'll explain that to you in a minute, but I want to acknowledge—we don't always acknowledge our staff here—that the speech I have before me today was written by a young man by the name of Aleks Dhefto, whom I hired some time ago. Aleks is just over here. He happens to be Albanian. Aleks, could you poke your head out the door? I'm not saying that to get credit; it was a smart decision to hire an Albanian. I didn't know Aleks was Albanian when I hired him, but I should have guessed because of how his name is spelled. He has done a great job.

1410

Aleks, I apologize; I'm not going to give the speech as you've written it. I would have loved to, but a lot of the comments and a lot of the things Aleks recommended that I say about the great history, the migration, the independence of Albania and the pride of this community have already been said. What I want to do in a very short period of time, as I want to leave time for my colleagues, is explain why it was so important for me to speak here today.

In the audience is a very good friend of mine, Dr. Ruki Kondaj—you can stand up if you want, Ruki. Ruki is the honorary president of the Albanian Canadian Community Association, and she's just a going concern. Ruki actually lived in my riding for a period of time, and I met her back around 2011. She invited me to an Albanian function. I had never been to one before. I didn't have a

huge Albanian population in Scarborough, so we never had a lot of those before. Eventually, she talked me into going, and I went and had a fantastic time. I met her community. I was so blown away by the talent of the singers, the talent of the dancers, the food, the talent of the actors—there are many Albanian actors as well—and the friendliness and welcoming feeling that I got in the room. They even made me dance with them that night, and I never even looked back.

From then on, I attended all the Albanian functions. Ruki would often make me attend. She would twist my arm and say, “You have to come,” but she didn’t really have to twist my arm. It’s a beautiful community. It is a welcoming community. It is a community that loves to celebrate their heritage and their history, as we can see by the dress here at the Ontario Legislature today. It’s a community that I have very much loved being associated with. In many ways, they say to me that they’ve adopted me as one of their own, and I’m very, very proud of that.

I just want to say thank you to the Albanian community, represented by their leaders here today, for the incredible contribution you make to our province, to our culture and to our business community. I want to thank you for adopting me. I very much appreciate that as well. I am honoured by being associated with the work you’ve done through the years, and I’ll continue to be a huge fan and a huge supporter in the years ahead.

This is a really important bill that I think we’re going to pass here in this Legislature today. I thank all the legislators here for their support of this, and I thank the community for coming and for the great contribution they make to our province.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: “Mirëdita” to our guests in the Albanian-Canadian community. Welcome. It’s my honour to stand here in the Legislature and speak in support of this wonderful bill, the Albanian Heritage Month Act, and to be joined by so many members of our Albanian-Canadian community.

I’d like to start by congratulating my friend, MPP colleague and neighbour to the east, the member for York South–Weston, and congratulate her for this wonderful initiative and bill; I’m proud to be able to stand and support it. I’d also like to welcome the esteemed guests we have today. At the risk of being repetitive, I’d like to welcome you again, Dr. Ruki Kondaj. Your contributions to the community have been well spoken to here, so I won’t talk about that as much, but I thank you for coming and thank you for your leadership of the community. I’d also like to thank you for your work alongside Ms. Albanese in the preparation of this bill and the organization of this.

I’d just like to take a couple of minutes to talk about why I think this bill is so important. I’d like to tell a brief story about my upbringing. My grandparents and mother immigrated to Canada. They weren’t of Albanian heritage, but they were of Eastern European heritage. For years, I used to attend Saturday school. My mother and

my grandparents used to send me to Saturday school to learn about my history and heritage and their backgrounds. I remember that every Saturday after school my grandfather would pick me up and we’d do homework. He’d help me do my Ukrainian school homework at his place. We’d be sitting there and I’d be working away learning about my culture and heritage. But I didn’t want to be sitting at his place on Saturday afternoon; I wanted to be out doing what young people do. I remember one day in particular I was frustrated and I said to him, “Gido, why are we doing this? I don’t want to do this anymore. I want to stop.”

And he said: “Yvan, you can’t stop. Let me tell you why. You have to learn about your history, you have to learn about your heritage and you have to do that not only so you understand where you come from, but also so that you understand the people who came before you, the people who have come and made Canada so great as well.”

That’s really what this bill is about to me: It’s about celebrating Albanian history and Albanian heritage, but it’s also about celebrating the contributions that this wonderful community is making to our city, to our province and to our country. When we celebrate our history, our cultural heritage, we maintain our ties, we learn about our ancestors. The Albanian community, as has been spoken to by members on both sides, has a very rich history, a very rich culture. This bill aims to recognize that.

But I also spoke of the other reason that I think this bill is important, and again, that is to recognize the contributions the community is making to our province. The contributions Albanians have made span communities across our province. It’s not just Toronto; it’s well outside of the GTA. You have made a contribution in our social, in our political, in our business, in our cultural life. You’ve helped make Canada the great country it is today. For that, I thank you, and I think this bill helps us celebrate that as well.

In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, I’ve had the pleasure of getting to know some of the members of my Albanian-Canadian community. I look forward to getting to know more. One of the reasons Ms. Albanese proposed November as Albanian Heritage Month is because this is the month when we celebrate Albanian Independence Day. I had the privilege of celebrating Albanian Independence Day with the community on a number of occasions. I’ve also had my arm twisted by Dr. Ruki Kondaj. I’ve had this honour of celebrating—we’ve had the flag raisings here at Queen’s Park, we’ve had celebrations in the community. Members of the community during those celebrations have told me why they thought this day was so important, why they thought November was so important: because independence was a great accomplishment, because so much sacrifice went into achieving that independence and because they looked ahead to a brighter future for Albania and its people.

There’s something else. During those celebrations, I had a chance to learn about some of the contributions that I spoke about that the Albanian Canadian community has

made to Ontario. I even had the chance to learn a little bit more about your heritage. I think Brad Duguid and I were attending some of the same events, because I also had the opportunity to participate in an Albanian dance with Brad, with Laura and with others. I have work to do on that front.

But that, to me, is what Albanian Heritage Day is all about—what I was hearing from members of the community at those celebrations. It's about celebrating the incredibly rich history and heritage of Albanian Canadians and the Albanian people. It's about celebrating the contributions that you have made and you continue to make to our great country.

During those celebrations, Ruki taught me a phrase that I want to repeat today in Albanian that she said captured what people are feeling on this day. She said: "Jam krenar qe jam Shqipëtar." To me, that is what the community felt last year, when we've celebrated in the past with Mr. Duguid, with Ms. Albanese, and that's what Laura Albanese's bill is all about. It's about being proud to be Albanian.

Today, I look forward to the passage of this bill. I look forward to celebrating with you in the years to come not just your heritage and culture, not just the contributions you've made in the past to our great country, but the contributions of the future. Falemenderit.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to support my colleague from York South–Weston's Bill 145. I want to thank her for her leadership in championing this particular heritage month, but more importantly, her history lesson to us today about where the country is located. We just celebrated this afternoon Greek Independence Day at Queen's Park. Recently, this House also passed a Tamil Heritage Month. So there is lots to be proud of, lots we should be celebrating.

The member from York South–Weston talked very eloquently this afternoon about why we need this particular bill. As a former public school trustee for the Toronto District School Board, by highlighting the contributions of the Albanians in our community, whether it is in the political environment, the education, the workforce or the economic piece—there's a portion of the bill. I'm going to read it out again. I know the member from York South–Weston talked about it: "Albanian Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Ontario's rich history."

This is absolutely important, because we have young people who are here today. Moving forward, how great is this province if we continue to celebrate other people's heritage, but our own Albanian children are not remembering their own rich history, their own language, their own story?

1420

I'm a Chinese Canadian, English is my second language and I'm very proud of my Chinese heritage. But more importantly, every child should be remembering their history and their roots. They should be encouraged

to celebrate, because we have data right now in the school boards that if you protect the mother language, your child will be more successful in life.

I want to say thank you to the Albanian community here for sharing your history with us, but, more importantly, for your contribution to this great province—the best province in Canada.

To my colleague from York Southwest, thank you for your leadership in bringing this forward. I think we deserve to celebrate this, all of us. Let's move this to third reading, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for York South–Weston has two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to begin by thanking all the members who have spoken to this bill today: the member from Thornhill, the member from Niagara Falls, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and member from Scarborough Centre, the member from Etobicoke Centre and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

I know there would have been other MPPs who wanted to contribute to the debate. They are unfortunately busy with other duties that they have as MPPs, but I am very happy and pleased that we are finding the support, as you saw and heard from the various speeches that we heard today, of all the different parties here to help proclaim November as Albanian Heritage Month.

Again, we heard how important it is to celebrate one's traditions, one's history and one's culture, but also the future—how important it is for the new generations to learn how all of us as Ontarians have come from different parts of the world and make up the wonderful multi-cultural mosaic that Canada is.

I want to again thank the Albanian Canadian Community Association and Dr. Ruki Kondaj and Ramazan Kellezi, who are here—everyone who has taken the time. I know there are people here from different parts of Ontario—from Ottawa, from Hamilton, from London—who are here for this bill.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will end by saying:

"Jam krenar qe jam Shqipëtar."

