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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 15 November 2016

Mardi 15 novembre 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 15 November 2016

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 15 novembre 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**AGGREGATE RESOURCES AND
MINING MODERNIZATION ACT, 2016
LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DES SECTEURS DES RESSOURCES
EN AGRÉGATS ET DES MINES**

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 14, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act / *Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en agrégats et la Loi sur les mines.*

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

Hon. David Zimmer: Speaker, we've been debating this piece of legislation now for some time, so I just want to go over it once more. I pose the question to the viewing audience: What are the proposed mining amendments all about? Well, it's a part of Ontario's ongoing efforts to modernize the Mining Act. Mining is a crucial commercial and economic activity of this province. It is important that all aspects of the mining business in Ontario, if you will, be as modern as we can possibly make them.

If passed, the bill would make some technical amendments that the Mining Act needs to implement on mining claim registration, which is the newest way to register mining claims. That, of course, entails a new mining lands administration system. We are going from the old style of staking mining claims to a new online approach to make this jurisdiction here in Ontario at the leading edge of how the mining business is conducted.

There are a number of other aspects of mining that have already been modernized, so these will complement those that are already in place. Other aspects have included new rules and tools to help provide clarity and certainty to industry to help build positive relationships with surface rights owners and ensure ongoing engagement by industry with affected indigenous communities.

I want to just speak for a second about the relationship of indigenous communities to the mining industry. As the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, I

can tell you that First Nations' relationship to the land and to all that the land encompasses—that is, the rich minerals in the land—is of huge importance to First Nations. It's important that First Nations' opinions be taken into account and respected, and that there be an open dialogue about how these amendments are going to interact with First Nations' cultural attitudes towards the land.

Let me give a couple of comments about why the amendments to the Aggregate Resources Act and Mining Act will be put together into one bill. As a part of the government's continued efforts to modernize the Aggregate Resources Act and Mining Act, these amendments with both the aggregate piece and the mining piece have been combined into one single act. So much of aggregate is a by-product of the mining industry that it makes sense to treat them as a common entity, if you will.

The proposed Mining Act amendments were introduced in December 2015. That was a part of the ongoing process of modernizing Ontario's Mining Act, as I've said. That process, interestingly, began in 2009 with the passage of Bill 173. While this is the first time that the proposed Aggregate Resources Act amendments have been introduced, the proposed changes represent the first step in a very phased approach to modernize and strengthen the aggregate resources policy framework.

The current bill will enable the Legislature to consider proposed changes to two of Ontario's natural resource statutes at the same time. There's an economy there, there's an efficiency there, there are policy links there that make it proper to include these amendments and changes to roll this legislation affecting both aggregates and mining into one piece of legislation.

Another question comes up, and I've been asked: "Why does the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry have the lead on this bill?" The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to put forth important legislation in Ontario's provincial Parliament. I am particularly looking forward to working with my colleague Minister McGarry, who is the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, as this legislation is presented to the House.

I've also been asked if this combined bill will change the process of the Mining Act amendments to be passed. I can assure you, Speaker, and members of the House, that the combined bill will work its way through the usual legislative process for government-proposed bills.

I want to say some additional comments, then, about modernizing the Mining Act and what's involved in these

proposed amendments. Ontario is proposing some necessary technical updates to the Mining Act to implement around-the-clock mining claim registration and an entirely new administration system for managing mining lands. If the amendments are passed by this Legislature, licensed prospectors would select cells on a grid overlying a map of the province, and that would be done through an online client claim registration portal instead of the old style of walking through the bush or across the land, staking claims with a small sledgehammer and claim sticks. That's the sort of idea we have of staking claims from the movies. Perhaps some of us have actually been in the north and observed that being done. So it's a very, very modern approach.

Again, I want to stress that if Ontario is going to continue to be, as it has been for generations, a leader in the mining business, it is important that Ontario have the latest technology, the most modern tools to do mining. That will attract investment. That will make people want to come to Ontario to avail themselves of the most efficient way, the very best possible way and the fairest way of staking claims. That's why Ontario is moving to an online claim registration system.

What other jurisdictions—and that's an interesting question to ask ourselves: What other jurisdictions have online staking experience and what has been their experience? I can tell you, Speaker, that while Ontario is continuing to modernize the Mining Act to ensure it remains one of the top jurisdictions in how exploration and development are carried out, there are other jurisdictions that have implemented these processes themselves. We're keeping pace with these jurisdictions. Online registration of mining claims is already in place in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Quebec. Manitoba and Nunavut are in the process of implementation of this new approach to the staking of mining claims.

0910

So you see, Speaker, and members of this Legislature, it is important that Ontario maintain its leading place in the technique and the practice of staking mining claims. We do not want to fall behind, given the rich, rich possibilities that await us in the mining industry here in Ontario.

