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Monday 30 May 2016

Lundi 30 mai 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 30 May 2016

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 30 mai 2016

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning.

This week, the House will be paying tribute to deceased former members Michael Dietsch and Leonard Joseph Quilty. I ask that members keep their memory in mind during prayers today.

Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. David Zimmer: It is my pleasure, and the pleasure of this House, to rise in the House to introduce and welcome, on behalf of the government and all parties, those who have gathered with us here today. It is an honour to be joined by indigenous peoples from across Ontario on this important day. I would like to welcome survivors of residential schools; those people and organizations that support them; and the indigenous youth, leaders and elders who have travelled from across this province to be with us here today on this historic occasion. Thank you all for being here.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would very much like to introduce my grandchildren Olivia and Claire Wesley; their dad, Stanley Wesley; and my partner, Jane, who have joined us for this important day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the tradition, we have with us in the members' gallery Chris Bentley, from London West in the 38th, 39th and 40th Parliaments. Chris, welcome. Also with us we have the former Premier of the province of Ontario, Mr. Bob Rae.

As ordered on May 19, this House is now adjourned during pleasure.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

COMMISSION DE VÉRITÉ ET RÉCONCILIATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May I please have the chamber doors opened for the entry of the elders and indigenous guests. Please rise.

Pray be seated.

Remarks in indigenous languages.

First, let me acknowledge that we are standing on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. As Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, I am honoured to welcome you to the Legislature today, on behalf of all members of the provincial Parliament.

I'm honoured to host the survivors of Ontario's residential schools in the Speaker's gallery today. These men and women bore witness to a dark past in our province's history. They were torn away from their families, punished in celebrating their culture, and many suffered unthinkable acts. But they were strong. They endured, but the pain remains.

Today, it is my hope that we are now witness to a brighter future, one that allows their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren to move forward in the spirit of reconciliation.

At this time, I respectfully invite Elder Jim Dumont and his associate Elder Shelley Charles to recite a prayer to begin the proceedings.

Mr. Jim Dumont: *Prayers in indigenous languages and English.*

0910

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you, Elder Dumont.

At this time, the three party leaders will address the House. I now invite the Premier to offer her remarks.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I rise today to express a personal commitment as Premier and the commitment of the government of Ontario to being full partners with indigenous peoples on our journey towards reconciliation and healing.

I first want to thank the other parties for their co-operation in convening this special assembly and to recognize those whose presence makes today a historic and hopeful occasion: Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day and other chiefs in attendance—I know there are many here—Métis Nation of Ontario President Margaret Froh; Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres President Sheila McMahon; the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Native Women's Association of Canada, Dawn Lavell-Harvard; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami President Natan Obed; Cree elder and residential school survivor Andrew Wesley; and all of the residential school survivors, indigenous leaders and youth who are here today. I also want to thank Elder Jim Dumont for his opening prayer with Elder Shelley Charles, and Métis Senator Verna Porter-Brunelle, who, along with Elder Jim Dumont, will provide closing prayers.

Je veux remercier tous les jeunes des régions autochtones d'être ici aujourd'hui afin de nous aider à franchir cette étape de notre cheminement vers la réconciliation.

Indigenous people are the original occupants of this land that we call Ontario, and over thousands of years

they developed distinct languages, cultures, economies and ways of life. This long history means that we are assembled in a sacred and traditional gathering place for many peoples of Turtle Island. I want to show respect for this by acknowledging that we're on the traditional territory of several indigenous nations and pay special recognition to the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and by recognizing the history and contributions of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Our shared history begins around 400 years ago. When Europeans first arrived, the generous partnership of indigenous peoples helped them to establish profitable enterprises and settlements.

In 1763, the Royal Proclamation confirmed the original occupancy of indigenous peoples and paved the way for nation-to-nation treaties between the British crown and indigenous peoples. Treaties were negotiated and signed with the intent of delivering mutual benefits.

In Ontario, most of this happened hundreds of years ago. To some, seven generations ago can seem disconnected, but we know that our history is always shaping our present. And for some of us, treaties are part of the history that shapes our prosperity. Treaties granted us land to live on and water to drink. They're the foundation on which the short history of our country has carried forward—a history in which every generation has built a better life by building on the achievements of the past.

But that is only one side of our story. For indigenous people in Ontario, this same history created a very different reality. Despite the promise of early treaties and the respectful nation-to-nation partnerships they established, indigenous people became the target of colonial policies designed to exploit, to assimilate and to eradicate them. Based on racism, violence and deceit, these policies were devastatingly effective. They disempowered individuals and disenfranchised entire communities.

When Canada became a country 149 years ago, the legacy of violent colonialism only gathered momentum. From coast to coast to coast, the residential school system set out to “take the Indian out of the child” by removing indigenous children from their homes and systematically stripping them of their languages, cultures, laws and rights. Children were physically, emotionally and sexually abused, and many died.

These heartbreaking stories are hard to hear. For generations of indigenous people, these stories were their lives.

Les récits des survivantes et survivants nous brisent le cœur et il est difficile de les entendre, mais nous devons tous les écouter.

Canada's residential schools are closed, but they have been closed for not even one generation. Echoes of their racist colonial attitudes can still be heard, and the echoes of a society-wide, intergenerational effort of cultural genocide continue to reverberate loudly and painfully in the lives of indigenous people today.

However we choose to measure a person's opportunity and security in life, a disturbing gap exists between the indigenous and non-indigenous population. It is the gap

created by a country that abused and betrayed its indigenous people. It is a gap that swallows lives and extinguishes hope across generations.

0920

For a long time, indigenous peoples' call for justice could not be heard across this yawning gulf because Canada did not want to hear them. It is thanks to the resiliency of those who endured the abuses of the past that we are finally listening. Thank you for finding the strength and courage to come forward and tell your stories and the stories of those who were lost. In opening our eyes, you have given us this chance to move forward as partners and the opportunity to say we are sorry. So before I go on, I want to show my respect for all the survivors and all the victims by offering a formal apology for the abuses of the past.

As Premier, I apologize for the policies and practices supported by past Ontario governments and for the harm that they caused. I apologize for the province's silence in the face of deaths and abuses at residential schools. And I apologize for the fact that the residential schools are only one example of systemic, intergenerational injustices inflicted upon indigenous communities across Canada.

By adopting policies designed to eradicate your cultures and extinguish your rightful claims, previous generations set in motion a force so destructive that its impact continues to reverberate in our time. And so I want to apologize for all of this by saying I am sorry for the continued harm that generations of abuse is causing to indigenous communities, families and individuals.

À titre de première ministre, je présente nos excuses pour les abus et trahisons du passé et pour le mal qu'ils continuent à causer dans la vie des autochtones aujourd'hui.

No apology changes the past, nor can the act of apology alone change the future. In making this apology, as in making the political accord last summer, I hope to demonstrate our government's commitment to changing the future by building relationships based on trust, respect and indigenous peoples' inherent right to self-government.

This act of apology is not the end, nor is it the beginning. It is but one step on the journey to reconciliation and healing that we are committed to walking together. Last year at this time, we took one of those steps when Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission held its closing ceremonies in Ottawa. I was honoured to participate in the Walk for Reconciliation, and I want to thank Justice and now Senator Murray Sinclair, the commission, and all the survivors who participated for helping to illuminate a dark past, for honouring all of those who lost their lives and for pointing the way forward.

Ontario has already taken first steps on this journey forward. They're highlighted in *The Journey Together*, which is a report that we're releasing today. It outlines how Ontario is further responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings and calls to action. Today, Ontario commits to working in partnership with indigenous leaders and their communities to undertake 26

new initiatives that will help build trust and respect into our relationships and build opportunity and security into the lives of indigenous people.

These next steps begin, as I have today, with efforts to help everyone in our province understand the truth about our history. We will educate all Ontarians about the horrors of the residential school system, the betrayals of past governments, and our rights and responsibilities as treaty people—because in Ontario, we are all treaty people. This will include the work we are doing to ensure our education curriculum teaches every child in Ontario the truth about our past and what it means for all of us today. In addition to further actions to commemorate victims and educate Ontarians, Minister David Zimmer intends to introduce legislation today that would declare the first week of November as Treaties Recognition Week.

The Journey Together also introduces and enhances programs focused on closing opportunity gaps and ending intergenerational cycles of trauma. It guides our actions to enhance indigenous voices in the administration of justice and build a justice system that is responsive to indigenous legal principles, autonomy and cultures. And because indigenous languages and cultures are critical to the well-being of communities and to reconciliation itself, we will take a number of actions to support indigenous communities in protecting and promoting traditional knowledge, languages and oral histories. Finally, we will rename the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

The commitments Ontario is making in The Journey Together are supported with an investment of more than \$250 million over the next three years. But funding commitments alone cannot undo generations of racism and abuse. To do that, we truly need to learn from our past, which is why our programs and actions will be developed and evaluated in close partnership with our indigenous communities, openly and respectfully.

We are also working to incorporate indigenous elder and youth perspectives into decision-making across government, because reconciliation cannot be compartmentalized; it is a society- and a government-wide journey.

We will also work closely with Canada's federal government, whose commitments to reconciliation are encouraging and vital to our success.

We understand that there will be setbacks as we walk this road, as we unlearn the patterns of previous generations and replace them with new, healthy relationships. But setbacks will not weaken our resolve to walk together to a place of trust, accommodation and friendship. We do not approach reconciliation as something we need to get over with. We approach it as something that we need to get right.

Mr. Speaker, indigenous partners, my fellow Ontarians, there is no more denying our past or hiding from the truth. The duty owed to indigenous peoples is enshrined in our laws and in our values as Canadians. Building trust, respectful relationships with indigenous peoples and taking steps to end intergenerational cycles of trauma

and inequality: That is our present task. One day, it will be our history.

With the steps we're taking together to build a country that lives up to its laws, its values and its reputation as a force for good in the world, we're walking a path that connects us across generations. We are undoing the harm caused by our past, and building a society where future generations of indigenous and non-indigenous can walk together as equals, living in peace and harmony on the land that we now share. Walking this journey together, we will not fail. Chi meegwetch. Niá:wen. Marsi. Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now like to ask the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition to bring his remarks.

Mr. Patrick Brown: As leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, on behalf of the entire Ontario PC caucus, I am honoured to receive the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on this very special day here on the floor of the Ontario Legislature.

Today, it is truly an honour to share this floor with our elected colleagues, elders and special guests. I acknowledge, as the Premier has, Isadore Day, Ontario Regional Chief of the Chiefs of Ontario; Margaret Froh, president of the Métis Nation of Ontario; Natan Obed, president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami; Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Ontario Native Women's Association; Sheila McMahon, president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres; Andrew Wesley, a residential school survivor; and Verna Porter-Brunelle, Métis senator.

With the official release of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission nearly a year ago today, I can still remember the emotional response I had when reading the findings for the very first time.

The Indian residential school system is a tragic chapter in our history, and has resulted in lasting and profound impacts on our indigenous communities to this day. As you know, over 6,750 individuals and residential school survivors contributed to the commission during the seven-year process that began in 2008. This includes the combined and unique experiences of our First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. I'd like to personally thank each of these survivors for going through the difficult and emotional task of recalling their own experiences with the residential school system in Canada for the benefit of future generations.

Cela inclut l'expérience combinée et unique de nos peuples de Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuits. Je voudrais remercier personnellement chacun et chacune de ces survivants de passer par la tâche difficile et émotionnelle de rappeler leurs propres expériences avec le système des pensionnats au Canada pour le bénéfice des générations de l'avenir.

The stories they are telling are harrowing, and I thank them for their extraordinary courage to speak.

0930

Anybody who takes the time to read the Survivors Speak component of the final report can't help but be profoundly moved. The numbers are staggering: Over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth were part of the residential school system. Torn from their homes, they were forced to assimilate to a culture not their own. At these schools, children were subject to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. One out of every 25 of these children died there. Some were buried in unmarked graves, their parents and families not notified. It stands in stark contrast to the Ontario and the Canada that we know and celebrate today, and an education system that many take pride in.

I was proud to be in the House of Commons when the government of Canada made its historic apology. Unfortunately, for many that apology came far too late. I'm proud that in Canada, treaty rights are enshrined in the federal Constitution, and I was encouraged last year, when the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was released, that the Prime Minister apologized once again on behalf of the government of Canada and asked forgiveness of the aboriginal people of this country for failing them so profoundly. This burden is ours as a country and a province. We are sorry. Nous sommes désolés.

It is critical to remember that survivors live among us. I look forward to working towards the 94 calls to action as a parliamentarian, Ontarian and Canadian, and towards bringing truth and reconciliation between our nations. As a province, our commitment is to live and work together with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners to ensure the principles of trust, mutual respect and shared benefits. We are committed to supporting survivors and to continuing to strengthen relations with our aboriginal partners. As the official opposition, we will continue to work hard to ensure that the government of Ontario will continue to work towards this goal and to ensure that the necessary supports are being provided to our aboriginal communities.

We look forward to reaching across the aisle and working not only with our counterparts but also directly in partnership with indigenous communities, because all apologies, all statements, all recommendations and all ceremonies are empty and inconsequential gestures without concrete and meaningful action. Now, more than ever, it is time for us to come together as a province to work hard on behalf of all Ontarians, and that begins by recognizing the mistakes that were made in the past.

For their hard work and perseverance, I would like to thank the chair of the commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, as well as commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, along with all those who previously served on the commission, for their immense contributions that led us to this day.

Thank you, again, to all our special guests who have joined us this morning. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I would now like to invite the leader of the third party to bring her remarks.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Elder Dumont and Elder Charles, Regional Chief Day, President Froh, President Obed, President McMahon, President Dr. Lavell-Harvard, Rev. Wesley and all the indigenous leaders, youth and residential school survivors who have joined us here today. Thank you for being here. Meegwetch.

I want to thank all of the elders, chiefs and guests who are here today in this House on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

There was a time when this House, this province and its institutions were not just complicit, but part of authorizing and allowing the most egregious and harmful policies towards First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

For years, governments in this province and in this country did everything they could to ignore and violate the human rights and treaty rights of indigenous peoples, to eliminate cultural practices and to eliminate aboriginal governments—replacing existing forms of aboriginal government and in the process disempowering aboriginal women, who held significant, powerful roles in many First Nations—to destroy indigenous communities and destroy families. Canada engaged in cultural genocide. As the chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, writes in the commission's final report, residential schools are "one of the darkest, most troubling chapters in our nation's history." They targeted the most vulnerable people: children. They tried to break the spirit of indigenous peoples, and as Justice Sinclair says, "That any indigenous person survived the culturally crushing experience of the schools is a testament to their resilience, and to the determination of those members of their families and communities who struggled to maintain and pass on to them what remained of their diminishing languages and traditions." It is a testament to survivors like Rev. Wesley and to the strength of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples across Canada. And this recognition today in this House is long overdue.

There are two pieces to the commission's work: truth and reconciliation. Today we can learn the truth. It is written in the volumes of the commission's report. We can read and learn and begin to try to understand the real foundations on which this country and this province is built. We can learn the truth: that child neglect and abuse was at the core of the residential school system. We can learn the truth: that the government failed to provide the funding, the food, the medical treatment, the proper housing, the duty of care that we owe to every child. We can learn the truth and recognize that the legacy of the residential school system is its intergenerational impact on current and future First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

La vérité, nous pouvons l'apprendre. But only if we continue to listen. The hearings may be over, the report may have been written, today's responses may have been delivered, but the listening cannot stop, because the work

of reconciliation, the work that we must do, is only just beginning.

Of course it's true that some progress has been made, like the work that's been done to ensure that this history is part of our curriculum—that's important. But the commission's findings demonstrate the ongoing failure right here in Ontario to live up to our responsibilities. For too many people in this province, racism and systemic discrimination continue to shape their lives, the conditions in which they live and the doors that are open to them. Neglect, mistreatment and abuse have been part of the lives of so many First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and women, and a national inquiry into the murdered and missing indigenous women is long overdue.

Far too many First Nations communities continue to live without clean, safe drinking water in our province. Today there are at least 133 drinking water advisories in effect in First Nations communities across Canada, and 90 of those drinking water advisories are for First Nations communities right here in Ontario, from Attawapiskat to Curve Lake to Pikangikum and Shoal Lake 40. In this province, children are growing up without safe, clean drinking water. Parents are trying to feed their families without safe, clean drinking water. Elders are living without safe, clean drinking water. And that's unacceptable.

It is unacceptable that any family is forced to live without decent housing. And it is unacceptable that so many First Nations communities do not have access to the health care that people need. In this province today there is a state of health emergency in many First Nations communities, a health emergency born of decades of discrimination and neglect but borne out in extreme health inequities and suffering, a severe shortage of physicians and health care providers and medical equipment in First Nations communities and lives that are being cut short by diseases like rheumatic fever, diabetes and hepatitis C.

This is not what should be happening to anyone in Ontario today. So the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report is not just a series of volumes to be read. Ce rapport est un appel à l'action. In fact, it is 94 calls to action, and it is incumbent upon the government and upon all of us to act on those recommendations. They must compel us to move forward on the long journey towards meaningful reconciliation; to build a stronger relationship as equals between the government of Ontario and First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments and peoples; to remember the past and to change the future; and, most importantly, acting on the 94 calls to action means acting with much greater urgency and much greater resolve to address the ongoing impact of racism and discrimination and injustice against indigenous peoples in every form it takes. Frankly, we can no longer allow jurisdictional disputes between the government of Ontario and the government of Canada to serve as an excuse for inaction in the face of the violation of people's rights.

0940

Today, on behalf of Ontario's New Democrats, I want to take a moment to express our full support for the apology that has been issued by the government of Ontario and by the Premier this morning. It is an important and long-overdue apology, but it alone is not enough, and I know that she acknowledged that by some of the other commitments that were made along with that apology. We'll be doing our job to make sure that those commitments are adhered to.

We must all show—all of us—the political will and the determination that exists today to solve the problems that communities face: to ensure that everyone in this province has safe drinking water and safe housing; to clean up lands and rivers that are contaminated with toxins, like the Wabigoon River, that is central to the way of life for the Grassy Narrows First Nation—which we know can be done, as long as the political will is there; to ensure that women and children and men can all live free of violence; to ensure that every family has access to the health care that they need in their communities; and to ensure that children and youth have access to the opportunities that they need to start their lives and look forward to their own futures.

We owe it to every family that was torn apart. We owe it to every victim and every survivor. We owe it to future generations to do everything we can to build a future free of racism, discrimination, inequity and injustice.

That is our task moving forward. If we accomplish it over the years, we will have achieved reconciliation. It'll be a long, difficult journey, but we will take it together.

Meegwetch. Merci beaucoup. Thank you all very much for being here on this historic day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all three leaders for their heartfelt comments.

At this time I would like to start our remarks in reply and begin with Isadore Day, the Ontario Regional Chief.

Chief Isadore Day: Bonjour. *Remarks in indigenous language.*

Good morning.

Remarks in indigenous language.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the Creator, creation, the prayers and the protocols.

I want to acknowledge the ceremony this morning and the elders who are with us who helped us with the invocation to get us started on this very, very important event today.

I want, as well, to acknowledge the Indian residential school survivors, the living and the deceased. They're among us today, both physically and in spirit.

I want to acknowledge Premier Kathleen Wynne and your cabinet colleagues—good morning; and the official opposition and PC Leader Patrick Brown. I'd like to acknowledge NDP Leader Andrea Horwath as well.

I'd like to acknowledge all First Nation leaders who are with us here in the gallery and who have assisted us in coming here today to respond to this very momentous occasion.

I want to acknowledge the ITK president, Natan Obed; as well, the MNO president, Margaret Froh; and the NWAC president, Dawn Lavell-Harvard.

I also want to acknowledge all those organizations that are among us here to share in this celebration. There are many, many people that should be acknowledged here today—far too many to list: my respects to all of you.

I also want to note, in appreciation, the significance of being in the Ontario Legislature. I understand that this is a very, very historic event. The opportunity to stand here in respect and acknowledgment of the apology today very much is heartfelt by us, Premier, and the members in the House here today.

It is an honour to be here today. We're gathered together to acknowledge the important effort of reconciliation by the Ontario government. Today, we journey together toward the restoration of the rights originally recognized through sacred and binding treaties with our ancestors, and reparation of lives of First Nation people damaged by Indian residential schools in Ontario.

We're here today on the traditional land of the Mississaugas of the New Credit. This is a land walked upon and shared by so many peoples from so many indigenous nations. We are the Anishinabek, Mushkegowuk, Onkwehonwe, and the Lenape—the first peoples of Turtle Island. This is our land, Ontario, land of blue waters.

We stand here today in the presence of the spirits of our ancestors; in the presence of the spirits of those leaders who signed the Treaty of Niagara in 1764, the Lake Superior and the Lake Huron treaties, the Williams Treaties and the numbered treaties; and in the presence of chiefs and grand chiefs who are descendants of those who represent this unbroken line connecting our people to this present-day relationship with the originating colonists—the Ontario citizen today and the settler kin of the Métis people.

We also stand in the presence of the troubled spirits of our children, our youth, our sisters, mothers and grandmothers. Far too many have taken their lives or have had their lives stolen. Far too many continue to suffer under poverty and despair, not of their choosing, not of their wish or desire, but as a sustained result of colonization deception of the peace and friendship in the treaties—unfortunately here in the province of Ontario. We speak about the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this province.

As we stand in the presence of our residential school survivors, we are reminded of a system meant to kill the Indian in the child. Not only have they suffered unspeakable abuse, but their children and grandchildren have also suffered. How terribly sad that this horrible legacy continues to impact our present generations, as is so evident in the current suicide crisis of our children and youth. The vast majority of us as First Nation people across this land can speak of the direct impacts of this dark legacy. Yes, many of us have lived in the direct darkness and shadows of the evil that was so evident in so many of those schools.

The Indian Act of 1876 formalized the chains of oppression that we, as First Nation people, continue to struggle to break free of to this day. Combined colonialism—the Indian Act along with the full implementation of the residential school system—would become the malevolent scheme towards the destruction of our humanity. This colonial force created such a high level of dysfunction and despair for so many generational decades that its effects continue to impact the well-being of our families to this day through intergenerational trauma, a communal post-trauma experienced in all First Nations in this province.

We also continue to be subject to policy and legislation that shapes and controls our lives to this day and the progenies of the Indian Act system: unjustified and unjust jurisdiction against our people and our lands. The deepness of poverty that continues to kill our people is not right. This has never been right in a land as rich as Ontario. Our ancestors did not envision these present horrors when they agreed to share the wealth of this land. This goes against, again, the original peace and friendship treaties of this land.

Our peoples were never included in the discussions when vast tracts of land here in Ontario were illegally sold to immigrants from Europe in order to pay off debts of the War of 1812. If our peoples had not been allies in that war, Ontario and Canada may have never existed.

Our peoples were never part of the discussions when Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia formed Confederation in 1867. Yet, today, we are subject to a division of powers and not formally welcomed by the federal family on this land—oddly like uninvited guests on our own land.

Before 1867, the marginalization of indigenous people had already begun through discriminatory and inequitable measures. We were already being forced into small reserves. We had begun to lose our rights, traditions, cultures, languages and sustenance to life. We began to lose our children to residential schools. We had become prisoners in our own lands: Canada's apartheid—it is real. It is the true subject of reconciliation in this province today.

0950

Premier and members of the Ontario Legislature, this is your time to cast a light on a dark and painful history. Let the healing begin.

The spirit of change is upon us. The highest courts of this land tell us the Constitution protects indigenous ways of life, our culture and the connection to our lands. The Constitution can now affirm and begin to formally recognize, through reconciliation, inherent and treaty rights—never relinquished as pre-contact and original indigenous peoples of this land.

The political accord being implemented in Ontario, the commitments of both the federal and provincial governments that follow the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, and the full adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—these are all powerful signals of a new

relationship based on equality, restitution and recognizing our sovereignty as nations.

Today, we will walk together on the path towards building happy, healthy First Nation families and communities. We will end the scourge of suicide. We will end the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We will return our children to their families. We will work together to build economies in the spirit and intent of the treaties. We will work together to combat climate change. We will work together to return Ontario to the beauty and bounty that first attracted settlers to our lands. We will strengthen indigenous peoples' connection to our mother—Mother Earth.

In conclusion, we must turn all of our efforts and seek the full involvement and inclusion of our Indian residential school survivors in all aspects of moving forward, for it is they who have carried the full burden and experienced the darkness of this history. They must never again feel left out, alone or abandoned. This process, Premier, these investments, they belong to these residential school survivors. As the Regional Chief of Ontario, I will be making every effort possible to ensure that the residential school survivors are a part of each and every aspect of this investment and this policy coming from this House moving forward.

Today, we move closer to fulfilling the original intent of the treaties envisioned by our ancestors. Premier and all those present in this legislative House, today we reclaim our rightful place in Ontario. May the Creator bless all of you, and may our ancestors feel the warmth of reconciliation in this new era of healing. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will now hear from the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Margaret Froh.

Ms. Margaret Froh: Good morning. Bonjour.
Remarks in indigenous language.

My name is Margaret Froh. I am the president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, and I'm very honoured to be here this morning to address the Legislature, and be here with residential school survivors, as well as First Nations and Inuit leaders.

I want to begin by acknowledging the territory that we're on, and I want to thank the elders for the prayers—how we started our day—but how we started this morning in the House as well.

I also want to acknowledge Premier Wynne and your cabinet. I want to acknowledge the leader of the official opposition, Patrick Brown, as well as the leader of the NDP, Andrea Horwath, and all of you—all of you who sit in this Legislature for this historic event that's happening today.

I want to acknowledge the First Nation and Inuit elders, community leaders, citizens and guests who are present in the House this morning, and I want to acknowledge our Métis citizens and members of our provisional council of the Métis Nation of Ontario, our Métis provincial government, who are here with us today to witness this historic event.

Premier Wynne's announcement today and the apology that has been shared is, I believe, another significant

milestone in the efforts that Ontario is making in committing to establish strong and collaborative relationships and partnerships with indigenous peoples in Ontario.

Last year, the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission came to a close and, with it, the final report and the 94 calls to action were issued—and I stress the term “action” in that sense—to address the legacy of the Indian residential school system in Canada. I believe Ontario's announcement today acknowledges that hugely negative impact that the residential school system has had in our communities and continues to have in our communities. I believe it charts a course of action, a way forward for us to begin to address that legacy.

Métis, First Nations and Inuit children, families and communities suffered under Canada's residential school system and its assimilationist policies. However, the Métis experience of residential schooling remains largely untold. For many Métis children, residential schools and day schools that were operated by the churches and the religious orders and supported by provincial and federal governments were the only option for receiving an education. For some, they were made to go to school. For others, they were sent by their families in the hope of an education and a brighter future for their families and for their communities. And as with First Nations and Inuit, Métis families and communities continue to be deeply affected by the legacy of residential schools.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission dedicated an entire volume of its report specifically to the experience of Métis people within the residential school system. Quoting from that report: “The Métis experience of residential schooling has been overlooked for too long.... There is no denying that the harm done to the children, their parents, and the Métis community was substantial. It is an ongoing shame that this damage has not been addressed and rectified.”

The vast majority of the 94 calls to action issued by the TRC in their final report are inclusive of all indigenous people, and the actions announced here today must do the same. They must include Métis, First Nations and Inuit. If we are to effect any real change and advance reconciliation in our province, Métis must be at the table along with our indigenous family.

I want to acknowledge and give thanks to TRC Chair Justice—now Senator—Murray Sinclair, and Commissioners Chief Wilton Littlechild and Dr. Marie Wilson for the care, attention and deep commitment they showed in the work that they did. They have provided all Canadians with a true gift in the statements they have gathered on behalf of survivors and in that vision that they have provided for a way forward, for a way forward in healing and reconciliation.

I want to acknowledge and give thanks to all the survivors and their families, including those who are here today, for having the courage to stand and tell their stories. They've shared so much in that truth-telling process.

What is abundantly clear from Canada's truth and reconciliation process is that there is much work that

needs to be done to advance healing and reconciliation in Canada, both between indigenous and non-indigenous people but also between and among our own indigenous nations as well.

The TRC final report and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples together provide a blueprint for moving forward in that work of reconciliation in Canada. Six months ago, I was here, along with the leadership of the Métis Nation of Ontario, and all three parties in this House stood in support of the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act. That recognized the unique structure of our Métis Nation government, and that, I believe, was an act of reconciliation.

We stand here again today, this time again with all-party support, for this statement on reconciliation and supporting and acknowledging that apology that you've offered, Premier Wynne. On behalf of the Métis Nation of Ontario, I want to acknowledge that the apology that's been offered by the province of Ontario is very much welcomed.

I also want to acknowledge the government for taking this important step today to specifically address those 94 calls to action in the TRC's final report and to do so through a collaborative process in close partnership with Métis First Nations and Inuit peoples in Ontario.

The Métis Nation of Ontario is very proud of the respectful and productive relationship that we have with the government of Ontario, as demonstrated through our MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement. We're going to build on that solid foundation to work with Ontario towards and advancing reconciliation.

As a Canadian, I recognize that I have a role to play in the process of healing and reconciliation. Indeed, every single one of us, as Canadians, has an important role to play in that work. The Métis Nation of Ontario is committed to working with Ontario, with all of the parties, with other indigenous peoples and with all Ontarians to advance that end.