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. We will take the vote on this particular private member's bill at the end of our private members' business this afternoon.

RAE LUCKOCK AND AGNES MACPHAIL

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I move that, in the opinion of this House, to recognize the important contribution of women to Ontario's history and to acknowledge the need for greater representation of women in politics, two statues honouring Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail, the first two women elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, should be erected on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Madame Lalonde has moved private member's notice of motion number 64. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, before I start my speech, I just quickly want to acknowledge the presence of several guests. I will just point to our gallery here. I want to say thank you to all the women, and the children, who are here to support my motion. It means a lot to me and I'm very humbled. But I need to recognize two individuals, one in particular, Dr. Jean Augustine, who introduced a similar motion to honour the Famous Five on Parliament Hill, and Lloyd Luckock, who is the grandson of one of the two MPPs I'm going to talk to you about this afternoon. Welcome to our Legislature. Everyone else, welcome and thank you.

As I said, it's an honour to stand here today to talk about this motion that will honour two very important legislators in Ontario's cities. The road to equality for women has not been easy nor short and, most importantly, it is far from over. My motion is just one piece on the broader road to equality.

This month is Women's History Month, and there could not be a more appropriate month to highlight the lives of two incredible women who broke the glass ceiling and were tireless crusaders for women's equality. The motion I've brought forth today seeks to recognize the significant contributions of our first female MPPs, Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail.

There are many of you in this House who know about Agnes Macphail. She was, after all, our first female MP elected. In comparison to her counterpart, Rae Luckock is largely omitted from Ontario history, so I would like to start by sharing a little bit of her story.

Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail were both elected in Ontario's general election in 1943. Both of them represented the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and held Toronto ridings: Luckock represented Bracondale, while Macphail represented York East.

Luckock served one term as MPP from 1943 to 1945. During her time in this chamber, she was a champion for women, advocating that women should be able to stay in the working world when the men came home from the war. She was also a strong environmentalist trailblazer through her inquiries into the effect of air pollution, Mr. Speaker.

In 1945, she was unfortunately unable to achieve re-election. This was largely due to Cold War anxiety, which saw her being accused of communist affiliation, which ultimately led to her defeat.

Luckock rose from this fall stronger and more determined to further the cause of women. She was the head of the Housewives and Consumers Association and a prominent member of the organization far beyond her term. In 1948, she led the March of a Million Names on Parliament Hill, in which she led the fight for reasonable prices for consumer goods. Much like the name says, Rae had gathered a petition of one million names and presented it directly to Prime Minister Mackenzie King.

The march succeeded, and the federal government did take some action against milling and baking companies who artificially fixed the price of bread.

In the early 1950s, the Housewives and Consumers Association joined with other women's groups to become the Congress of Canadian Women, and Rae Luckock was elected its first president. The congress was involved in the global peace movement in the 1950s and invited a cultural exchange between the people of the Soviet Union and Canada.

Rae travelled the world to attend the World Peace Council, including one hosted in China in 1956. Due to her travel to the People's Republic of China in the 1950s, she was barred entry to America. But being a tireless crusader, she argued for this ban to be lifted, and it actually was.

Unfortunately, Rae's fighting spirit was reduced when she was diagnosed with Parkinson's, and she spent the last decade of her life in a hospital, passing away in 1971.

But I'm glad to help start the conversation to restore Rae's legacy, and it's an even more special day because we have her grandson here, as I mentioned to you, Mr. Speaker—again, thank you to Lloyd—to represent the Luckock clan. So thank you very much.

Agnes Macphail had the honour of being the first female MPP in Ontario. She was also our first female MP in Canada who represented Grey-Bruce. She also served a second term as an MPP beginning in 1948 to 1951. The capstone of her political career can be said to be the 1951 equal pay bill that she introduced, a first in Ontario and a significant milestone on our journey of women's rights.

Much has been done to honour this distinguished female political figure, including the establishment of March 24 as Agnes Macphail Day in her former East York. I have to say that it's actually her birthday today. So, today, I wish Agnes a happy birthday from all of us here in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that I'm able to highlight the extensive careers of these two women and the enormous contribution they have made. I want to spend some time in my speech to talk about these two women because, all too often in our history—we were having this conversation—they're not there. They almost do not exist, or, as we mentioned earlier, they're in a children's library section here in Ontario. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that this will hopefully change that concept of the history of our two first female MPPs.

1430

I thought it was also important that we discuss Rae. As I mentioned before, Agnes is well known. In fact, she is well known enough that there is a bust of her on the grand staircase. Yet Rae's legacy has been overshadowed, and it was time to restore her place in Ontario's history.

We should also recognize that Ontario does have some milestones to be proud of. One unique story in this province is the story of the first woman to seek a seat at Queen's Park and possibly the first woman in the British Empire to seek a seat at a provincial or federal level.

Margaret Haile became the Socialist candidate for the riding of Toronto North in 1902. Her nomination to be the Socialist party's candidate was accepted. Despite the fact that women actually did not have the right to vote, or even take a seat at Queen's Park at the time, she managed to take 1% of the votes. She was the forerunner of the suffragette movement in this province, and another female trailblazer we should remember in this province.

In 1943, of course, we elected our first female MPPs, Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail. The first female PC elected in this House was Margaret Birch, elected in 1971, and she also became the first female cabinet minister in 1972. The first Liberal member was Margaret Campbell, elected in 1973.

Over the decades, this chamber has slowly become more representative. After the 2014 election, there were 38 female MPPs in this chamber, which represented a record-breaking 35.5% of this House.

Applause.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Yes, 2014, our year. That marks a significant change from just 15 years prior, in the 1999 election, when females were only 17% of this Legislature. We've also seen the first francophone woman elected here, Claudette Boyer, and the first francophone female Attorney General, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur.

Our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, currently one of three female Premiers in this country, became the first woman Premier in 2013, alongside a Deputy Premier. The leader of the third party is also a woman, and more than half of the NDP caucus is female.

All this being said, we still must pursue the journey to equality and realize that for many minority women in this province, the journey is even further. While today we are recognizing the first two female MPPs elected to this chamber, we should also reflect upon the fact that aboriginal women did not get the right to vote until 1960. These women were long disenfranchised. Even when they received the right to vote, the Prime Minister at the time, Diefenbaker, did not properly conduct nation-to-nation consultation.

We must be at the forefront of encouraging women to enter politics. This House is still not close to a gender level that reflects the population we represent. Therefore, we must continue working towards the goal of equal gender representation.

Mr. Speaker, these statues not only represent the hard work and dedication of two political figures, but the long path ahead for women. It is not enough for public discourse to become familiarized with the contributions of women like Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail. Rather, it is essential that we have physical, visible depictions on the legislative grounds, not only for the sole purpose of sight-seeing, but for the cementing of the idea that women's contributions and hard work are just as worthy as those of the men.

These statues are an embodiment of that worthiness, appreciation and, most importantly, recognition. Members, you can see that these two statues are not just a

mere embodiment of the work of these two; these statues are symbols of the road to equality for women and their equal representation in politics and all walks of life.

I stand here today in honour of the women who remain steadfast in the fight for justice, equality and representation. These are the women who have paved the way for me and for other females, our colleagues here in this House, to courageously pursue a political path. It is because of their dedication to furthering the cause of equality for women that I'm able to stand here today.

The road to equality and representation for women is long, but what makes any journey worthwhile are the little achievements along the way which further that cause. The power of change lies in the little steps taken at the right time, in the right place. It is great to see that many here understand that it is undeniably just that: a necessary step in the direction of full and equal representation for women.

Agnes Macphail said—and I'll end by saying—"I want for myself what I want for other women: absolute equality." In light of those words, I hope that everyone here will support this bill. In doing so, we are making the dream of those women a reality. With this, we are one step closer to an equal and equitable Ontario.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to the private member's initiative from the member for Ottawa-Orléans. It is indeed an honour, and I congratulate her for having the history and the commitment and the heart all embraced into one initiative that encapsulates what women are all about in Legislatures across Canada.

I say that because I represent Ontario with the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians. It's a steering committee whereby we get together and we talk about how we can encourage more women to get involved at all levels of government. I really applaud you for doing this, and certainly we'll be talking about your initiative at our next steering committee. It's good news.

We have to do more in terms of ensuring equality for all people. I think your initiative today doesn't just outline why we need to recognize two amazing women who, in your words, broke the glass ceiling, but lays the path for recognizing equality for all people. For that, I congratulate you as well.

I also would like to share with you that it's an extension of what we already have at Queen's Park. There was an amazing vision a few years ago where a remarkable assembly was developed on the first floor for all of the public to view. I congratulate the Clerk's office and Speaker Levac specifically for investing in an opportunity to celebrate women in Ontario who have made a difference. The next natural step to your private member's initiative is to recognize the ladies who have laid down the bricks on that path: Agnes Macphail and Mrs. Luckock.

It's great to see family members here to realize and celebrate what your great-grandmother stood for. I think

that when we have a bust or a monument that recognizes what women achieved decades ago, it will remind us of more people and more women who need to be celebrated as well. I say this with all sincerity.