I have been asked, that being the case, why we have not moved sooner with these implementations. I've also been asked how much it is going to cost. Well, Ontario is a huge province, as you know, Speaker, a huge province, much larger than any of the other provinces that I have referenced, with the possible exception of Quebec. So a significant amount of work is required to complete the initiative that we've taken. Ontario has decided to do it in a phased-implementation manner so that we get all of these technical online pieces in place in an orderly fashion, so there is a phased transition to the new system. Phase 1 of the modernizing of the act was implemented in 2011, phase 2 in 2012 and 2013, and we have committed to phase 3 in the 2014 budget. So, Speaker, at the end of the exercise, Ontario will continue to be the leader in mining and exploration.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to join in this morning on Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act.

I want to speak primarily to some of the comments in regard to aggregates. I was part of the Standing Committee on General Government, which, for over 18 months, went around the province to discuss the update that could be made to the ARA act. There were several members who are still here and a lot of members who aren't here in the Legislature anymore, enabled by our great researcher Jerry Richmond. We would say Jerry rocks. Jerry is retired now also, but he kept us all together, because it did go over a lot of months, to keep track of all the issues. I think we're happy to finally see legislation. We've been begging for it since the report was tabled over two years ago. Different ministers have been in the portfolio. But there really needs to be an update.

Geography determines where aggregates are. I live in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. There are aggregates all over my riding. In fact, there are the top aggregate producers, municipal producers of Ontario. Kawartha Lakes, the largest municipality in my riding, is in that category of the top 10 producers in the province of Ontario.

We tried to make recommendations that strike a balance between the aggregate functions and living with the neighbours, the municipalities, the environment. We see that many recommendations we made are not in this bill, so I'm hoping that when the bill comes to committee we can make some.

One is haul routes, H-A-U-L, haul routes. For example, I can have an aggregate facility in Trent Lakes in my riding, but the roads they haul the aggregates on, to where they're providing the aggregates, are actually through another municipality. Therefore, the money does not go to the municipality where there's the most wear and tear on their roads. So we want to see the increased levy, but we want it to go to the municipality, especially in this case, that has the most wear and tear due to the aggregates.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a pleasure to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma-Manitoulin.

I want to address some of the comments the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation made this morning. He's absolutely correct, particularly on the Mining Modernization Act perspective of this particular bill. There is some updating, and there are some definitions that are going to be changed, something that I described in my one-hour lead that I believe I had just a couple of weeks ago. All of this is under the Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act, and a lot of it is enabling legislation.

Unfortunately, there are a lot of suggestions and recommendations that came under the Blueprint for

Change that we don't see in this legislation. And I remember welcoming the member who just spoke, from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, to Manitoulin Island when she did come on behalf of the committee. I was happy to see those new faces from her area and other areas of the province coming to my riding.

Some of the things that are not contained in this bill are that there are no clear solutions to those seeking greater restrictions on the large quarry operations in sensitive areas like the Niagara Escarpment. That's not in this bill.

It does not require a needs assessment to help balance interests when land use decisions are being made about quarry applications. That is not in this bill.

The bill is silent on maximizing the use of recycling aggregate, something that I talked on extensively during my one-hour lead last week.

The bill offers no clear solutions for those seeking remedies for excessive noise, truck traffic or other impacts of aggregates operations. That is not in this bill.

There are no clear solutions to the growing communities that are suddenly surprised with the reappearance of long-dormant quarries. That is not within this bill, as well.

So the government can stand and say that this is a great bill, but a lot is left to, "Well, let's hope they do the right thing;" and if we look at the track record of this Liberal government, they've been failing with an F for a very long time.

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

Hon. Laura Albanese: I think that we're discussing a very important bill and we're trying, as the minister said in his speech, to modernize Ontario. I know that the other members are bringing forward some interesting suggestions, and I'm sure that those could be looked at during the committee process. As we know, every bill goes through the committee process and that's the most important part, really, where real changes can be made.

I represent an urban riding, so if anything, we get part of the recycling in some of the industrial parts of my riding, but not much else. But at the same time, I want to say that it has always been important to me, because when I was growing up, actually, my father had a company in Italy, not here, and that's what he did. He had quarries. So I'm familiar with the industry because I recall when I was a child visiting some of these quarries and how significant they were for the benefit of the economy at the time. They were used to make roads and to make bridges and we know how important infrastructure is for any society. So we have that aspect that brings it back home in many ways.

Today, we have the ability to recycle aggregates and to reuse a non-renewable resource, if you will, in a much better way. This has become critical to sustainment management.

Speaker, thank you very much for allowing me to add just a bit to this bill.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to add my voice to this debate this morning, as the aggregate industry in the riding of Huron–Bruce is very significant and we have numerous pits and businesses that reflect the successful aspect of the aggregate industry.