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Together, I believe we must chart a new course forward for our province and for our country, one that's based on respect, understanding and trust. Today we remember the past, but it also brings great hope for the future, and with that, with this work to advance reconciliation, we will build a much brighter future for all of us in Ontario. Merci. Meegwetch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Now we'll hear from the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Mr. Natan Obed.

Mr. Natan Obed: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

Good morning. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. Premier Wynne, leaders of the opposition, my fellow leaders and elders, all of you here today in the gallery as well: Thank you so much for being here. This is indeed an historic day for Canada.

It's very unlikely that a representative of Inuit would be speaking with you here today. This is the land of our indigenous brothers and sisters, First Nations and Métis. But it is also unlikely when we think about the history

that Inuit have had in our colonial relationship with Canada. Inuit have been visiting and have been subjected to many policies that have changed our life courses, and many of the things that have happened to us have happened in Ontario.

So today, with our population of 60,000 across Inuit Nunangat, our Arctic homeland, we have 25% of that population that live outside of our settlement regions, and many thousands of Inuit live in Ontario. The histories behind those shifts in populations sometimes have to do with many things that all Canadians would consider to be normal, such as going away for school or job opportunities. But there are too many people that have left our homeland out of necessity or out of systemic racism and policies that have not provided people with the ability to live in their homeland, and are here either in Ontario out of unfortunate circumstances or because of our legacies, such as the residential school system.

It's profound to think of the effect that the residential school system has had on indigenous peoples in Canada. For Inuit, our experience happened in a time of great change, after World War II. Many Inuit didn't live in communities until after World War II, when the Canadian government forced a number of different policies on us in a very short period of time.

The residential school experience was one of many that took our children and those whom we loved dearest away from us. So I want to recognize all of those who still struggle with what happened during that time—not just the residential school survivors but their families and all who loved them. Their lives are forever profoundly changed, and what is happening here today is going to chart a new course.

For all the things that happened in the last 50 or 60 years to indigenous people and to Inuit in Canada, it had a start in the sense of profound ownership of one population over another, and we hope that reconciliation now will bring the true meaning of the term “self-determination” back to indigenous peoples.

For Inuit, self-determination is not limited to our boundaries. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples clearly states that indigenous peoples' rights are wherever they reside, rather than specific to our homelands. So as this reconciliation process happens and decisions are made about how monies flow and what populations are going to receive services or supports, the true test will be whether or not Inuit will be a part of those discussions as partners, as indigenous people, or the alternative, which is so often linked to further ways to keep our populations in poverty and at the lower margins of society.

Reconciliation demands action, and you've shown action here today. But also from action comes a test—a test of whether or not, when things get difficult, when decisions that should be made based on the tenet of self-determination are at odds with the needs of other interests—whether they be economic or whether they be political or in the governance of the way in which decisions happen in the bureaucracy, or wherever decisions happen that affect the rights of indigenous people.

The true test is, what are we going to do? What are the citizens of Ontario, the members of the Legislature, the cabinet, what is the Premier going to do when tough decisions need to be made that are not necessarily in the best interest of one political party, communities or individuals? I think that ultimately, the respect that we have for one another needs to go beyond just sympathy, to a true sense of understanding the relationship that indigenous people have with this province and with every single citizen.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you today. Naqurmiik.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I would now like to call upon Sheila McMahon, the president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres.

Ms. Sheila McMahon: Boozhoo.

Remarks in indigenous language.

My home community is Couchiching First Nation. I've lived in Fort Frances, Ontario, for many years, off-reserve.

My English name is Sheila McMahon. I'd like to thank you—the elders, Mr. Speaker, Premier Wynne, ministers, Leader of the Opposition Mr. Brown, Ms. Horwath, members, chiefs, indigenous leaders, our residential school survivors, and ladies and gentlemen. As the president of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, I bring greetings from our members from across Ontario. We're very honoured to be here today, and we thank you for inviting us to join you in this historic ceremony of reconciliation.

The friendship centres have travelled a long road to be strong, vibrant cultural hubs for our communities to gather and celebrate what it is to be indigenous. We did not always travel this road with many friends outside of our own communities. It has taken society a long time to shine light in the dark corners of our collective histories. Only now are you beginning to come to terms with what this history means for you, and about who you are. That is why we are here.

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The reconciliation work ahead of us should be marked and acknowledged in a way that is recognized by all of us. It is in itself a step in the direction of transforming the way we see each other.

This is also the role of the friendship centres: to create space that celebrates indigenous people and act as that bridge between indigenous people and non-indigenous people and communities. In that way, friendship centres are simultaneously an embodiment of indigenous identity and reconciliation. Since the very first investments in friendship centres in the 1970s, a different set of relationships was created: a different way of us seeing ourselves because of what we were able to accomplish, and a different way for you to see us because of what we were achieving.

We do not take this for granted. We have worked for decades to come to this place, where we can finally have an honest conversation about our shared history and not

to be strangers in our own land. We acknowledge this monumental step towards reconciliation, which will change the future for generations to come. It's a good day today. I believe it started when we went to our sunrise ceremony, and I'd like to say meegwetch.

When we hold our feathers, we speak of honesty and truth, and we speak from the heart. And when I say thank you, meegwetch for listening, I'm speaking from my heart.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would now call upon Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association.

Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard: Aanii. Boozhoo. Bonjour. Good morning. Please let me start by acknowledging the indigenous peoples of this territory.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, honoured elders, Madam Premier, leaders Patrick Brown and Andrea Horwath, and all of the very, very important people who are here today. This is truly a historic moment.

We are honoured to participate in this historic event towards reconciliation with indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report represents an opportunity for indigenous families, for indigenous women to be restored to our traditional leadership roles and to restore balance to our communities and our nations. When we include our women in the decisions that affect our lives, we will actualize community change, and we will have the restoration of balance and well-being in our communities.

Our journey together in this country began with indigenous women being systematically targeted and subjugated by colonial practices. These practices have broken our families, broken our relationships, but our strength and resiliency is key to community healing for our families. It's our community and our responsibility. This is our traditional way of being. This is our role as women, as mothers, as leaders.

Reconciliation means more than just the restoration of our relationship. Our women, our people have unaddressed grief and intergenerational trauma, as the residential schools severed the most important bond: the bond between indigenous children and their mothers and their families. This system exposed our children to a cycle of violence that continues today. But we know that violence is a learned behaviour, and therefore we also know that we can unlearn this behaviour. We can make a change through holistic healing frameworks that acknowledge our shared history and our interconnectedness, that acknowledges the good and the bad and learning from our past. If we are going to stop the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women, the crisis of suicide in our youth, we must do better.

Reconciliation with indigenous women must create the space for re-empowerment, and, through this capacity-building of our communities, we will set in motion the prospect for family healing. We know the current child welfare models must involve the voice of women and families. It is our role as mothers and community leaders,

in order to renew the cultural identity and family well-being. There's a reason it's called our "mother tongue." Our mothers are the first teachers; the teachers of our language, the teachers of our culture, the transmitters of our identity. It is for these reasons, it is for those future generations to have those teachings, that we continue on this path together when times become difficult and indeed it would be easier to walk away, that we remember that we have a very difficult job to do and we must stay the course.

For many of our women, these maternal and cultural responsibilities continue to be unfulfilled because our children continue to be taken, continue to be placed in the care of the government. Many of our women are denied the right to parent their own children. The community suffers, the families suffer, but, most importantly, the children are still suffering.

We are here today, collectively, to honour these children and the families. These are our families. We're here to honour the victims and the survivors of the residential schools. It was because of the courage of those brave souls, who spoke out, who shared their unimaginable pain and suffering—the horrors of abuse, not only in their bodies, but in their hearts and minds. We shall never forget.

Courage is not the absence of fear, but the strength to carry forward in the face of fear. They had that kind of courage to carry on. It is because they had such courage, the courage to speak the truth, that those who heard their stories are forever changed. In their honour, we shall remember. Never again—never again will anyone be able to say that it was a well-intentioned effort gone awry. Never again will they be able to say, "It wasn't that bad; lots of children go to boarding school." Never again will we be able to deny the tragic reality of our joint history and the ugly truth upon which this country was founded. We shall remember because we owe it to those children who never returned home, those children who died within those walls.

We have heard their truth, and now we must share their courage. There can be no reconciliation when there's no conciliation in the first place. We cannot simply repair a tear in the fabric. We must have that kind of courage to begin a long-overdue process of weaving a new fabric for Canada and for Ontario, a new fabric that incorporates the fibres of all of our beings. One of our most important teachings as Anishnawbe people is from the sweetgrass: that one blade is very easily broken; when we bundle them together, it is strong; and, when we take all of our bundles together and we braid them, you cannot break this. Whether this is our people in each bundle or whether this is the different political parties, some things are too important to allow political stripes to get in the way. It's time that we set that aside and bond together because together we are stronger, and together we can do better.

I acknowledge the courage it took to apologize and the commitment of this government, the commitment of everyone in this room, to move forward in a good way.

This is indeed a historic day. Now, together, we will begin the next chapter of our story. We can and we must do better. This time, let it be better for us all. Chi meegwetch.

Applause.

1020

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will now hear a representative for all survivors of the residential school system, Mr. Andrew Wesley.

Rev. Andrew Wesley: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

I come to you this morning with humility. I come to talk to you about the residential schools.

The old ones tell us that when we come into this world, we're given one canoe and one paddle. As we travelled the rivers of life, for many of us, the survivors, we got stuck in the rapids, and we stayed there for many, many, many, many years, before we started talking about the abuse.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Many of us that were in school, we experienced many abuses that we already heard the Premier reading from the report. Those experiences are true. We carry it today, as we go in this life.

One time, I heard Martin Luther King Jr. speaking about, "I have a dream." In that dream, he talked about the mountain. Just a while ago, I heard Justice Sinclair talking about the mountain. Us survivors, we've been to the top of the mountain. On top of the mountain, we were given new fire to talk about our hurts, our pain, our struggle. We were given to be bold. We were instructed to be strong. We were instructed not to be ashamed. We were instructed not to be afraid to talk about dehumanization. We were not afraid to talk about the traumatization of our spirits.

We came down from that mountain, and we're telling you the truth of what happened. We're telling you the truth because we're tired of being hurt. We want to travel with the rest of you in a good way. From that mountain, we gained the strength we needed.

Many of us went to the various TRC hearings to be able to tell our story, not to be afraid to cry the way we cried when we were abused like little kids, not to be afraid to cry as an adult and as a grandfather.

To me, reconciliation didn't mean anything for a long time. Why should I reconcile? I didn't do anything wrong. Why? I was taken away. I was beaten up. But I didn't do anything wrong. Why should I reconcile to the government and to the church?

But because of my wife and her strength and her encouragement, I started to understand what reconciliation is all about. And as I got old, I started to understand more, that I have to talk about the abuse and be able to release the pain that I was carrying. Now I understand what reconciliation is all about. I understand.

You know, when a hunter is about to go out and get food for his family, the night before he goes out, he speaks to the game that he's going to bring home to ask

for forgiveness. From that mountain, we were given the power to honour the people that abused us, because we want to live a good life.

Remarks in indigenous language.

Applause.

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

I would now call upon Elder Verna Porter-Brunelle, Métis senator, and Elder Jim Dumont for the closing.

Ms. Verna Porter-Brunelle: Good morning. Bonjour. Tansi. I am honoured and very humbled to have been asked to come here today. I would like to recognize Premier Wynne, I would like to recognize all the elders who have come here today, and the members of the House.

1030

Creator, we pray and thank you for each and every day you have blessed us here on Earth with your many gifts of water, trees, spring flowers and the air we breathe. Many of our brothers and sisters are not so fortunate, but today our leaders have shown compassion, and with your guidance, Creator, we will be on the path of healing and helping. Wrap your loving arms around the families that grieve for their children. Send your spirit to those who feel they have no meaning here on Earth. A good lesson is that we not take life for granted.

Let us show respect and understanding to the struggles of our indigenous people. We are indigenous people: First Nations, Métis and Inuit. As Métis citizens, we fought in wars and our ancestors and family members attended residential schools, but we have been forgotten in many ways. But we are strong, and we're a proud Métis people. We have fallen, we have gotten back up, and we are now united and stronger.

We may be miles apart from some of the indigenous people but our hearts are connected. Our heartstrings ache when we hear of another suicide. Today, with renewed commitment from our leaders, help from our Creator and prayers from all of us here today, there will be a brighter future coming. We honour our ancestors who have gone to the spirit world and we are very proud today. The sun will shine again on our people.

Aujourd'hui, nous sommes très encouragés par les bonnes nouvelles. On demande au Créateur de nous donner l'espoir et l'encouragement nécessaires pour guérir des relations du passé.

Several years ago, I was honoured to be the master of ceremonies for the Honourable James Bartleman, past Lieutenant Governor. He had written a book, *As Long as the Rivers Flow*. When I went to get my book signed, I told him I didn't quite like his book. I said, "I'm having a hard time getting through it. I'll read two pages and I have to put it down." That's how graphic everything was, and it was a true story. His answer to me was, "Keep reading—it gets better." So I'm leaving you with this today: Keep reading; keep fighting for our rights. It does get better. Meegwetch. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Dumont: *Remarks in indigenous language.*

When we opened the day, we sent out a message to the spirit in all those sacred places where the spirit dwells. And we ask the spirit to look this way toward us and to help us in what we're doing. We ask that of our mother the Earth also, and of our relatives in this creation. And when we do this in this way, we know that the spirit answers us. We know that our mother won't let us down, and we know that our relatives care about us and they will answer what we ask as well.

And so, when we are finished doing what we have come here to do, then we are obliged to talk to the spirit again, to talk to our mother the Earth and our relatives that we've asked this of, because in the way that they think, the way that the spirit thinks—what they are being called on to do—they answer us because of how much they do care about us. They will remain true to that obligation that they have made. So we have to let them know that we are finished what we have come here to do.

In our thanksgiving, we thank them for the way that they have helped us. It must have been that they responded to us and did offer this help, because in a place where, a lot of times, people aren't kind to one another—because there's something in this system, that people think that to govern a country, you are obliged to be at odds with one another. But we have heard in this House today, in recognition of the true and vital importance of attending to the issues of the original people of this land, that everyone will work together.

Maybe it's just me who thinks that, but it must be a hard thing to do, to actually say that in this place. But both sides of the House have said that, and that means something to us.

We can say the spirit must have heard us, so the spirit nudged us from time to time, to remind us of our responsibility and the way that we should act and the way that we should be, in trying to work together, and that it's important that we be honest and true to one another. The spirit must have reminded us of that.

In these words, in all of the words that were spoken, we have reminded one another about our relationship that we have, and that what all of the treaties are about isn't, first of all, about surrender and ownership and possessions and compensation. Treaties are about relationship, and we have to find a way that we can be truly related to one another in a good way in this country, in this land, in this province. That's what we committed ourselves to do when we signed those treaties. That's the way we entered those treaties.

In the same way that we opened this session today, from the time we stood in the presence of the rising sun to here in this lodge, in this House, we made a commitment to the spirit, and in doing that, we said, "Even here in this place, the spirit is working."

1040

That's the way we enter all agreements. We make that agreement in the presence of the spirit and we have to be true to that. We have to own up to that responsibility and we have to remind one another of the importance of that. We have to figure out how we can do that in a good way,

not only to make up for the wrongs of the past but to find a good way into the future. So the spirit must have heard us and must have responded.

Even those things that we fail to mention are a reminder to us that all those that we ask must be wondering why we never talked about them. We didn't say anything about the animals. We didn't say anything about the vegetation, the grass and flowers. We didn't say anything about the rocks, the minerals. We didn't say anything about the trees when we talked here together.

The absence of that really stands out to the spirit. So it must be telling us that we need to consider those things, because we know that if anything ever happens—that there are no longer any medicines flowing, and that something happens so that the food that grows up from the earth is not edible any more—kindness will disappear from the earth. We will not know how to care about one another. If anything happens that we cut down all the trees, truth and honesty will be gone amongst us. If anything ever happens to the animals, we will lose our ability to share with one another. If anything ever happens to the rocks and the minerals, as it is happening in this country, the very strength that we need to live our life and to live up to the things that we believe in, that strength will be gone.

We need to make that connection in everything that we do. At the end of whatever we're speaking about, whatever we're gathered together about, we always say "all my relatives." When we say that, what we're saying to all of our relations in this creation as well as our human relations: "We are all related to one another and I will include you in my words. I will include you in my thoughts. I will include you in the decisions that I make."

We end in that way, asking the spirit to continue to bless us with life and letting all of our relations know that we have considered them and we have been noticed by them.

Remarks in indigenous language.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have been extremely honoured and deeply humbled to preside over this historic ceremony this morning.

Remarks in indigenous language.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Our escort, please.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we finish with the order, I would also like to introduce Mr. James Bartleman, the former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

With the House's indulgence, I would like to take a five-minute recess to prepare the House for question period. If I do not receive any feedback, I'm going to assume that we are going to take a five-minute recess to allow people to leave and to prepare the House.

This House stands recessed for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1047 to 1053.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

AUTISM TREATMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I didn't think this government could get more callous, but the next thing you know, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville called the police on Melanie Palaypayon, the mother of a six-year-old boy with autism. Melanie just wanted to be heard, but instead her own MPP sent the police to her door.

It's one thing to refuse and cancel meetings. It's another thing to block the parents of a child with autism on Twitter. But what I can't believe is that they'd have the nerve to call the police on a constituent. And regardless of that apology, that action is completely unacceptable. Melanie simply wanted a few answers. Specifically, she wanted to ask, "Who are you to decide my child's future? Who are you to decide he is not worthy of a better life?"

So my question to the Premier is, who is this Premier to decide that this six-year-old, Xavier, is not worthy of a better life?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm tempted to say, "And now for something completely different."

Let me begin by reminding the member that the member has apologized to Ms. Palaypayon. I know he's profoundly sorry for the circumstances that resulted in the anxiety caused to her and her family.

We know how important it is to listen to constituents on all matters. Our caucus members have been meeting with families from across Ontario to explain how the new autism program will work, to make sure that they are getting the information that they need. It is of concern to us if families are not getting the information they need in terms of transition, because at the root of the new autism program is the intent and the directive to make sure that every child in this province who has autism gets the service and the intensity of service that they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: This is not an issue to make jokes about. This is a heartbreaking, real-life story of the callousness of this Liberal government.

I met with Melanie and her six-year-old son, Xavier. She is an amazing mother with an equally amazing son. I'm happy that the member finally, belatedly apologized, but it was only after this government got embarrassed on the front pages of the newspapers. It wasn't right, it got exposed and that's why the apology finally happened.

It's not just kicking a child with autism off from the waiting list that we're seeing this government undertake; it's cutting care at the province's children's hospitals. Last year, the Liberals cut 42 jobs—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Beaches–East York—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to do my job, please.

The member from Beaches–East York will withdraw.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Withdraw, Speaker.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's getting to be a habit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not going to help.

Please finish.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern. An example is the 42 jobs at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. SickKids in Toronto has been forced to operate at over 100% capacity.

How much longer will the Liberals turn their backs on the most vulnerable children in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are increasing funding to health care each and every year. We are putting \$333 million into a new autism program in order to provide a better program. That's \$333 million more than is already in the system.

The point of doing that is to make sure that we provide programming for kids who are right now sitting on a waiting list and not getting any service. That status quo is unconscionable. We have to make sure that we provide the service that those kids need.

Mr. Speaker, the investments that we have made in health care, the investments that we're making in autism are about providing the services that children, seniors and families across this province need. That's the intention of the investments that we're making and we're seeing results, which I'll speak to in the supplementary.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: When the Premier says, "investments in health care," her investments mean cutting 42 staff at CHEO. Her investments mean kicking 2,200 kids off the list for desperately needed IBI. Her investments mean you have SickKids at overcapacity. Her investments are the diminishment of health care in Ontario.

The Premier says that their investment in autism is the right course, is evidence-based, but let me point out what the Ottawa Citizen wrote. In January 2014, a report from the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Expert Committee stated that the therapy should not be cut for children over the age of five. There is no evidence to back up your approach. There is no evidence to back up your cuts. Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is, where exactly is the evidence found to defend taking IBI from kids over five?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, therapy is not being cut to children over five. The point is that there are

children sitting on waiting lists who are not getting any service at all—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that this program is about getting more service to more kids—16,000 more kids getting service, kids who are getting service now, making sure that they go through a transition.

1100

I've met with the organizations of parents who are concerned about this. I've listened to them. The minister and I have talked about the reality that perhaps we need to look at direct funding as part of the model. That's something that parents have brought forward to us.

Miss Monique Taylor: Perhaps.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite heckles, "Perhaps." The fact is, \$8,000 of transition is direct funding. What we're looking at is, is there a better way to help those families make the transition?

We're working hard on this side of the House to make sure that kids get service. The opposition can choose to negate that. The reality is, more kids need—

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

Interjections.

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

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. It's clear that this government is cutting health care across the board. They slashed \$815 million from physicians for patient care, not to mention the 1,400 nurses cut in Ontario in the last year. Clinics are closing all across the province.

But what most people don't see day to day is the ridiculous and unacceptable overcrowding in Ontario's hospitals. When I first saw it in Brampton, I couldn't believe that hospital beds were littered in the hallway. That can't happen in Ontario.

What fantasy world is this government living in when they say they are investing in health care? Instead of getting beds out of the hallway, this government has the nerve to run self-congratulatory radio ads about what a great job they're doing out there.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, someone has to take responsibility. Will the Premier do the right thing and make sure her Minister of Health takes responsibility for the chaos—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to comment in the supplementaries.

Mr. Speaker, let me just talk about what's happening as a result of the investments that we are making, and have made, in health care, including the billion dollars more that was in this budget that the opposition voted against.

Ninety-four per cent of Ontarians have access to family health care providers. The independent Wait Time Alliance has made a statement that we've gone from the worst to first for reducing wait times. That's in hip and knee replacements, cataract surgery, cardiac care, radiation oncology, MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds.

The Fraser Institute—let me just pause there—the Fraser Institute, great friends of the member opposite. Their 2015 Waiting Your Turn report revealed that Ontario has the second-shortest overall wait times in Canada.

The results speak for themselves. The investments that we have made, and are making, are making a difference. We will continue to make those investments and improve health care in Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon will come to order.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I realize the government's talking points are, "Everything is fine," but I would love to have the Premier name a single patient, a single nurse, a single physician in the province of Ontario who isn't fed up with this government's cuts.

Let me share with you an article from the Toronto Sun. I think Christina Blizzard summed it up very eloquently when she said this government is taking a "hacksaw" to health care in Ontario—

Interjections.

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

Please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, if the government members want to heckle about the article on their hacksaw approach to health care, why don't they listen to this quote from the Ontario Health Coalition? Natalie Mehra said, "There's no tracking of the health cuts by the health ministry...."

There is "no planning behind the cuts and no attempt to" get things right. She said "there's no actual plan" for our hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, since it is now clear the Minister of Health isn't doing his job, isn't planning for health care in the province, and given the fact there's going to be a cabinet shuffle, will the Premier show the Minister of Health the door?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

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

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, of course, I'm kind of happy that rather than answer it herself, she handed that question to me.

The leader of the official opposition knows—I'm sure he's seen the figures—that the vast majority of the hospitals across this province function and operate within less than 100% occupancy.

In fact, the figures that are currently reflected are the Q4 figures, which represent a period in time, those January, February, March months, where, typically, because of flu season and other factors, we do often see an incremental increase. But even with that, only 11% of the hospitals across the province indicated occupancy pressures.

When you look at the trend, even compared to 2013—or rather between 2014 and 2015—the number of hospital sites that have reported a point in time occupancy rate greater than 100% has decreased by 32% over that period of time.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: The Liberals' failure to properly fund health care is leading to hospitals bursting at the seams. Across the province, hospitals are over capacity because of the government's cuts. SickKids, over capacity; London Health Sciences Centre, over capacity; Rouge Valley Health System in Ajax and Pickering, over capacity; the Juravinski Cancer Care Centre in Hamilton, over capacity; the Peterborough Regional Health Centre, Brantford General Hospital, Ottawa Civic and General hospitals, all over capacity.

The Minister of Health has this crisis on his name. This crisis is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. Patrick Brown: This is a crisis created by the Minister of Health. This is because of the incompetent leadership on health care.

My question is this: Will the Premier answer directly? Will she do a favour to Ontario's patients and fire this Minister of Health?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In our budget, we've allocated an additional \$345 million specifically to the hospital environment. But if you look back a couple of years, since 2013 we've also dramatically increased the number of acute care beds in Ontario. It's increased by approximately 5% of the total number of beds, to almost 20,000 beds now in the province, an increase of nearly 1,000 beds in that time period alone. But other important indicators as well: We have seen an increase, because of population increase, in the number of ER visits, but we've seen that ER wait times have either stayed the same or in fact they've improved.

Those important outcomes that patients are and should be looking to in terms of the quality of care that they're receiving, the re-admission rates, which are staying the same or declining, and our ability to accommodate people in ERs—we are seeing and continuing to see progress in those areas.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Documents obtained by New Democrats show that somewhere in Ontario there is an unnamed hospital that needs \$287 million in repairs to address health and safety concerns, imminent breakdown and code compliance. What hospital is that?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge that we have more than 150 hospitals across this province. We're building new hospitals like the new hospital in Oakville, the Humber River Hospital as well. They just had a ground-breaking ceremony in Orangeville for the Headwaters improvements that are being made.

We recognize that going forward in two areas—maintenance, and renovations and repairs—we've increased in the most recent budget an additional \$50 million a year to go towards that. But we're also investing \$12 billion over the next decade to make the kinds of improvements that Ontarians across this province expect to see in their hospitals.

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We have hospitals that are literally months old. We have hospitals that are decades old. We continue to invest in both areas to make sure that they're able to maintain themselves properly, and we're building, renovating, expanding and rebuilding where necessary as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Next on the list of hospitals in dire need of repair is a hospital that needs \$252 million in maintenance repairs. Which hospital is that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud of the work that we're doing across the province in making sure that Ontarians have access to the highest quality of care. We do that as close to home as possible.

The leader of the third party—and certainly the opposition party as well—knows of some of the efforts that we've been making over the last year, including in places like the Trenton hospital, to make sure that the services that those individuals rely on are provided.

In the Leamington hospital there was a decision made, quite frankly, by the hospital itself to close the obstetrics ward. We weren't prepared to accept that as a government and we worked diligently—I worked with the member representing Chatham-Kent-Essex as well—to make sure that those birthing services, those obstetrical services, were maintained. In fact, I think he would probably agree with me that we've even been able to enhance the services that are provided there. We've pro-

vided funding for three new obstetricians to work there in concert with midwives providing that holistic support.

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

Andrea Horwath: Next on the list is a hospital that urgently needs \$171 million in maintenance. I would just ask the Premier, which hospital is that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's precisely why we committed \$12 billion over the next decade. We have a process in place. The leader of the third party might just want to randomly select hospitals and invest in them; we have a very rigorous process through the ministry, together with Infrastructure Ontario, where we will look at both maintenance and repairs but also those new builds that are required from time to time.

What I don't understand is, if this is such an important issue to the third party, why they voted against our budget that allocated \$50 million in new money on renovations and \$12 billion over 10 years for new builds.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. Last December, the Auditor General said there was \$2.7 billion needed for hospitals in order to bring them up to a good state of repair. Now documents obtained by New Democrats show that deferred maintenance in Ontario hospitals actually exceeds \$3.2 billion, but the government refuses to tell us which hospitals are in the worst shape. In fact, the government said that if they revealed the names of the hospitals, contractors could lose confidence that they would get paid.

Why is the Premier letting hospitals fall into disrepair, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, as the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has said, we recognize that there is a need for upgrades, for maintenance and repair, which is why \$12 billion over the next 10 years has been put in place to actually address those.

There is a process in place whereby the condition of the facilities is made clear. There's obviously an order in which those facilities have to be addressed and that's what the \$12 billion is for. I would have thought that the leader of the third party would think it was important to allocate that money because she understands that there is a need among hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Auditor General said that the funding wasn't keeping up. In fact, hospitals are having to dip into operating budgets just to cover their capital costs. Now we've learned that the backlog is even higher than what the Auditor General identified in her report. Ontario has 142 hospitals with over \$3 billion in deferred maintenance. The government refuses to reveal which hospitals need the most repairs, and instead of planning ahead, the government has no idea how much more maintenance will be needed over the coming years.

Health care is the government's silent crisis, Speaker. Failing to do urgent repairs will only make it worse. Will

the Premier admit that there is in fact a silent crisis in health care here in the province of Ontario?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Only the NDP can turn a positive into a negative. I think the reason they're doing that is that they're a little embarrassed that they didn't vote in favour of our budget that allocated \$1 billion of new money to the health care budget and, in addition to that, \$12 billion over the next 10 years. And we have \$50 million on top of an existing \$50 million a year for that important maintenance, renovations and repairs.