In particular, I really admire you. You're lucky. You're lucky to be here to see your great-grandmother recognized, and I thank you for taking the time to come in to Toronto today.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to the family of Agnes Macphail. Yes, she grew up in Grey county, and I know the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound is very proud of that as well, but there's a dotted line back to Bruce county, so I'm just going to slide that in. Upon graduation from school, Agnes Macphail first started teaching outside of Port Elgin, and then she proceeded to teach school just outside of my hometown of Teeswater, in Kinloss.

It was during her tenure as a teacher in Kinloss that she started speaking from her heart, as I referred to earlier. And in speaking from her heart amongst farmers, business people and people who realized, most importantly, her natural sense of what's right and that natural fire in her belly to make a difference—they encouraged her. The community at home encouraged her to move forward. You outlined her path very nicely, both at the Hill and here at Queen's Park. I really think that's admirable.

1440

We want to support this because I know that someday, when we look at your memorial out on the lawn somewhere, when we look at Agnes and Mrs. Luckock, we are going to think of other women. I'll just get a little plug in here as well. Some of you who have been here for a while might recall that I grew up with a municipal office in my home until I was a teenager. My mom was one of the first or second female clerks in the county of Huron.

When we look at a monument recognizing two amazing women from decades ago, I think it's also going to encourage all of us, and young women who come to Queen's Park, to think about their own mentors and how they might be able to shape their own path in making a difference. I thank you and we support this wholeheartedly.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's great to have an opportunity to get up and talk about Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail, who were political trailblazers, organizers and activists at a time in this country when it wasn't acceptable for women to be so. Both elected to the provincial Legislature at the same time, Rae stepped aside to let Macphail actually be sworn in first, as the first woman, because of all the work that she had done around issues here in the province. Agnes was the first woman to ever be elected as an MP in the same year that women got the right to vote in this country. What an amazing feat. I think it was 1926.

Anyway, that election year was a major breakthrough for the CCF, as well, in Ontario, propelling them to the

official opposition with 34 seats. In the Legislature, Rae served in many capacities but, as the education critic, she promoted the idea of free university tuition and improved rural education. She championed equality for women by advocating for equal pay for equal work and pay for homemakers, something that we are still fighting for 73 years later.

Macphail's activism around women led to the Elizabeth Fry Society. She championed rights for seniors and she was the first woman ever to be elected as a delegate to the League of Nations in Geneva. And although we have come a ways forward and although we support this motion to erect these statues here at Queen's Park, I don't think that we can move forward unless we acknowledge some of the realities that still exist here in Ontario and across this country.

I'd argue that current realities don't pay justice to these two great women. The reality is that we still have a gender wage gap present, a 30% gender wage gap. We still have underfunding to public agencies here in Ontario. That means that pay equity has never been achieved, even though pay equity legislation was introduced back in 1987. We still have a 30% wage pay gap and generally, too, some of the lowest-paid workers in this province. Those people who work in home care, who work in developmental services and who work in day care have never achieved pay equity because their agencies don't have the funding to actually get there.

While I appreciate the member's bill, I think that there are still issues around precarious work, and precarious work may affect women more than men—part-time work and contract work. The government still has a lot of work to do around issues under the Employment Standards Act, where women are not being paid as they should be paid even under minimum wage situations. There needs to be a lot of work done around the Employment Standards Act and a lot of work done around the Labour Relations Act so that it is made easier for women and men in precarious work to unionize and have a voice so that they can collectively bargain in this province.

The statues are a good thing. I think the government also could turn its mind to using a gender lens sometimes in their budget deliberations to make sure that we're looking at how budget decisions actually impact on women in this province. I think that's what we would be hearing from Agnes and from Rae, that although things have moved along, they move along far too slowly, and they would want to see things move along much quicker here in the province of Ontario.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue. I welcome the family here today; we're happy to have you here.

I'll leave a couple of minutes on the clock for my friend from Parkdale-High Park.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I am delighted to be able to rise today to speak to our member for Ottawa-Orléans' motion to honour two great women by having statues

erected on the lawn of Queen's Park. I actually do congratulate her; this is a wonderful statement. When you think about the statues around Queen's Park, they're almost universally male, except for one, Queen Victoria.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You have to be an old queen—

Mr. Arthur Potts: You have to be a queen and not just a male queen. Thank you.

I have a great picture of the blossoms in front of Queen's Park with Queen Victoria looking through them, somewhat amused I thought, at these wonderful blossoms.

I want to start by saying I believe that symbols are extraordinarily important. We have an opportunity in the foyer, as we walk into this House every day. As I walk up here, I see a bust of Agnes Macphail, and I smile at it every day that I go by. I smile at it particularly because she represented the riding I currently represent, and it brings a little history back to me.

In fact, Speaker, it's a bit of history that I share with the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because it was from his riding that she was first elected an MP in 1921, so he and I share that history. Although at the time she represented different parties than both of us, we share the history of her being involved. So these symbols are very important.

Also, statues are important. The Adam Beck statue: It's a family story of ours that my father went with my mother on a date and walked her over to Adam Beck's statue where he proposed to her. It's always been part of the folklore of our family that my father proposed to my mother, and I wonder why he would propose in front of the founder of Niagara Falls and such. Maybe she was electrifying; I'm not sure what his rationale was. But something we've always had in the family is that statue. Maybe some inspired women might find the opportunity to join themselves in matrimony around a statue at Queen's Park, if we were to have that.

Agnes Macphail's birthday is today. Many years ago, the province of Ontario recognized March 24 as Agnes Macphail Day in Ontario. Tonight, I have the pleasure of going to the East York Civic Centre, where we're celebrating the Agnes Macphail Award. Patrick Rocca is a local real estate agent who has done yeoman service in East York for underprivileged people. He represents the Thorncliffe breakfast program for underprivileged students in that community, the Maurice Cody Dirt to Turf Project and the New Circles Flemingdon project.

I spoke briefly about this on Monday in a member's statement, but I'm honoured to be able to go there this evening. There will be a historian—I think it's Alan Redway, in fact, an ex-mayor of East York and previous winner of the Agnes Macphail Award himself—who will be doing a short history of the life of Agnes Macphail tonight in advance of giving Mr. Rocca his award. I'm very excited that we're going to do that and that we can celebrate.

I don't have a lot of background knowledge of Ms. Luckock. Rae was elected at the same time, and I think

the member from Welland was mentioning that Agnes Macphail had the history as the first MPP only because she was called up first to be sworn. Technically, they were both elected at the same time, although Agnes Macphail was sworn in first, which is why we can say she was the first MPP elected to Queen's Park. But in no way does that diminish the very important moment that for the first time two women were elected to this Legislature.

I'm delighted to be able to stand and support this. It reflects so well in my community. Maybe it's two statues or maybe it's one statue of the two of them together, hand in hand at Queen's Park; I don't know. I'm looking forward to maybe having artists put forward their proposals to see what it will look like. But the fact that we can recognize it on the lawn at Queen's Park is extremely important, and I thank the member for bringing forward her motion.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm also pleased to speak to the motion before us today to create a monument commemorating Ontario's first two female MPPs, Agnes Macphail and Rae Luckock. I welcome all our guests here today for this momentous occasion, and I congratulate the member from Ottawa-Orléans for bringing this forward.

1450

The first two women were elected to this chamber in 1943. It's a very significant historical event and we should honour those two women. They were to champion increased awareness and education for representation of women in politics, which we, as women in the Legislature—I think we're at 36% now? Yes. So, hey—sorry for the delay, but we're getting there.

We still champion a lot of the same issues that those two women fought for. Agnes Macphail was also elected to the House of Commons and then became a well-known politician, writer and speaker. It is her birthday today, which is very significant. It's funny how things can work out that way. So good for you.

She did come from humble beginnings, that were mentioned earlier, from Bruce county. She had strong opinions about equality and was outspoken about human rights and feminism. Just to note, she defeated 10 men in 1921 for that nomination. And let me tell you, in 1921, I'm sure there was a little bit of intolerance towards her gender. So well done, Agnes.

She carried the riding with a majority, so the people within the riding, once she got through that nomination, respected and honoured her talent. In 1921, I believe, there were four women who contested that whole federal election in Canada, and she was the only successful candidate—just another great part of history.

She campaigned on currency reform. She had an interest in prison reform and, because of her compassion, the Archambault commission investigated the shocking stories of mistreatment in Canada's prisons and stories of discrimination against former convicts, and a personal-

ized copy was presented to her. I believe there was a commercial that commemorated Agnes and showed her in the House of Commons, and which signified what she had done for prison reform.

She both participated in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and was the first Canadian woman to be a delegate to the League of Nations—lots of milestones that we all admire today.

Rae Luckcock was politically active during the time when the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was founded. I think the death of her daughter sparked her desire to push for political action. I know there are family members here today, so I apologize for the pronunciation there. She became active in 1932 and won election, after several hard-fought battles, in 1943.

She supported access to education, especially in rural areas of the province, which I can say we still fight for. She raised environmental issues and pushed for the voting age to be reduced to 18 so that more young people could be engaged in the democratic process.