I, too, though, echo the comments made by my colleague, my seatmate here from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, in the sense that we have to make sure that as that valuable resource is hauled from point A to point B, the municipalities in between have an opportunity to recover and be recognized for the damage—the wear and tear—that happens on their local roads. This particular act is remiss on that part.

Another thing that concerns me about this particular act is that yet again we see this Liberal government pulling control back to individuals. In particular—the realities with this act—the minister wants to allocate herself with powers to enforce decisions without a tribunal. Speaker, we've been down this path before.

Mr. Steve Clark: We've seen this movie before.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, as my colleague from Leeds–Grenville said, "We've seen this movie before." Look what happened with the Green Energy Act when local autonomy was stripped away, purposefully. We've also seen, in the Great Lakes act, the development of a guardian council and the appropriation of powers to the minister to make unilateral decisions. Bill 151 is another example of where the power to make decisions is being removed from the democratic arena and is being hauled back, literally, to an individual in the minister's office. That's concerning based on the record of this government's actions. We have to do better, and we want to see this corrected in amendments.

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for final comments.

Hon. David Zimmer: I wanted to say something about how this legislation will impact on indigenous communities. If indigenous communities are notified that a claim has been staked, how will that notification occur? Well, to encourage our early engagement and relationship building with claim holders and indigenous communities, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines some years ago put in place a notification process where information is provided about newly recorded mining claims in the vicinity of a First Nation community, including contact information for the claim holder.

Currently, when a new mining claim is staked and recorded, the claim holder is sent a letter encouraging early engagement and relationship building with indigenous communities, including a list of indigenous communities in the vicinity to the mining claim. Should the proposed bill be enacted—this piece of legislation—the new mining lands administration system would enhance that existing notification process by providing for automatic, real-time notification to indigenous communities following a claim registration. This will give First Nation or indigenous communities in the area of a mining claim

that has been staked instantaneous notice. They'll get the same in-time notice that everyone else gets the moment that that claim is filed through the computer.

I should add this important point also: First Nation reserves are not open for mining claim staking under provincial legislation. Reserve lands are federally administered and within the federal legislative jurisdiction process.

I want to say something about how governments will ensure that large areas cannot be easily tied up by a few companies. The online registration system in other jurisdictions has not, in fact, resulted in large areas of land being tied up.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton-Brock—that combination.

Interjection.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Somewhere in there.

In Bill 39, the Aggregate Resources Act—I'll have to focus my comments to just a few areas, although there's much to be said about this. I believe anybody who represents a rural area will have significant experience and interaction with their constituents over aggregate extraction in our ridings. I have had significant interactions as well.

I want to first start off—this act provides an undue and significant broadening of the powers of the minister, which is not what people are looking for. I'll draw attention to a couple of places. Section 37: "Upon issuing an aggregate permit, the minister may attach such conditions to the permit as he or she considers necessary." At any time, the minister may also "add a condition to an aggregate permit, rescind or vary a condition of an aggregate permit or amend an aggregate permit in any other way."

Speaker, we need and we expect that we live under the rule of law, not under the rule of ministerial edict. This bill provides all-encompassing authority to the minister, often without any right of appeal. I find it quite odd, knowing what the select committee recommended to this House on improvements to the Aggregate Resources Act, why the government would now come out with such broad, arbitrary powers vested into the minister.

Once somebody has a permit, has met all the criteria, has met all the functions and thresholds to extract, to then give the minister the authority to just arbitrarily change the conditions of the permit is absolutely, fundamentally wrong. That's just one element of this bill that I would like people to look at.

I think this bill also misses the mark on a distribution formula for funding between municipalities with aggregates and those municipalities that use aggregates. I think it's important for us to recognize—and I believe why aggregates can be so contentious—I think they're symbolic of that urban/rural divide that many people speak about. Aggregates, by and large, are located in rural

Ontario, but they're utilized disproportionately in urban Ontario. We see all these requirements placed on the extraction of aggregates, often either by the ministry or by different urban groups. But they're the beneficiaries of it, and the rural municipalities do not get much of a share in the wealth created from aggregates. This bill is silent on that aspect.

Something else that I want to just draw people's attention to—and I found the number astonishing. A number of years ago—it was during the select committee—I found out that over 90% of our aggregates in Ontario are already off limits. They cannot be extracted either due to site conditions or, more often, regulatory restrictions. Over 90% of our aggregates cannot ever be taken out of the ground in this province. That's an astonishing number.