It's not surprising that they're taking this position. It's easy when they're the third party to have this sort of rhetoric, but I just need to remind the Ontario public that when they were in power they closed 24% of all acute care beds in this province. They closed 13% of all the mental health beds in this province, reducing hospital funding in their last budget and reducing health care funding in the budget before that. That sounds like a lot of cuts to me.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nurses are being fired at a rate of three per day. Hospital beds are being closed. Wait times are increasing. And the Liberals are letting hospitals crumble here in the province of Ontario. When people go to the hospital, they're being treated in the hallways. There are labels on the hallways saying, "Hallway room 1," "Hallway room 2," "Hallway room 3." That's what people are dealing with when they go into a hospital here in Ontario in 2016.

How much worse does it have to get for the Premier to admit that there is a crisis in our health care system?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The only crisis would have come if that party had won the last election because they committed to reducing the budget by \$600 million, saying—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's what the member from Kitchener-Waterloo said: that \$600 million would come from health care and education. She actually said that she felt she would go to health care first.

The truth is, if you listen to the Ontario college of nurses, the 3,000 more nurses in this province last year, about 8,000 of them in the last several years, many of those in the hospital environment. I just said that we've increased, since 2013, the number of hospital beds in the province, the acute care beds, by more than 1,000. We have among the shortest, if not the shortest, wait times in the entire country.

Interjection.

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

Carry on, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Try as they might, they can't use rhetoric against facts. The facts demonstrate that we're continuing to invest and we're seeing that progress.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. North Bay Regional Health Centre has borne the brunt of the impact of this government's waste, mismanagement and scandal. Over \$50 million has been cut over the last three years, resulting in cuts to nursing, emergency, cleaning, cataract surgery, psychiatric care and forensic units.

Specifically, the Liberal government has fired 350 full-time staff, including 100 nurses. They've cut 60 hospital beds at our five-year-old facility, a facility the community fundraised for. And now, rumours are swirling that the hospital's cancer clinic will be closed by the end of the year. Can the Premier tell the people of Nipissing that our cancer clinic will not close?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Rumour-mongering like this is not helpful, and I'm sure it's creating anxiety in the community. We have no plans to change the level, quality and location of cancer services at the North Bay Regional Health Centre—the new North Bay Regional Health Centre, by the way. The funding has increased since we came in power to that health centre by 126%, or almost \$100 million.

We're seeing great results. I wish the member opposite would commend the hospital and the physicians, where we're seeing cataract surgery go down by 370 days, a decrease in the wait time of 87%. This is a victory. I'm so proud of this hospital. I'm so proud of the management, the hard-working health care professionals. The member opposite should champion their hard work.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'll share the message with the 100 nurses you fired.

Back to the Premier: These are headlines announcing the Liberal—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

Question, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: These are the headlines announcing the Liberal government cuts all throughout the north: "Health Sciences North Lays Off 102 Employees and Closes 64 Beds;" "28 Beds Close in Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital;" "St. Joseph's Care Group Cuts 11 RPN Jobs;" "Timmins and District Hospital Cuts 38," followed by another heading, "Timmins Hospital Cuts 40 Jobs;" "Temiskaming Hospital Cuts 15 Jobs, Including Nine Nurses;" "Sault Area Hospital Cuts 73 Staff," followed by another heading, "Sault Hospital Funding Cut By \$10 Million; 35 Positions Cut."

Speaker, this government's waste, mismanagement and scandal have hurt northern families. Will the Premier

tell us today, does she support these cuts to health care or will she shuffle out the Minister of Health?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Start the clock. The member from Nipissing will come to order.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I can only imagine what would have happened, Mr. Speaker, if that party had been given the opportunity to cut 100,000 jobs in the broader public sector, and many of those—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Nipissing, second time. Minister of Labour, come to order.

Minister, finish, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In hospitals alone in northern Ontario—we recognize the need to improve and modernize infrastructure. That's why 23 new hospitals have been built or are under way in the north, Mr. Speaker. Thunder Bay regional hospital, Health Sciences North in Sudbury, North Bay Regional Health Centre, Sioux Lookout health centre, Sault Area Hospital, West Parry Sound Health Centre, Mattawa general hospital—we've increased hospital funding in the north by 54%. We have seven community capital projects under way and—

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

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Premier. Today, groups supporting Grassy Narrows First Nation released an independent study commissioned by the First Nation that recommends that the cleaning up of the Wabigoon-English River system of the mercury that was dumped there 50 years ago is possible.

Will the Premier commit today to an action plan to clean up the Wabigoon River so that future generations don't have to grow up poisoned and the community of Grassy Narrows can heal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question. I have not yet seen this report. I'm very interested to see the science on which it's based. I have been to Grassy Narrows. We've established an Ontario/Grassy Narrows Mercury Working Group to lead a discussion about what the solutions are, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that there has been testing that has been ongoing, that the group will have a broad scope of inquiry, but that there are complicated issues around the settling of the mercury in the water at Grassy Narrows.

As I say, I don't know the source of the report. I understand there's some suggestion there is still new mercury that is leaking. I don't know the source of that. I look forward to looking at the report. But rest assured that we are very much engaged, even before this report came, on trying to figure out how make sure that people

in Grassy Narrows have clean water and a clean environment to operate in.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Members of Grassy Narrows First Nation will travel this week, as they do every year, the 1,700 kilometres to Queen's Park to once again call on this government to do something, to act on the contamination of their traditional fishing and hunting lands.

During this time last year, the Premier said, "The scientists have said to us there are questions about how to actually do the cleanup because ... the sediment at the bottom can actually cause further damage." Yes, Speaker, this needs to be done very carefully, but here today a report written by scientists says that it is possible to clean up the river. In the press today, the response from the Ministry of the Environment to this new report is word for word the same as the ministry comment from February. How is this possible? Truth and reconciliation: It means being honest with our relationships with our First Nations partners.

Will the Premier commit today to the cleanup of the mercury in the Wabigoon River once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is an extremely important issue. It's an extremely important issue, obviously, because of the health of the people who live at Grassy Narrows; it's extremely important in terms of the economy of Grassy Narrows. I know the member opposite is aware of that. I haven't seen this particular report but, as I said, the working group that has been established will have to take this information into account.

If there is a way to clean up that river without disturbing the mercury and making the situation worse, then obviously we want to look at that. When I was at Grassy Narrows, that was one of the first questions I asked: Is there a way of cleaning up this mercury so that it doesn't actually further contaminate the water, the fish and the other wildlife? Obviously, we will look at the information, the ministry will look at the information, but the working group that is tasked with this specific subject is going to take this into account and look for a way forward.

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Ontario's Newcomer Settlement Program supports agencies like the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services, better known as CICS, in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt. This agency has provided almost 50 years of comprehensive, diverse programs for newcomers of all ages. These settlement programs support communities to integrate in our province. Since 2003, our government has invested over \$82 million in the Newcomer Settlement Program. Each year, nearly 80,000 immigrants benefit from our investment.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please inform the House what the Newcomer Settlement Program is doing to support new Canadians?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Agincourt for asking the question. Over the next two years, 2016-18, our Newcomer Settlement Program will provide \$20 million in funding to support 114 projects across Ontario. The funding will improve access to services by providing support to 97 settlement agencies, of which 19 are new. It will double the number of francophone service providers to attract and integrate francophone newcomers. It will also provide a threefold increase in settlement funding to expand services in northern Ontario and improve service access for vulnerable immigrant populations such as refugees.

This is just beginning. We will continue to support refugees as they integrate with Ontario communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for the response. It is reassuring to see that our government understands the importance of supporting agencies like CICS and the Chinese Professionals Association of Canada to help newcomers settle in our community.

I'm also very pleased to see that the NSP-funded services are available to a broad range of newcomer groups, such as permanent residents, Canadian citizens, refugees and refugee claimants, provincial nominees and temporary foreign workers, including live-in caregivers and international students, because many of my constituents of Scarborough–Agincourt have benefited from these programs.

Organizations funded through the NSP have a proven track record of providing quality services to newcomers, possess the organizational capacity to deliver quality services and demonstrate sustainability and appropriate financial management.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please outline the Orientation to Ontario immigrant services and what it offers to new Canadians?

Hon. Michael Chan: The NSP has been a great success. The Orientation to Ontario program is a service that helps current recent immigrants get quality information about settling in Ontario. The program is coordinated by COSTI Immigrant Services and is delivered in local communities by a network of 19 settlement agencies.

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An estimated 2,500 recent newcomers in 24 Ontario communities will benefit from the program in 2015-16. The program features a workshop series on settlement-related topics and a workbook for participants that includes settlement information and planning tools. There is also a website that is a great source for pre-arrival and settlement information.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. This government's record on health care has been disastrous. The Minister of Health has placed this system into a state of perpetual crisis. Last year alone in London, Windsor and the rest of southwestern Ontario, we've seen a cut to health care services and longer wait times. Due to this

minister's freezing of hospital budgets, we've seen hospitals forced to cut staff or cut services in order to balance the budgets.

St. Joseph's hospital in London has had a \$17-million budget shortfall which saw 60 nurses fired. Windsor cut 120 nursing jobs with a \$20-million budget shortfall. All knee, hip and joint replacement surgeries were cancelled or postponed for January, February and March because of a lack of funds.

The Premier has not answered the questions from the member from Nipissing or the member from Simcoe North. Does she have confidence in this minister and will she replace him?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It gives me an opportunity, because it has been some time since I've been able to speak about the new investments in the 2016-17 budget, \$1 billion, so that our entire health care budget is roughly \$52 billion. It's substantial to say the least. But, as part of that \$1 billion, we're investing in a whole set of things.

I've spoken, obviously, on the \$345 million going to hospitals and the \$12 billion going to the new capital investments, but I haven't had an opportunity to say things like 85 million of new dollars for that important area of recruitment and retention of nurses, of occupational therapists, of dietitians, many of them who are in the front line, who are working in our family health teams or other similar environments; or, importantly, the work of my parliamentary assistant, the member from Ottawa Centre—I hope—

Interjection: Ottawa South.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: An investment of \$75 million to fund new hospice beds across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The only person who has confidence in this minister is the Premier herself. Just talk to the health care professionals across the province. They are disgusted with the lack of access that they have had due to this government and the public attacks this government has had on not only doctors, but also pharmacists in this province. The Premier seems fine with this action.

We have seen the stem cell transplant system fail, resulting in deaths in this province, and the Premier is fine with this. We've seen this minister nurture a culture of fear in the home care system and the Premier is fine with this. But the line was drawn a few months ago when Pete Verberne, a 61-year-old Alzheimer's patient, was forced to sleep on the floor in restraints for eight days because the hospital was understaffed and over capacity. Even the member from London North Centre says this was absolutely unnecessary.

The health care system has been in perpetual crisis for years. There have been cuts in services, cuts in nurses and our hospitals are over capacity—

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

Minister.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Obviously, it's a big question, and I'll do my best to answer it to the satisfaction of the member opposite. But we are investing so much money in new investments that are relevant to Ontarians. I think, at the end of the day, what Ontarians look to are the outcomes. Are they able to access a family doctor or a nurse practitioner? Ninety-four percent of them are. In fact, just the year before last, the most recent figures show 900 new physicians began practice in this province. That's roughly almost four times the rate of population growth.

So we're making investments in our doctors. We're continuing to increase the line for compensation for doctors. There were 3,000 more nurses practising in our province last year alone, according to the Ontario College of Nurses.

We're continuing to make those important investments in people, in property and in the facilities that people depend on across this province.

WATER QUALITY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This morning, we all heard Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard, the very eloquent executive director of the Native Women's Association, tell us what we already knew: that 90 First Nations communities in Ontario do not have safe drinking water. In Attawapiskat, it contributed to a rash of skin lesions for young children. Here in Ontario, in 2016, First Nations children are sick because of untreated water. Does the Premier think that it is acceptable that, after 13 years of Liberal government, First Nation Ontarians in 90 communities still do not have safe drinking water?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do not think that it is acceptable that any Ontarian anywhere in the province would not have access to clean, drinkable water. It is unacceptable to me, absolutely.

At the root of the ceremony that happened this morning and all of the work that we have done as a government to work with First Nations and, quite frankly, with the previous federal government to engage them to try to get them to work with us—we've moved ahead, Mr. Speaker. We have put in place a plan to address drinking water, and I think now we have a federal government that will work with us on that.

But it is absolutely our objective to address the challenges of drinking water on-reserve, to take all of the expertise that we have in Ontario and the technology that we have and work with the federal government and the First Nations to put in place the right water supply for each of the First Nations in the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: We all know that water is a basic human right. The rest of us in Ontario, we take it for granted. But when I asked during estimates for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, I'm told that it is a federal responsibility. But you know what, Speaker? Infrastruc-

ture needs in First Nations are an Ontario responsibility. We don't need to pass the buck on that one.

I would like the Premier to tell this House, when will First Nation Ontarians, living in 90 First Nation communities—communities like Curve Lake, like Pikangikum, like Shoal Lake 40, like Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug—have safe drinking water?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite might know that each situation is somewhat different. For example, in Pikangikum, it's my understanding, when I was there, that there is clean water but the water doesn't flow to people's houses. In that case, there's an issue of building the infrastructure and making sure that that clean water can actually get to the houses.

In other situations, there are water treatment plants—

Interjection: So that's acceptable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's not acceptable. It's not acceptable, but the situation is different community by community.

That means we have to work with the communities and with the federal government to make sure that, if it's the transportation of water or whether it's the water system itself, whether it's the training of the folks on the ground to make sure that the troubleshooting can happen—all of that has to be done and it must be done in partnership with the First Nations and with the federal government. That's the work that we're doing in our government, Mr. Speaker.

HOUSING SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Last week, I was pleased to be with the minister in Aurora for a funding announcement of almost \$1 million over two years for a project that will offer a number of housing alternatives for people with a range of complex developmental disability needs in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora.

The Why Wait demonstration project is a collaboration between York Region Lifetime Independent Facilitation, York Support Services Network and Montage Support Services. Minister, I understand that this project is part of the broader Developmental Services Housing Task Force initiative that you mentioned in the House this year. Can the minister please provide us with an update on the recent work of the housing task force and the progress being made for residential services in Ontario?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Newmarket–Aurora for the question and for hosting me last week to announce the funding for the Why Wait demonstration project.

As the member knows, these projects are part of a recent announcement of the second round of six creative community-based housing initiatives for adults with

developmental disabilities. Our government has committed up to \$6 million over two years for demonstration or research projects which includes \$2.13 million to support these six projects in Ottawa, Essex, Sarnia–Lambton and Newmarket–Aurora. This is part of our three-year, \$810-million investment to support the transformation and modernization of developmental services. The Developmental Services Housing Task Force has been doing extensive work in the area of creative residential services, because we know that there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Minister, for outlining the work this government and your ministry is doing.

In conversation with residents and leaders in my community, it's very clear the importance that adequate access to residential services has on the lives of individuals living with disabilities and their families. There continues to be a need for more creative residential options and day supports and respite services. This is something that individuals, their families and the developmental services sector have known for a long time. However, the government's \$810-million investment is making a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please elaborate how efforts like the Developmental Services Housing Task Force will create more opportunities that focus on inclusion, choice and independence?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We know that individuals with developmental disabilities have unique needs and that there is a demand for a broader range of housing solutions. This is why the six projects selected cover a wide range of supports, including developing a DSW co-op, so that families have a pool of trained and qualified staff to hire using their Passport funding; using technology to increase independence and quality of life; and digital tools to support francophone families in their search for housing.

I'd like to thank the hard work of agencies, families, community partners and the housing task force members. We have an opportunity to expand our knowledge and learn how creative partnerships can help us provide new housing support options. I look forward to future partnerships that we can learn from so that they can be replicated to help more people in the future.

NURSES

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Premier. Day after day, I hear from constituents in my riding and across this province about the harsh reality of this government's incompetence, whether it's freezing budgets at mid-sized hospitals like Ross Memorial; Peterborough Regional Health Centre being forced to eliminate 153 nursing positions; 61 RNs cut from St. Joseph's in

Hamilton; or 70 nurses cut at the Trillium health centre in Mississauga. No area of this province has been spared from the government's failure to deliver on the home care, long-term care and mental health care that our patients need.

The minister has failed his mandate to ensure that the needs of Ontario's patients be at the centre of our health system. While the Premier pledged to be different than her predecessor, we see that she is running down the path away from our patients, ruthlessly firing 1,400 nurses in the last year. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier finally support the growing needs of Ontario's patients?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, try as I might, Mr. Speaker, I just have to go back to this allegation from both opposition parties that somehow we fired 1,400 nurses over the last year. Again, are you telling me that you don't believe the Ontario college of nurses, the body responsible for regulating nurses? On their website they've indicated that 3,000 more nurses—the majority of those in hospitals—are working in this province. I'm a little dismayed, I'm a little perplexed as to why they just dislike, don't trust and don't believe the Ontario college of nurses, because I think that that's probably the best and most independent source of information that we have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, back to the Premier: The government is out of touch. Those numbers are true. I didn't make them up; I didn't pull them out of thin air. But you no longer—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

Please finish—and put the question.

Ms. Laurie Scott: As a nurse, I firmly believe that our registered nurses, our nurse practitioners, our registered practical nurses and nursing students deserve our support and respect. If there are fewer nurses, then there are fewer nursing hours. That means the number of hours of care for the patient is cut. After 13 years, this government has become both financially and morally bankrupt. The accessibility and equality of patient care have deteriorated, and they continue to crumble.

Back to the Premier: Since you haven't answered the member from Simcoe North, the member from Nipissing or the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London, are you going to remove the Minister of Health?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would imagine the member opposite is, therefore, a member of the College of Nurses of Ontario. So call them up, tell them you're a paid member and ask them how many more nurses are working in our hospitals and working in our communities last year alone. It's 3,000 net—not any gross number that the member opposite might want to talk about; a net increase.

But that's understandable, because maybe her relationship isn't that great, because it was her government that fired 6,000 nurses when they were in power. It was her former government that described them as out of time, out of sorts, hula hoops, and it was her government that closed 10,000 hospital beds.

You talk about devastation in the hospital closures. We're rebuilding the mess that they created.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. The government has introduced its election reform bill. It shuts down critics, helps the Liberal Party and makes it nearly impossible for non-partisan citizens' groups to get their message out. Instead, it opens the doors to partisan government advertising dominating the airwaves. It cracks down on public advocates, but leaves the door open to lobbyists.

This legislation is clearly about helping the Liberal Party. Can the Premier explain why they refuse to move ahead with a transparent, non-partisan panel?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I remain baffled by the question from the NDP, because to every single opportunity that was given to them to participate in a conversation around what the bill should contain, they said no. They refused to engage in any conversation whatsoever, because they probably want to delay the process, because they have so much housecleaning to do on their end that they won't engage in the process. The official opposition engaged in the process. The Green Party of Ontario was quite engaged in the process, but the NDP? No, no, no. No substantive ideas, but stall and delay tactics.

We have put forward a very robust plan to consult the public. As you know, Speaker, the bill has been tabled and has been referred to the standing committee for consideration over the summer months. We will be debating the motion dealing with that, on which I sought unanimous consent, which was denied by the NDP. We look forward to working and listening to Ontarians.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: We fully understand that the Liberals remain baffled on a number of issues, but this process is about restoring confidence in the electoral system. The truth of the matter is that the Liberals wrote this legislation behind closed doors. They didn't consult a single expert. They didn't consult Ontarians. They didn't listen to the concerns raised by the opposition. This is about helping the Liberal Party and shutting down any public criticism. Now they're taking control of the committee process.

Will the Premier put partisanship aside and open this process up to a non-partisan panel, chaired by an independent person and not under the complete legislative control and total veto of the Liberal Party of Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Yes, Speaker, we remain baffled by NDP flips and flops every single day. It baffles every single one of us, because they keep flipping and flopping on all their positions.

Speaker, when we sent them a letter inviting them to a meeting on the draft legislation, they said no. When we reached out to them on May 2 asking them to attend a meeting on the draft legislation, they said no. Then, I sent them documents from my briefings with the official opposition and the Green Party and asked for their input. They said no.

But apparently, they have some sort of suggestion out on a Facebook page addressed to the Premier and she still hasn't received the letter. This is how the NDP has been stalling the whole democratic process around ensuring that Ontarians get a say on the draft legislation as soon as possible. This afternoon, we will be drafting the motion so that as of June 6—

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

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ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As part of the Climate Change Action Plan, cap-and-trade proceeds will be invested transparently into initiatives that will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These investments will create good jobs in sectors like clean tech and construction, help small and medium-sized businesses reduce greenhouse gas pollution, and help households save money on energy costs. Last week, the government shared the first set of these planned investments that will utilize these proceeds to drive our goal to fight climate change.

Building on the success of the Green Investment Fund's dedication of \$92 million for energy retrofits to social housing across this province, Minister McMeekin and Minister Murray announced a further plan to increase the energy efficiency of not only social housing but also private rental apartments.

Mr. Speaker, through you, will the minister share with the House the details of this investment and speak to how it will reduce costs?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That's a terrific question. What can I say? That's a good question; I've got a good answer.

Of course, reducing emissions, as everybody in this House knows, is a key priority for our government and that starts with social housing and select units in the private housing sector. That's why, as part of our climate action plan, we intend to provide up to \$400 million for apartment building retrofits and \$500 million for social housing retrofits. That's going to help with installing energy-efficient boilers, windows, insulation and lighting.

To be quite frank, investing cap-and-trade proceeds in this way is really going to help to not only provide

additional access to affordable housing but do it in a clean and environmentally sensitive way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. When we can invest in both combatting climate change and helping low-income Ontarians with the transition to a lower-carbon economy, I think that's a huge win-win.

This announcement is part of the soon-to-be-released Climate Change Action Plan. The CCAP will outline the actions we are taking to ensure Ontario reaches its greenhouse gas emissions target and will focus on making it easier and faster for consumers and industry to access new low-carbon technologies. The minister has committed that the action plan will be out before the House rises.

Can the minister please inform the House on the action plan and the real, positive benefits it will have on people's lives and in the fight against climate change?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: To the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for Barrie who has been such a great champion. It's interesting: We visited homes in her constituency that are net-zero or low-carbon homes. The sale advantage is that they come without a heating or cooling bill.

I think it was a humbling experience for Minister McMeekin and I, when we were at Green Phoenix housing, because they have retrofitted that. And why did they do it? Because their heating costs were becoming expensive for their low-income tenants. By reducing their emissions by 40%, they dramatically cut the costs of living in the home. And what they discovered was a low greenhouse gas emissions home was very inexpensive, affordable housing building to do. So there is lots to be learned from people out in the community.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Lorne Coe: To the Premier: In February, I asked the Minister of Health why the government cut jobs at Ontario Shores. The minister's response was an answer that sounded as though it was drafted in an ivory tower.

Despite the minister's protests to the contrary, when you cut front-line services at hospitals, wait times get longer. That's just a fact, Mr. Speaker.

My constituents in Whitby-Oshawa sent a strong message to the government that they're tired of this government's failed policies which lead to longer wait times and watered-down services, that they're tired of waste and mismanagement.

The Premier still hasn't answered. Will she shuffle out the Minister of Health?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: In our most recent budget, we announced an allocation, an increase, in the budget to Ontario Shores of over \$2 million. It comes on the heels of some other important investments: an in-patient addi-

tions investment that we recently made; the extremely important eating disorder in-patient program that now exists at Ontario Shores. I know, quite frankly, that that institution, that hospital environment, which provides such important, high-quality care, is important not just to the residents of that region but to the entire province. Ontario Shores is one of the hospitals that we're focusing a tremendous amount of attention on to make sure that it is, on an up-to-date basis, providing that high quality of care that Ontarians can and should expect.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Yes, point of order, Speaker: I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, constituents of my riding of Leeds-Grenville. I have a delegation of my second Girls' Government—they're from three high schools in Brockville—and also representatives from Girls Inc. of Upper Canada. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I'd like you to invite them every day.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nickel Belt on a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to correct my record. This morning, I said that children in Attawapiskat were suffering from skin lesions. That was a mistake. I meant to say Kashechewan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member has every right to correct her own record.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Speaker. I invite you and my colleagues here in the House to join me in wishing a very happy birthday to the member for Burlington. I'm told that this is the 25th anniversary of her 29th birthday. So happy birthday to you.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to welcome today Marlene Gallyot and Jeff Peller. Welcome to the members' gallery.

LONDON KNIGHTS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am sure that all members of this House will want to join me in expressing our pride and congratulations to the London Knights, who won the Memorial Cup on the weekend.

VISITORS

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to the House a constituent from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Mai Nguyen. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome two guests of mine from Belleville—I'm sure they were there in 1999 when the Bulls won the OHL championship. Genevieve Pouliot and Stanley Jones are here. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome—I know they're somewhere in the building, but they were here before—former member Rob Milligan, now a teacher at Campbellford high school, and his class.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: During constituency week, I'm pleased to say that the member from Trinity–Spadina had his birthday. Happy birthday to the member from Trinity–Spadina.

CONSUL GENERAL OF TURKEY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would take this opportunity to respectfully invite all colleagues to a reception today from 5 to 7 p.m., hosted by His Excellency Erdeniz Şen, the consul general of Turkey to Ontario.

AFRICAN UNION FLAG-RAISING

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I just want to remind members that there's an African Union flag-raising here at the Legislature today at 12 o'clock.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I showed a little bit of leniency, just in this particular situation, due to the fact that we did not have introductions because of our ceremony this morning. But I'm going to remind members that we do have an agreement that we use the five minutes for introductions at that time. I would hope that you would help me in sticking to that. I'm lenient in the five minutes, if there's a large number, but after that, it's off-bounds.

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

The House recessed from 1200 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: They were here earlier this morning: teachers Heather Bender and Michael Foulds and students from John Diefenbaker secondary school in Hanover.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to welcome the students from St. Sylvester school; grade 5 and grade 8 students are here this afternoon. I want to recognize their teachers Oycie Povo and Jeanette Harrietha, as well as four girls from the Girls' Government: Katrina, Briana, Madonna and Juno. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm really honoured to have with me two special people from my riding: Katelyn and Kylie O'Neil. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to introduce Katee Carrasco from my constituency office, who's in the gallery today. Welcome to Queen's Park, Katee.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm pleased to rise today to highlight May as Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month.

MS affects three times as many women as men and is the most common neurological disease among young Canadians, typically affecting those between ages 15 to 40. Close to 100,000 Canadians are living with MS.

MS occurs when the insulating covers of the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord are damaged, resulting in physical, mental and psychiatric problems. Patients' lives are severely affected. Symptoms can include double vision, blindness in one eye, muscle weakness and trouble with sensation or coordination.

As of today, there is no cure for MS. There are, however, treatments, medications and physical therapy available to assist those who are suffering with this chronic disease. Government needs to work to reduce the bureaucracy that is limiting access to these new medications to treat MS.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada for their leadership and in their advancements to finding a cure and enabling those affected by MS to help enhance their quality of life.

As previously mentioned, MS affects three times as many women as men, which is why WAMS was created. WAMS stands for Women Against Multiple Sclerosis and has been an extremely successful advocate over the past decade.

The red carnation is a symbol of MS. Every year, the MS Society of Canada runs the carnation campaign, which helps assist with donations to fight to end MS.

I encourage all Ontarians to participate in the MS walks in their communities and to get involved to help spread the word to increase awareness surrounding multiple sclerosis.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me tell you about a bike ride that's taking place. It started in Windsor last Wednesday; it will end here at the Legislature this Wednesday. Injured workers Richard Hudon and Peter Page are making the trip along with injured-workers advocate Allen Jones. Their route is a grueling 600 kilometres, and they have been meeting with injured workers along the way. They've made stops in Chatham, Wallaceburg, Sarnia, London, Brantford and St. Catharines. They'll be in Hamilton at 4 o'clock today at the workers' monument at city hall. Tomorrow, they will be stopping in Mississauga.

On Wednesday, Injured Workers' Day, if you haven't made lunch plans yet, join them outside on the lawn for pizza before they're joined by other injured workers for a rally at the Ministry of Labour. The purpose behind the ride is to raise awareness for the many issues involving workers' compensation in our province.

On a final note, we lost a fierce advocate for the working class last week in Tecumseh. George La Bute was 94. He was one of the leaders of the Ford strike in Windsor in 1945. The UAW was out for 99 days. That strike led to the Rand formula in Ontario: If you belong to a union, you pay union dues.

George La Bute was a labour historian. His garage is a museum to labour history. He was also a former town councillor in Tecumseh and a veteran of the Second World War.

God bless you, George La Bute.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: A letter dated July 28, 2015, from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and written to the president and CEO of the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, has only recently been made public. The letter recognizes the outstanding emergency department performance that was achieved at Sydenham District Hospital. Within its own category of hospital, the wait times in the emergency department at Sydenham District Hospital were reduced more than any other in the province. Unfortunately, this hospital, which is efficiently delivering vital care in my riding, is under threat of closure.

The Wallaceburg-Walpole Island health coalition recently conducted a survey that asked thousands of respondents whether Ontario's government must act to stop the closure of Sydenham District Hospital's emergency department and restore funding, services and staff to meet the community's needs for care. The result was a unanimous and resounding yes.