She also championed the fight for extending workers' compensation to homemakers. She said the famous quote: "The rearing of children and caring for the home must be recognized as work of inestimable value to the state."

Apart from the statue outside of Queen Victoria, there are no other monuments for historical female figures on the grounds of the Legislature. So to both these inspiring women, I say it's time to put the statues out front.

Thank you for the opportunity.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour to stand. Agnes, when she was heckled in the House—she was heckled one day by a man who said, "Oh, just get a husband." Her response immediately was, "And if I married him, how do I know he wouldn't turn out like you?"

When I was first elected 10 years ago, I remember saying over and over again to school groups and others who came here: "There are only two women depicted on the public floors of the so-called Pink Palace. One of them is the Queen and the other is Agnes Macphail." I have a little superstitious thing I do, which is, whenever I walk past Agnes's bust, I rub her shoulder. One shoulder is a little shinier than the other right now, after 10 years.

These two women were remarkable women, and I absolutely support this and commend the member from Ottawa-Orléans for bringing it forward. This is the time to do this—past the time to do this.

International Women's Day just passed. Fifty years ago, when I was a kid, I marched on International Women's Day and I marched for three key things: universal, paid-for child care; control over our own bodies; and equal pay for equal work. We still don't have child care 50 years later. We still don't have equal pay for equal work. And sadly, with the Ghomeshi response this afternoon, we don't even have control over our own bodies. I just had to throw that in there, because I will go to that demonstration later too. That would be in the spirit of Agnes and Rae.

The other thing that I find interesting this afternoon—and touching, really—is that we have a Liberal bill, supported by every party in the House here, for two adamant socialists. They were, Mr. Speaker; they were radical socialists, these two women.

When you look at the CCF, the Canadian Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which was the precursor to the NDP, the Regina Manifesto starts off, "We aim to replace the present capitalist system, with its inherent injustice and inhumanity, by a social order from which the domination and exploitation of one class by another will be eliminated...."

Those words sound radical today, but imagine what they sounded like back then, and imagine them coming out of the mouths of two women. That's amazing. When you look at Rae—she went to China. She couldn't go into the United States after that; she was considered an enemy of the state. She was declared a Communist, and that was the end of that.

Agnes had the same reaction. Agnes had some great quotes, and I'm going to share them with you, but one of them which isn't normally known—I didn't know about this one; I just looked it up—was upon her election: "I was intensely unhappy. Some of the members resented my intrusion. Others jeered at me. Everything I said was wrong ... everything I did was wrong.... The men did not want me in Parliament...." There were no other women there. Imagine how lonely and awful that experience must have been. It's inconceivable to us today, really, no matter what we face.

Of course, my favourite quote is the most famous of hers, which is, "Never apologize, never explain—just get the thing done and let them howl." I love that.

When I speak in feminist surroundings to women's groups, I always start off by saying that I'm the first woman born in my family as a human person, and that's because my mother was born pre-1928 and pre- the Famous Five. The response is, "Where were you born?" and I say "Canada, and so were my mother and grandmother." Think about how far we've come, Mr. Speaker, from those days.

This is a chance truly to celebrate the achievements of our mothers and grandmothers, and what they did for us. Back in the 1960s, there were quotas on how many women engineers and doctors could go to the University of Toronto. That was in the 1960s. That wasn't that long ago. I grew up in an era of "Help Wanted: Male" and "Help Wanted: Female." All of this we've seen overturned.

As my colleague from Welland said, of course there's still so much more room to grow and places to achieve, and Rae and Agnes would be the first to stand here and say that. In fact, I think they'll haunt us if we don't put on pressure to achieve child care, for example, or wage parity, for another example, and of course to look at things through a gendered lens.

Here are some other quotes by Agnes Macphail: "I owed it to my father that I was elected to Parliament in the first place, but I owed it to my mother that I stuck it out once I got there."

This one is quite lovely: “Whatever is dirty, it is women’s job to clean up ... and that goes for everything, from cellar to Senate.”

You just have to admire the feistiness of these two women. I love the thought of having statues to them out front. I think that would be absolutely wonderful.

We’ve experienced so many firsts, we who are lucky enough to be alive in this era, but what would be wonderful—I loved the member speaking about this—is that these would become, just like the Famous Five on Parliament Hill, points of pilgrimage for many women in other countries who wish they could achieve what we’ve achieved, and for women all across our own country to really reinforce our history. What’s so important is that now our daughters and our granddaughters remember. We need to leave a legacy for them.

I just want to remind folks that on April 12—I see that Equal Voice is in the House—we will be having Girls’ Government here. The Girls’ Government girls will be coming down to Queen’s Park. These girls are fired up about politics, Mr. Speaker. We don’t have statues yet to gather around, but I’m telling you that we will gather around the bust of Agnes Macphail, and all those smaller hands than mine will rub her shoulder for good luck—maybe a little bit out of superstition, but also out of great hope that next year or the year after, we’ll be standing in front of a statue to do that, which would be great, but, more to the point, that we will see in our lifetime 50% of this whole House be women.

1500

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m pleased to recognize the Associate Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It’s my honour to rise in this House today to support the motion that was put forward by my colleague the member for Ottawa–Orléans. I want to begin by applauding her leadership in bringing forward this very important and timely motion. The motion would see the creation of an important monument that would honour the memory and contributions of the first two female MPPs, Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail, elected in 1943.

These women were trailblazers. Let’s consider the world in 1943. The war was going on. Women were fighting for the right to work outside the home. The fight for gender equality had only just begun to get traction. Against this backdrop, these strong women took up the call to service. They put their names forward to represent their communities in Toronto ridings and won.

Too often throughout history, the stories and contributions of women are overlooked. These women are political legends whose stories should be celebrated. I can think of no better place to honour their memory than on the grounds of the Legislature.

Earlier today, I was walking by an exhibit on the second floor of the legislative building that showcased the political history and the faces here in Ontario. While the exhibit highlighted prominent stories for Ontario, what was noticeably absent were the images and faces of women. We know women were there, but their contribu-

tions were overshadowed. They were silent. It’s time we change that here in Ontario. It’s time to give presence to women’s contributions.

I’m proud to be part of a government under the leadership of our great Premier, the first woman to lead this province. It’s through her leadership that we, as a government, promote gender equality. We’re taking practical steps to improve the lives of women and girls across the province. As part of that effort, we need to start doing more to ensure that the history we tell reflects the voices and the experiences of women. Creating this monument is an important step towards achieving that.

When students from my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood come to visit Queen’s Park, I want them to be able to see how this House and our political history in Ontario have been shaped by women.

Mr. Speaker, passing this motion in 2016 is particularly symbolic. This year marks the 100th anniversary of women in Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan being given the right to vote. In celebration of this historic milestone, the Royal Canadian Mint has created a new dollar coin which depicts a woman casting her ballot.

What better way for our government to recognize this important historic event than by passing this motion and creating a monument to celebrate Rae Luckock, Agnes Macphail and all the women since then, like the Honourable Jean Augustine and others, who have helped to shape this province and this great country and to inspire the next generation of women political leaders?

I encourage the members of this House to support this motion, and I want to thank the member from Ottawa–Orléans for her vision and insight in putting it forward.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I’m very pleased to rise on the member from Ottawa–Orléans’ motion to create a monument commemorating Ontario’s first two female MPPs. I’m not going to give a whole history because we’ve heard a lot about Rae Luckock—she has some family members here, and I want to welcome them—and, I guess I could say, after everything I’ve heard, her partner in crime, Agnes Macphail. They were both elected in 1943 to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and then Agnes went on to the House of Commons.

The expression is “what caught my eye,” but what caught my ear was when the member from Parkdale–High Park said—this is a quote from Agnes: “The men did not want me in Parliament.” That really brought back a memory of my late mother, who, in the 1950s, was the only woman out of over 500 men to write the chartered accountant exams in Quebec. Every now and then, she would talk about it. My mother was very petite, no taller than me, but the difference between us is, people called her a little mouse. She was very quiet. She spoke in a loud whisper. She was very good, obviously, in math, to brave that world. The men would purposely smoke around her when she was pregnant. They knew she didn’t want them to smoke around her, but they would continue to smoke around her. They were in lab rooms where there

were high stools, and they would grab the low chairs and not offer them to her—things like that. She said, “The men didn’t want me there”—because it was normally a club and it was fun for them to be there, and here was this woman coming in their midst.

I think we can all relate to these two women who came and braved a man’s world—real trailblazers.

The problem with our generation now is maybe we have it a little cushy. Maybe we don’t recognize what went on before and we don’t appreciate it. Having a statue on the lawn will remind us to remember the women who fought for what we have here. Maybe it will remind us of what’s going on in other countries, where women don’t have the opportunities we have here. Maybe it will remind us to represent some of the women’s issues.

I think women feel they’re being told every now and then, “Women have come so far and there’s almost equality. Do we really have to have women’s studies? Do we have to have women’s issues? Do we have to have International Women’s Day?” We’ve all heard those questions before. We have to not feel uncomfortable and we have to look them in the eye and say, “Yes, we do, until women have the means to have a fulfilling life and not feel guilty for it.”