Of course, the other element behind our aggregates that we need to understand is that we're having fewer and fewer people engaged in the extraction of aggregates. Competition has been reduced. Small pit and quarry operators have not been able to keep pace with the regulatory environment and the cost of doing business in this province. We've lost many family owned and operated pits and quarries in my riding and throughout the province, and that has led to an increased cost and a reduction of competition.

I'd like to turn it over to my colleague.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I appreciate my colleague sharing some time with me. As we first came in this morning, we were scared that they were going to limit debate, so I wanted to get a few more things on the record for my municipalities and on the work we did for that committee.

In 2011, after the election—the ARA review was basically an election issue in some of the ridings, so thus we started. It was a really great committee as we travelled the province. We made 38 recommendations. One that I mentioned earlier, that I just highlighted, is the fact that I have aggregate producers and then I have haul routes. If there's a pit or a quarry in one municipality, it can be right on the edge of that municipality, but the wear and tear on the roads—because I have fewer provincial highways, they're actually over municipal roads.

The remuneration is very low. I have to go back in my memory quickly; I think it's 11 and a half cents, and maybe six cents go to the municipality. The municipalities in my area are actually losing money because the pittance they get from the fees does not compensate for the roads they have to build. You can imagine these big trucks on culverts and bridges. The wear and tear is excessive.

0930

The ministry, in this bill, is recommending an increase, and I'm more than happy that that is finally coming, five years later. It's the distribution, and the fact that we don't really know how much it's going to increase and how it's going to be distributed. When we

were in committee, we heard a lot about a fund that it goes into, like a separate trust, a dedicated fund into which the dollars go. I must say that the aggregate association worked well with a lot of municipalities. They were ahead of the mark and made recommendations even before our committee started. They were with us at committee, the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association and many municipalities. They had already looked ahead to see what they could do.

What we see here are not specifics—I always worry when it's all left up to regulation; I know some things have to be—of how this increase per tonne is actually going to be distributed. I want to say that in Trent Lakes, where half of the quarries are actually on crown land, that is actually not addressed. If you have extraction from crown land, you actually don't get any money from the per-tonne extraction, yet they use the municipal roads. That was definitely recommended, in our view—and the minister is nodding her head, so I appreciate that—but it's not really clarified here.

Northern Ontario could be a different issue; I understand that. That's what we heard when we travelled. That's why it's good to travel on committee to other parts of the province. But in southern Ontario, when we have a small municipality like Trent Lakes and they don't have any remuneration and 50% of their pits and quarries are on crown land, it's very impactful. Their roads are in desperate need of repair, yet their budget, because of low population in the township, is not there. I'm hoping the minister looks at that.

From Trent Lakes, most of the haul route on several quarries goes through the municipality of the city of Kawartha Lakes and actually through several villages. Again, they're not getting any money, and yet they have the most wear and tear from certain pits and quarries on their roads. When TAPMO, which is the Top Aggregate Producing Municipalities of Ontario, saw this as an issue, they said we should have dedicated funds on the use of roads for aggregates and then divide them up fairly.

I know that the member from Caledon mentioned recycling. Certainly, we'd like to see recycling a little stronger in the bill. We don't need to extract as much from pits and quarries if we use more recycled materials. We see some municipalities—and even the government did actually, I think, 30% use of recycled aggregate, yet a lot of municipalities, when they put to tender, they say “no recycled,” which is something that should be looked at, and I think it's in all our best interests.

I have very limited time, but one more is about mapping. The town of Caledon did mapping so that people coming in could actually see where deposits were that may be future-developed, and I think that should be across the province of Ontario.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that leniency.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to just echo some of the concerns that were raised. I think it's important to acknowledge that the communities where the aggregates

or the materials or natural resources are—the municipalities should receive some remuneration. I think that's an important point in fairness, so I want to acknowledge that comment being raised by both members who just spoke.

When we're talking about the aggregate issue, an area that's been very unclear and an area where there has been significant problems is with respect to gravel truck drivers. These are the drivers who go into the pits and have their trucks loaded up. There's a massive lack of clarity with respect to this issue. The drivers have had numerous complaints. They've done strikes, and it's really because of a lack of leadership with respect to the ministry. What's happening is that you have drivers who are coming to a pit. They're driving in a gravel truck, and their beds are being filled up by the loaders. What happens is that these are tonnes and tonnes of material that are being put into a truck. The driver cannot control where the material is being loaded. What happens is, when they're pulled over, the ministry then charges not because they're carrying over the capacity—they're carrying well within the capacity of their truck—but then there's axle-weight capacity. So if the material, if the aggregate is a little bit too much on one axle, then they're charged with an offence, and these offences are quite expensive. It's not a criminal offence, it's a highway traffic offence, but even for a provincial offence, the fines are so high that it actually costs them more to pay the fine than what they earn in a day.