I wish to extend my congratulations to the doctors and nurses of the emergency department at Sydenham

District Hospital and to assure the people of Wallaceburg, North Kent, South Lambton and Walpole Island that I will continue work to ensure this standard of care is there for them. The emergency department is critical and the 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, fully functional emergency department in Wallaceburg must be kept open.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I very often rise in this Legislature to speak about great things and the people in my riding. Today, unfortunately, it isn't the case. Today, I must rise again to bring to attention this government's failure, half measures and broken promises that have had a negative impact on the people of my riding and many of those who travel through our riding.

The government's failure to complete the widening of Highway 3 between the town of Essex and the town of Leamington continues to be a public safety issue. People, unfortunately, are dying on this road. Just in the last 30 days, in the last month, we've had two separate multi-vehicle fatalities on that very stretch of road. Many of the members who are in here today sat with my predecessor, Bruce Crozier, who dedicated his entire career to the expansion and the widening of that highway. It is aptly named after Bruce because of his efforts. Unfortunately, this government has stalled at the third phase, the final phase that would stretch from Essex to Leamington, widening that not only for commerce, not only for commuters, but for the safety of the individuals who are on road.

It is our belief that the government is dragging its heels on this project, but we can't understand why, because it is a government project. It was a promise they made to our community some 10 years ago. We would like to see it finished.

We call on the government and implore the Minister of Transportation to fulfill his promise, finish what Bruce Crozier started, get the funds flowing to our community and ensure that the public can travel safely down that corridor from Leamington to Essex and Windsor, so that we can ensure the road is feasible and safe for all commuters.

SCHOOL TOURS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Last week, as you know, was a constituency week for members, and I took the opportunity to visit a number of schools in Kitchener Centre, including Courtland Avenue Public School, Westheights, and St. Mark and St. Paul Catholic elementary schools.

I had the chance to speak to five different classes in this whirlwind tour, all taking place in one day, and it was a wonderful way to meet so many bright, young students, who ranged from grade 2 up to grade 8. They were very interested in the political process. They asked a lot of really great questions, such as, "What's a typical day like for you as an MPP?" and "Is there a lot of stress in your job?" And, of course, the inevitable question:

“How much money do you make?” I was happy to answer all of those questions.

A couple of the grade 5 classes who were part of the tour are taking the unit in government. They were able to identify the various levels of government. They clearly understood all of the different responsibilities, federally, provincially and municipally. I asked each class if there was any message they wanted me to deliver back to Queen’s Park. One young man by the name of Hank said that he wanted me to tell the Premier that he thought she was doing a great job, so I promised him that I would do that.

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I encourage all students to stay politically engaged and to come visit us here at Queen’s Park—it’s their Legislature—and also consider serving as a page in our page program, like the young people who are here. Hopefully we’ll be seeing these bright, young faces in the near future here at Queen’s Park.

COMMEMORATIONS IN 2017

Mr. Toby Barrett: In a few—six—months, we commence celebration of not only Canada’s 150th birthday, but also the 225th anniversary of the founding of Ontario. Of course, plans are afoot and I encourage all to get involved, to come up with some projects, large and small, to mark these milestones in our society.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided the British colony into two governments. West of the Ottawa River became Upper Canada, now Ontario, with its first Parliament meeting in Newark, now Niagara-on-the-Lake, on September 17, 1792. The first Parliament was opened by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe reading the speech from the throne. On July 1, 1867, 75 years after Ontario’s Legislature first met, church bells rang and four million people celebrated the creation of the Dominion of Canada.

In a few short weeks, we celebrate Canada Day, the original Dominion Day, to mark Confederation. Locally, both Caledonia and Port Dover have gigantic parades attended by thousands. In fact, Port Dover has been hosting its Callithumpian Parade every year since 1867. Some claim it’s the longest-running Canada Day parade in the country. Canada’s sesquicentennial will kick off where a lot of this began, in my riding in the historic village of Vittoria. I encourage all: Let’s get involved for 2017.

AMATEUR SPORTS

Mr. Granville Anderson: It’s always a pleasure to rise in the House and celebrate the achievements of constituents from the great riding of Durham. I recently heard some very good news about one of our highly successful youth sports teams: The Durham Attack under-14 infinity girls’ volleyball team has been dominating tournaments both in Ontario and in the United States so far this year.

Their recent successes include winning gold in their division at the Volleyball Canada east national championship in Ottawa just a few weeks ago and winning bronze at the President’s Day Cup in Dayton, Ohio, back in February. Since 1992, the Durham Attack team has been one of Canada’s premier volleyball clubs. This team is dedicated to teaching its young athletes the skills they need to be successful on and off the volleyball court by developing character through the pursuit of excellence. The team’s success is a testament to all of the young people, and all that young people can do when they are supported in an environment of empowerment, encouragement and fair play.

Congratulations to everyone on the team, and congratulations to the coaches and other people of the community that support all of our sports teams.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Having had the honour to serve as the Minister of Transportation and also the minister responsible for ServiceOntario, I’m very much aware of the services that ServiceOntario provides.

Having served on the Treasury Board for very many years, I do understand that sometimes we need to make tough and difficult decisions. However, we must make all these decisions in the best interest of the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario cannot be well served by reducing service, and especially for the most needy and deserving people in the society. In addition, we need to make service reduction decisions only after consultation with the affected communities.

There are also specific ServiceOntario centres which are not only important for the services they provide, but are also very vital for the business community around them. One such ServiceOntario centre is located at Westdale Mall in my riding of Mississauga–Erindale, which the ministry has decided to close. This ServiceOntario centre attracts consumers to the mall, which supports the other small business entrepreneurs in the shopping centre. This reality has led to a rise in business for small business owners in the mall due to the ServiceOntario centre’s presence in that mall. Without the ServiceOntario, Westdale Mall will be put under tremendous strain for the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood.

I would like to ask the ministry to reconsider this decision and the government to make sure that the people that they serve are protected and the community and the mall is protected as well.

RUSSIAN-CANADIAN CULTURAL AID SOCIETY

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I’m proud to rise today to recognize the work of the Russian-Canadian Cultural Aid Society. The RCCAS was founded in 1950 as a non-profit organization and is run entirely by volunteers. The foundation exists for the benefit of the Russian-Canadian

community by providing the means and facilities necessary for the actualization and cultural development of the community.

In all of its activities and undertakings, the foundation is guided by ideals that incorporate affirmation of cultural identity and principles of traditional Russian and Canadian values. Its mission is to promote and maintain rich Russian cultural traditions and help new immigrants integrate into the Canadian way of life.

Yesterday was the grand opening of Russian House Toronto, in my riding of York Centre, at Earl Bales Park. The house was founded to provide much-needed facilities for fostering the preservation and promotion of Russian culture, traditions and language. The space will be used for concerts, lectures, dancing and other activities to serve the more than 118,000 Russians living in the greater Toronto area. English events will also take place to help showcase Russian culture.

Cultural centres like Russian House Toronto are essential to building community, educating and protecting diversity. I am truly grateful to all those involved whose dedication and hard work resulted in the establishment of such an important and rewarding cultural space.

SPECIAL REPORT,
FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES
COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, during constituency week, the following report was tabled:

On May 26, 2016, a special report from the French Language Services Commissioner entitled Active Offer of Services in French: the Cornerstone for Achieving the Objectives of Ontario's French Languages Services Act.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Mr. Milczyn from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs presents the committee's report as follows and moves its adoption:

Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended: Bill 181, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.*

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

Report adopted.

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REPRESENTATION AMENDMENT ACT
(WAHNAPIITAE FIRST NATION), 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE
(PREMIÈRE NATION DE WAHNAPIITAE)

Madame Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 206, An Act to amend the Representation Act, 2015 to include the Wahnapiitae Indian Reserve No. 11 in the electoral district of Nickel Belt rather than in the electoral district of Timiskaming-Cochrane / *Projet de loi 206, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale pour inclure la réserve indienne Wahnapiitae n° 11 dans la circonscription électorale de Nickel Belt au lieu de la circonscription électorale de Timiskaming-Cochrane.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: This should have been done when we changed the boundaries to the southern ridings, but here it is. The bill amends the schedule to the Representation Act, 2015, which sets out the 11 northern electoral districts in Ontario. The amendments change the boundaries of two electoral districts so that the Wahnapiitae First Nation Reserve, known as Wahnapiitae Indian Reserve No. 11, is included in the electoral district of Nickel Belt rather than the electoral district of Timiskaming-Cochrane. I fully agree.

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TREATIES RECOGNITION
WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Zimmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / *Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités.*

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: The bill proclaims the first full week in November each year as Treaties Recognition Week. I will speak in more detail later in the afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The normal procedure is to simply say you're going to speak at ministers' statements.

HAROLD COLES INC. ACT, 2016

Miss Taylor moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr46, An Act to revive Harold Coles Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 86, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 46 and 55 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot items 46 and 55 be waived. Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to private members' public bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I move that the order of the House dated December 10, 2015, referring Bill 149, An Act to establish an advisory committee to make recommendations on the jury recommendations made in the inquest into the death of Rowan Stringer, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged; and

That the order of the House dated April 7, 2016, referring Bill 180, An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning, to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly be discharged; and

That the order of the House dated April 7, 2016, referring Bill 182, An Act to proclaim Ontario Down Syndrome Day, to the Standing Committee on Social Policy be discharged; and

That Bills 149, 180 and 182 be instead referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet in Toronto on Thursday June 2, 2016, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 149; from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 180; from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 182; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bills 149, 180 and 182:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario Parliamentary Channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 5 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, 2016; and

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

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

—That the deadline for written submissions be 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 2, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bills with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Friday, June 3, 2016; and

That the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, June 6, 2016, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 149, from 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 180 and from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 182; and

That the committee shall report Bills 149, 180 and 182 to the House on Tuesday, June 7, 2016; and

That in the event that the committee fails to report any of the bills on that day, such bills shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That the order for third reading of any of these bills may be called the same day; and

That 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of each of the bills, apportioned equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall put the question for third reading of each bill respectively, without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that the order of the House dated December 10—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a) and 81(b), the order for second reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week, may be called today; and

That up to 90 minutes shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the

recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceeding and, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill; and

That the order for third reading of Bill 207 be immediately called; and

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

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

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals moves that, notwithstanding standing order 71(a) and 81(b), the order for second reading of Bill 207—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

SEMAINE DES VICTIMES ET SURVIVANTS D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I rise in the House today to speak about a significant event that is taking place right now, both here in Ontario and across the country: Victims and Survivors of Crime Week.

C'est l'occasion de faire connaître les problèmes auxquels se trouvent confrontées les victimes d'actes criminels ainsi que les services, programmes et lois en place pour leur venir en aide. Cette semaine s'appelait auparavant la Semaine nationale de sensibilisation aux victimes d'actes criminels, mais son nom a changé pour inclure les survivants. Ce changement de nom nous rappelle que les survivants d'actes criminels sont aussi des victimes d'actes criminels.

Victims can overcome trauma and grow to a place of strength. With support, there is hope for healing and recovery.

1330

The theme for this week is "The Power of Our Voices," which recognizes that together, we can raise our voices and say no to the injustice experienced by victims of crime, say no to heartbreak and hopelessness, and say yes to helping survivors move forward with their lives.

Cette année, nous marquons également le 20^e anniversaire de la Charte des droits des victimes, qui a force de loi depuis 1996 et qui reconnaît les besoins des victimes d'actes criminels.

La charte contient des principes que le système de justice doit respecter à l'égard des victimes d'actes criminels : courtoisie, compassion et respect.

Later this week, I will have the honour of presenting awards to individuals who are doing outstanding work in the area of victim services. These annual awards, taking place this Thursday, recognize the people who work tirelessly to help victims of crime and their families.

Certains des récipiendaires sont des victimes qui, par leur dévouement et leur courage, ont contribué aux services aux victimes en tant que survivants, leaders, ou modèles exemplaires. D'autres sont des bénévoles, des professionnels et des organismes qui offrent aux victimes des soutiens et des services quand elles en ont le plus besoin.

This event also helps raise the profile of programs and services available to assist victims across the province; for example, Victim Crisis Assistance Ontario. Working closely with local police, staff and volunteers, it provides support to victims 24 hours a day. This can include ensuring that victims have a safe place to stay or helping them with safety planning. It is small acts like these that can be so important during a crisis.

Devenir victime ou perdre un être proche dans un crime violent n'est pas quelque chose que l'on planifie. Dans les jours qui suivent immédiatement l'acte criminel, de nombreuses victimes ne sont pas prêtes à faire face à des dépenses inattendues, comme le remplacement d'une serrure ou le nettoyage des lieux du crime. Notre Programme d'intervention rapide auprès des victimes verse des fonds d'urgence aux victimes qui en ont le plus besoin.

Of course, our work doesn't end there. The needs in our communities are ever-changing, so this network of supports will continually adapt and evolve. We are now finalizing a pilot program to offer independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors. This program will be of great value to the people who need it the most.

I encourage all members to join me in thinking about the needs of victims in our communities and in recognizing the dedicated individuals who help victims every day, every step of the way. They are role models for all of us.

STUDENT SAFETY

Hon. Liz Sandals: Speaker, I'm proud to have re-introduced the Protecting Students Act, which, if passed would protect our children and students and strengthen public confidence in the Ontario College of Teachers and in the College of Early Childhood Educators.

We know that the vast majority of Ontario's educators do an excellent job supporting our children and students. Everything they do provides our children and students with the opportunity to learn and develop in safe and respectful learning environments.

In those rare circumstances where discipline is required, families, parents, children, students and educators deserve a fair and transparent process that maintains the public interest and protects the well-being of our children.

Together with the Ontario College of Teachers and the College of Early Childhood Educators, we have a shared

interest in maintaining public confidence in the investigation and disciplinary process, and have worked hard to reinforce public trust.

These necessary legislative amendments will support the implementation of recommendations by the honourable Patrick J. LeSage. We are pleased that the Ontario College of Teachers has implemented many of these recommendations already, but in order to fully implement all of them, we need to make legislative changes.

If passed, the Protecting Students Act would improve the Ontario College of Teachers' disciplinary processes, reduce the potential of conflicts of interest and help protect students, children and teachers. Key changes include:

- ensuring a teacher's teaching certificate is automatically revoked if he or she has been found guilty of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography;

- requiring employers to inform the college when they have restricted a teacher's duties or dismissed him or her for misconduct;

- allowing the college to share information with the school board or employer if the subject of a complaint poses an immediate risk to a student or child;

- requiring the college to publish all decisions from its discipline committee; and

- improving timelines for the investigation and consideration of complaints.

Those are some of the key changes that the legislation would enforce if passed.

As a government, we strive to maintain the highest levels of accountability and transparency and we expect the same of all organizations that operate in the public interest. Most importantly, parents, children and students expect a public education system that is fair, transparent and accountable, and they need to be able to easily find answers to questions that they may have about disciplinary proceedings and decisions.

Speaker, this is an important step our government is taking to make sure Ontario families continue to have the confidence that their children are safe and protected in their learning environments. I look forward to having every member of this House stand behind and support this very important bill.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus to respond to Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. The theme of the week is "The Power of our Voices," and it resonates across all aspects of our society. We cannot continue to be silent as offenders seek to assault and silence their victims. We need to speak up and encourage the survivors to believe in the power of their voices.

Crime can affect anyone at any time and we all have a role in preventing crime and assisting victims. Both as

PC critic for women's issues and co-chair of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, we see a society that is too often silent and passive on the deep misogyny that is entrenched in our culture. We need to work together to combat all forms of discrimination, because violent manifestations are rooted in ideas which need to be confronted head-on.

We also owe it to the victims and survivors to protect them from being victimized, and to help them heal. I've called on the government to better support our probation and parole officers, notify crown attorneys when offenders refuse to sign their orders, restore adequate funding to the Partner Assault Response Program, adopt the government's own Domestic Violence Death Review Committee's risk assessment tool to flag high-risk repeat offenders and to pass Bill 130, introduced by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, which calls for electronic monitoring of sexual or domestic violence offenders when released on parole.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the issue of human trafficking, it being one of the largest growing crimes in Ontario. We know over 90% of the victims are Canadian-born, predominantly girls and averaging the age of 14. They cannot escape without our help.

I have long called for specific services for victims of human trafficking and brought forward legislation that the government could enact immediately to help protect them. It includes increased protection orders, forcing a trafficker to stay away from the survivor for at least three years, and a tort that allows survivors to sue the trafficker for damages and accrued profits.

The cost of doing nothing is immeasurable in terms of the damage to our young women, their families and our communities.

1340

In conclusion, I also want to acknowledge the dedication and efforts of victims' services staff, volunteers, advocates and front-line workers in assisting victims and survivors of crime and their families.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise in the Legislature this afternoon on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to speak to the Protecting Students Act in response to the Minister of Education's statement. This bill seeks to amend the Ontario College of Teachers Act and the Early Childhood Educators Act in order to continue to implement the recommendations stemming from the LeSage report, released in 2012.

Speaker, when this bill was first introduced in 2013, our caucus did not feel that it went far enough. At the time, our caucus offered support for the bill as a good first step, though we certainly felt that there were certain elements missing from the bill that needed to be entrenched in legislation.

However, we're pleased to see that this new bill will ensure that a teacher's certificate is automatically revoked if he or she is found guilty of certain forms of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography.

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children are unacceptable crimes on one of the most vulnerable populations in our society, and there should be zero tolerance for these types of acts. We have an unequivocal responsibility as a society to protect our children and students. Speaker, there's no place for child exploitation in this province—or any part of society, for that matter—and we expect all individuals, regardless of profession, who engage in this behaviour to be brought to justice.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate the bill as it moves forward through the Legislature—at second reading, into committee and clause-by-clause—and propose amendments where and if we feel this bill can be strengthened.

VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF CRIME WEEK

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to respond to the statement from the Attorney General on Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. In the brief time I have available, I want to highlight three specific issues that must be addressed if this government is to adequately respond to the needs of survivors.

The first issue is the impact of the government's modernization process—otherwise known as funding cuts—on victims' services and Partner Assault Response Programs. A recent survey of violence-against-women coordinating committees from across Ontario revealed that almost half of these committees believe the changes will have a negative impact on victims' safety and that they will limit the ability of victims' services organizations to participate in community collaboration. Modernization means fewer services, a greater negative impact on vulnerable community members, and a reduction in public education and coordination activities.

A related concern is the arbitrary reduction in the length of the Partner Assault Response Program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, an issue I have raised repeatedly in this Legislature. If we don't take action to change the behaviours of abusive partners, we will never be able to keep women safe. Despite the unanimous opposition from community leaders and violence-against-women experts, the changes to PAR were implemented anyway. The government continues to ignore the calls for PAR to be available on a voluntary basis, with differentiated interventions based on level of risk. As a result, several agencies have refused to continue to deliver PAR because of ethical concerns that doing so could put women and children at risk.

The second issue that I want to highlight on this historic day marking our shared commitment to work for true reconciliation is the lack of culturally responsive services for indigenous victims of crime. Indigenous peoples and women, in particular, are disproportionately represented as victims of crime, particularly violent crime. Increased victim support services are an important step toward breaking the cycle of violence. But much

more work needs to be done to provide accessible and culturally relevant services for all indigenous people who have experienced victimization—services that reflect a deep understanding of colonialism, acknowledgement of systemic racism, and awareness of the legacy of residential schools.

The third issue is the government's failure to exclude Criminal Injuries Compensation Board awards and civil damages from the calculation of assets for Ontario Works and ODSP. All Ontarians deserve equal access to justice. This is an issue that the government can address immediately through regulatory changes to the ODSP and Ontario Works acts.

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

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my honour to rise today, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic caucus, to speak to Bill 200, the Protecting Students Act, 2016.

Ontario is a world leader in providing quality, publicly funded education because of our highly dedicated and professional teachers, as well as families who teach children the value of an education. Similarly, our hard-working early childhood educators help our children succeed and grow as learners in a variety of settings, from child care to primary grades, as well as before- and after-school programs.

Since 1996, the Ontario College of Teachers has had the authority to regulate and govern the teaching profession. Now we also have the College of Early Childhood Educators, which similarly seeks to regulate and govern Ontario's early childhood educators.

Inherent to the mandate of both colleges is their ability to discipline members who violate the public interest and the guidelines of their profession. In the most extreme cases—and I do mean extreme—disciplinary action may include suspension and, ultimately, the loss of a certificate.

Bill 200, the Protecting Students Act, introduced last week, seeks to implement a greater degree of transparency and accountability in the investigation, charge and disciplinary action of members of both professional bodies. In doing this, the legislation seeks to build on former Bill 103 and implement the recommendations of the 2012 LeSage report.

Speaker, these are not matters to take lightly. The bill rightly recognizes that children are vulnerable in our schools, and imposes harsher penalties for professionals who, in very rare instances, take advantage of their vulnerability, specifically through sexual abuse. At the same time, this legislation makes the process of charging and sentencing professionals with misconduct more transparent.

We know that true transparency does not come at the expense of due process. The two principles can, and do, coexist in many professional colleges, and this is a model that we hope this legislation will achieve. New Demo-

crats will also work to ensure that all provisions outlined in this legislation clearly reflect the role of both colleges as regulatory bodies for their professions.

Finally, my New Democrat colleagues and I will work to ensure that transparency is extended both to the public and to professionals within the colleges. I look forward to further review of the legislation at second reading and committee.

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

PETITIONS

AUTOMOTIVE DEALERS

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

“Whereas Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015 is a vital tool that supports Ontario’s auto sector by cutting red tape for dealers and consumers when a vehicle is purchased or leased; and

“Whereas, in 2011, the province of Ontario conducted a pilot project on in-house vehicle licensing at two new car dealerships that was well received by the participants; and

“Whereas the province of Quebec has permitted automobile dealers to conduct in-house vehicle registrations since 2003, with 700 dealers currently participating;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately pass Bill 152 into law, to promote Ontario’s auto retail sector by cutting red tape for motor vehicle dealers and consumers to save them time and money.”

I’ll sign this petition and send it with page Ariane.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: Speaker, as you can see, petitions continue to flood in to my office, and I’m pleased and honoured to read them.

“Don’t Balance the Budget on the Backs of Children with ASD...”

“Whereas the government recently announced plans to reform the way autism services are delivered in the province, which leaves children over the age of five with no access to intensive behavioural intervention (IBI); and

“Whereas in 2003, former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty removed the previous age cap on IBI therapy, stating that Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six; and

“Whereas applied behaviour analysis (ABA) and intensive behavioural intervention (IBI) are the only recognized evidence-based practices known to treat autism spectrum disorder (ASD); and

“Whereas the combined number of children waiting for ABA and IBI therapies in Ontario is approximately 16,158; and

“Whereas wait-lists for services have become overwhelmingly long due to the chronic underfunding by this Liberal government; and

“Whereas some families are being forced to re-mortgage houses or move to other provinces while other families have no option but to go without essential therapy; and

“Whereas the Premier and her government should not be balancing the budget on the backs of kids with ASD and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government of Ontario to immediately ensure that all children currently on the waiting list for IBI therapy are grandfathered into the new program so they do not become a lost generation.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to affix my name to it and give it to page Colleen to bring to the Clerk.

1350

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 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” regulated “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 fully support the petition. I will give my petition to page Emily.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

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

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

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

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

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

I’ll pass it to page Thomas.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have hundreds and thousands of names that come from all over Sudbury and Nickel Belt. I’d like to thank Lynn Doucette from Hanmer in my riding, as well as Dr. Pierre Bonin from Sudbury. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

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

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Katelyn to bring it to the Clerk.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of 689 residents who have signed this petition in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the local ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall in Mississauga provides integral services for local constituents;

“Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall has become a hub of activity for the mall, leading to more business for small business owners;

“Whereas the closure of the ServiceOntario centre in Westdale Mall will put tremendous strain on the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood shopping centre;

“Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall serves a wide range of individuals—vulnerable seniors, people from different income demographics, some of whom have difficulty travelling and/or affording transportation;

“Whereas large numbers of apartment and condo residents rely on the services provided by this centre and it will cause severe hardships for them;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the government’s plan to close the ServiceOntario centre at Westdale Mall in Mississauga and instead look at options for asset utilization for this specific ServiceOntario centre.”

I agree with this petition wholeheartedly, I will affix my signature and give it to Julia.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Ms. Laurie Scott: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Off-Road Vehicles Act, RSO 1990, c. O.4 currently says that children under 14 can ride an adult-size ATV (a) on land occupied by the vehicle owner; or (b) under the supervision of an adult ... ; and

“Whereas the manufacturers recommend that no person under the age of 16 operate an adult ATV for safety reasons; and

“Whereas in the province of Nova Scotia, no person under the age of 16 shall operate an off-highway vehicle, except when under the age of 16 and not under the age of 14 if (a) that person is under the direct supervision of that person’s parent or guardian and within the sight of that parent or guardian; and (b) both the parent or guardian referred to in clause (a) and person who is under the age of 16 years are certified as having successfully completed off-highway vehicle safety training in accordance with the regulations;

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

“Amend the Off-Road Vehicles Act, RSO 1990 ... to prohibit children under the age of 14 to drive adult-size ATVs on private property and have them restricted to size- and age-appropriate vehicles, and children 14 to 16 require certification to drive adult-size ATVs on private property as in Nova Scotia.”

This is signed by many people from my riding. I’ll hand this to page Colleen.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario’s labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be entitled to a starting wage that reflects a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker’s age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—ensure all workers are paid at least \$15 an hour.”

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, I’m going to present this petition on behalf of 162 merchants and their dependent families. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the local ServiceOntario located at Westdale Mall in Mississauga provides integral services for local constituents;

“Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall has become a hub of activity for the mall, leading to more business for small business owners;

“Whereas the closure of the ServiceOntario centre in Westdale Mall will put tremendous strain on the viability and existence of this small and essential neighbourhood shopping centre;

“Whereas the ServiceOntario centre located at Westdale Mall serves a wide range of individuals—vulnerable seniors, people from different income demographics, some of whom have difficulty travelling and/or affording transportation;

“Whereas large numbers of apartment and condo residents rely on the services provided by this centre and it will cause severe hardships for them;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the government’s plan to close this ServiceOntario centre at Westdale Mall in Mississauga and instead look at options for asset utilization for this specific ServiceOntario centre.”

I agree with this petition completely and I will affix my signature and give it to page Daniel to take it to you.

1400

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government is proposing to force all Ontarians using natural gas energy for their homes or businesses to switch to more expensive electricity; and

“Whereas for the 76% of homes and businesses in Ontario that heat with natural gas, switching to electricity will increase their home energy bills by more than \$3,000 per year; and

“Whereas the elimination of affordable natural gas will devastate family budgets and destroy the province’s natural gas industry; and

“Whereas the plan to ban the use of natural gas in Ontario is just one small part of a radical environmental agenda that is threatening the jobs and financial well-being of hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents;

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

“That the government of Ontario and Premier Wynne immediately scrap this plan and instead allow Ontario residents and businesses the freedom to use natural gas to meet their heating and energy needs.”

I agree with this petition entirely, will affix my signature and send it down with page Huzaifah.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Miss Monique Taylor: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario’s labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be paid a uniform, provincial minimum, regardless of a worker’s age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—require a \$15 minimum wage for all workers.”

I agree with this petition and I'm going to give it to page Colleen to bring to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Unfortunately, that ends the time that we have available this afternoon for petitions.

I recognize the member for Windsor West on a point of order.

FLAT STANLEY

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. I beg your indulgence as I introduce a guest to the Legislature. I know we're not supposed to hold up props, but if you can just bear with me. I'd like to introduce a new friend of mine, Flat Stanley. Flat Stanley is a school project and a friend of Evan Vanalstine, who's a seven-year-old grade 1 student at Island Lake Public School in Orangeville. For those who aren't familiar with Flat Stanley, Flat Stanley travels to different communities and shares his adventures and information about those communities. I'm proud to have Flat Stanley with me in the Legislature this week, and he looks forward to meeting all the other members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I think I have to rule that that's not a valid point of order, but we appreciate the information nonetheless.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TREATIES RECOGNITION WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I assume the minister would want to lead off the debate?

Hon. David Zimmer: I rise in the Legislature today on Treaty 13 land and the traditional territory of several indigenous nations to announce the introduction of legislation for Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario.

You may recall that about 18 months ago, in November 2014, I made a statement in this House about the treaty relationship and our commitment to working in partnership to establish an annual treaties awareness day. As you can see, following further discussions with indigenous partners, we're going a step further than that with a full week dedicated to the promotion of treaty awareness in Ontario.

A number of other provinces have treaty days, but with all the progress that's been made in recent years to raise awareness of treaties, it became clear to our partners and to us that a day just wasn't enough. Whether it's coming to terms with the legacy of residential schools, violence against indigenous women or the opportunity gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous people, these issues are all related. Understanding these issues and the effort to find solutions starts with a strong understanding of treaties.

I want to get to these issues and some of the steps we've taken in partnership with indigenous leaders and communities to raise awareness of treaties, but first, let me reflect on what we have witnessed earlier today.

First, I want to thank the House leaders of all three parties and the Clerks for working together to make today possible. It is exceedingly rare for us to open the floor of the Legislature like we did. Our focus is rightly on conducting the people's business, whether that be debating legislation or ensuring government accountability through question period. But on very historic occasions, we do open our floor to honoured guests and partners, and people outside this chamber take notice when we do that.