Yes, it’s 36% women here in the Legislature, but we know that women who have young children are made to feel guilty. I know of somebody who went door-knocking once in a campaign and was asked, “Who is going to take care of your children?” She was depressed. She asked me, “What would you have said?” She knew I had the quick answers. I told her that I would have said, “Well, I certainly hope you say that to every man who comes knocking at the door.”

I think that it would be wonderful to have those statues, just because it would remind us not just of the two women but of what they braved, what we have here and what more we have to achieve here in Ontario and the rest of the world.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: As I catch my breath here, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to speak on private member’s notice of motion 64. I want to commend my colleague the member from Ottawa–Orléans for bringing forth this motion.

As a female MPP elected to this Legislature, I cannot be more honoured and proud to support the member’s motion, which proposes to create two statues depicting Ontario’s first two female MPPs, Margarette Rae Morrison Luckock, better known as Rae Luckock, and Agnes Campbell Macphail.

I am proud and honoured to recognize the contribution of these two women who helped shape Ontario’s history, and am proud to advocate for the installation of two statues in their honour.

These would be the first statues of historical women from Ontario on the grounds of the Legislature. Several monuments exist across Canada, in significant numbers,

to honour famous women, including on Parliament Hill, at the Manitoba Legislature and l’Assemblée nationale in Quebec.

1510

Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail deserve to be recognized for their bravery. They stood up for what they believed in and encouraged women to be more engaged in the political process. Rae Luckock and Agnes Macphail were both elected in Ontario’s 1943 general election. They were the first women elected to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

New MPPs were usually sworn in in alphabetical order. As such, Rae Luckock was supposed to be the first woman ever sworn in as MPP, but she deferred to Agnes Macphail in recognition of Agnes Macphail’s long career as a federal MP. Rae Luckock was, therefore, the second woman to take the MPP oath.

Although largely forgotten in history due to the fact that she was accused of being a communist, Miss Luckock was a proud social activist who eventually would found the Congress of Canadian Women in 1950. In the Legislature, she advocated for causes such as free university tuition and improved rural education. She also championed the equality of women by advocating for equal pay for equal work. Many of these issues are still discussed today within the Ontario Legislature. I’m honoured to work with my colleagues—along with our Premier, Kathleen Wynne—as Miss Luckock did, to bring more women into politics, and to educate and empower future generations of women politicians.

This motion is especially important for me, as Rae Luckock was elected as the member for the riding of Bracondale. Bracondale is an area which is now part of my own riding of Davenport. As the first female MPP for Davenport, I feel a special connection with former MPP Luckock.

Upon approval, I’ll be happy to bring news of this private member’s motion to all the women in Davenport and to all my constituents. I will be especially proud to share this with Leading Women/Leading Girls in my neighbourhood, as well as the 15 girls from schools in Davenport participating in this year’s Girls’ Government. I want to show them that they, just as Rae Luckock did, can stand up for what they believe is right and that they can step into the shoes of trail-blazing women in politics, like Rae Luckock, Agnes Macphail and our very own Premier Kathleen Wynne, the first woman to serve as Premier in Ontario.

As a female MPP, I feel it is our collective duty, as members of provincial Parliament, to support this private member’s notice of motion, and I thank the member for Ottawa–Orléans for bringing it forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Orléans has two minutes to reply.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I’m going to try to wrap this up as quickly as my two minutes allow.

I want to say thank you very much to all my colleagues in this House—the members from Huron–Bruce, Welland, Beaches–East York, Parkdale–High Park,

Davenport, the Associate Minister of Finance, and the member from Thornhill—to have raised and brought forward those very important aspects of why—and thank you in advance a little bit, but most likely, for unanimous consent. I'm very happy that, Jean, it may be a little bit less difficult than it was for you, but it is still an important chapter that hopefully we'll be passing later on.

I also want to say thank you very much to several organizations that are here today and all the women and children who are joining me for this important motion. I know there were a lot of quotations and people giving their perspectives and their support, and I want to make sure we're recognizing you today:

—Nancy Coldham, co-chair of Equal Voice Toronto;

—Carolyn Robertson, chair of the Famous 5 Foundation;

—Mary Potter, president of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario;

—Lois Volk, president of the Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs.

In my hometown of Ottawa, where I used to be a social worker, a former colleague of mine, from the association of social work, sent me a very nice note.

I wouldn't be myself if I was not able to recognize them—and, last but not least, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Ontario, which have shown support.

This is the beginning, I hope, of what will be an education for all Ontarians about the role of women in politics. The first two female MPPs elected in this Legislature, in my opinion, should be having a bigger presence and also having a chance to be reflected upon as groups and students come forward. Merci, monsieur le Président. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We will vote on this motion after we finish the next private member's ballot item.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO
ILLEGAL TRADE AND TRAFFICKING
OF PEOPLE, DRUGS, MONEY, TOBACCO
AND WEAPONS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 CONCERNANT
LA COMMISSION D'ENQUÊTE SUR
LE COMMERCE ET LE TRAFIC ILLICITES
DE PERSONNES, DE DROGUES,
D'ARGENT, DE TABAC ET D'ARMES

Mr. Barrett moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 162, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry into illegal trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons / Projet de loi 162, Loi visant la création d'une commission d'enquête sur le commerce et le trafic illicites de personnes, de drogues, d'argent, de tabac et d'armes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his

presentation. I recognize the member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Part of this started last spring. In my tobacco country constituency office down in Simcoe, I received visits from a Guatemalan film crew, as well as a documentary crew from Costa Rica. Both asked the same question: "Why are our countries inundated with contraband tobacco from Ontario?"

Then, last fall, I had a visit from Mexico City's Reforma newspaper, another film crew. They were tracking the sources of Ontario-grown illegal tobacco entering Mexico after their government had increased taxes on smokes.

During the interviews, I had little to offer about the distribution channels and the identity of the players. It's something you really don't want to talk about. I did have questions of my own: If containers are used to smuggle a local product to Latin America, what's coming back up in return? How does money change hands outside of normal banking and trading relationships? What organizations are local traffickers dealing with in countries like Mexico and Guatemala? What else is being moved back and forth across borders as part of our local black market in tobacco and other products?

A gentleman named Ed Myers, former editor of FrontLine Security Magazine, was kind enough to fly up from North Carolina to support the launch of this private member's bill calling for an inquiry into the illegal trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons. During the Queen's Park news conference, Ed Myers said, "All smuggling-related crimes are interconnected—organized crime networks that are used to smuggle contraband tobacco are the same as the ones with the same criminals who are running drugs, weapons or humans to fuel more serious crimes or fund terrorist attacks."

Speaker, Ed Myers and I will be addressing the May conference of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards.

To adequately examine the phenomenon of trafficking and the black market within the context of a changing world, this commission would rely not only on information and opinions of scientists and experts, but also on candid opinions, attitudes and experiences of knowledgeable individuals who are out there in the province and beyond. It would recommend solutions to reduce the scope of the problem with respect to black market activity.

The legislation mandates the commission to be time-limited and requires an interim report in six months, a final report in 12 months—the final report to be made public within 10 days after it's submitted to the Lieutenant Governor.

The commission, through this legislation, would be created or designed to conduct an inquiry and certainly not an inquisition. It will attempt to deal with issues that bear on a variety of social and legislative policies that should be adopted toward both domestic and international trafficking of the various sectors I've been referring to.

The commission will look at existing laws and enforcement. The commission will report conclusions and make recommendations to our Ontario government concerning legislative and other initiatives.

I've come to realize that all smuggling-related crimes seem to be interconnected. A lot of the same players organize crime networks. They're used to smuggle contraband tobacco, oftentimes the same ones that are running drugs, that are running weapons, dealing in trafficking with people, and that are often involved in more serious crimes. And, as I've been told, it's an avenue as well to fund terrorist attacks.

1520

I do stress that Ontario's black market continues to grow not only in scope but also in sophistication. Ontario is a major hub, as we have heard for months now, with respect to human trafficking for sexual exploitation.

Cocaine, amphetamines, heroin and other narcotic analgesics have long been financed by organized groups. Cash is king. We now see money laundering as well through online gambling, e-commerce, bitcoin and contraband tobacco. Read the budget: 30%, I'm told even 40%, of taxes are lost to the illegal trade, and all of this is permeated by the market in illegal weapons.

The crime is organized. My question this morning in the House was, does this government feel that we have a society that's suitably up to date? Are we organized to fight back?

I point out that Ontario does not have a strategy for human trafficking. The same can be said for tobacco, and the same can be said for drugs and illegal weapons. There's a lack of data; there's a lack of statistics. We do have task forces. This is all to the good. There's various ad hoc initiatives, but there's a lack of information sharing, a lack of collaboration among these various groups that are fighting the criminal underworld.

My second question this morning: Is this government willing to establish a time-limited inquiry, research-based, drawing on fact and expert testimony, to review the literature, assemble the necessary knowledge and the understanding, to explore best practices and, again, provide advice for future action? Because I feel the future may not bode well for our province of Ontario, given the nature of much of this global activity. It is becoming more complex. It's much more sophisticated in magnitude and scale. It requires innovation in return and continually updated approaches.