This is an issue where the government needs to provide some more clarity. A driver can't control where loaders put the materials. They can look at the overall weight, but they can't control the aggregates being on a particular axle or not. That's an area where the government needs to provide some more leadership.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I listened intently to the members from Lanark and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. We were on the committee that travelled the province with the member from Haliburton, and I think it was a very productive exercise, because we went all the way up to Manitoulin and saw how they ship aggregates to Cleveland and everything. I think we learned that this is a very complex issue dealing with many competing interests. That's why you can't have one-off comments about this bill.

We do know that this bill is certainly long overdue, but it is not a silver bullet because there are very difficult issues. For instance—I think the member from Haliburton mentioned this—the most perplexing thing I found was that all the local municipalities were complaining about the aggregate industry and the damage to the roads, yet we found out that the local municipalities do not use recycled aggregates. They refuse to. Their engineers say, “Recycled aggregates are not up to our standard,” yet the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario uses recycled aggregates; 30% of the aggregates used by the MTO are recycled.

We asked many municipal leaders—I remember Mr. Seiling and others came—“Why don't you use recycled

aggregates? You would reduce the impact on your municipalities, you would reduce costs, yet your engineers don't allow the use of recycled aggregates." It was just mind-boggling to see this. It is one of the perplexing aspects of this bill.

Anyway, it is something that needs oversight, it is a good bill that blends together a lot of interests, and it's overdue.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I really appreciated the fact that our member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock had an opportunity to share the time with our colleague from eastern Ontario, because as a member of the standing committee that went across the province—there were a lot of learnings that happened over the 18 months that the standing committee worked on this particular report. Again, as has been pointed out, 38 recommendations came forward for consideration, and we've been waiting five years for action on those recommendations.

I'm really glad the member from Eglinton–Lawrence mentioned the recycling aspect. That is so, so important. This is 2016. We should be thinking about how those infamous "Rs" can be applied to the aggregate sector. We, too, support the notion of doing better in that regard and improving and recognizing greater opportunities to do just that: recycle our aggregates as we move forward with our road development and rehabilitation.

Another thing I'd like to touch on is the fact that mapping is very, very important. I commend my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon on the work that she did along with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. The town of Caledon is leading by example. They've gone out on their own initiative and mapped out the future development of aggregate resources.

I think this is imperative as we go forward as a province, so that when they're looking at relocating or opportunities for development in our local municipalities, people are able to recognize very quickly the future development of aggregates, because it will make a difference.

Just to close my two minutes in terms of comments, I want to say that members in this House spent a lot of time on the report that came out of the Standing Committee on General Government. I know this minister will take those recommendations to heart and do the best she can.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Good morning, Speaker. I'm glad to offer my comments on Bill 39, Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act. It's actually a very educational bill for many of us because, as members have said, geographically, it really dictates where this bill will be particularly important.

0940

This is an almost entirely enabling legislation, with very few details. The blueprint report that was done, A

Blueprint for Change, has many, many recommendations that weren't adapted into this bill, and the changes that are happening from the blueprint are left to regulation.

This all kind of came about because of the example that Melancthon went through, where a developer, or a corporation, purchased farmland in quantities, in acreages—500 acres—in quite a substantial amount. The community was left thinking that they were going to use it for farmland. It turned out that Melancthon didn't have the intention of using it for farmland and food production but, indeed, for aggregate purposes. In a lot of ways, that was the case that drove this legislation.

Leaving a lot of these things to regulation isn't really something that people can put a lot of faith in. We need to have legislation that actually will work for the companies and for the communities that they're going to use their resources from. We talked about that with regard to the environmental piece. That's very important to communities. We don't want to have those things dumped back into our environment. We want to make sure that we recycle those aggregates appropriately. I think helping the communities will make a big difference when it comes to the environment.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A lot has been brought up by members. I appreciate the member from Eglinton–Lawrence; we were on that committee a lot, and learned a lot. Some of the recommendations—I'm hoping he's going to come into committee when we have maybe a potential to put some amendments forward.

I had left off about mapping. Municipalities could map where deposits are. We all can see where the quarries are now. But we also wanted to have a process that was simplified—digitalized. We said to digitalize it, so people could go online. They can go on now and see where sites are. Digitalize the whole permitting, to see if there's a pit and quarry operated that hasn't acted in good faith.

I'm a little concerned with some of the bill, where it says every licensee shall pay an annual fee in the prescribed amount within the prescribed timeline. But it says "shall," and in the current legislation—it was "shall" and now it's "may." We have to have a responsibility that the people who are taking out the licence for these pits and quarries have a responsibility to pay licence fees, but also that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry can go in and make sure things are working properly and there are reports that are tabled annually.