As special as it is when we do that, this morning's events went even further. Elders Dumont and Charles, together with Senator Porter-Brunelle, shared their wisdom with us and helped us get the day started in a good way. And whether it was our Premier or the leaders of the opposition parties, I think we have heard a good balance of reflection on the history that has brought us here today, together with real hope and a renewed sense of purpose as we move forward together on this journey of reconciliation.

Most importantly, Speaker, though, the opportunity to open this floor to indigenous leaders reminds me that in the beginning, we—we—were the guests, not our indigenous colleagues.

It reminded me of one of the first big anniversaries I marked as minister, in 2013: the 250th anniversary of the royal proclamation. The proclamation signed by King George III 250 years ago was a turning point in the recognition and protection of aboriginal rights in Canada, rights that are now fully enshrined in Canada's Constitution. That proclamation formalized the treaty-making process across what is now Canada.

Less than a year after that, we marked the anniversary by joining many indigenous leaders that we see here

today to mark the 250th anniversary, this time of the very first treaty that came out of that process: the Treaty of Niagara.

At the risk of overstating the spirit of the time, one can imagine the atmosphere which produced two fundamental agreements that continue to matter so much to our country today. This was a time before the social media echo chamber, before the never-ending news cycle—dare I say, it was a simpler time. The fact that 24 First Nations and a crown representative were able to agree on the first treaty just a year after the royal proclamation suggests a time when people put far more premium on listening than they do today.

It is my hope, Speaker, that if passed, this legislation would create time and space for the descendants and successors to those early European settlers to listen and learn about the history of treaties and how they continue to influence the world today.

This legislation supports Premier Wynne's statement of commitment and reconciliation made in the Legislature earlier today, and it sustains the government's broader response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action released last year.

It is also part of Ontario's broader treaty strategy to revitalize the treaty relationship in a spirit of respectful coexistence and to enable us to pursue the reconciliation of Ontario's relationship with First Nations through mutually respectful dialogue and action.

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The treaty strategy we launched about two years ago committed this government to promoting public awareness of treaties. It marked a new effort to engage partners in constructive dialogue on treaties and work to improve the socioeconomic outcomes for indigenous peoples in order to make a real difference in their lives. That strategy also underpins our response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report, as outlined by the Premier this morning.

Unlocking the legacy of treaties and residential schools will ensure that all Ontarians develop a shared understanding of our joint history. Knowledge about and understanding of the treaties and treaty relationships will help all Ontarians work with indigenous partners to close the gaps in health, education, justice, housing and more.

Speaker, I pose the question: How does a stronger understanding of treaties relate to truth and reconciliation in residential schools? How does it relate to ending violence against indigenous women? Why is an understanding of treaties, their history and their modern-day influence so critical to meeting the challenges in the relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples today?

It is important to understand that treaties were signed in a spirit of partnership and in a spirit of mutual respect. It's critical to also understand that within just a few generations, that trust, sadly, was broken. The bond was broken by colonial governments.

It is important to understand how broken promises led to attempted cultural genocide through the residential

school system. It is important to understand how the compounding legacies of broken promises and residential schools created an environment where indigenous women are far more likely than their non-indigenous counterparts to be victims of violence.

Let me say something about our treaty strategy and what we've done. To renew our historic partnerships, we have to have an understanding of our shared history. Ontario is unique in Canada for the number and the variety of treaties, with 46 treaties and land purchases covering most of the province. As I mentioned earlier, a few years ago the government committed to a treaty strategy to generate conversations on treaty relationships and to build greater awareness and understanding of our different perspectives and histories.

To increase awareness and understanding of treaties, we launched the social media campaign #TreatyON, which created a widespread interest on Twitter and Facebook. My ministry also worked with First Nations to revise the Ontario public school curriculum to include information about residential schools and survivors. We distributed a First Nations and treaties map to every school in Ontario—approximately 11,000 copies—to increase awareness of the important role that treaties continue to play in our lives. This is the first treaties map Ontario has published since the 1940s. Now, with the introduction of legislation today to pronounce the first week of November as Treaties Recognition Week, if passed, we would continue to build public awareness about the agreements made by our ancestors to live together on this land.

Central to that effort will be working with indigenous partners to leverage and extend the great work they've done to produce books and kits and videos and posters and maps to raise awareness of treaties across Ontario. We'll work with the Ministry of Education and we'll work with schools and teachers to make sure students and their parents are exposed to all of the great material out there.

One of our newest tools will be the Reconciliation Tree. Donald Chrétien sculpted the tree. It's based on his very beautiful piece of art entitled Tree of Life. The Tree of Life graces the cover of *The Journey Together*, the plan that we released earlier today. If you haven't had a chance to have a look at that document and the art contained within it, and the messages within it, please do.

Ontarians will see the tree at events during aboriginal history month, which starts on Wednesday, and at pow-wows throughout this summer. Later this summer, we'll help teachers put together their own reconciliation trees with kits that they can obtain online. Ontarians will write their hope for reconciliation on a leaf and attach the leaf to the tree to share with others. You can also share your hopes online with the #ReconciliationTree hashtag.

Let me say something about land claims for a moment. My ministry has also made significant progress on strengthening our relationship by resolving land claims, and in the spirit of reconciliation, we are working to resolve land claims in a very timely manner. The min-

istry has met its public commitment to reach a decision on new land claims within three years of receipt of a completed land claims submission. We've also met our commitment to settle six land claims in four years. Ontario's total number of land claims is 68; eight of them are in research and assessment, 47 are in the negotiation stage and nine are in the settlement agreements that are being implemented.

Since 2003, Ontario has settled 18 land claims and land-related matters, involving the transfer of over 58,000 acres of land to Canada, to in turn be added to First Nation reserves and compensation packages totalling \$121 million.

Since 2003, we have settled land claims at twice the rate as before. In January of this year, Ontario and Chapeau Ojibway First Nation initialled the final agreement for the First Nations treaty land entitlement claim under the terms of Treaty 9.

In March of this year, I signed the settlement agreement for the Chapeau Cree treaty land entitlement claim with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. This claim involves the transfer of 4,000 hectares of Ontario crown land near Chapeau to be set aside as reserve lands. This settlement agreement is now with Canada, awaiting their signature and execution of the agreement by the federal Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs was also pleased that the federal government and the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point signed an agreement just this month to return Camp Ipperwash, a former military base appropriated in 1942, to the First Nation. I attended that ceremony in Ipperwash with Minister Bennett and First Nations leaders. It was a moving event. It was a long time coming, but the satisfaction that that event brought to the First Nation leadership, to the federal minister and to Ontario was palpable. It should also be noted that an agreement was signed in 2009 to return the land of Ipperwash Provincial Park to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point.

Ontario has completed a land use, infrastructure and risk report in support of this transfer process, and the final tri-lateral land transfer agreement is undergoing a final review before it is signed off by all parties.

Speaker, as proud as I am of the progress we have made in the ministry in promoting treaty awareness and resolving land claims, progress would be impossible without a strong relationship with indigenous partners. As you may recall, in August 2015 we signed a historic political accord, the first in decades, with First Nation partners including Ontario Regional Chief Day and the First Nations Political Confederacy. All the signatories agreed that this new political accord represents a renewed relationship between the First Nations and Ontario, and it is an important step in the ongoing revitalization of First Nations communities. It is an opportunity to move forward together in a spirit of respectful coexistence and to make a real difference in the lives of indigenous peoples across this province.

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The accord is also important because it recognizes First Nations' inherent right to self-government and commits the parties to joint discussions on common priorities. These common priorities include the treaty relationship, resource benefits and revenue sharing, and various jurisdictional matters involving First Nations and Ontario.

Discussions on jurisdiction and self-government are aimed at building a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities for all parties, and finding practical ways to create real opportunities for First Nations through the strengthening of our partnerships. Ontario's growth depends on renewing the historic partnership we have had with indigenous communities.

The recognition of First Nations' inherent right to self-government, together with the commitment to work together on joint priorities, can already be seen in the efforts of indigenous partners to support treaty awareness and drive change in their communities. For instance, the Walk a Mile Film Project is a joint effort between the city of Thunder Bay and Fort William First Nation to raise awareness of urban indigenous issues in northern Ontario, particularly in the northwest.

The Anishinabek Nation's education materials are putting a unique pressure on the folks at LEGO to produce the unique purple dye that goes into the LEGO wampum belt in the We are All Treaty People kit.

When it comes to making progress on the biggest issues facing indigenous peoples in Ontario, we are relying more and more on the involvement of indigenous partners not only in the design phase of programs, but in the delivery of the programs themselves.

As an example, I was very proud to join Premier Wynne and my colleague Tracy MacCharles in February, when we released *Walking Together: Ontario's Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*. It was the culmination of the work not only of ministries across government, but of members of the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, which included the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, the Chiefs of Ontario, the Métis Nation of Ontario and Independent First Nations.

Speaker, this new strategy focuses on raising awareness and preventing violence, and providing more effective programs and community services that reflect the priorities of indigenous leaders and communities, as well as improving women's socioeconomic conditions to support healing within indigenous communities.

Central to this strategy is the new Family Well-Being Program. With \$80 million over three years, it will reduce the effects of violence on indigenous families by making community supports available for families in crisis. The program will be designed, developed and delivered by and for First Nation, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous partners in their own communities.

It will offer supports that respond to the root causes of violence, intergenerational trauma and overrepresentation

of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban indigenous children and youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems. These supports will include more front-line service workers to provide families with increased access to services, community-based programs for children and families who have experienced violence, and more safe places where families can turn when they do face crises.

Unfortunately, many families do not trust police stations, band offices or child protection agencies to provide culturally sensitive and holistic support systems. The program will provide funding for welcoming safe spaces for victims and family members to support prevention and early intervention efforts.

Speaker, here again is an understanding of how that trust was lost with broken promises, combined with a colonial superiority complex that failed indigenous communities. By helping to build capacity, and then turning over as much as possible the design and the delivery of such important services to indigenous partners, we can begin to roll back the harmful effects of generations of colonial policies.

Let me say in conclusion, Speaker, that I have confidence that the initiatives announced today and the work done over the past year will lead us along a good path towards reconciliation. It will help advance the supports needed to build resilient communities, to raise healthy new generations, to make Ontario a place we are all proud to call home. We will lead by example. We will take active steps to devise a model reconciliation system, and we will work on that on a daily basis—day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year.

On that note, I am very pleased that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs will be renamed and become the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. I want to emphasize the word “reconciliation.” This name change more accurately reflects our long-term commitment and ongoing efforts toward reconciliation and dealing with the legacy of residential schools. I am excited that the proposed new Treaties Recognition Week will provide all Ontarians, especially children, with even more opportunities to learn about treaties that have shaped this province. This legislation would mark another important step on the journey we must all take together. The time for lasting change and rebuilding relationships is upon us, and we must seize this opportunity. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity this afternoon to debate the just-introduced bill number 207 to establish Treaties Recognition Week in Ontario.

I would like to begin by thanking our guests who attended this morning's special session. They included, of course, Elder Jim Dumont and his associate Shelley Charles, who did the opening prayer; Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day; the newly elected president of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Margaret Froh; the president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Natan Obed; the president of

the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres, Sheila McMahon; the president of the Ontario Native Women's Association, Dr. Dawn Lavell-Harvard; and, of course, Andrew Wesley, a survivor of the residential school system; then the closing prayer by Elder Verna Porter-Brunelle, a Métis senator. I would just like to say, before I get started, that they all gave great talks, all different, with some very good messages, and it was a very unique ceremony this morning in the Legislature.

Before that happened, things started a little earlier on this special day. In fact, my alarm clock went off at 4 a.m. so that I could be there for the sunrise ceremony that took part in the park just north of Queen's Park. I didn't think it was such a great idea when the alarm went off at 4 a.m., but I can say that once I got there, I was really pleased to have the opportunity to take part in the ceremony. It was a good way to start this special day out. It started out before the sun was up. It started at 5:30 a.m. There was a smudging ceremony and then tobacco was handed out. A pipe was lit, which was smoked by those who wished to. Water was handed out. People consumed blueberries. There was, of course, some explanation of the significance of all of those steps. It wrapped up with a lot of hugs, so that was more hugs than I've been exposed to in a long time. Anyway, it was a very good way to kick off this special day. This afternoon—it may be going on as this debate happens—there's a blanket exercise being held on the grounds of the Legislature as well, another special ceremony that is going on.

1430

So it's already been a very special day at the Legislature, with our First Nations, Métis and Inuit partners, especially having them speak on the floor of the Legislature. I certainly believe this underscores the importance of respecting treaties, as well as the established treaty process, as policy is developed into the future.

This bill is a proclamation bill that Treaties Recognition Week would be the first full week in November beginning on Sunday. As the elder Jim Dumont pointed out in his talk in the Legislature this morning, treaties are about relationships, and I think that is very true. Treaties are the root of a government-to-government relationship between the province of Ontario and individual First Nations located within its borders. They are between the government and our First Nations and peoples in the Mushkegowuk, Mohawk, Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Delaware, Mississauga, Chippewa, Pottawatomi, Algonquin, Odawa, Anishnawbe, along with our Métis and Inuit peoples.

We, as elected officials, understand the significance of treaties and their importance to the government-to-government relationship between our First Nations peoples, Ontario and the government of Canada.

I would like to take the time before really getting started to say how fortunate I am in the area that I represent, in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, in that I have seven First Nations within the boundaries of Parry Sound–Muskoka: the Wahta Mohawks, in the south-western corner; Moose Deer Point First Nation on the

shores of Georgian Bay; Shawanaga First Nation, just north of Parry Sound; Henvey Inlet First Nation, also on the shores of Georgian Bay; Wasauksing First Nation, just west of Parry Sound; Magnetawan First Nation; Dokis First Nation on the French River; and of course, the Moon River Métis as well. That has been a nice part of my job. It has allowed me to learn a lot by attending various functions at those communities.

Treaties acknowledge and reflect the fact that First Nations were the original peoples of Ontario and Canada, and occupants of the land. These nations were never conquered. The treaties then serve as a pact to live together, coexisting and sharing this land and all that it has to offer. Treaties are a formal bond between the crown and the individual First Nation signatories, based on the principles of trust and mutual respect. They stand to be lasting and meaningful agreements.

Ontario as a province, just as Canada as a nation, was founded on treaties. Treaties are an integral aspect that lay at the core of the relationship between First Nations, provinces and the government of Canada.

As the minister mentioned, with 46 treaties and other land agreements covering Ontario, I feel raising awareness is very important.

I believe that it is significant to note as well that a number of these agreements signed between First Nations and the crown predate both the current boundaries of Ontario as well as the birth of Canada as a nation.

Treaties are pacts. These bonds made between First Nations and the crown are in the spirit of working together for mutual benefit. The specific protection of lands and the preservation of hunting and fishing rights cannot be emphasized enough.

As was mentioned by the minister, the Métis played an important part in the process of facilitating the treaties.

Treaty rights are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution. Section 35 is a reminder to Canadians and a sign to new Canadians of the relationship between the crown and our First Nations.

As I was preparing to speak today, I thought, “What will be the biggest contribution of this bill going forward?” Raising awareness certainly goes hand in hand with education. It is this educational component that will help ensure that our future generations—our young people—are brought up knowing the history and the importance of treaties. This key component cannot be understated.

Education raises awareness at the earliest stages in the classroom about what treaties are, what they represent and why they are important to the fabric of Canada and Ontario. Education in our school systems does not go far enough, however, as many Ontarians would, I’m sure, admit that they could learn more about the history of treaties in the province and their unique qualities. For this to be successful, there needs to be outreach. I believe that the Treaties Awareness Week will address the public awareness component.

The First Nations demographic is the fastest-growing segment of Canada’s population, and First Nations youth

are a key component of this. In Ontario, our post-secondary institutions recognize this trend and are stepping up to meet the education component.

The Gichi Kendaasiwin project at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay is a perfect example of this move to embrace the culture of our aboriginal peoples and celebrate the relationship through education. The centrepiece of Lakehead’s vision is the Gichi Kendaasiwin Centre, which would serve as a base for community gatherings, a repository of memory, a spiritual place, and a welcoming pathway for all people toward awareness and appreciation of indigenous cultures. I certainly hope that this ambitious project comes to fruition and that projects currently ongoing in other post-secondary institutions continue to integrate indigenous culture into their education experience above and beyond what is already mandated. Mr. Speaker, I don’t think that this is a prop, but I’ve met with Lakehead University, and they’ve gone over in great detail the plans they have for their project.

While we speak of increasing education on the government-to-government relationship that is to be respected through treaties, wounds from the past still take time to heal. This morning, it was moving to hear the speeches from the floor. To hear from a residential school survivor and to receive the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is yet another step in this process. With the release of the report and its 94 calls to action, I must say that it provides a striking glimpse into a part of our collective history as Ontarians and as Canadians. Again, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the chair of the commission, Justice Murray Sinclair, as well as Commissioners Marie Wilson and Wilton Littlechild, along with those who previously served on the commission, as well as those whose immense contributions led us to this day.

As the PC Party leader, Patrick Brown, did earlier, I would especially like to thank and commend the over 6,750 individuals and residential school survivors who provided the collective voice for the report by sharing their own accounts and recalling what must be very difficult memories from the past. Reading through the “The Survivors Speak” component of the report was particularly striking when taking a step back and considering what the individual children must have felt as they were taken from their families, forced into residential schools and made to suppress their culture, language and traditions. The first-person accounts of children and the way their families were changed and torn apart by the enrolment in residential schools is truly tragic.

Of the over 150,000 First Nations children who passed through the Indian residential school system across Canada, the human toll is staggering. One out of every 25 First Nations children who attended residential schools died there and was buried there, oftentimes without their families being notified. Just as the legacy of the residential schools spans generations, so too must the subsequent education of future generations. I’m pleased to see the government including that in the school curriculum.

I also want to note that in 2008, then-Prime Minister Stephen Harper made the historic apology on behalf of

all Canadians in which the federal government recognized that the great harm caused by the Indian residential schools had no place in Canadian society. I'm also proud that Canada is one of the very few countries in the world where treaty rights are enshrined in our Constitution.

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Even with these national strides, it is impossible to read the tragic stories and the first-hand accounts without emotion, knowing that we cannot undo what has been done in the past. The work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will help future generations to learn from this element of our collective history and, in time, bring healing and some form of closure, we hope, to the terrible legacy of residential schools.

The report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is another step along the path to promoting reconciliation between aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians, and we look forward to continuing the work it will take to bring forgiveness, healing and true reconciliation to all. With healing and learning from the past in mind, the treaty process in Ontario is also evolving.

Mr. Speaker, we have, of course, the Algonquin land claim, which is one that is ongoing. In Ontario, in particular, we are party to the treaty-making process currently as negotiations of the Algonquin land claim continue to move forward. In what would be the first modern-day treaty in Ontario's history, we wait and watch. It is particularly noteworthy that if the process is seen to completion—and it has been going on, I think, over 20 years now—it would be the first treaty signed between a First Nation and the government of Ontario in the 21st century, the bulk of existing treaties being signed in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. When the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs was in estimates committee before constituency week, I asked him and some of his staff questions about progress on this. It looks like it's an ongoing process that is still years to come. There still needs to be agreement from the Algonquins as to the treaty, and there still needs to be more consultation with the general public, as well, that would be affected by the implementation of the treaty.

Treaty Awareness Week, the significance of November 1—I would be remiss not to mention the celebration of our aboriginal veterans and their contribution to our country. On June 21, I'm looking forward to the unveiling of a statue of the great Francis Pegahmagabow in the town of Parry Sound, in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. I'm sure that many here know the story of Francis Pegahmagabow already, but for those who are unfamiliar, he stands as the most highly decorated First Nations soldier in Canadian army history for his service during the First World War. Recorded accounts of his service, including action at the Battles of Ypres, the Somme, the Scarpe and the second Battle of Passchendaele, are remarkable. Serving as a sniper and a fearless messenger, Francis served nearly the entire duration of the First World War despite being wounded on more than one occasion. His awards include the Military Medal with

two bars. Upon returning to Canada at war's end, Pegahmagabow returned to Wasauksing First Nation just west of Parry Sound and served as chief during two separate stints. He also became active in politics at the federal level and, in 1943, was elected Supreme Chief of the Native Independent Government as it was then called. His legacy lives on in Wasauksing and the Parry Sound area, connecting with new generations of First Nations youth, as well as those in the local community.

Francis Pegahmagabow fought for Canada to protect the rights and freedoms of all Canadians and, at home, fought for First Nations representation and rights.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the well-deserved unveiling of that statue in Parry Sound on June 21, National Aboriginal Day.

It has also been my pleasure and many others' in the Legislature to get to know our past Lieutenant Governor, Mr. James Bartleman, who was here for this morning's proceedings. James Bartleman is also from my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. He grew up in Port Carling and is a member of the Chippewas of Mnjikaning.

He served as Lieutenant Governor from 2002 to 2007. Mr. Bartleman also had an impressive international career in Canada's foreign service, with stops in Bangladesh, Cuba, Israel, Belgium, South Africa and Australia. Upon being appointed Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Bartleman chose to focus his efforts on three main goals, all of which have significance to our relationship with our First Nations partners.

The first was reducing the stigma of mental illness. That is obviously very, very appropriate, with recent events, particularly at Attawapiskat, but obviously it's of high, high importance in our First Nations communities around Ontario. Number two was fighting against racism and discrimination, and number three of his priorities was promoting literacy among First Nations children.

When James Bartleman was Lieutenant Governor, I used to enjoy when he would be at events around Parry Sound–Muskoka, and he would always have stories about growing up in Port Carling. In terms of literacy, he talked about how important the library was to him and to his success. But he actually started reading by finding comics at the Port Carling dump. That was his initial reading, and then he made his way to the library.

Back when I was chatting with him after this morning's proceedings, I asked him if he had been to Port Carling recently. He said he had been to the library where he donated a copy of the whole collection of the books that he has authored. So it's still very active.

In 2004, he established the Lieutenant Governor's book program, which took in donated books from across Ontario and had them distributed to on-reserve First Nation libraries, particularly those in the remote and fly-in communities. I'm sure it was the importance of literacy and the challenges he faced that motivated him to do that.

One can appreciate that before the more widespread availability of Internet access, having physical books was the only way to provide opportunities for First Nations

youth with an outlet to explore through reading, and improved literacy levels. This year I received a call from a constituent hoping to donate books for this purpose. He mentioned James Bartleman in this context.

I believe that his legacy in trying to aid First Nations youth will go down as one of his greatest contributions to Ontario. It is truly immeasurable, the number of First Nations youth introduced to the joys of reading and improved literacy who owe that opportunity to the hard work and vision of James Bartleman. I'm proud to know him and proud to have gotten to know him as Lieutenant Governor.

To tie back into treaty awareness week, I would like to say that treaties are something to be celebrated and honoured. In previous years, I was also very pleased to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation here at the provincial Legislature. While the Royal Proclamation is not a traditional treaty, it served to lay the groundwork for subsequent agreements by recognizing aboriginal rights and setting the guidelines for future treaties between settlers and First Nations.

Also, August 2014 marked the 250th anniversary of the Treaty of Niagara. I believe these anniversaries are also tremendous opportunities to raise awareness and understanding about how treaties have shaped regions of our province and our history.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity as—this being my second time as PC aboriginal critic, a number of years ago when we first appointed an aboriginal critic, I had the pleasure of making a flight up into northern Ontario for the 100th anniversary of the signing of James Bay Treaty 9. That happened in the far northwest, near Mishkeegogamang, or Pickle Lake, at a historic Hudson Bay outpost, a beautiful beach on Lake St. Joseph.

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I also enjoyed that event because, as you know, I like to fly and I was able to fly my own seaplane up there. I still recall flying up there and seeing the weather report; it said it was going to be 36 degrees. I thought, "It must be wrong," but it was a couple of the hottest days I've ever experienced, in the far northwest of northern Ontario. Truly it was an honour to attend that ceremony. Nishnawbe Nation Grand Chief Stan Beardy was there, and James Bartleman was the Lieutenant Governor at the time. It was one of the first events that I was able to take in as aboriginal affairs critic.

I've also, as I mentioned before, had the opportunity in my riding to learn more about Inuit, First Nations and Métis culture by attending events around the riding. I was able to attend a three-hour ceremony with the then Minister of Transportation from the government, who was starting meetings with regard to the four-laning of Highways 400 and 69 through the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. This was a very formal procedure, with some similarities to this morning, with tobacco being presented, a smudging ceremony and prayers, etc.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention in the brief time that I have left that one of the other initiatives that has been happening around Queen's Park in the

promotion of awareness of Inuit, First Nation and Métis in the province of Ontario is the renaming of a couple of the committee rooms—I believe it's 228 and 230—into the Gathering Place. There was a ceremony—again, involving smudging and tobacco—to open up those rooms, and they are now decorated with First Nations, Inuit and Métis art. For members here they can, on a daily basis as they attend receptions, get a feel for the culture. Again, at that ceremony there was dancing and smudging etc.

Also here at Queen's Park, on an annual basis I get to attend the Louis Riel Day event that happens here on the grounds of Queen's Park. I've been privileged to participate in that in many different years, most of the time with President Gary Lipinski, who has just retired, and now more recently with the newly elected Margaret Froh.

Of course, the Métis Secretariat Act passed just a month or so ago and I was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to that.

In my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, I try not to miss, if I can, the Moon River Métis annual general meeting, which also includes a fish fry, which I always enjoy having an opportunity to attend.

Also in my time as aboriginal affairs critic, I had the opportunity when John Tory was leader—he wanted to learn more about First Nations—to charter a plane out of Thunder Bay. We flew to the most northerly community in Ontario, being Fort Severn, and met with the chief and council and learned about the community and the challenges they face with schools and many other challenges—housing, schools, water etc. We also flew to Webequie, which is right in the middle of the Ring of Fire, to see a community that at that time had a lot more activity going on. Again, Sam Beardy, who was the Nishnawbe Nation chief, was there to help educate us. That was a very full and interesting day.

More recently, I had the opportunity in Thunder Bay to meet with Nishnawbe Nation Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, who was also here at today's proceedings, with the new leader of our party, Patrick Brown, who was interested in meeting and learning more. I know that, at that meeting, Patrick would also like to visit some of the remote First Nations, which certainly face some of the greatest challenges in the province of Ontario. So I look forward to arranging that sometime in the future. I have also had the opportunity to attend powwows in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka, particularly in the French River area.

In conclusion, I would just like to say that treaties are central to the way of life in our future with individual First Nations, and I look forward to advocating for the recognition of treaty rights, increased education and awareness, and a respectful government-to-government relationship between First Nations and the government of Ontario.

Just as we will continue to celebrate treaties, I look forward to observing Ontario's first treaty awareness week this November, starting on the Sunday, with the First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. It's been a

pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to this bill this afternoon. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I rise, on behalf of New Democrats, to put a few words on the record in regard to the bill that was introduced in the House just now, which we support. Obviously, it's one that the three parties have agreed to. House leaders got together, and we've said that we would allow this bill not only to be introduced today, but actually to get second and third readings, all in the same day. So I just want to start at the beginning by saying that New Democrats are proud to stand and support Bill 207, the Treaties Recognition Week bill.

But I've got to tell you that I want to speak to some of the issues we should really be trying to address in this province. I, like Sarah Campbell and a few other members in this House, represent a large number of First Nation communities. In a lot of those communities, there is very, very weakened infrastructure—I will just put it that way.

If you're looking at housing, here is the picture: Most houses on-reserve probably house 15 to 25 people. You have three-bedroom houses where one family is in one bedroom, another family is in the second bedroom and another family is in the third bedroom. Mom and dad are on a bed in the bedroom. You may have a couple of kids sleeping somewhere on that bed or in a bed beside it. In some cases, I've seen where they've taken the closet out in order to make bunks so you can hotbed kids to sleep, if it's a large family. That's the condition that kids on-reserve in many of our communities have to face.

I ask you the following: How does a kid growing up in a house that's overcrowded, a house where you don't even have your own bedroom where you can go in and study your homework, do well in school? How do we support that child to make sure they are able to fully participate in the education system and are able to get an education that will serve them well in the years to come? It's pretty hard.

When you go into communities across northern Ontario, especially the fly-in remote reserves, a lot of those kids are like every other kid out in Ontario and across Canada. They're wide-eyed and bushy-tailed, want to have all kinds of fun and want to be able to learn and soak in the information. But unfortunately, for many of them, they find themselves three, four, five years behind their counterparts in non-aboriginal communities, because what we put in place after the residential schools was certainly an improvement—don't get me wrong; the residential schools were certainly not the way to go—but what we put in place took away only part of the problem. It didn't really address what we need in our communities to give kids what they need to be able to get a full education. So if you look at the whole experience of what happened in residential schools, it still marks our communities today.

Passing such a bill, I think, is a good thing, recognizing that we have signed treaties in this province with

our First Nations friends on James Bay with Treaty 9; we are signatories to that. But we need to also recognize that there's much that has not been done and much that needs to be done, and we're running out of time. We're leaving far too many people behind who, quite frankly, are giving up on life.

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I represent the community of Attawapiskat. Many of you will know, as you've been reading in the papers recently, that there has been a rash of attempted suicides in that community—and sometimes, unfortunately, people go through with it—for kids who are school age. There are obviously some over school age who are attempting as well, but there are a number of young kids who are attempting, by way of pacts, to unfortunately make that decision. So you've got to ask yourself a question: How does a child in Attawapiskat come to that?