It requires help from the public. No single entity can deal with what's on the other side. Additional research, of course, is always required, and evidence-based, effective policy. To this end, I maintain that an inquiry would help fill the void where we are lacking.

Regrettably, I see this in my riding in an ever-increasing way. Crime groups can pervade all parts of our society, all parts of our daily life, clearly a threat to any concept of peace, order and good government. Information sharing, intelligence sharing, not only within the province but with other jurisdictions—the federal government; the US; Europe; I think of Italy, for example—is so important for public safety.

The stakeholders have a tough row to hoe. Resources can be lacking and coordination can be lacking as well. I'm not advocating a silver bullet. There's no single policy, instrument or initiative to overcome the myriad challenges that we see here and the dynamics, but we do require a concerted effort. We have government for a reason, based on a strategic vision, as opposed to what may be seen as a bit of a hodgepodge of ad hoc, at times feel-good efforts.

As time goes on, we know the recent task force with respect to women offered two approaches: There was one page in the report on trafficking to coordinate help and allow support services to work with the criminal justice system—again, to collaborate; and secondly, it recommended that Ontario “develop a multi-ministerial, province-wide strategy on human trafficking”—the most common form of trafficking. Again, sex for customers, and again, no strategy. Much of this remains poorly understood; I think a lot of work has been done recently.

Addiction to drugs, another topic I cover, leads to other crimes to fund the need for drugs, the addiction: break-ins, robberies and, oftentimes, the worst-case scenario, murder. Drugs fuel gang activity. Drugs can lead to prostitution. Trade in drugs—the list I mentioned—has always been the source of income for established organized criminal groups. I will mention that any future decriminalization or legalization of cannabis, when we're lacking any reliable, quantifiable indicators or data, will make it difficult to predict the outcome.

Much of the black market economy circumvents normal banking operations. It's cash-based and has impact on corresponding safety and administrative issues. Money laundering facilitates corruption and essentially compromises the integrity of the legitimate financial system and the institutions we have. The bottom line: to provide funds for organized criminal groups that we're talking about. And it goes on: fraud, tax evasion and other criminal offences often involved with violence. I made mention of sophistication: the developing use of e-commerce, the diversification into other financial markets and opportunities to launder illegal profits and essentially obscure the money trail.

Contraband tobacco: Oftentimes, seizures have led to a trail of other drugs and firearms. Again, the financial incentives for illegal tobacco are huge. The issue of weapons, primarily automatic weapons—crime guns—is something we cannot ignore in our society.

Now, progress is being made, but we really cannot ignore this expanding domestic and international trafficking network, as I've mentioned, for people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons. Our existing legal, institutional and societal structures seem ill-prepared. In many ways they're not organized to deal with the entity on the other side of the fence that is very clearly organized. For that reason, in my view, a broader inquiry is warranted.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: First off, in debating Bill 162, I'd like to read the explanatory note to make sure that this is what we're debating here today:

“The bill requires the Premier to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a commission be appointed to inquire into and report on illegal trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons and to make recommendations, including recommendations for legislative measures, directed to the avoidance of those phenomena. Except for the deadline for submitting reports, the Public Inquiries Act, 2009 applies to the commission and the inquiry. The commission must begin its inquiry within 60 days after being appointed and must make an interim report in six months and a final report in 12 months.”

I'd like to commend the member from Haldimand-Norfolk for bringing this bill forward. Speaking on behalf of my caucus, I don't purport to be an expert on any of these issues. Some of the things I have heard on these issues as an MPP in this House, I think many Ontarians would be startled by some of the issues, particularly what we've heard about human trafficking.

1530

Before I heard them in this House, I thought that was something that happens in places far away, much less developed and organized, much less law-abiding, than our society is. I was startled. I am sure that there are other things happening in this province, that are happening across the country and across the world, that we would all be startled by. We are, as legislators, in a unique position because, as unsettling as it may be, it is our responsibility not to look away. It's our responsibility to look objectively at all issues and to see the root causes behind all issues.

I'm a farmer. I would much rather talk about planting and sowing and harvesting than I would talk about these issues. But the fact of the matter is, as a legislator representing my constituents and constituencies of people across the province, we need to discuss these issues. That's why I commend the member for bringing this piece of legislation forward.

This legislation, basically, in my eyes—in our eyes—what it's looking for is more information. As someone who is right now speaking in this House of laws, I need more information. We all need more information. We need to take an objective look at the information. There are, I'm sure, experts in these fields, experts who we may have spoken to, who people may have spoken to before. I'm sure this is not the first time this issue has been looked at.

This morning, as the member asked a question of the House leader of the government, his reply was that we need to do all—I believe he was talking about human trafficking—all that we can to try to come to grips with this issue. I agree with him. Doing an inquiry is a step in that process. Is it the answer? No. Will it help us significantly approach these subjects? We don't know. The purpose is to gather information so objective decisions can be made.

This, of all issues—specifically some of the things we're talking about, like illegal trades of anything and specifically of weapons and humans—is something that

we can't play partisan politics with. We can play partisan politics with a lot of things, and they don't directly impact people's lives. But we can't—we mustn't—play partisan politics with this one. We in the NDP caucus have no intention of doing so.

This is a request for a means to gather information on issues that are not easy to talk about in our society. Quite frankly, in most cases, it's easier to look away. It's not our job to look away. It's not our job, in this case, in any case, to create issues that aren't there. But it's certainly not our job to look away from issues that could be there.

We need to find information. This is one way to do it. If this bill is passed today at second reading, it could go to committee, where the committee can look at it to see if it should be changed in some way to make it work better. That's what this debate is for: to bring it to the next step. These issues need to be looked at.

I'm not qualified to speak on these issues. These issues, to the best of my knowledge, never touched my family. I can honestly say I have never approached in my constituency offices on these issues, so I'm not going to stand here and raise my fist and do the fire-and-brimstone thing. But they're there, and they're very difficult to deal with, and today is a day when we have to make a decision on whether or not we want to spend the time to look further and to see what we can see so that we can make decisions and the government can make decisions on how to proceed further.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's my pleasure to be able to speak on this measure this afternoon, which was brought forward for the consideration of the House in the private members' public business period of time.

I want to deal with a couple of aspects of this. First of all, I had the opportunity to be Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for a period of time, and I recognize that there are many challenges that face the field of community safety. One of them is human trafficking, which we all consider to be deplorable, and which governments at all levels are making an effort to deal with.

There is a clear need, I think people would agree, for more coordination of information between local authorities, government and community organizations. Our government will be taking real steps to address human trafficking by working with those community groups that are already on the ground, working hard to combat this specific issue.

Building on the work of the select committee, we have brought together a multi-ministerial advisory panel, co-lead by Minister Naqvi and Minister MacCharles, who are working closely with experts on the front line to bring forward a comprehensive strategy. Our government also asked the violence-against-women round table co-chairs to convene a special meeting on human trafficking, to bring together the experts so we can get their advice, which I think is an appropriate step to take.

While our government is already taking an active interest and involvement in this, we recognize that there

is always more that can be done. To that end, we have initiated conversations with, for instance, the province of Manitoba, a leader in this area, to learn about the effectiveness of measures that they have put in place and to share information on the success of their overall strategy, including the legislative changes that they have implemented.

We look forward to this approach in the future. It will be responsive to the needs on the ground and it will focus on collaboration with other levels of government, community groups and justice partners. It's important to get this right, and we're bringing forward that comprehensive strategy in June.

Our government has taken significant steps in this regard. The underground economy is another thing about which I think everyone is concerned. We know that everyone wins when we have a level playing field and there is a fair share for everybody. If there isn't a level playing field, underground economy activities that expose both consumers and workers to increased risks jeopardize the health, safety and economic prosperity of Ontarians.

As reported in our last budget, we have recovered \$930 million since 2013-14, a \$330-million increase over what was reported in the 2015 budget. I think there's a consensus in the House that there's a need for that.

1540

We've taken steps to combat the underground economy, including undertaking enhanced compliance activities, enhancing the CRA's capacity to address aggressive international tax planning and ensuring businesses that work for the Ontario government meet their tax obligations. We built on that progress as a government, and those initiatives have shown some success with regards to tobacco.

What members of the Legislature should really know is that this is all about tobacco. That's what this is about this afternoon: It's about tobacco.

We have successfully delivered on a number of key initiatives in the 2015 budget, and as announced in the 2016 budget, we're taking further measures to address contraband tobacco:

- the successful implementation of raw leaf tobacco oversight;

- implementing the prescription of labelling requirements for bales and packages of raw leaf tobacco;

- a dedicated contraband tobacco enforcement team, as established by the OPP;

- the launch of four public health unit projects that will focus on seizing contraband tobacco and flavoured tobacco products; and

- proposing immediate legislative amendments that, if passed, would allow the forfeiture of raw leaf tobacco.

We recognize that this is one approach. We also recognize the approach successive governments have tried is having some success. It requires the active leadership of the federal government, as well as the province, various police agencies and First Nations.