Enforcement needs to occur. The Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association would like the resources for enforcement, right? Not themselves, but for enforcement to occur, so that this keeps this liveability that we have to have with the neighbours to pits and quarries, with municipalities and with the environment all above board. It's a transparency that occurs. I think that we can do better, modernizing that and being more transparent with everyone involved.

There is a part of the bill that gives the minister some more powers. We're a little concerned about that.

But as always, Mr. Speaker, I'm running out of time on this topic. Thank you.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: As always, it is my privilege to rise in this chamber to speak on behalf of my constituents in Oshawa. Though we're not a big mining town, my community is brimming with passionate advocates for a number of important issues such as safety, the environment and transparency, all of which are areas of concern within this bill.

I will remind the Speaker that in Oshawa, we also have an international deep-water shipping port that connects to cross-country rail and the 400 series. We know a lot about industry and heavy road use and also finding that balance when it comes to protecting our sensitive environmental areas and our wetlands. So we do have thoughts on this bill. Let's get to it.

Today, we're debating Bill 39, the Aggregate Resources and Mining Modernization Act. Coming in at 73 pages, it isn't a light bill, but magically the government found a way to skim over a number of important details, still. As we know, this bill has two schedules which seek to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act—and, of course, we must applaud the government for another wonderful Liberal title by sticking the word "modernization" in there.

I should also note that the government first proposed changes to the Aggregate Resources Act around five years ago; we're just seeing this legislation now. That means that not only is it missing some important details, but it's also coming five years late.

These are some of the broad concerns we have about this bill, but as the bill amends two separate pieces of legislation, I would like to address each schedule separately as well.

Starting with schedule 1, which pertains to the Aggregate Resources Act, once again, the government is asking the Legislature to trust it with vague enabling legislation that leaves almost all the crucial details to regulation. Again, this is after a long delay. The government has very little to show for over five long years of reviewing the Aggregate Resources Act, and we're still waiting for details. Personally, I would assume that you could fill in some of those details after a five-year period, especially with so many weighing in on the bill, making recommendations which, by the way, we don't see reflected in this piece of legislation. But anyway, perhaps I assumed too much.

Back to what is missing: There aren't any guidelines, purposes, statements of value or provincial interests in this policy framework. The bill enables certain powers, but doesn't explain how these powers may or must be used. In short, the government can do pretty much anything it wants. The government could impose huge new regulatory burdens on the industry and make aggregate operations impossible, or it could allow every acre of wetland and prime farmland to become a gravel pit, operated without needing a licence or permit.

That's not good enough for stakeholders, environmentalists or the people of Ontario. They want and deserve proper details, just like they deserve with every piece of legislation that the government introduces and every decision they make that affects the general public.

Speaker, a side note: The largest user of aggregates is the government, so you would think that they would be the leaders, that we would be leading, taking the lead, when it comes to recycling. But unfortunately, we're not.

This bill does not prevent the destruction of wetlands by aggregate extraction. It does not protect the Niagara Escarpment. As I said, in Oshawa, we have Second Marsh and we have McLaughlin Bay. They're pretty close to our international deep-water shipping port and the industry that comes and goes through there. Locally, we appreciate the need for balance in preserving nearby wetlands and encouraging industry in supporting our roads. We do have thoughts on this, as do all people across Ontario.

There are no interpretive guidelines or tools for approval authorities to help them balance the need for aggregate operations with other public interests.

There is still no clear obligation to screen out pit or quarry applications that conflict with the government's own protections for natural heritage or source water, as the Environmental Commissioner recommended a decade ago. If the government is sincere about modernizing the ARA to provide better environmental safeguards, then it should demonstrate this in the legislation.

In short, there's a lot that is missing. There's a lot that hasn't been addressed and a number of questions up in the air. I will be the first to admit that I am not an expert in this field and, as my colleague mentioned, this bill has been an opportunity for many of us to learn more about this field and this topic; but I am pretty sure that the Environmental Commissioner is indeed an expert in this field, as are the industry stakeholders that recognize what's missing from this bill.

During consultations—people have been asking for things. Why aren't those recommendations seen in this piece of legislation? That's another question. Apparently, the government knows best.

What this bill does do is provide the minister and the Lieutenant Governor in Council the authority to do a number of different things. Some of them are important changes, such as allowing the minister to protect some of Ontario's natural heritage; other changes are redundant or require further clarification, which we hope to hear soon. We look forward to hammering out some of those issues and details, filling in the blanks during committee.

On to schedule 2 of the bill, which makes amendments to the Mining Act: Same as with schedule 1, the government has left the details in the amendments to the Mining Act almost entirely to further regulations after its passage.

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Again, the people of Ontario deserve more than this. The government has had plenty of time to iron out the details of this legislation in advance of its introduction,

but they've chosen the Liberal approach of passing the legislation and then introducing the details in the dark. That's a shame and a missed opportunity.