Well, it's complicated and simple. It's complicated in the sense that residential schools and what they have done to the people of the James Bay and other indigenous people across this province and across this country has really wrecked our communities. How do you, as a parent, parent a child when you grew up in an environment where they tried to beat the Indian out of you? They wouldn't allow you to speak your language. In some cases, you were not only physically assaulted, but sexually assaulted. How does a person who has never learned parenting skills become a parent when they become older?

As one of the presenters, one of the chiefs who was here in the Legislature, said this morning—I can't remember who it was; maybe it was one of the elders. But somebody had mentioned this morning, and it struck home to me, that violence is a learned behaviour. I think, in fact, the Premier had said that, which is true. Residential schools, if they did anything other than the horror that people had to go through, instilled a culture of violence that didn't exist before in our aboriginal communities.

I talk to elders across my riding. They talk about how, prior to being into the reserves—because where I come from, most of the reserves were not around until about the 1940s or the 1950s in the way that we can know them today—of course you had people who got mad at each other and stuff, but violence is not a Mushkegowuk thing. It's just not the way they are; that's not the way they're wired. But they learned that in residential schools.

So, by way of residential schools, we not only beat the Indian out of the child that went to school, we not only depressed them, we didn't only beat them, we didn't only attack them, but in many ways, we took away their parenting skills. And that has really affected the ability of communities to function thereafter. We still see the after-effects of that in our communities.

And so what we've done is we've put in place an education system on-reserve that only does part of what needs to be done. It's a federal system—first of all, I will argue the federal government has no capacity to run education—but we've put schools on-reserve and those schools on-reserve are funded at about half the level of

any other school in Ontario. If I'm a kid going to school in Timmins, I get more dollars per pupil than a kid going to school in Attawapiskat, Fort Albany or Peawanuck. How can that be? Are they not children? Are they not equal to children in any other place? In fact, they should have more money, because they're in a more geographically isolated area that costs more to run a school when it comes to heat and staffing and bringing in supplies. But they're funded at less than what the provincial school system offers.

I say we here in this Legislature talk about treaty recognition—of course we'll support Bill 207—but why don't we look at trying to change and break the cycle in education by saying, "Let's engage in a discussion with our indigenous people about how they can opt into a provincial school system, one where they don't abrogate the treaty rights and one that makes sure the federal government doesn't absolve itself of its fiduciary responsibility, but more importantly, an opportunity to enter into their own aboriginal school board, so they can teach their kids in their own language and they can develop the curriculum in such a way that it's sensitive to their culture and language and who they are"?

Je suis francophone. Mon premier langage est le français. L'anglais, je ne l'ai pas appris avant d'avoir six ou sept ans. Pourquoi j'ai appris l'anglais? Je l'ai appris dans la rue. J'ai eu la chance non seulement d'apprendre mon langage sur les genoux de ma mère, mais j'ai continué mon langage à l'école. Donc, je m'identifie aujourd'hui comme francophone.

I'm just saying, for those who didn't understand: My first language is French. I learned French at my mother's knee. As I got older and I went to school, when I was four or five years old I went to school in a French school with other French kids and with French teachers. I consider myself a francophone today; I don't consider myself anything else. I'm a Franco-Ontarian. Because I feel good about who I am, I can compete with anybody in this society. Nobody is any better or any worse than me. Why don't we give that same opportunity to aboriginal kids—our First Nations friends—so that for a child who goes to school in Attawapiskat, if that community chooses to opt into a provincial school board system, that would allow them to be able to be educated in their own language?

Learning mathematics or geography or history—it doesn't have to be taught in English or French. It can be taught in your own language. The only class that you would have to take in English is English. I'm going to be bringing a bill to this Legislature later this week that brings that concept of saying that if the community decides, "I want to opt in to an aboriginal school board of my own making"—and it would be strictly voluntary—the province would then, along with the First Nation, be able to negotiate with the federal government the creation of this board, in such a way that provides that kids are taught in a provincial system that has more money tied to it as compared to the federal system, that respects the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government, that

respects the treaty rights of First Nations and that allows them to develop a curriculum that is sensitive to their own cultural needs and language, etc. I hope that I get some support for that when that bill comes up for debate later on this fall.

My point is: If we're serious about our treaty rights, we have to understand what the treaties were meant to do. Some of you might have known a person who is no longer with us: Stan Louttit. Stan was originally from Fort Albany, if I remember correctly. He was born in Fort Albany but he lived in Moose Factory most of his life. Stan is one of those people, one those many people that I've met over the years, who really got me to understand a few things that I had no idea about, being a guy who grew up in Timmins, Ontario, next to all kinds of friends who were First Nation members. He got me to understand that when their forefathers signed treaties, it was always with an open heart. They would go in and they would sign treaties. They would never be giving up the rights to the land; it was about sharing the land. It was about: "This land that we call the Mushkegowuk territory—the James Bay area—is there for the benefit of all. So in exchange for you to be able to come into our land and to be able to exploit it—rivers, rail, mining, forestry, whatever it might be—in exchange, we'll be able to share in that so that we get some economic benefits. But we will also get an education and a health care system so that our kids can go to school and they can be well taught and our people can be well taken care of when it comes to health care."

Here we are, over 100 years later. We signed the treaty in 1906, I believe. And here we are, over 100 years later, and we're still struggling to deal with some of the same issues that were supposedly agreed to when we signed the treaty.

Let's look at where we are now. We're better than we were. I'm not going to say for one second that things have not gotten better; of course they have. But we have an education system that is still failing our kids. The education system that we have, in my view, could be much improved by finding a way of bringing it into the provincial system and being able to deliver education in a way that's culturally appropriate but also properly supported by the province, which is in the business of education. Here's something that we can do today to respect our treaty rights.

I have here—it's not a prop, Mr. Speaker; it's a document of the government of Ontario. It's the compendium document to Treaty 9. I remember reading this a long, long time ago—the entirety of the document—because Stan Louttit made me read it. Stan said, "You have to read this to properly understand." What this essentially said was: "We, the First Nations people of Moosonee"—or Moose Factory or Attawapiskat or Marten Falls—"sign with the understanding that we'll share the land. You can come in and do these things, but one of the things we're going to get back is an education system."

Here we are today, 2016: We can start working towards that reconciliation. We can say, "Okay, we hear you." Let's try to live up to what the treaty was supposed

to be all about, which is providing good education to the kids on-reserve, making sure that the kids who grow up in Attawapiskat or anywhere else on-reserve in this province are able to get an education that's equal to any other child in this province. We understand that colleges and universities are not going to be established in all of those communities, just like colleges and universities are not established in all of our communities across Ontario. But at the very minimum we should have JK to 12 so that those kids can at least get what's necessary to give them the building blocks and the start that they need for what they're going to do for the rest of their lives. This is one thing alone that we can do when it comes to living up to treaty.

1510

The other thing that the treaty said was that we will provide health care to the people of the Mushkegowuk territory. We have. In fairness, the federal government established a health care system that was okay. It wasn't great, but it was okay. It was run for a number of years, and some years ago we started a process here in Ontario where we transferred the hospital—not the entire health system, but most of the health system was already with the province—over to the province. The problem that we now have is that the structure by which we have transferred it is not functioning. The hospitals act of Ontario demands that you have a hospital board as in every other community. I just want to ring the bell here. Living in Attawapiskat in the James Bay is not the same as living in Timmins or Toronto. Having a hospital board of the same type doesn't work. So the Grand Chief, Chief Solomon, from the Mushkegowuk territory, has been onto the Minister of Health, and I have to say there's some positive response, so hopefully this is going to happen. I've been working with them at a number of meetings and conferences that we've had.

We need to do two things in order to live up to what was demanded in the treaty—providing adequate health care to the citizens who live on-reserve; in my case, the James Bay would be the one. What the Grand Chief is proposing to live up to what's in the treaty is to say, "First of all, let's create our own health planning authority, other than having the LHIN, and allowing us to deliver our own health services to our own people in a way that is culturally, linguistically appropriate to the people that we serve"—recognizing the vast geography between Moose Factory, Ontario, and Peawanuck, Ontario, because we're going from the Moose River through the James Bay into the Hudson Bay. It's a pretty big territory. I get there in my plane and fly, and I can look over the edge of the earth, and it's curved, and I don't see the other place that I'm going to. It's a pretty big area. My point is that what Chief Solomon wants is that we actually put in place a planning authority and a health delivery system that is run, controlled and developed by First Nations with the province—because the province is the experts in the field—and, obviously, funded by the federal and provincial governments as it would be in any other case, but one that actually works for the First Nations people.

Let me give you an example of why this is important. I'm going to get in a little bit of trouble with a few people back in my own riding for saying this. Last winter—or the winter before, I should say—we had a major oil leak underneath the hospital in Attawapiskat. As a result of that oil leak under the Weeneebayko hospital—there's a wing, a very nice building right in Attawapiskat, provincially owned, provincially controlled—the building became contaminated. The biggest complaint that the community had was not with the provincial government. The biggest complaint the community had was that their own hospital administration and board were not responding to them. Nobody was coming to them and saying, "Let's sit down and talk about this. Let's communicate. Let's properly understand what's going on. Let us understand as a hospital what's important to the community, what we need to do." So when this oil spill happened, the first thing that I had to deal with as a member, as I called up chief and council, was, "Gilles, the hospital is not talking to us." Well, there's the problem. The structure is a colonial structure. It's the Ontario hospitals act structure.

What we need to have is a board of chiefs that actually is the board. That's what Chief Solomon and other chiefs want: that when you have a hospital as we do up on the James Bay, it would be the chiefs from each of the communities who are on the board. That's what we used to have with the old Weeneebayko hospital. The idea would be that the chiefs would be at the table. They would be part of the decision-making process about how we administer and run our hospital and our health services on the James Bay. You would have the health authority that's above it to be able to make decisions about funding and about what community supports need to be in place; how do the Weeneebayko health services work with the community health services in Attawapiskat or Payukotayno, which is the child and youth services; and how do all of these organizations work together in a way that is culturally, linguistically and geographically in sync with the realities of the James Bay? That's what the chief is asking for.

In the case of the hospital, as I said, the first couple of meetings that I had up on the James Bay were about bringing the hospital director and others into the community to have discussions with the community so that the community could properly understand what was going on, but more importantly, that the hospital understand what was going on with the community.

I came down here, along with the chief and others, and met with Minister Hoskins. I give him full credit: "Not a problem; we'll do what has to be done to fix it."

It took some time; there's no question. We had problems. At one point we found remains underneath the building. We thought, "Oh boy, is this a burial ground?" It turned out to be an animal that was buried there before the hospital was built.

There were real complications in doing the cleanup because the oil had migrated. Not only that, but there was oil that was there from before they built the building. We've got to wonder who made that decision.

The point is, the government did what it had to do. The hospital has reopened under a resolution by council saying that there are some other things that have to happen that haven't happened yet. Stay tuned. Who knows what's going to happen here?

My point is that if we're serious about treaties, as we should be about Treaty 9—Treaty 9 says that we will provide health services to the James Bay so the people of the James Bay can have a comparable health system to the people outside of the James Bay. Essentially, that's what the treaty says. The only way that I believe that this Bill 207, recognizing Treaties Recognition Week, really can be alive is for us to actually live up to what the treaty is.

Those are just two examples of where the province—and I'm going to give you another one in a second—could live up to our recognition of our responsibility when it comes to treaties with our First Nations brothers and sisters. Let's do something about education. Let's do something about our health system so that we can actually do what the First Nations themselves want and to develop a system that works for them.

In the case of the mental health crisis that we're seeing on the James Bay right now, I want members to think about this: If you lived in, let's say, a community of 1,700 people, you would have more services in that community when it comes to mental health services than you do in Attawapiskat. At Attawapiskat—get ready—you have one mental health worker for about 1,700 people on the reserve. How in heck is one worker going to deal with the needs of 1,700 people? I'm not saying that all 1,700 have mental health issues they need dealt with, but certainly a percentage of them do.

You have the Weeneebayko hospital, which has one mental health worker. That means to say, if you have a crisis when the person is not at work, you're brought into the hospital and you're just dealt with by a regular nurse. If you happen to get sick and have an episode on the weekend when that person is not working, what do you do? A person goes out on a two-week holiday or has to go out because their daughter is giving birth in Timmins, or whatever—you can't run a system that way.

Then you've got Payukotayno, which is our children and youth services. It's like our children's aid society. They're trying really hard, but they're underfunded. They don't have the staff either. Here's Payukotayno, which has two people in Attawapiskat who are supposedly doing mental health work, but when I sit down with the chief and council and I sit down with Weeneebayko, as I did a couple of weeks ago, up at Attawapiskat, nobody had any idea what those people were doing or what their jobs were. They're so busy, the two of them, trying to do whatever they're doing, they don't have a chance to communicate, and there's no real coordination of services between Weeneebayko and Payukotayno and the rest of the community. That's why Grand Chief Solomon wants this change. We need to have a system that allows everybody to know what's going on so that we can work together with whatever resources we have and maximize

the use of those resources so that we have a better chance of catching people when they fall.

I go back to a small community. If I was in Smooth Rock Falls and I was to have an episode and would need mental health services, we have mental health services available in Smooth Rock Falls. We have what's necessary for people to be able to be dealt with and to be able to hopefully get better and to start the process of healing.

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But, if you're in Attawapiskat and you're a 12-year-old kid, you go to a house with 20 or 25 people in it. You live in whatever that gives. Some days it's good; some days it's less good. There's nobody to deal with you. So how do you feel?

I'll say this: We are very, very lucky people, in Ontario and Canada. The Mushkegowuk people are an infinitely proud and very calm people. It is not their way to agitate. It is not their way to do what a lot of others, like in my culture, would do, which is get all excited and God knows what. They're still willing to work with us, after all of that, to be able to try to find a solution.

You have, a-hundred-and-some-odd years after the treaty is signed, the grand chief of the territory saying, "I'm still here. I'm still willing to live up to the terms and conditions of Treaty 9. Hello out there? Ontario, can you come and work with me? Canada, can you come and work with me?" That's all they're asking for. They're asking that the senior levels of government actually work with our First Nations, to be able to do what's right, for us to live up to what was in the treaty.

I just say to my friends here that it's a good thing that we're doing this Bill 207, for the Treaties Recognition Week. Certainly, we're going to support it. I don't want to diminish the importance of that today. But if we're truly serious about us respecting treaties and doing what's right, we have to first remember what we signed in the treaty and that we live up to what we signed in the first place. This is my treaty as much as it is yours, because I'm a signatory to it as well. It's incumbent upon me as a citizen to make sure that I live up to my responsibilities in the treaty. All of us in this Legislature have that same responsibility.

All I know is, as I look to the James Bay, to the people that I represent, they're still there. There's still patience. They're loving people, prepared to work with us despite all of the disappointments over the years. It always amazes me. They're still there.

I want to end on this note. People may take this wrong, but I just want to say it. It's a story that always kind of struck me some years ago. I go flying into Marten Falls. Some of you might know Elijah Moonias. Eli was supposed to pick me up at the airport. I fly my plane in, and as I land on the ground, it's about minus 30 and the wind is blowing. I'm cold as heck and I'm trying to wrap the plane up and plug it in.

Eli finally drives his pickup up to the side of the plane. He looks at me and he says, "Bisson." I say yes. He says, "NDP." I say yes. He says, "Moonias. Communist."

I'd never seen that. You laugh because you've probably heard this story. I was bewildered all that day, going, "I've been dealing with chiefs on the coast for some time. I've never had one self-identify as a communist before." I finally, after a little while, say, "Chief Eli, you have to tell me what this is all about."

He sits down and he says, "Well, when I was seven years old, a plane came into my community, landed on the river, and they snatched me. They took me off to a residential school. For two years, I never came back home. They wouldn't let me come back."

"Finally, after about two years, they flew me back into the community. When I got there, you have to remember, the community back then was not what it is now. We didn't have wooden floors. Many of us lived in tents, because we were still living on the land in the winter, so in the summer we would pitch our tent where the community is. When I showed up at the community, they boarded me at the priest's house."

The priest had a regular house like anybody else would have. Eli says to the priest, "Where's my mom and dad?" The priest says, "Oh, you have to go down there, around the corner, around the stump, over the creek and you're going to find your mama living over there."

So little Eli goes down there to find his parents and gets there. His parents are still out in the bush, but his grandma is there. So he meets his grandmother and he's all excited and spends some quality time with his grandmother that afternoon.

He goes back to the priest's house and they're having supper. He says, "Father, I have a question." He says, "What's that?"

He says, "How come, when I go visit my grandmother, she lives in a place with dirt floors, she brings water in in a bucket, she brings her waste out in a bucket. I look in this, and you've got a wooden floor, you've got water that comes out of the tap, you've got heat that comes out of a switch. Why is it that you live like this and my grandmother lives like that?" And he says, "Shut up. You're being a communist."

So he says, "Since that day, I consider myself a communist."

But the point, I think, is made. The experience Eli had is the experience of many, which was that it wasn't only that the residential school marked you, for the experience that you had, but it's also what happened as far as the makeup of the community itself, and to what point it was institutionalized both within the church and within the government in the delivery of those services.

As we move towards the passing of Bill 207, I'd just ask members, let's live up to what we signed in our treaties. Let's do what we said we would do over a hundred years ago and provide our aboriginal friends with the services they so desire and so much deserve, as we all do across this province.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House earlier today, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Zimmer has moved second reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DE RECONNAISSANCE DES TRAITÉS

Mr. Dhillon, on behalf of Mr. Zimmer, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week / Projet de loi 207, Loi proclamant la Semaine de reconnaissance des traités.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Dhillon has moved third reading of Bill 207, An Act to proclaim Treaties Recognition Week. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A point of order—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: You don't ask me. You ask him.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's what I'm asking. Can you send us a copy?

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just so I get a copy.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's in the order paper, Speaker, the copy of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): All right. I recognize the government House leader to move the motion.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, the following arrangements be made with respect to Bill 201, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007:

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday, June 6, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to two hours, followed by discussion with the officer moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from the leader of the Green Party of Ontario, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour followed by discussion with the leader moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 2016, for the purpose of

hearing from a witness chosen by the official opposition House leader, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour followed by discussion with the witness moderated by the Chair; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, June 9, 2016, for the purpose of hearing from a witness chosen by the third party House leader, who will be invited to make a presentation of up to one hour, followed by discussion with the witness moderated by the Chair; and

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That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, June 7, and Wednesday, June 8, 2016, for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the deadline to request to appear on these dates be 12 noon, Thursday, June 2, 2016; and

That witnesses be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

That all witnesses receive 10 minutes for presentation and 15 minutes of questioning by committee members; and

That the Chief Electoral Officer or his designate be invited to attend committee hearings as an adviser authorized to answer questions posed by members and provide feedback on presentations; and

That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August for the purpose of public hearings; and

That the committee be authorized to meet from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 1, 2016, for the purpose of organizing hearings during the summer adjournment; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 1 p.m. on Monday, August 15, 2016; and

That the deadline for filing amendments with the Clerk of the Committee following public hearings be 4 p.m. on Monday, August 22, 2016; and

That the committee be authorized to meet in Toronto from Monday, August 29, to Thursday, September 1, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That at 4 p.m. on Thursday, September 1, 2016, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, September 12, 2016. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the

question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for second reading, which order may be called that same day; and

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 74.

Does the minister wish to lead off the debate?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I will, Speaker. Thank you very much for recognizing me to speak on this important motion, government motion number 74, which relates to Bill 201—I believe that is the number of the bill—An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Speaker, as you know, the government has tabled this very important bill in the House, dealing with modernizing election finances rules in the province of Ontario. But we've done something more than just introduce the bill. We have worked very closely with the opposition parties—particularly the official opposition and the Green Party of Ontario—to ensure that there is sufficient input from opposition parties in the drafting of the bill and making sure that it captures all the main elements as they relate to the modernizing of election finances rules in the province of Ontario.

But most importantly, Speaker, the government is very much interested in hearing from the people of Ontario when it comes to this draft legislation, so that it could be further improved and strengthened to ensure that we have accountability and transparency when it comes to election financing in our province.

Therefore, one of the most unprecedented things we have done, or something that has been used rarely, is to send this bill to the Standing Committee on General Government right after first reading. As the Speaker would know, usually a bill gets tabled at first reading, and then second reading debate commences for a good, at least, 10 hours or so in this House before it is referred for public consultation and clause-by-clause.

In this particular instance, the government has chosen—and I believe and hope there will be support from the opposition parties and from all members—to forward this bill right after first reading, to make sure that we take the time during the summer and consult Ontarians in a robust manner, with the view of further improving this draft legislation.

That is very much in essence what this motion captures. And I'll go through some of the specifics with you, Speaker, as to what this motion does.

First of all, it starts the committee process at the Standing Committee on General Government right on June 6, which is next week. What the motion is asking, as a first step, is that the Chief Electoral Officer be invited to present to the committee on this bill and, of course, make himself available to members of the committee to engage in the discussion around this bill and modernizing of the role of election financing.

The second thing it asks for is that, on the following day, the leader of the Green Party of Ontario be invited to

come and speak to the committee and present on this important bill, with, of course, an opportunity for all committee members to engage in the discussion with him.

Then the motion goes on to ask the opposition parties to invite an independent expert witness, one for each party, to come and present to the committee—again, an opportunity to start having a constructive dialogue with committee members on the merit and the substance of the bill, and of course an opportunity to better understand and learn best practices when it comes to election transparency, which will strengthen transparency and accountability. That's why one of the things that we are suggesting in this bill is to give an opportunity to both opposition parties to independently call an expert witness.

Further, the next week, it also asks for the committee to sit in the evening hours from 6:45 p.m. till about 9 p.m. so that we can start engaging Ontarians and create an opportunity for Ontarians, who work very hard during the typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. time frame, to come to the Legislature in the evening to be able to present on the bill. Of course, our aim is to get as many Ontarians as possible to come and make the committee process more accessible for Ontarians. That is why this motion is asking to create an opportunity for the committee to sit in the evening hours so that Ontarians are able to participate in this very important process.

The motion goes on and also requires that it work through the summer months. The motion requires four weeks of sitting during the summer months, with the view of an opportunity for the committee to travel across the province. Again, our hope and expectation is that the committee members, working in a constructive fashion, will be able to travel the breadth and scope of our great province and find opportunities to invite Ontarians to come and present their point of view on this very important matter.

This bill, of course, is all about further strengthening democracy in the province of Ontario. We want to make sure that, during the summer months, there is ample opportunity for Ontarians to come forward—and not just Ontarians, but other legal experts as well. So this bill creates that platform, creates that opportunity for the committee to be able to work through the summer months—up to four weeks—to travel across the province, and to put an invitation out to Ontarians for them to come forward and speak to this very important bill, to give their point of view and perspective to further strengthen this bill.

Lastly, in terms of timelines associated, what this bill is also suggesting is for the committee to do clause-by-clause towards the end of August and early September, with the view of ensuring that all the work that has been done, all the information that has been collected from Ontarians and legal experts, can then be translated, if I could use that expression, into amendments to the bill, into additions to the bill in a clause-by-clause manner, so that that bill can be referred back to this House for second reading debate when we come back again from our summer recess, and that is post Labour Day.

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The whole notion, during the summer months, is to ensure that the committee gets ample time to work, to travel, to listen to Ontarians, to make changes to the bill and report it back to the House in September, so that we can then go on with the work on second reading debate, as is the norm in this place, go back to public consultation for committee process after second reading, as stipulated in the standing order rules, and then after that work, report the legislation back for third reading debate. Our hope and expectation is that we can have this bill passed before the end of the year so that this legislation can come into place starting January 1, 2017—of course, that being premised on the bill passing through this Legislature.

Again, the hope is that by getting the bill passed and by coming into effect on January 1, 2017, it lets everyone, all political parties in the province of Ontario—not just the ones who are sitting in this Legislature—and all other individuals, candidates, independent they may be, know the new rules and transition into the new rules far in advance of the next election, which will take place in 2018. That's why we want to create ample opportunity for this bill to have public consultation, and that's why we have proposed this motion that will allow for us to work through the summer after first reading, then second reading in the fall, then second reading committee process—so committee process times two in essence—and then third reading debate and passage of the bill. I think that's important because this bill deserves that kind of public scrutiny and public input. As I said, this is about modernizing public financing, election financing, and ensuring that we further strengthen transparency and accountability in the work we do.

Now, I still feel very strongly that this is the right process to take, Speaker, because as legislators—and we have had this debate in this House around this bill—it is important that we do this work. That is exactly why we have been elected: to take on difficult issues that come up, to be able to work together collectively, to solicit ideas and use the legislative mechanisms to bring Ontarians into the process, solicit their feedback and work collectively, in a collaborative manner, because that's what people out there expect us to do, and develop solutions together. That is exactly what we have outlined: a very robust consultative process within the framework of our standing order rules, within the legislative process, making sure that legislators are able to participate in that important conversation, are able to listen to Ontarians, solicit their ideas and make this draft bill even stronger.

Speaker, one of the other things that is proposed in this motion is the role of the Chief Electoral Officer. I think I mentioned to you earlier that one of the first things that we're asking to do in this motion is to ask the Chief Electoral Officer to be the first presenter. But in my conversations with the opposition parties, and particularly the official opposition, an idea was brought forward that we have the Chief Electoral Officer be part of the committee and their work, as an adviser. I thought that that was a very good idea, because he does bring a

very unique expertise. As the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario, he obviously has much knowledge and expertise of rules in other jurisdictions, like the federal government, upon which a lot of this bill is modelled. Therefore, Speaker, the motion also asks that the Chief Electoral Officer be able to attend all committee hearings as an adviser to the committee, so that we as committee members are able to use his expertise or his designate's expertise on this bill.

I do want to thank the official opposition and the House leader of the official opposition for this suggestion. I'm happy that we were able to incorporate that within this process.

I think there is pretty much a broad consensus across all party lines that we need to strengthen and modernize Ontario's financing rules, and I'm glad that the government is moving forward with that. I think there's a lot of opportunity, as I've stated earlier, for all of us to work together.

I also very strongly believe that this is really not a partisan issue. This is an issue around strengthening our democracy, and it is in the best interests of all members of the Legislature and everybody who is engaged in a democratic process—we hope that every Ontarian is—to participate in this process. Therefore, Speaker, my plea will go out to all members and all parties to please engage in a substantive conversation around this legislation. I think it's important that we set up a framework for the future that further instills confidence in a democracy from the people.

One of the strengths we have as a province and as a country is our democratic system, the fairness around our democratic system. It's the opportunity for parties and individuals to engage in a healthy debate around issues that are most important to our constituents. That's what makes our democracy so strong.

I often say that it is the multiplicity of ideas—the clash of ideas—that makes us and our democracy so strong, because it allows for an environment where different ideas can come together. Then the people get to decide, at the end of the day, which idea or ideas they like the most. It's very much a system that is based on merit, and every four years the people of Ontario, in the case of our province, get to make that determination.

We know that people in many other parts of the world would love to emulate our system, where that kind of deep debate and discourse in a respectful manner takes place without any violence whatsoever.

Many have heard my personal experience. As many know in this House—and I have spoken about it in the past—I was born in another part of the world and in my early childhood was living under a military regime, where my father was involved in a pro-democracy movement and spent nine months as a political prisoner. His offence was that he led a march, a protest asking for the right to vote, point finale. I still have a copy of his charge sheet from the military court. He was under the martial law ordinance at that time. That's what he was accused of, that he was inciting people—imagine this: You're provoking people to have a right to vote. That was his

crime. I'm very proud of my father for committing that crime, because that's a crime that defines the essence of our society.

One of the most incredible things my parents did, in my view—they sacrificed a lot during that period; I was 10 years old at that time—was to come to this country, where it's not a criminal offence to be a member of a political party, it is not a criminal offence to have a right to vote and go every four years and cast that ballot, and it is not a criminal offence to be part of a Legislature where we can get engage in healthy dialogue and debate.

That's the kind of society we're building. That's the kind of democracy we need to continue to further strengthen. It is incumbent upon us as legislators—nobody else, Speaker. It is very much incumbent upon us as legislators to champion that, to work on this type of legislation to further strengthen democracy.

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We need to trust ourselves that we can do so in a manner that is non-partisan, that is in the best interests of Ontarians, the people we represent, people who have the right to vote or who may not have the right to vote, like the pages in our chamber, who are just not old enough to vote, or new Canadians, who are not yet Canadian citizens and have not earned the right to vote.

It is our responsibility, as you know very well, to represent every single voice. By not engaging in that dialogue and that conversation, and by not taking on difficult issues like this particular bill, I think we will be abdicating our responsibility.

Speaker, I'm personally very comfortable, from every core of my being, that this is the right process that we are taking. We have tried to work very hard with all political parties to get their input and their advice in this matter. To that, Speaker, I will say that even until the last minute, we received advice from the third party as well, as to how we can improve upon this motion, and I have accepted some of that advice.

In closing, I'm going to move an amendment to my own motion that I have received from the third party, and it's something that we agree on.