The involvement of First Nations in this process is essential to its success, which would not be possible if our government were to proceed with actions that would be provocative in the midst of these kinds of negotiations and discussions. Ontario recognizes and respects the ceremonial value and economic development and importance of tobacco to First Nations. The progress we have achieved working with First Nations communities has been the result of a balanced and respectful approach involving partnerships and compliance activities, including discussions on self-regulation of tobacco on reserves and revenue sharing. By pushing for the strict enforcement that we have heard from time to time instead of engaging First Nations on this issue, it may well undermine the current work and progress that has been made. That's a concern that we always have.

Progress is being made in this regard. I'm hopeful there will be further progress. The government is working toward that, both at the federal and provincial levels of government. We hope to see some considerable progress as a result.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to stand today in support of my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk's Bill 162, to strike a committee to investigate and offer recommendations to combat the threat of tobacco, weapons, smuggling and human trafficking.

You heard the member for Haldimand-Norfolk's remarks. He got a lot of attention from media in Mexico, in Costa Rica and in some South American countries as well—I suspect not because of his fluent Spanish, although I know Toby has visited more countries than, I think, anybody else here in his time of travel, so he may be fluent in Spanish. It may be because of his good looks; there have been references to John Wayne from time to time, at least on this side of the floor—the Norfolk version of him. But I suspect that Mr. Barrett has become a bit of a media star in South and Central America because of the connection with his riding and with smuggling illegal tobacco and other contraband into those countries. And as he pointed out in his remarks, what comes back in those trailers and containers into our country?

I want to commend the member—because he has been on the forefront of fighting back against illegal contraband products for some time—for success in many endeavours. In others, he continues to push the existing government to take action. Hopefully, by having this committee study the issue and actually paint the truth, a real picture of what's happening, we can force further action.

I find it embarrassing that Canada now has the second-highest level of illegal, contraband tobacco, right next to El Salvador and Panama—sorry, we tie El Salvador behind Panama. It's a very dangerous statistic for us in Ontario and in Canada, and it troubles me where those dollars are actually going. The member pointed out very well that the next connection is to weapons smuggling, to

harder drugs, and then to the degradation of human smuggling and trafficking.

I think there are two reasons—I'll be very direct about this—why the situation is actually getting worse in our province. Number one is because of the veil of political correctness. I think governments and legislators are afraid to take this on because a significant degree of the black market smuggling, particularly in contraband tobacco, is going through First Nations reserves. In fact, in a recent National Post story, they said that one third of all cigarettes sold in Ontario and Quebec are coming from native reserves.

Some day in the not-too-distant future, people will look back and be shocked at how long politicians looked the other way, at how long we swept this major problem under the carpet.

It is really a soft prejudice of low expectations, that just because it happens on a First Nations reserve, some politicians will say, "Not much is going to happen there anyway. There's not even much growth, so we'll just ignore the problem."

There would be no doubt that if a smoke shack opened up in a rich white neighbourhood in Don Valley West or in St. Paul here in Toronto, there would be hell to pay. It would be closed immediately. It couldn't happen next to a school. But because it may happen on the Six Nations reserve or down in eastern Ontario, politicians look the other way.

What message does that send to young native residents on those reserves who are looking for a brighter future, a good job, for a young entrepreneur who wants to start her own business, that people are getting ahead through a life of crime? It's fuelling these other thoughts.

It is a veil of political correctness and fear that is paralyzing politicians who, one day, will look back and be ashamed that we took so long to address this issue which imprisons First Nations youth into a less bright future than if we had the courage to move things on. Hopefully, Toby's bill will provoke action to embarrass us into action.

The second aspect, quite frankly, is the fact that this starts out with illegal tobacco. So what's the big deal? Who didn't smoke a cigarette when they were a little too young, and steal it from the babysitter or mom or dad or the kid down the street? Bradley may be the exception, because he's still wearing his Boy Scout uniform underneath his suit. Others of us may have tried things from time to time.

Or people look the other way and say, "Hey, it's just cigarettes. What's the big deal?" Tobacco taxes are so high, so people are beating the government and saving a few bucks. The problem is that it has now moved on to bigger, more dangerous drugs, relationships with the Hells Angels and with Mexican drug dealers, and hard-core crime that is leading then to young girls being sold into prostitution and following those same trails.

We have let this go on for far too long. It is getting worse, not better. We've been embarrassed to take it on because of political correctness and because we dismiss

smoking as a harmless habit. That time is coming to an end, and God bless Toby Barrett, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, in provoking action, in getting a true picture, and then forcing us to action.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's great to have an opportunity to get up and speak to this bill on the Thursday before Good Friday. What is it actually called today?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Maundy Thursday.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Maundy Thursday.

The member from Timiskaming-Cochrane talked about the need to get more information about this issue. I know, coming from a Welland riding and living very near border communities—I live just 20 minutes from the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, from the Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls and from the Lewiston bridge in Lewiston, New York. Quite often, we hear in the Niagara area, more than I expect they would hear in the north or in downtown Toronto, about the smuggling of drugs or other contraband across from the US borders. They even smuggle cheese, groceries and alcohol.

Many of us who live in Niagara, actually, on occasion make those trips over—

Mr. Tim Hudak: I declare my cheese.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I declare everything, actually. I have to tell you that—

Hon. James J. Bradley: He used to work at the border.

Ms. Cindy Forster: He did. I know that. And the border crossing guards, I think, do a great job, making sure that a lot of contraband cigarettes do not legally come across those borders.

I can tell you that in my shopping trips occasionally—although I haven't made those trips quite recently, because of the dollar. I used to make them more frequently, when the dollar was a little bit closer. I can say that I really haven't been across probably in six months, and then it was only to go to the airport.

We have all kinds of levels of policing here in this province and in this country. We have the RCMP, we have the Ontario Provincial Police, we have our regional police here in Toronto, the Toronto police. In Niagara Falls, we even have the parks police. All of these various authority bodies are out doing work around just the issues that the member from—

Mr. Toby Barrett: Haldimand-Norfolk.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —Haldimand-Norfolk—I should have known that—is talking about. So there are many jurisdictions actually dealing with the issue of drug smuggling and human trafficking and all of those issues.

1550

Now we're into the issues of medical marijuana. We have a government federally that is talking about legalizing marijuana in this country. With 30,000 Canadians using medical marijuana at this point in time, having that access and not having to go to the street to access marijuana for their medical needs, hopefully that will

reduce some of the drug trafficking that we see coming across our US borders.

I think this bill—is it a bill or a motion?

Mr. John Vanthof: A bill.

Ms. Cindy Forster: This bill will likely pass today and go off to committee. Hopefully, we'll be able to hear from some delegations making their presentations. We will have a look at it and make our decision at that point in time on whether it's a worthy piece or whether there are enough investigations going on within all of the various bodies that are working in this province and in this country to control the kinds of things that are in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Do you know what? There are some things I agree with and some I disagree with in this bill. I've often said in this House that assigning motives to people is not something that's very helpful here. I always hate when it's done to me and I try not to do it to others. I always feel like a real jerk when I go home, which I can be, being a bit Irish and a bit gay and a bit Oscar Wilde-like in my better moments.

Interjection: A bit gay?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: A little bit, yes.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We love all your gay.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You like all my gay? I was making a joke about the old queens: It was easier for an old queen to get our statues out there than it was for most women. I won't go down that because I can just see that Sun headline coming at me.

I want to talk a little bit about the context and a little bit about the results of colonialism—that I think that we need a bigger framework to have this conversation in.

My discomfort with the bill is not—because I think that the member is a very thoughtful guy, who I have great respect for. I've always admired his work and his advocacy for people with disabilities. He's a very independent and thoughtful guy. I always enjoy when MPP Barrett, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, presents bills here, because they're always creative and they always come from a thoughtful and original mind and a man with great integrity. When I'm speaking about this, my concerns are sincere and they're not to diminish this.

I spent about a dozen years of my life working on the streets of Winnipeg with the most marginalized kids, and too many of them were Cree, Ojibway and Lakota children. We often have this thing about protecting our children from some sort of predator, some guy in a trench coat in the local park. That mythology is so very dangerous, because the people who kidnap, destroy, rape and give drugs to our children are not strangers. They are, 80% or 90% of the time, the hockey coach, the priest, the mom, the dad, the uncle Bob who everyone liked and who was always so friendly with the children—people in places of trust. I've always had this difficulty. It was this criminalization of the stranger that has always bothered me, because not only is it wrong, it's one of the

things that makes children really vulnerable because it has us looking over here.

When I became a foster parent, I had to answer 17 pages of handwritten notes on the relationship between pedophilia and homosexuality. I always found, when I was a parent, that almost all of the kids who had been sexually or physically abused in child care and in fostering were from nice, suburban middle-class families where the born kids got the key to the house and the foster kids had to wait on the front lawn until someone “safe” came home. It's this destruction of that.

If we're really concerned about trafficking and children and we really want to have an inquiry, we can start with indigenous missing and murdered women. We could walk two or three blocks from this place and go to Covenant House—every MPP should spend a day there—and talk to the kids from across this province and hear their stories. Some of them have been kidnapped. Some of them have been raped. Many of them have been horribly and violently abused. I would hope, since that's the vast majority of that, that if we were doing an inquiry, we wouldn't have to look much further than the back-yard.