These amendments have long been promised by the government. We should note that they were originally contained in Bill 155, the Mining Amendment Act. As we know, that bill died on the order paper, Speaker, when the government prorogued the Legislature, you might recall, for that one day in the fall—another example of when the government has put their interests ahead of the interests of Ontarians, but I digress.

Back to the bill: The majority of the amendments are meant to streamline the antiquated claims process in the province, consistent with the government's mineral development strategy. New Democrats have long championed the development of the mining resource industry in the province as a jobs and infrastructure creator, particularly in the northeast and northwest of the province.

As my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin had spoken at length about northern issues—this is a government that pretends to care about infrastructure, but it's been dragging its feet on facilitating multi-billion-dollar infrastructure and job creation, which is affectionately being called the ring of smoke now. Here we have another example of where we could be seeing more.

That's why we support the government finally making amendments to the Mining Act, but that doesn't excuse the manner that they've introduced them in or, again, what's missing.

This bill leaves the majority of details to regulation. The changes have moved at an almost glacial pace, and there is a continued lack of engagement on being party to necessary agreements between First Nations and industry.

We have concerns about the lack of details. We wish to express our disappointment in the amount of time it has taken the government to finally address some of these problems. Ultimately, we are indeed supporting the legislation, but the government should be providing greater clarity to the bill. It should strengthen environmental considerations, especially protection of prime farmland and drinking water, but these are things that we're going to push for at the committee stage.

Again, it's disappointing that they have taken so long to address some of these problems, then delayed them even further through prorogation. Just like in introducing this bill, the government has historically shown a lack of urgency towards facilitating multi-billion-dollar infrastructure and jobs generators in the north.

Speaker, sometimes it feels like this is a broken record. We're just dancing to the same broken record. How often can we say that the government has left the details out of the bill, the government has delayed the introduction of important amendments, the government has refused to properly consult with experts and stakeholders, and here we are again? We keep saying it, but they keep doing it. So I guess we're back to where we started.

Once again, the government is asking us to trust them with vague, enabling legislation that leaves almost all the

crucial details to regulation. Once again, they have little to show for over five years of reviewing. Like I said, it's a 73-page bill—it's not a light bill—but it is still missing pieces.

I've outlined the broad concerns we've been speaking about on this bill in the Legislature. I'd like to take a moment to thank my colleague the member for Timmins-James Bay, who has long served as the NDP critic for natural resources and forestry, and my colleague the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, who serves as the NDP critic for northern development and mines. They've done incredible work on these files. They've pushed for positive and necessary changes that have often fallen on deaf ears with this government. I know that being an opposition critic can be a thankless job some days, but I'd like to thank them for their work in this field. I want to thank them for their experience, their passion and their expertise. I hope the government has at least listened to a few things that you've suggested, now and on so many occasions in the past.

We are supporting this bill. There are changes we will fight for. There is time to make this bill stronger, and we are happy to continue to make those suggestions, whether the government is listening or not.

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

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: It's again a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge to add my comments to Bill 39.

I just wanted to point out that the work that's been done on many sides of the House leading up to this bill has been substantial. I'm really delighted to know that the recommendations from the standing committee are reflected in this bill in response to what the standing committee put forward, for instance: the standardizing provisions for site plan amendments, which is recommendation 8; creating a framework for equalizing fees and royalties, which is recommendation 6; and enhancing provisions that will support improved reporting on rehabilitation and recycled aggregate production, which is recommendation 10; and so on and so forth. Certainly, that work that was done on A Blueprint for Change has also helped to inform this process. Other committee recommendations will be moving forward when we move to phase 2.

In saying that, I've listened intently to many members on all sides of the House and have taken note of all those comments, and certainly I want to see this bill move forward as quickly as possible to committee so that we continue the work and the discussion with more public consultation and see what the committee can make of the bill and finally shape this moving forward.

I did want to make my final comments after thanking all the members who have already spoken to this bill to talk about equalizing fees. This has been a subject of great interest with the municipalities, industry and the public. Certainly, equalizing fees between crown land and private land helps to address the ongoing burden that the municipalities face with infrastructure. So that par-

ticular discussion will move forward fairly quickly. The consultation has now finished. We're now poring over that work, and that will be moving forward to see how that addresses it in the future.

So again, Mr. Speaker, thank you to all who have spoken to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments. The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Mr. Speaker, yet again, thank you very much. I'm piecing my information-sharing together this morning.

I want to thank the member from Oshawa for her comments. For sure, 60% of aggregates are used by the public service, so they're used by the governments of Ontario, and I think that people have to realize that. This is where we struggle for the balance.