Speaker, at this time, I move that the clause, "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with:

"That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and

"That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and"

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Naqvi has moved that the clause "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with:

"That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and

“That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and”

Further debate? I can recognize the government House leader to speak to this motion.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm not going to take too long except to say that this amendment to the original motion is based on the advice that I've received from the House leader of the third party in particular, but it's a sentiment that I heard from members from the official opposition as well.

As I said, we've been working in a spirit of co-operation and want to make sure that there is latitude and flexibility available to the members of the committee to be able to do their work in a collaborative and co-operative fashion. Therefore, I have moved this amendment in that spirit, and I hope it will be acceptable to all the members of this Legislature, and particularly the government notice of motion 74 as an amendment.

Once again, thank you very much for indulging me and giving me the opportunity to speak on this important motion. I'm sure there will be many more opportunities for myself and other members to speak on the bill as well, when it will come up for second reading debate.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd just like to clarify that I'm going to be sharing my time with my colleague and friend from Nipissing, Vic Fedeli.

It's a pleasure to stand today and speak about Bill 201, An Act to amend the Election Finances Act and the Taxation Act, 2007.

Speaker, thank you very much for acknowledging me to speak on this motion. The reason we are debating this motion is that this Liberal government has got itself into a serious pickle over political fundraising. From big-ticket fundraising to fundraising quotas, this Liberal government and this Premier have used this and abused the rules around political fundraising unlike anything that we have ever seen before. They've clearly decided they've padded their bank accounts enough, so now it's time to change the rules.

I find it interesting that just back in October 2015, I tabled a private member's bill on third-party advertising in this House. The Premier and her entire caucus, in fact, voted unanimously against my PMB. Yet, today, they're keen to steamroll and move this reform forward. It's interesting what happens when the media gets involved and the public starts to challenge them on things that are actually seen to be self-serving. All of a sudden, they have now found religion on electoral reform and financing.

When I tabled my bill, it was about fairness. It was about anyone being able to step out and run for a position, a privileged position like this, and actually play with a set of fair playing rules so that anybody, regardless of their stake in life, could step up and say, “I want to be a member of provincial Parliament.” That was the essence of why I tabled my bill. As well, the Chief Electoral Officer has twice—in the last two reports he has tabled—suggested that there needs to be significant

reform. And yet, again, the government did nothing of their own volition. They certainly didn't do it.

My colleagues, both Rick Nicholls from Chatham-Kent-Essex and the member from Fergus-Elora—your riding, Mr. Speaker. You tabled it as well. They voted against both of those. So three times they had the ability, just in the short term, to actually change this. Now, all of a sudden, because they got caught with their hand in the cookie jar, they've decided that they need to do this.

I find it interesting that the government House leader—and I have a lot of respect for the government House leader—is suggesting open debate and that he wants to strengthen democracy, and yet most of what has been written so far was done behind closed doors. It wasn't open to ourselves and the third party, necessarily, to actually—the Premier came with it on the back of a napkin. I'm actually going to give her credit that she did it on the weekend. That's wonderful. Some people went the other way. I think it's great. We all work all weekend. We work seven days a week. But it was on the back of a napkin. It wasn't open dialogue. It wasn't open debate to create a document that we all had the ability to have fair input on. She came and said, “Here's what I believe, and you're going to like it.”

Despite a promise to fix it, there remain no restrictions on cash-for-access ministerial fundraising. The proposed legislation does not address changes to the rules for lobbyists or political staff, or the many loopholes to third-party special interest advertising. I just want to remind those people listening and those in the House today that third-party advertising in the last election spent \$8.6 million—way more than the three parties combined. That, to me, is just fundamentally wrong. When a group that is not duly elected can actually have that much influence on an election, we've lost our way somewhere. That was the whole intent of my private member's bill: to bring fairness and equity back to individuals who want to step up to this very, very distinguished—I believe—career.

Their legislation, as I've said before, was crafted behind closed doors. Frankly, that's offensive. The government House leader—and I hadn't heard this story before—spoke about his father being a political prisoner and wanted to speak of participation in democracy. And yet, again, his Premier crafted this behind closed doors. She crafted what she wanted to happen for their benefit—

Interjection: Self-serving.

Mr. Bill Walker: —self-serving benefit, as opposed to having open and frank dialogue. We suggested that it should be an all-party group that actually gets together and creates the basics so that everyone could be playing from the same ground rules. To me, Mr. Speaker, this is fundamental democracy. Again—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's like banning natural gas.

Mr. Bill Walker: Banning natural gas: exactly. Where did that come from? It certainly wasn't from this side of the House; I can assure you of that.

The government House leader, as well, said that the core of his being believes in the process they are following. It seems counter to participatory democracy

and the ability for all people to have a say when, again, they're controlling how we write the rules and where the rules are written. Yes, they're trying to say that we're going to have some public debate, but if I go back to the budgetary process, again, they had debates all over the province. It was wonderful, except they didn't even let it get to the committee to actually explore all of the input that was given by the great people of Ontario before they tabled their budget. So I am a little bit cynical when they tell me that it's going to be open and participatory. It will be open and participatory as long as they control all of the details and all of the access to that.

It brings me to the point—before I finish this thought process—that there's also talk of them wanting to change the election process overall. They think that they want to move forward. Similar to the federal Liberals, they want to get rid of first-past-the-post, and frankly, it worries me. It worries me because if they're not going to debate it openly with input from all parties involved, then that is not democracy. They have to do it with a vote by every single voter who is eligible. That is open and participatory democracy. We've called that, if any of those changes happen, it has to be done through a referendum so that every single person out there has the ability to have their say. Electoral reform belongs to the voter, not to one party, not to one group, not to special interest groups, but to all people, to have their individual say.

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Recent revelations show that the government held over 90 cash-for-access fundraisers in two years, which in turn shows that the Wynne Liberals may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. Recent revelations also show that Ontario's electricity users, who are paying the highest prices for electricity in their lifetime, are at the losing end of this political machination.

This is why we in the PC Party have called and continue to call for a public inquiry. I've had hundreds of constituents in Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and Ontarians from all corners of this province support this call by signing our petition in support of an inquiry. Clearly, this government continues to lose the trust of the people of Ontario.

I'm going to read comments from some of them. It's important that this be on the record. It's not just us as the opposition; it's not just us doing our job to hold the government accountable, which is truly what we're sent here to do when we're on this side of the House. This is from people, general Ontarians, who have explained this to us.

"The Wynne Liberal government has to be the most corrupt/incompetent Ontario government we have experienced since Confederation"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to have to ask the member to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker. It was a quote, so I do apologize, but I was just using the words that they actually shared with me. I will withdraw.

"For example:

"(1.0) Cancelled gas-fired power plants and associated payoffs to the energy developers without legal basis;

"(2.0) Ornge mismanagement and failure to take corrective action;

"(3.0) Failure with SAMS program for welfare payments despite early warnings of significant problems.

"We will never learn of the full incompetence and financial damage of the Wynne government until they are stripped of power. When the full damage is learned Kathleen Wynne should be charged with defrauding the public purse and breach of trust"—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It's unacceptable language; you have to withdraw that as well.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): If you continue with unparliamentary language in your quoting of this document, I'm going to have to move on.

Mr. Bill Walker: Just reading a quote, Mr. Speaker, but I do withdraw. I agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay, but if you continue to read unparliamentary language, I'm going to have to move on.

Mr. Bill Walker: The end of the quote was, "Just my opinion." Jim McEwen.

"This government ... as the previously Liberal government run by Dalton McGuinty," is doing things that they do not believe are acceptable. "This is not okay, and someone must make this party accountable for every taxpayer dollar they spend. Thank you for your time." The Lantz family.

Another quote: "Let me begin by expressing my disgust. The thought of (two) more years of Liberal rule is profoundly depressing. This has to stop. Now." Ms. Steele.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario don't trust the Wynne Liberals to have their backs. I say that the fact alone that Bill 201 was spawned by the same Wynne Liberal brain trust is cause for major concern. Why was this government so keen to draft their so-called reform bill behind closed doors? As I said earlier, they've had three opportunities, with two of my colleagues and myself in the House bringing legislation forward, where they could have corrected this. They could have actually voluntarily done this. We even did it with support and knowledge given by the Chief Electoral Officer. Yet they voted unanimously against all three of those private members' bills. Is it because they wanted to control the process so they could control the outcome, ensuring the new system only benefits themselves? Is it so they can continue to ignore our calls for a public inquiry? Ontarians who are signing our petition believe that it's only through an investigation into the past conduct of the Liberal government and the Ontario Liberal Party that we can ensure we clean up political financing in Ontario.

Getting public inquiries is not easy. They cost money. Justice, fairness and preserving our people's rights can cost money; we acknowledge that. But that's democracy. That's why we have the privilege and the right to live in

Ontario, in Canada. To us, doing nothing, which is to not inquire in an open and transparent way, can cost us much, much more.

The inquiry we need is to be about the cozy relationship between this government's fundraisers and renewable energy companies. The Ontario Liberal Party has received and benefited from over \$1.3 million it received from 30 renewable energy companies. In turn, these same companies have received and benefited from millions of dollars of government contracts for wind turbines and solar power.

At the losing end of this cozy relationship are Ontarians who, as a result of the failed energy policies of this government, are paying the highest rates in North America. Nothing has been more damaging to household budgets and to our economy than the province's current electricity rates. To us on this side of the House, this is offensive. Frankly, it's wrong. It's this sort of thing that demands an inquiry.

Ontario ratepayers deserve to know exactly why their hydro bills are so high. Although I can't speak for them, I wonder if the backbenchers on the opposite side of the House understand why it's important they stand up for the people. Hiding the process behind closed doors shows contempt for democracy, for our Parliament and for our parliamentary process. Most importantly, it shows contempt for the people that we're given the privilege to represent here every day.

Is there any file the Liberal government has managed worse than the energy portfolio? I don't expect you to answer that, Mr. Speaker, but I think I might know, if you joined us back out here, what your answer might be. Evidence of the Liberal scandal, mismanagement and waste continues to pile up.

Our finance critic and Nipissing MPP Vic Fedeli revealed 10 days ago, in his Focus on Finance, that the Liberal government could have gotten itself out of the multi-billion-dollar Samsung deal and saved ratepayers \$5.2 billion. That's with a "B." Every day I have people come through my constituency office—they e-mail me, call me, as all of our colleagues in here do—asking for funding for things like autism, physiotherapy, for seniors who need care and services and they're not getting that. There's \$5.2 billion that was on the table that this government had a choice they could have made, and that \$5.2 billion would then have been here to help those on the front lines of health care, education and all of our safety and community social services that are going without.

This Liberal government would like you to believe there's nothing it can do or could have done to mitigate skyrocketing hydro costs in Ontario, but that is simply not true. I know my colleague Mr. Fedeli will have a lot to say about this during his debate. He's going to take the other half of this time and I'm looking forward to the details that he brings. He always does a great job of making sure he has the facts, he takes his time and, most importantly, what he does is he listens to the people of his constituency but also the people across all of Ontario.

When he brings documents such as his Fedeli Focus on Finance, you know that he has done his homework.

You know that he has gone out and done the research. The people of Ontario respect and appreciate him because he does such a great job of putting the facts in front of people and letting them make their own decisions. It's pretty easy, because at the end of the day, there are a lot of facts that he brings to the table that can't be refuted by this government.

Like everything this Liberal government does, the Liberals put their own political interests over the best interests of Ontarians. It's no wonder Ontario ratepayers pay among the highest and fastest-rising energy rates in North America—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order. The member from Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I was actually just trying to understand the relevance of the current member on our motion in trying to identify where exactly we are going with this debate today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Yes, I'll remind the member that it's not a bill, it's a motion, and that we will stay within the guidelines of the motion. If you wander, I'll alert you to that.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I'll always try to stay within the guidelines, especially when you're in the chair.

What I'm trying to do is make sure that people understand when they're bringing in a motion like this but are actually doing the bulk of it behind closed doors. I need people in Ontario to understand and provide a bit of context of some of the other things that have happened behind closed doors under the regime of this government, and look at the impact. People, every day of our lives, come in and talk to us about the exorbitant hydro rates that they are having to pay, people who can't afford to make their energy bills because of behind-the-closed-doors actions of this Liberal government.

I'm just trying to paint the picture and put some facts to show that there's a trend here and that we're worried very much that this actual motion will be done in the same way, that it will be done behind closed doors with only one party really controlling what they want to happen.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Now they're putting closure on it.

Mr. Bill Walker: We certainly don't want any time allocation, but at the end of the day, they are rushing this one through.

As I alluded to in my earlier remarks, I had a private member's bill just back in October 2015 in this very House, and every single member of the Liberal Party voted against that. They knew what was going on. They knew the Chief Electoral Officer told them in two reports that it needed to be reformed, and yet they didn't and they want to write the rules behind closed doors. It's no wonder Ontario ratepayers are paying among the highest rates because of these decisions. As I was saying earlier, life under this the Liberal government continues to get worse.

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Mr. Speaker, I have some suggestions about financing reform. As I said, the news that the government held over 90 cash-for-access fundraisers in two years only increases the perception that the Wynne Liberals may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. I think it will be delightful to hear from the Chief Electoral Officer during hearings on Bill 201.

I've had a number of conversations—as I say, my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills, back in 2011, brought a piece of legislation that would have helped to reform at that time. My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex brought it in 2014, and I brought a bill in 2015, just in October of last year, to talk about a lot of this stuff. Each time, it was voted down—unanimously, by the way—by members of the Liberal Party. So it's interesting. The Chief Electoral Officer brought two reports suggesting major reform was needed, and yet, unanimously, they voted against those three.

So I'm finding it very hard, despite trying to give them credit, why all of a sudden there's a rush, why all of a sudden they want to speed this through the summertime. As I alluded to earlier in my comments, we went through a budgetary process where they had meetings all over the province. They spent a lot of money, actually, to get people all across the province to give debate, and yet they didn't even let the findings of all the input be taken to committee before they tabled their budget. So I'm a little bit cynical that this one is very similar. We're going to control the timelines. We're going to control, relatively, who's going to be in there—a very, very short timeline to be able to do this, and yet, back in October, there was no need to do this.

I need to keep going back there, because I want one of them at some point when they speak to answer this question: Why, in October, were you unanimously opposed to voting for electoral reform and third-party financing reform, and yet today we want to rush this through and have it done by the fall? Is it because you've now filled your coffers? You have lots of money in there and there's a little bit of a distinct advantage if you can shut down the ability for the other two parties, or anyone else out there, to do fundraising at the same level. Just a thought process—if they want to answer that, that would be wonderful.

The Chief Electoral Officer has done a good job of calling to our attention and to the attention of Ontario taxpayers, Ontario voters, many loopholes that exist in our financing laws. It was in response to those concerns that he has been raising for years that my colleagues and I did introduce, as I've just said, legislation to fix third-party fundraising. It was introduced by Rick Nicholls, Ted Arnott in 2011—sorry. I should use Wellington–Halton Hills—my apologies—Chatham–Kent–Essex, my colleague Rick Nicholls, in 2014, and myself from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as recently as last year.

I get that we're in the House. We're in the thrust of opposition versus them being in power, but when one of your duly designated officers of this Legislature brings

this to your attention twice, it begs the question of all Ontarians as to why they did not, in one of those reports, step up and say, "We'll fix this. We'll do it within the next year, before the next election cycle." They had two election opportunities to do that, and they did not do that. This is a non-partisan officer of this Legislature bringing very valid concerns to their attention, and yet they did not do it. So we actually had to utilize our private members' business to be able to do that. Again, Mr. Speaker—I'm going to say it unequivocally a number of times—they voted down unanimously those proposed changes each time.

Back in April, we tried again with my leader, Patrick Brown, to present our party's six-point plan to clean up political financing in Ontario. In addition to calling for an immediate public inquiry, we were also asking for the creation of a special select committee with equal representation from all parties that will take public input from across the province.

I go back again to the House leader talking about opening debate and strengthening democracy, and yet we asked for a select committee to allow open debate among all three parties—in fact, the Green Party wanted to be part of that as well—and yet they've turned that down and they've controlled behind closed doors, really, this debate. It leaves me a little bit cynical about where we're going to go and what we're going to be able to achieve when we're truly not allowed to have—we've had a lot of good work done with select committees in here. We've had some mental health initiatives come out of this. We have the sexual task force that was created.

So with this one, which is, again, definitely fundamental to democracy, I find it very strange. I would again encourage one of the members opposite in the Liberal Party to explain to us, and explain, more importantly, to their voters, to the people they represent—and all Ontarians, frankly—why they are so against a select committee to be able to debate something that is so fundamental to our democracy.

We're asking for limits to third-party special interest advertising. As I said earlier, the Chief Electoral Officer has built a case. They've gone from less than \$1 million to, in the last election, a third-party advertising spend of \$8.6 million, more than the three parties combined. That, to me, frankly, is just wrong. Each of us has to be able to step up and be willing to put our name on a ballot, but we have to be able to play by the same very fair, equal ground rules. When other parties or other third-party interest groups can have that much influence—particularly financial influence, which I don't have access to—then we need a change. That's why I brought my private member's bill, as well as the feedback we received from the Chief Electoral Officer, who point-blank put this in front of the Liberals twice and said, "I have very, very significant concerns."

You would have thought, on principle, ethics and just pure belief in democracy, they would have taken self-initiative then to correct these rules and done it openly, with a select committee. You would have thought they would have wanted to come across the aisle and ask for

input. As they say, “We want to collaborate. We want to work with the other parties.” Here is a prime example of when we’ve opened the door and encouraged them publicly and loudly to do that, and yet they’ve said no.

We’re asking for a complete phase-out of union and corporate donations. We asked for an end to ministerial fundraising targets. It’s unacceptable. People across the aisle will refute this, I’m sure, and say, “Well, you guys have fundraisers too.” Yes, but the last time I noticed, not one single person in my party or in the NDP was able to sign a contract with a vendor for government business. Unless I’ve missed something here in my five years, I’m not certain that we have that influence. I know I have never signed a contract on behalf of the government. Someday hopefully, we will be able to do that, in the near future—2018, if you want to mark it on your calendar, would be wonderful.

But at this point, it is just wrong. The public is asking me—when I go home to my riding, significantly, and down here when I’m in Toronto, when I’m out, people are approaching me and saying, “What’s up with this government? They had that culture of entitlement and now they’re spreading it out, saying ‘You have to pay to be able to talk to me.’” Whether they have or haven’t done the influencing, the doubt and the perception remains in the mind of the voter, and that’s what we need to clean up. If we want to have a true and open democracy, we need the people to have faith and hope in their government that they’re going to have those integral aspects.

And we’ve asked for a strengthening of lobbying restrictions, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier, serious allegations have been raised as to the conduct of this Liberal government, and the perception is growing that it may have turned doing government business into a money-making machine for the Ontario Liberal Party. Integrity is a foundation of trust with the people of Ontario, and the people of Ontario have lost trust in this government.

Laughter.

Mr. Bill Walker: It’s not funny. I hear members across laughing. It’s you that they’re talking about. It’s not us. It’s people who are banging on our doors, sending us emails, asking for public inquiries, asking us to make sure there’s a select committee, so that they will actually feel truly represented and that it’s not a self-serving initiative yet again. They’re challenging it.

I brought up the energy file earlier, because that’s the thing I hear the most about in my riding. The mismanagement of that file alone has people very provoked across this province and worried about where our future is going to go, worried about their business, worried about seniors, worried about people who cannot afford their hydro bills and worried about young people like these new pages who have joined us today—welcome, pages; it’s quite an interesting day for you to come in on. People are worried about where we’re going, and they need to have that integrity of government, that trust and faith and hope in a government.

The reality is that this government doesn’t want to talk about their past conduct. They’re only talking about changing the rules because it looks and appears to most people in the public like they got caught. Otherwise, why the urgency? Why, for the last eight or 10 years, have we not changed the rules for fundraising, Mr. Speaker? Why have they not—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I need to ask the government members to please refrain from heckling the member. The member has the floor.

Member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, sorry to interrupt.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It seems I’ve hit a nerve with some people over there. Maybe they’re finally looking in the mirror and saying, “I maybe should have thought differently when I made some of those decisions. I should maybe step up and represent the people who give me the privilege to be here. Maybe I should do the right thing, not the partisan policy”—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Member for Ottawa–Orléans, please refrain from heckling. The member for Kitchener Centre, please refrain from heckling the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, who has the floor.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously there are two people I’ve hit a nerve with. They must be looking in the mirror every day feeling badly about themselves, because I don’t know why they would heckle me on something as simplistic as this. It’s about democracy, Mr. Speaker. It’s about having an open-door discussion with the people who are going to be involved. Why would they not allow a select committee? Why would they not allow a public inquiry into something as fundamental to our democracy as this, unless they’re starting to feel guilty that they’ve been doing it for the wrong reasons and that they’ve been standing for the wrong principles?

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I continue to suggest that a full investigation is required, a public inquiry is required, and a select committee for this, so that everybody has their fair ability. When the Premier comes along, whether it’s on a napkin or a 15-page document only constructed and crafted by her, and says, “Here it is,” that is not open debate on something as fundamental—

Mr. Jim McDonell: That’s what got us into trouble in the first place.

Mr. Bill Walker: That’s what got us into trouble in the first place. Absolutely.

Mr. Speaker, conducting government business should not be used as a money-making machine. This is about the people of Ontario, the province, the future of these pages and all of the young people in our province. It’s time to end the Liberals’ cash-for-access fundraisers. It’s time to do the right thing. It’s time to call the inquiry.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask one more time for a select committee on this actual issue, so that we can have full debate and not rush it through so that we have a fear that it's again being controlled by one party for self-serving interests. It needs to be fully open, fully transparent, fully accountable.

To again quote my good friend the government House leader, he believes that this is fundamental democracy. The core of his being believes in the process they are following. If it's truly the core of his being, then it should be open, it should be accountable, it should be transparent, and it should have full engagement of all three political parties.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I have to say that it's going to be awfully hard to follow the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, because you made some fabulous points. You always speak on behalf of your constituents with such passion and such depth, and I know they appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that they appreciate it because I visited the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound's riding last summer, and we had some good times together. Before I get into debating this political financing reform, I just want to speak for a second about the member. It's not just that he brought me to Chapman's ice cream and we got to, first of all, see how brilliantly they recovered from their tragic fire and the fact that they have just built one of the most modern facilities in Canada, and they allowed us to sample pretty much anything we wanted. It took a lot of bike rides and a lot of walking the week or two after that to lose the extra calories gained from all the sampling. What I wanted to refer to was the high praise that the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound received everywhere we went. We spent a couple of days together, and the people I was introduced to had a lot of nice things to say, and so I wanted to acknowledge that. That's why the passion comes out.

The member spoke several times about the select committee with equal representation. He spoke several times about having equal representation on a select committee. That just fundamentally would have been the right thing to do. It would have been the fair thing to do. It kind of takes the politics out of everything when you have two or three members, perhaps, from each party. You can speak from the heart and know that one party doesn't have more votes than the other. If you look at the committees today, we sit on the Standing Committee on Finance, and there are six members from the government side, there are two members from the official opposition and one member from the third party—

Ms. Catherine Fife: A good member.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A great member from the third party.

It just tells you that no matter what we do, no matter how many facts we present and no matter, quite frankly, Speaker, how right we are, we get outvoted six-to-three,

six-to-three, six-to-three. It just happens. That's what's going to happen on this entire political financing reform.

As the good member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound already said, this thing was written on the back of a napkin, on a kitchen table—we know that now. We understand that. Everybody in Ontario understands that. That's why we don't have a comprehensive bill here, with input from all parties. We have it force-fed from the Liberal government, much in the way they force-fed all of their other bills, which is why the province is in so very much trouble right across the issues—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: If the member from Barrie lets me have the floor—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Barrie to please stop heckling the member from Nipissing.

The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know she needs to get all she can say in because she's not going to be here in two years. We understand that fully. So I can appreciate why she wants to continue to heckle, but that's not going to get her anywhere.

Let me tell you, Speaker, if you want to know about the—if you want to hear about—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Can we please recognize that the member for Nipissing has the floor and extend to him the respect that every member of the Legislature is entitled to, which is to be heard.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: You earn respect.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. When they speak while you're standing, you can you imagine the fun that we have trying to speak while we're trying to make our points across here as well.

I know that the House leader on the government side spoke about being collaborative and co-operative, but, Speaker, this is anything but collaborative and co-operative. What we're going to see here is six to two to one, a six to three. Instead of having a select committee with equal representation, we're going to have the arrogance that this government has displayed on every bill, which, again, is why the only time we're ever really going to get to the bottom of an issue—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Excuse me, Speaker, I'm really trying to concentrate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the Minister of Education to please stop heckling the member for Nipissing. One member has the floor. You can't engage in a constant dialogue with the member who has the floor. When you get your turn, you can stand up and speak if you choose to. There's still time on the clock for your side.

The member for Nipissing has the floor.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. I'll try again, Speaker. I can appreciate why, because they know what we're

going to talk about here. They know they got caught yet again. They know I'm going to talk about the Liberal cash-for-access fundraisers that they have. They know that. They know that's coming, so why don't we just spend the time right now talking about the fact that the government has held, over the last two years, 90 of these cash-for-access fundraisers. That's why they've scrambled this bill together, to have us debating this bill, as a distraction from the fact of why we're doing this: the fact that they got caught yet again with these cash-for-access fundraisers. We'll talk about a couple of them, because they really do affect the economies in Ontario, and the burden that this has placed on families.

Look at the wind programs that have just happened. It was shown in the Legislature by one of our members. The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London brought to the floor the fact that, of all of the wind turbine contracts that were given just this past year, all of the successful bidders were donors, big donors, to the Liberal Party. The ones who didn't get a contract, the ones who weren't successful, weren't on the list of donors. So this leads you to believe, it leads one to make the assumption, that there's pay to play: You pay, you get to play in Ontario; you don't pay, you don't get to play. It leads you to that assumption.

As a result, we have the highest energy rates in North America, and they're only going higher, Speaker. When this government took office, before all this happened, energy rates were 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Now we've got all these pay-to-play programs and, lo and behold, energy rates are now over 18 cents a kilowatt hour. We've got the highest energy in Ontario. We've got a government that continues down a path of putting out these programs that are hurting the people of Ontario, but the people who are continually winning these contracts are donating to the Liberal Party. So it gives the appearance that there's this pay to play. And that's—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm afraid I have to caution the member for Nipissing. You can't impute motive, and you're getting very close to that line. I would ask him to be very cautious in terms of the language when he wants to characterize the nature of this problem—this issue.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I appreciate that, Speaker. Thank you for setting up the guidelines. I do appreciate that.

If the Premier and her ministers have nothing to hide, they wouldn't be running from a public inquiry; they wouldn't be running from a select committee that has equal membership. Speaker, as you well know, because we've been together here for a while, I was heavily involved in the gas plant scandal and all of the documents, and here's what happened. During the minority government, it was a little different. The official opposition had three members on the committee, the third party had two members and the government had four members. It made for quite interesting days, where we were able to get access to documents and were, at the end of the day, almost able to get to the truth of the gas plant scandal

when the election was called. The moment we got back and there was a majority government, the first thing the Premier did was shut down the committee and not allow the rest of the witnesses who had been summoned and scheduled to come to that committee. That's what is going to happen here.

Then the government used their majority to deliver, produce and publish in this Legislature what I would call a sanitized version of what happened. They didn't even talk about the fact that the OPP was involved, pressing charges. None of that even made it into the report. That's what is going to happen when you've got this Liberal government writing the rules and then passing the legislation. That's exactly what is going to happen. Here we were in the gas plant scandal hearings, we were almost there, a couple of people left to hear from, and the moment this government was able to shut it down, they shut it down and provided a report that led you to believe one thing, when the facts were actually quite distinctly different than that.

So I worry, as many people in Ontario worry, that that is what is going to happen here. We're going to have a version of this bill pass because it's a majority government, and because there is not equal representation on the select committee, we're going to have yet another one of these force-fed programs where the government is going to do what they want and damn the torpedoes. That's what it's going to be.

For the sake of restoring the public's trust, if they can—and I'm not sure they can—I think the Premier should do the right thing: call this inquiry and set up the select committee with equal representation. I say “restoring the public's trust” because the public has no trust in this government. Now that the gas plant scandal is out of our reach and we don't get any new documents, the only time we got to the truth of what this government was really all about was by breaking open another box of the gas plant scandal documents and being shocked and surprised at what this government really thought, what they really had. Because never in their wildest dreams would they have ever imagined we were going to read on a daily basis what they were saying amongst each other. But we got a real window into the inner workings of the Liberal Party.

Sadly, with the Premier shutting down that committee, we don't have access any longer. Now the only time we can get to the real facts is when we do a freedom of information or when we hear—thankfully—from the Auditor General. She provides us with honest-to-God facts. When we hear from the Financial Accountability Officer, we hear honest-to-God facts from him as well.

One of the facts last week—the week before, actually—was that whenever this government gives us projections, he called them serially wrong. They were serially wrong. That means they're always wrong. That doesn't instill confidence in the government, knowing that their numbers are wrong every time. Their projections are wrong every time. That's from our own Financial Accountability Officer.