Also, indigenous people have a real problem: colonialization and the fact that we're all treaty people. We benefited from these treaties. We dammed those lakes and rivers. We farmed those fields. We cut those trees. We built those cities. One of the proudest things I did when I was mayor was when I and the mayor of Saskatoon were the first two mayors in Canada to do treaty entitlement settlements. If you go to Winnipeg or Regina, you'll see that the Hilton hotels and the commercial office buildings are owned by First Nations. As my friend Dan Chief said, “We don't need another 10,000 acres of trees; we need a real economy.”

Here in Ontario, this makes me very sad. We talk about tobacco—the only parts of the economy we abandoned to the First Nations were gambling and tobacco. Look at Grand River Enterprises; look at those. My father died at 63 of lung cancer. He was a smoker. I'm not a big fan of it, but the only independent, successful aboriginal businesses right now are in the areas of the sin things, the things we don't like: tobacco and gambling.

Look at what Chief Hill has done at Six Nations. They have 17 solar projects. They're now one of the largest sources of revenue. Under the Green Energy Act, the Six Nations of the Thames is now one of the largest providers, and they get royalties all across the Haldimand tract in the member's constituency.

I always believed that if you want to lift people up and you want to build people up, restore the economy. The only new thing that we've put out there that the First Nations could seize was the Green Energy Act, the solar and wind. The handful of First Nations that had the money to do that have transformed that, and now you're seeing other pillars coming around that. But at least the wealth from tobacco and the wealth from gambling provided something. I would like to see First Nations—and then you're really lifting people up.

We keep on chasing down the legal contraband tobacco, and they take us to court and we lose every single case. We shouldn't treat them differently than Macdonald or Rothman's; they should meet the same standards as everything else.

I wish I had more time because I think this is a too narrowly framed discussion, and there are other things that we need to be more concerned about. A good job doesn't solve every social problem, but a stronger economy and more choices in life are the best way to get out of poverty. I hope the member would work with us towards a bigger framework to solve a problem that affects more people than some of the things he's chasing here, and I say that with the greatest of respect to my friend.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I commend the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for bringing forward this bill, the Ontario commission of inquiry into the black market trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons act, 2016.

I just want to comment on the minister's remarks. We are trying to actually help the government. This is a very reasonable bill. It certainly doesn't touch everything, and we can't touch everything in the private members' time that we do have, but it is asking the government of Ontario for a time-limited commission to conduct an inquiry—just an inquiry—to deal with issues that bear on, certainly, the social legislative policies that we, as lawmakers, have the responsibility to fix and to better. That is our job.

His bill today talks about domestic and international trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons. It's calling us to look at existing laws—how can we enhance them? We're talking to the front-line people that are a bit of a patchwork of services around the province, the coordination of their speaking to each other, and trying to figure out how to stop these law-breakers. I commend him for that because he is very thoughtful in his policy development. In fact, I think he's one of the most thoughtful members we have in the caucus. He takes time. He has a background as a teacher and in working with people with addictions. He brought this forward because he sees a need for it.

1600

There is a situation in illicit trade occurring among us. For us to ignore it is for us not to be doing our jobs. I speak about human trafficking quite a lot in the Legislature. I'm happy to hear that the government is going to bring forward some type of strategy on human trafficking in the next couple of months. I have brought a private member's motion and a private member's bill in respect to human trafficking within the last 12 months.

The select committee really forced the government to look at sexual violence and harassment. In their report, they identified the province of Ontario as a hub for human trafficking. Over 90% of the girls, women and young men being trafficked are Canadian-born, which is a statistic that is staggering. The average age is 14. There

are children being lured over the Internet and social media. Yet we have a government we have been pushing so hard to do something, and it seems that it has taken so long to give those police officers, crown attorneys, judges and victim services the crucial tools to eradicate this evil practice of human trafficking.

I know this is one part that the member's bill touches upon. I fully support this bill and admire him for bringing this forward and trying to get the government to try to take action.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is my honour to rise today and speak in strong support of my colleague's bill, Bill 162, the Commission of Inquiry into Illegal Trade and Trafficking of People, Drugs, Money, Tobacco and Weapons Act.

As PC critic for community safety and correctional services, I applaud the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for bringing forward this bill, as these black market criminal networks have deep roots throughout the province that must be eradicated.

Ontario, along with Quebec, has the highest concentration of contraband tobacco manufacturing operations, the majority of high-volume smuggling points and the largest number of consumers of contraband tobacco, according to the RCMP. Contraband tobacco is, in fact, a serious problem. Not only does it rob store owners who follow the rules, but the province loses tens of millions of dollars in tax revenue. Worst of all, children are being provided with cheap cigarettes by criminals. This problem has to be stamped out.

In addition to the black market tobacco trade, the illegal drug trade is a serious concern throughout Ontario and also in my riding of Chatham-Kent–Essex. Last summer, four individuals were stopped by police on the 401. The OPP seized undisclosed amounts of fentanyl, OxyContin and also other drugs when the individuals were pulled over. Further investigation uncovered multiple guns and even a knife. In 2014, Chatham-Kent police seized an estimated \$175,000 worth of cocaine, marijuana, fentanyl and other drugs as well. In addition to that, they also seized more firearms.

Last summer, I attended a meeting hosted by concerned citizens in Tilbury who were focused on the issue of human trafficking along the 401 corridor. Windsor, London and Toronto are the areas that are usually focused on, but this problem extends to communities all along the highway. The Chatham-Kent Coalition Against Human Trafficking held its first workshop in 2013. The event was called Breaking the Silence, a community workshop on human trafficking. Courageous individuals shared their stories.

An important element in tackling crime as deplorable as human trafficking is raising awareness about its prevalence throughout our province, which has been described as a major hub of smuggling. This should not be Ontario's legacy.

Organized crime requires organized crime-fighting. This bill will bring together law enforcement agencies,

scientists and experts, as well as individuals impacted by these horrible crimes. To the government I say, why not bring to light what is going on in darkness? Why not encourage people to share their stories and expertise on how to destroy these unspeakably evil crime networks? What possible justification could anyone have for being against such a commission being formed, other than the most discouraging of reasons: that perhaps the wrong party proposed the idea?

As it stands, our province is a noted hub for the worst crimes that humans are capable of. We must do more.

I'm going to finish up with just one very simple thought—although it's not simple; it's somewhat profound—The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do absolutely nothing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The time provided for private members' public—oh, I'm sorry. I apologize. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the input, and I appreciate the support in some quarters.

I heard concerns that this may be provocative. I don't know. Given what we're up against, I think we have to be provocative. I think it's important to maybe set aside that test of political correctness on occasion, given the seriousness of what we've been talking about in the past hour. I do regret some of the reluctance that I heard. I have always felt that we have government for a reason. However, it's clear to me, and we can certainly go on to plan B and to plan C. In our rich society, we have so many organizations—public sector, non-governmental, private sector organizations—that are working on this, and working together at the provincial, international and federal levels.

One model that I had for this—and I did spend 20 years in much of this field—was the Le Dain commission. That came out back in 1972. That commission—the analysis of illegal drugs of the day—was very comprehensive and still remains the model for me. It provided an ideal forum at the time—gosh, this was, I don't know, 40 years ago—for a frank discussion. Set the emotions aside. Set the politics aside. Have public and private hearings, informal exchanges of opinion and a literature review, obviously. Base it on research; base it on science.

I feel that there are other groups out there that are working on this and will continue to work on this, whether the Ontario government is on deck or not.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Now the time for private members' public business has expired.

ALBANIAN HERITAGE
MONTH ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LE MOIS
DU PATRIMOINE ALBANAIS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We will first deal with ballot item 24, standing in the name of Mrs.

Albanese. Mrs. Albanese has moved second reading of Bill 145, An Act to proclaim the month of November as Albanian Heritage Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the committee of the whole House, unless—the member for York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to refer it to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is a majority of the House in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed? Agreed.

The bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

RAE LUCKOCK AND AGNES MACPHAIL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Now we'll deal with the second item. Madame Lalonde has moved private member's notice of motion 64. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO
ILLEGAL TRADE AND TRAFFICKING
OF PEOPLE, DRUGS, MONEY, TOBACCO
AND WEAPONS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 CONCERNANT
LA COMMISSION D'ENQUÊTE SUR
LE COMMERCE ET LE TRAFIC ILLICITES
DE PERSONNES, DE DROGUES,
D'ARGENT, DE TABAC ET D'ARMES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We'll now deal with the third private members' ballot item this afternoon. Mr. Barrett has moved second reading of Bill 162, An Act to establish a commission of inquiry into illegal trade and trafficking of people, drugs, money, tobacco and weapons. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Second reading negated.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day? I recognize the Chair of Cabinet.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Bradley has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? The motion carries.

This House stands adjourned until April 4 at 10:30 in the morning.

The House adjourned at 1611.

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	
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
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

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Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
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Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
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Granville Anderson, Chris Ballard
Steve Clark, Jack MacLaren
Michael Mantha, Eleanor McMahon
Monte McNaughton, Soo Wong
Vacant
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
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