We get the truth from FOI, we get the truth from the Auditor General, we get the truth from the Financial Accountability Officer and—which really sheds light on what’s happening in Ontario—we get the truth from the Ontario Provincial Police. That’s what we’re at today. In the province of Ontario—the once-powerful province of Ontario, once the engine of Confederation, this now have-not province—we need the Ontario Provincial Police to get us the truth about Ornge, about the Sudbury alleged bribery, about the gas plant scandal. We need Ontario Provincial Police to get us our facts, because we can no longer rely on anything this government tells us.

These are the people, Speaker, who are going to be putting this very financing reform together. I could make many, many parallels but I’m not really sure that any of them are going to pass the parliamentary language rules.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Try it.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I won’t even try.

This is going to be the government—this scandal-plagued group of mismanagers are the ones who are going to be not only crafting this financing reform, but they’re the ones who are going to have the majority to vote in favour of it. That scares me and I think it scares most people in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, that was one that I was going to use, actually, but I’m not going to. I’m going to try to keep it parliamentary.

When I hear the House leader saying, “We’re going to set up this committee; it’s going to travel”—and by the way, I do like the amendment very much, the one that changes, “That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August, for the purpose of public hearing”—the fact that it’s changed now to that they can meet four weeks throughout the summer and bring a staffer. I think that’s a positive amendment. I think that’s good, but it also brings an interesting point up, one that we just got through only a few months ago.

We had pre-budget consultations all across Ontario. We travelled—men and women, organizations, stakeholders, groups, companies, unions: All travelled all throughout Ontario to bring their contribution to the discussion. And here we’re going to see travel for a month this summer. The shocking revelation—again, it was only discovered through a freedom-of-information request, this one from the Canadian Press, Allison Jones. She brought the fact that while these groups were spending money travelling, while this Legislature was spending \$100,000 to send us to Thunder Bay and Windsor and Hamilton and Ottawa and Sault Ste. Marie—all of that travel, Speaker—what we learned through freedom of information, not from this government and their denials, was that while the committee was still meeting, the government not only had the budget written; it was being translated. That was discovered by Canadian Press.

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Again, when they talk about “collaborative” and “co-operative,” they’re beautiful words to be using. But

they’re going to travel now for a month. What assurances do we have that this is not a repeat, that they’re not already translating the bill that they’ve got written? There are no assurances, and quite frankly, Speaker, if they gave us any assurances, we wouldn’t believe them. We’ve been burned far too many times.

They were translating the budget that was already written while they had us travelling the province under this sham. We had become unwitting participants in the Liberal government’s sham that they really wanted to hear from the people of Ontario. They had no desire to hear. The budget was written and being translated.

That is what we’re concerned about: that that could also be happening, and that we’re being set up yet again. It gives the appearance of collaboration and co-operation and, “Oh, isn’t it wonderful that we’re all travelling and listening to you?”, but there are no assurances. We’ll have to do a freedom of information yet again to find out how much of this was written beforehand.

The reason we’re doing this is to divert attention from the real issue: that the government got caught again. They got caught with ministers with quotas. They needed to bring in so much money. We’re not talking small change here; we’re talking about ministers whose quotas were \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 that they needed to bring in as part of their role as that minister. It’s shocking, and so revealing, that this is what they were doing.

Now they’ve got us here debating a motion and an amendment about fundraising—an admirable thing to be talking about, which we have asked for beforehand, as the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound said—but it took them getting caught yet again in another scandal. This time it had the appearance that their members—well, the fact; there’s no appearance. It’s a fact that their members were under orders to raise money.

So you’ve got the Hydro One deal. You’ve got banks that were involved in the Hydro One deal, and now you’ve got those same people holding fundraisers for the Liberal Party. Again, they’re not small-change fundraisers; they’re big fundraisers—hundreds of thousands of dollars brought in. There’s an appearance that comes from this, Speaker, and not a very nice appearance of what could be happening out there.

There were 90 pay-to-access fundraisers over two years. It only increases the perception that the Wynne Liberals have turned the government into a money-making machine for the Liberal Party, and that is just beyond the pale. That tells you where their focus is.

At one of the pre-budget consultations—I’ve said this story many times in the Legislature—Jennifer told us the story where she has to decide whether to heat or eat because she cannot afford both. She told us that she turns her heat off when she gets up in the morning and turns it back on for a short period at low-cost times. It was a heart-wrenching story of a woman, a real person with a real name, who sat in front of the all-party committee.

It tells you that this government’s attention is not on Jennifer, the Jennifers of the world, the Jennifers of Ontario or the families or the seniors. It’s all about the

fundraising. That has been their focus. It would be pretty hard to raise \$500,000 through the course of a year if you're not really focused on it. They've got to be spending an enormous amount of their ministerial time raising money for the party—for the machine—instead of taking care of Jennifer and her hydro bill.

They're holding these fundraisers. They're attending these fundraisers: the Hydro One deal, a big fundraiser afterward, hundreds and hundreds of thousands; the wind deals, hundreds and hundreds of thousands. These aren't to the benefit of the people of Ontario, Speaker. These are the same people who now are going to be crafting this bill around it. Well, there's still no restriction in this new bill for the cash-for-access ministerial fundraising scheme.

The legislation does not address the changes to the rules for lobbyists or political staff. There are significant loopholes in the bill for third-party special interest advertising to remain. No, they didn't take care of any of those things that the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound brought with such passion in his private member's bill. No, those don't get addressed. It's diverting attention from the fact that this is a very serious fundraising machine that got caught doing what they do, and now we're throwing this political fundraising reform and looping everybody into it, except that it's not fixing the real problems and it's distracting. It's designed to distract the media, the members and the people of Ontario from the fact that they got caught again in a very serious world of fundraising.

Those Hydro One deals and the wind turbine deals that I spoke of, where they got hundreds of thousands in cash from the proponents, didn't help lower our hydro rates. In fact, for each and every one of them, the end result has increased our hydro rates. I spoke earlier of the 4.3 cents when this government took office and 18 cents plus now in the peak rates. Well, they're only going up now. The Auditor General herself told us.

In the December report, the auditor told us that we paid \$9.2 billion more for green energy than we ought to have for the same amount of green energy. It's that overly lucrative deal that this government did and, lo and behold, the proponents who won the contracts are donors. They've certainly done well by the donors, but they've not done so well by the people of Ontario, the Jennifers.

The seniors I had in my office in North Bay a couple of months ago, when we were fighting the doubling of their drug costs—you know, our press interviewed many of them. We were all there for this drug cost announcement, which we won—we won that battle; it got pulled out of the budget—but all of them diverted their discussion to energy, because it's their number one issue. These are men and women who have these huge bills that they weren't expecting, and they gave their stories individually to our media in North Bay at that announcement.

I remember that Bonnie Beam was one of them. Bonnie told us how she only heats one room in her house. I know Bonnie. Bonnie worked at the bank I banked at for years. I've known her for many, many

years. I hadn't seen her in a long time. She showed up at a seniors' forum that I held. She showed up there and spoke to the media. I had no idea what she was going to speak on, and I was shocked when she told the media that she can only heat one room in her house. I was shocked at that. That's the reality.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That's not funny. They can continue to laugh, Speaker, but I tell you it's not funny. My jaw dropped when I was listening to Bonnie tell that story.

But the government, the Liberal Party, goes ahead with these funders with these energy companies and ends up charging us the highest rates in North America. This is the direct correlation we have. This is what is going to continue to happen.

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If we have this government write the rules, there's none of the restrictions for the cash for access to these ministers. That doesn't get fixed. So the real problem that started all of this is allowed to continue. Instead, they've glossed over and papered over, with big announcements—written on a napkin at the kitchen table—all the stories and how wonderful it is, but it doesn't fix the problem. They got caught. They got caught again, and that very problem they got caught doing is not getting fixed.

Speaker, we continue to ask for a public inquiry, we continue to ask for a select committee with equal representation, because the bulk of the Liberal scandal has gone unaddressed. They've skated by the scandal, skirted around the scandal, and now we're talking about fixing something that needs fixing, no doubt, but it allows them to change the channel from the serious discussion about their heinous scandal. Now we know why the government has drafted this legislation behind closed doors. It allows them to control the process. They're pulling all the strings, all the levers. They get to control all of the process, which means they control the outcome.

Now, what is collaborative and co-operative, as the House leader said, about the you-shall-do and you-shall-accept bill that's being presented? They get to control the outcome; they get to ensure that the new system benefits them. That's what this is all about. It's not about helping Ontario. This should be absolutely bipartisan. This is going to be forever, possibly. There should be an equal amount of representatives from all the parties so that we can hash this out and really talk about what's important to fix. They don't want us to fix this. The loopholes that allow them to do their access fundraising are not going to change.

We want to see financing legislation that's best for the people of Ontario, and sadly, we're not going to get there with this. We are not going to arrive at a conclusion that's successful for the people of Ontario. We're only going to arrive at a conclusion that meets the needs of the Liberal Party, because they're in control. They're running the table. Every step of it is controlled by them. There's no middle ground. There's no give and take. They are

always trying to rig the system to benefit the Liberal Party.

The Auditor General spoke to us last December about the Government Advertising Act, 2004, when they changed that. There was no debate. They just went in and changed this thing that allows them to run partisan ads so that the Auditor General will not be signing off on these things. She doesn't want to sign off on these things, because it would mean she has given her approval. It's the same people here who did that, changed the government rules to set up the system so that it's only in their favour. It's the same people here who are setting this up so that it will not affect anybody to their benefit, other than the members of the Liberal Party.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Let me say, Mr. Speaker, I'm not pleased to take part in this debate whatsoever. We have an opportunity here to do the right thing. The government could still decide, if it wanted to, to do what my leader and the leaders of the Conservatives and the Green Party have suggested, which is to go the route of a non-partisan process by which we make changes to the act.

Let me say up front, this whole notion that somehow or other the New Democrats and Conservatives are opposed to changes to election financing rules is bogus. We have said from the beginning—and I will not speak for the Conservative Party, but I'll speak for New Democrats—that we have no problem with changing the rules. In fact, these are positions that we've advocated for years. We've often said that the system they had in Ottawa which Mr. Chrétien put in place actually made some sense. It essentially took the influence out of politics that could exist as a result of people giving money to political parties and political candidates, and to members once they get to this House.

So I want to be clear: New Democrats have said we're not opposed to making changes to the Election Finances Act. We think, in fact, that it's a welcome step. But our argument is that if you're going to make those changes, you have to do those changes in a way that's non-partisan and not driven by one political party, because in this case what you've got is the Premier of Ontario who supposedly sat down at her kitchen table with her family members and drafted a bill.

Hey, I'm a member of the Assembly. That's my job, not her family members. So, first of all, that bill was drafted—as I understand it, as far as the idea of it—on napkins at the kitchen table at the Premier's house. There's nothing wrong with people having discussions with their own families and having discussions with friends about legislation. God, all of us do that at one time or another. But when it comes to the drafting of legislation, it's a completely different question.

I get it. Normally, the government drafts the bill, just as I, as a private member, can draft a bill. But there are times where we have to take the politics out of the drafting. If you look at what we've done as far as evolving the Election Act and evolving the Election Finances Act,

we've gone from a system that was completely controlled by the government to a system that was more non-partisan.

Back in the days of the mid-1970s, there was a Conservative government in place with Mr. Davis, and there were allegations at the time of inappropriateness when it came to fundraising and the uses of those dollars, so there was a pressure. The opposition, the New Democrats and Liberals of the day, came into the House, they asked questions and they pushed the government. The media wrote stories. It was on TV and on the radio. Finally, the government relented and said, "Yeah, we need to make changes to the Election Finances Act."

So what they did is that there was a commission that was called the Camp commission, which was a non-partisan organization made up of scholars, judges, retired judges and others who were charged with looking at a number of things. One of the things that they were given the task to look at was how to change the Election Finances Act.

Much of what we have in the act today is the result of the exercise that was had back in the 1970s. That's when we put limits on how much money you can give. That's when we put limits on how much money you can spend. Some of the things that were done have survived since the 1970s, in the changes that were recommended by the Camp Commission.

But it didn't end there, because over the years there had to be changes made to the Election Finances Act, as there were changes to the Election Act itself. When those came around, there was a way of doing it that was somewhat modelled on what the Camp commission had done.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Somewhat.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, somewhat modelled. It was certainly not the government drafting the legislation. What you had was a process whereby a non-partisan committee—in one case I remember there was a committee that was struck with one member from each caucus, tasked with, I believe it was, changes to the Election Finances Act. It might have been the Election Act, but I think it was the Election Finances Act. That was under the former Dalton McGuinty government.

They sat down, the three of them, and they heard submissions from the experts, being the Chief Electoral Officer and others. There was some discussion at that committee, because you're allowed to have a committee of one member from each caucus, and they came to a consensus about what could be done. A bill was then drafted based on that consensus.

You can't change the vehicles of democracy by majority. It's just a bad idea. You change the vehicles of democracy, being your Election Act and your Election Finances Act, in a non-partisan way that is completely transparent, that the public can have some confidence in.

So when my leader Andrea Horwath got up and said at the very beginning that she wasn't buying to the Premier's process, it wasn't about grandstanding, as the Premier wants to make it: "Oh there she goes, the leader of the third party New Democrats, Ms. Horwath. She's

just grandstanding.” It’s not about grandstanding. It’s about doing your bloody job as an opposition leader and saying, “Hey, you can’t do this by majority. If you’re going to make changes to the Election Act, fine, we’ll give you recommendations of things that we can live with.”

1700

In fact, we gave the government a list of things that we thought were important to include in a bill, should we go down that way. The government keeps on saying, “They never gave us anything. They didn’t talk to us. They’re just trying to stall.” No, my leader was clear in the beginning: “The process has to be non-partisan. When the process is established, here are some of the points that you have to cover in drafting legislation.” She spoke to some of those things that essentially everybody is talking about: Should there be corporate and union donations? What about limits when it comes to how much you can spend? Third-party—all of that stuff. It’s all legitimate stuff that we need to deal with. But you do it in a non-partisan process. You don’t do it by way of a government majority using its majority to do it.

The first part was that we didn’t buy into this process that the government put in place that essentially allows them to draft a bill that they’re then, by way of a majority at committee and in the House, going to plow through whatever they want. We said that we want a process where a bill is drafted with a consensus of the three parties—or what we actually asked for was a non-partisan process, similar to the Camp commission, to be able to do what had to be done. That was the first one.

The second thing is, the government says, “Oh, yes, but you guys are trying to hold it up.” Hogwash. We gave letters to the government that said, “We can live with your timeline. We can live with the bill coming back to the House in September, that the bill be passed before the end of the fall session and starting on January 1 next year, that the new election finances rules are established and begin on January 1 of next year.” So the government said that we were trying to slow things down—no such thing. We were never trying to slow anything down. It was about the process. It’s like saying, okay, somebody just got caught for something, and you can name your brother-in-law the judge. Well, my brother-in-law likes me. I don’t know about you guys. I don’t think my brother-in-law would throw me in jail. George? Bob? Would you guys throw me in jail? I don’t think they would. My point is, it’s similar. It’s like the old South or the old West: “Yeah, the judge is my buddy, and whatever you want, you’re gonna get.” That’s essentially what we’re doing here. The government has decided to use its majority in order to draft legislation to get the result it wants in the end.

New Democrats agree that there has to be change. For some of the changes that the government talked about, we said, “Yes, we can live with those.” We gave them some information as to some of the things that we wanted to see, and we never, at any time, tried to slow this process down.

The government said, “We’re going to continue this little charade for a bit longer.” They came to the House leaders’ meetings, and they gave us motions for midnight sittings in the last two weeks of the House. I’ve been around here for a long time, just as has the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. Has there been an end-of-session where you have not seen those motions? Of course. It’s like motherhood and apple pie. At the end of the session, you see these motions to sit till midnight. So that didn’t really bother me. They said, “Oh, that’s in case you guys start filibustering in the House and hold up the legislation. We’re going to need that to pass it.” My God, you have the rules of the House. You can pass bills through this House in seven to eight hours. Call the question or use a time allocation motion. You don’t need me to do it.

But I’m the only speaker in our caucus speaking to this motion. Are we holding this thing up? I don’t have anybody else who’s getting up after me—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you want to get up?

Ms. Catherine Fife: No, it’s okay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All right. We just worked it out. She doesn’t want to get up.

Mr. John Vanthof: I’m thinking about it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, you’re thinking about it? We’re negotiating here. It’s not like the British Parliament where you negotiate for dollars.

The point is, I’m the only speaker. We never intended to hold up the legislation. Our number one concern is—let’s make changes to the act. We agree. But those changes to the act have to be done within a process that is transparent and non-partisan because there are a number of things that are going to happen in changes to this bill that people are going to have to live with.

I give you but one example: the third-party provisions of this bill when it comes to advertising. I understand why the government wants to limit third-party advertising. There are some logical arguments. I can understand the argument of why you’d want to make sure that somebody who has bagfuls of money, like Donald Trump, could come in and skew an election—I get it. I understand that. It turns out he doesn’t have as many bags of money as he said he did, but that’s for another debate.

But on the other hand, there is a democratic right of citizens to be able to express their view on what a government did, didn’t do or should do. Yes, it means that you’ve got to mount a campaign, that people have to go out and knock on doors and put out flyers and buy advertising on radio, paper and TV to be able to put out their message. This government is saying, “Oh, we have got a solution here.” What a nice solution for Liberals. One good one for the Liberals, one bad one for democracy. Is the limit \$100,000?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: A \$100,000 limit in the six months leading to a campaign that any group will be able to spend on third-party advertising on any issue.

Let me give you what this means. Remember those parents who were here with the autistic kids? I am sure those parents are going to want to have some kind of a campaign if the government doesn't back down—and I certainly hope the government backs down on the autistic file and grandfathers all those kids. That would be a great thing to do, and you would have our support if you did that.

Mr. John Vanthof: That would be the right thing to do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It would be the right thing to do. But let's say the government doesn't. Do you expect that those parents will sit back and do nothing? Those parents are going to say, "I want to mount a campaign in the next election and I want to put this issue front and centre. Which of you out there are going to support giving IBI therapy to kids over age five? Who's going to take care of my kid?" They're going to go to me and they're going to go to my leader, Andrea Horwath, and they're going to go to this member over here and his leader, Mr. Brown, and they're going to do the same thing to the Liberals, and they're going to say, "Which of you is going to stand for my child?" And, yes, they're going to want to spend some money on advertising in order to let people know that if you were ever to have a child who has autism and needs to have IBI therapy, God forbid, what the government has done is harmful to their well-being and their outcomes.

But what the government is proposing in this bill, the way it's drafted now, is that you can only spend up to \$100,000 for the six months leading into the campaign. That means to say, you buy one—well, not even a full-page ad in the *Toronto Star*. A full-page ad is maybe \$100,000.

Mr. Paul Miller: And you're done.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Then you're done; you can't do anything else—one media outlet. If you go to Global or CTV and you try to buy advertising on television in prime time—we all know how expensive it is. We have to do it. It's hugely expensive. They won't be able to. They will be left with standing on the street corner yelling and saying, "Hey, everybody, look over here, look at the autism file." But guess who gets to advertise through this entire process for six months?

Mr. Paul Miller: The government.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government can advertise all it wants. They're not limiting how much money the government can spend in order to say how great a job they've done on whatever file. I'm sure to God we're going to see government advertising of the Premier doing the bionic jog on television—

Mr. Paul Miller: "Brought to you by the government of Ontario."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "Brought to you by the government" of Ontario. There will be all kinds of this stuff, six months before the next election, where the government is going to be saying, "We've invested in health care. Look how much health care is better today." They will have pictures of smiling people and children and everybody is

going to go all warm and fuzzy inside. Even though we know that they've cut health care, they've fired nurses, they've laid off staff in hospitals, they're going to put that advertising out there anyway. They will not be limited by this bill that is being proposed.

Well, that's not the way this process should work. The rules of democracy should be the same for everybody. Should there be a limit or some sort of control on third-party advertising? Absolutely. I have no argument. I don't think anybody on this side of the House—I don't know about the Conservatives; I haven't heard them speak to this, but I know with us, as New Democrats, we don't have a problem with that issue. But the way you deal with that is that you refer it to a non-partisan committee to look at it and say, "How do you balance off the rights of democracy of those people and that group against?"—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I like talking to the member from Barrie. I can't help it. Mr. Speaker, I hope you're not offended. I really do.

But I just say that you can't do that, because at the end, this should be a system that works for the people of Ontario. If citizens want to organize and raise some dollars and do some advertising on an issue of their choice, they should be allowed to do that. Should there be limits? Should there be rules? Absolutely. But let a non-partisan committee look at how that can be done in a way that works.

There are other proposals in this bill that are equally as concerning, and some of it is quite confusing. A number of us—I don't think everybody in the House has read the bill, but I've tried, about three attempts, to read my way through this bill. I normally try to read bills so I'm up on it. I'll tell you, it is a very hard bill to follow. Number one, because you have to, in some cases, refer back to the existing legislation to understand what it is they're amending, which is normal, but the other part of it is that, in some of it, you don't quite really understand what the government is getting at, and you go, "Does this mean what I think it means?" It's not good stuff.

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The government has decided by way of this motion to order the bill, after first reading, into committee, which is their right, but what they should have done is what Andrea Horwath, Patrick Brown and the leader of the Green Party had suggested: Refer this matter to a non-partisan committee that is able to look at what is better when it comes to changes to the finances act so that the principles that we want as members and that the Premier wants are followed by way of what will come out as a bill. But the government didn't do that. The government instead is saying, "All right, I'm going to do my own thing."

Okay, so they didn't do that. The government could have done something else, if they wanted to. They could have referred the matter to committee and have the committee draft the bill. The government kept on saying, "Oh, we can't do what has been done in the past by the

Conservative government of Bill Davis, by the Liberal government of Mr. Dalton McGuinty and by the NDP government of Bob Rae. We can't do that because, oh God, we'd be breaking the rules"—even though that's how everybody did it; they did it in a non-partisan way. They say, "We have to follow the rules of the Legislature."

Well, here's a rule, and I'm sure the government House leader knows about it: He could have referred the matter to committee, and said, "We want to refer to committee the issue of election finances. Here are some of the principles that we want looked at," and let the committee go out and draft the bill. It's within the standing orders of the Legislature. They didn't do that. You have got to ask yourself the question, why? Why wouldn't they take Andrea Horwath's suggestion, Patrick Brown's suggestion and Mr.—

Interjection: Schreiner.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Schreiner. I was going to say Schroeder, that's why I kept on—

Interjection: That's Charlie Brown.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry about that. My apologies. That was a slip.

But the point is, why did the government refuse the request of three leaders of the major parties? There are four major parties in this province. Three leaders came together. I don't think that has ever been done before. When have you ever seen three political leaders of political parties get together and agree on doing something in a particular way? That's almost impossible. I give Andrea Horwath and her team great credit for having done that.

But ask yourself the question, why is it that the government doesn't want to do what Horwath has suggested or what the government could have done by ordering the matter to committee for the bill to be drafted? It's because they want to control the outcome. That's what this is all about. Let's not kid ourselves: The government decided—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What was that? Excuse me? Excuse me?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Tu es dans l'opposition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, it's because we're in the opposition, I'm told. That's why.

Of course. Oh Lord. My God, imagine that the opposition would have any ideas. Oh my God, everybody, we should go home.

I think this is pretty well what this is all about—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I will not repeat who said that.

Mr. Bill Walker: I think you should.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, I'm not going to, it would not be fair.

Mr. John Vanthof: No gas for heat and no opposition.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "No gas for heat and no opposition." That's a good one. I have got to repeat that: "No

gas for heat and no opposition." Wow, and high hydro bills.

But, Mr. Speaker, back to the debate. You have to ask yourself the question, why is it that the government has decided to do this on their own? It's not because we're opposition that we're doing this. It was Bill Davis who did it. It was Bob Rae who did. It was your own Premier Dalton McGuinty who did it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Even Dalton McGuinty did it.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Even Dalton McGuinty did it, and some of you served in cabinet with him. Why? Because they understood that some of these things you have to do in a non-partisan way. Dalton McGuinty created a committee, one member from each caucus, in order to give the recommendations on the drafting of legislation or amendment to legislation. Was he being partisan?

Mr. Paul Miller: She knows better.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, of course. Mr. Dalton McGuinty, what did he know? McGuinty understood that there are some things that you don't have the power to do if you really want to have the confidence of the public behind you.

So because the government wants to control the outcome, they've drafted a bill that has some good things in it. There are some things in this bill that are okay. I'm the first to admit it. But there are some things in this bill that are really problematic, like the rules for the third-party and other issues. So the government drafted a bill in order to essentially set the discussion—excuse me, the conversation. Remember when the Premier was first elected as leader of the party? She would say, "I want to have a conversation with Ontarians." I think she's having a conversation in the mirror: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the smartest Premier of them all?" It's getting pretty quiet there these days.

Interjection: And what did the mirror say?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, there are some things I can't talk about in this House. I can't repeat what that mirror said.

My point is that she talked to herself and decided what was going to be in the bill. Then, to make it worse, she said, "Okay. Now I'm going to refer it to committee." So we have this motion, Mr. Speaker. The motion essentially sets out exactly what the government wants, as far as process.

They didn't refer it to a committee, as Dalton McGuinty did, which was a committee of equal representation on the committee. That's what Dalton McGuinty did. He referred it to a committee and said, "Equal representation on the committee and the parties work it out." No, no, she sent it to a standing committee of the Legislature that who has the majority on?

Mr. Paul Miller: Liberals.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government.

Mr. John Vanthof: I believe that would be the government.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. The government has got a majority.

Here's what is going to happen. Our beloved colleague—I'm trying to look for the riding. Kitchener–Waterloo?

Interjection

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just Kitchener?

Catherine Fife—you don't want to be our beloved member?—stood in this House, question after question and kept asking over and over again, as our leader Andrea Horwath did, saying, "Why is this government so intent on doing this in a partisan way? Why is the government so decided to be able to control the outcome of this?" I think the answer is pretty clear.

Mr. Paul Miller: "My way or the highway."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly. As the member from Hamilton–Stoney Creek says, "My way or the highway." I believe it's a question of arrogance, to a certain degree, but the other thing is that it's more sinister than that. It's because they want to control the outcome. They want to play the game in a way that will be to the benefit of the Liberal Party.

Now I have to say that I was actually a bit taken aback in my riding last week. All of us were in constituency week, going around meeting with constituents and groups, and this issue didn't come up a lot, to be honest. Most people follow their hydro bill. They certainly knew about that. They certainly knew about natural gas. They knew about that. Oh, and they knew the autism file. My God, that came up a lot.

But a few people raised this one, and what I thought was interesting was that they said, "Well, there go the Liberals again. The Liberals are doing what's good for the Liberal Party." I got that twice, once in Kapuskasing and the other time, I think, in Timmins or Hearst, where I was. I think that's essentially the story: The Liberals are controlling the outcome because they're more worried about what is good for the Liberal Party and their benefit than what is good for the people of Ontario.

I'm not going to speak much longer on this; I think we're okay to go. I think we made the point. My leader was clear about what we should have done. Catherine Fife, the member from?

Mr. Paul Miller: Kitchener–Waterloo.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Kitchener–Waterloo. Thank you, I didn't know the riding.

Interjection: Our beloved member.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Our beloved member from Kitchener–Waterloo was clear in what we wanted. We were not opposed to the change. We think the change is not a bad thing; in fact, there should be changes made to the Election Finances Act. A good discussion about how we get where we've got to go is not a bad one, but it should have been a non-partisan process. This particular process that the government has established is one that controls the outcome, and we'll be voting against this motion for those reasons.

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

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 74. Then Mr. Naqvi moved that the motion be amended as follows: That the clause, "That the committee be authorized to meet"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No. Actually, I want to hear it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): "That the committee be authorized to meet for one week in June, two weeks in July and one week in August for the purpose of public hearings; and" be struck out and replaced with "That the committee be authorized to meet for"—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): "That the committee be authorized to meet for up to four weeks during the summer adjournment for the purpose of public hearings; and"

"That one staff person from each recognized party be authorized to travel with the committee; and"

We are now dealing with Mr. Naqvi's amendment to the motion.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Are members ready to vote on the main motion, as amended?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion 74. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion, as amended, carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

I have received a deferral notice from the chief government whip, pursuant to standing order 28(h), requesting that the vote on government notice of motion 74 be deferred until the time for deferred votes tomorrow, Tuesday, May 31, 2016. The request is from the chief government whip. As such, the vote is deferred.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day.

I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Attorney General has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1722.

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
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
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	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
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	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Arthur Potts
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Han Dong
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Peter Z. Milczyn
Daiene Vernile
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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Ann Hoggarth
Harinder Malhi, Jim McDonell
Eleanor McMahan, Lou Rinaldi
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Daiene Vernile
Robert Bailey, Wayne Gates
Monte Kwinter, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Cristina Martins
Randy Pettapiece, Shafiq Qaadri
Daiene Vernile
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Steve Clark
Granville Anderson, Robert Bailey
Steve Clark, Vic Dhillon
Sophie Kiwala, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahan, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Chris Ballard, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Peter Z. Milczyn, Julia Munro
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, Bob Delaney
Joe Dickson, Jennifer K. French
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, 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, John Fraser
Marie-France Lalonde, Gila Martow
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