In his comments about recycling, to follow up with the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, the Ministry of Transportation has done trials of up to 30% use of recycled aggregate. Actually, one of the recommendations from our review was that they share their technical expertise and best practices regarding aggregate recycling. I think that we should push that further with other municipalities, certainly, to show them that it can be done. It has the right standards and I think those are very much what we need. In fact, there were nine recommendations, I believe it was, under recycled aggregate materials, so nine recommendations we actually made to that effect.

There are also recommendations that were made in regard to the federation of agriculture, so basically aggregate operations and agricultural land. So there are great recommendations there about where the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the industry, the Ontario Aggregate Resources Corp. and other parties do the evaluation of current and potential innovative rehabilitation practices by which excavated areas may be returned to agriculture production. So we're trying again to strike that balance.

I just want to mention quickly the cumulative impact of aggregate operations on water resources. I actually had the initial pilot project done in the Carden township area of Kawartha Lakes on that. So those pilot projects are out there, and they should look at those recommendations also.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member from Oshawa for engaging herself and learning about this. This is something where, when you really look at the aggregates and mining sector, you find out very quickly that it really is about your communities that you have, your services, the economic opportunities that come from it, jobs and prosperity. It's not just a bag of dirt. It's not just rocks. A lot of it is so connected to our communities.

She went at length during her comments talking about the two schedules. On schedule 1 she talked about the ultimate problem being that it's enabling legislation and

the government is basically saying, "Trust us. We'll do what's right and we know what's wrong." She also touched on missing components that are not within the legislation that were absolutely within the blueprint, and unfortunately we didn't see those in the bill. That's a common theme that we hear from many of the members who are standing up and talking about this particular bill.

The additional powers of the minister: What do they exactly mean? How are they going to be applied? Are they going to create more bureaucratic red tape, reports and oversight in the industry, causing them further delays? That is another shortfall in this bill.

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Speaking about shortfalls, there are shortfalls on wetlands, shortfalls on source water and shortfalls on recycling. The Environmental Commissioner has been talking about these particular changes to the aggregates act for a very long time. These are all things that she highlighted in her comments.

On schedule 2, she talked about the entire—the amendments that are being done were already proposed. This is not new. This is just a redefining of some of the definitions that are there.

One of the biggest things that is missing under both schedules is an engagement process. Yes, we talked about the First Nations that are there and, yes, that process is highlighted under the aggregates act, where they're actually identified this time. But what is that framework? What is going to be the process that industry, or even First Nation communities, are going to have to go through in order to engage themselves? That's a question that remains unanswered.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I listened with interest to the member from Oshawa and, like the member from Haliburton said, we should correct the record here: The Ontario government does recycle; municipalities don't. The Ontario government, through MTO, which uses 60% of the aggregates, is a leader. It's not because we're trying to pat the government on the back. We think they should do more; we've got recommendations for them to do more. But at least MTO is using recycling when they build their roads. That's a very important clarification that's got to be made, and we wish municipalities would follow.

Sometimes, as elected officials, we try to simplify things, but on the committee, we learned how complex and challenging this is. It's a series of industries, really. It's not just one industry; it's a series of industries. It deals with the municipalities. It deals with First Nations, that we have to consult with them, which we've done for years on this. The mining industry, the environmental concerns, the Ministry of the Environment, natural resources, wetlands—all of these have to be taken into account. The construction industry—wow. The agricultural community, the Ministry of Agriculture—all of these ministries, industries and communities had to be consulted. That's why it's taken the time it has. That's

why we have the report—with the help of Mr. Richmond, who put together that great report—to find out the different balances.

That is what's gone into this bill. I think that it's a good, solid step in the right direction that deals, again, with the economy of Ontario, with the environment of Ontario and with the governance of our wonderful province. It is a good step forward.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I appreciate the thoughtful comments from around the room: the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, the members from Algoma–Manitoulin and also from Eglinton–Lawrence. I'd like to address some of the comments, and I appreciate the opportunity.

As the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock pointed out—the 60% use by the public sector—and to the point that the member from Eglinton–Lawrence made, the government is using them, the government is recycling, and we're awfully glad to hear that and to know that. But what I had commented on was: Why aren't we seeing more of a leadership role taken? That leadership would be how to engage municipalities, how to get others on board, how to improve and increase the recycling.

To the point made by my colleagues about the blueprint and about the recommendations: Why aren't we seeing more of those recommendations being considered in this piece of legislation? Hopefully more of that will come out in committee and can further strengthen this, especially when it comes to agricultural land use, when it comes to the shortfalls on environmental issues. What will the engagement process look like?

The missing components, which the member from Algoma–Manitoulin brought up: With the aggregates and mining sector, we should be talking about jobs and prosperity. We are, but there's so much opportunity there. How best do we unlock that potential? As he said, it's not just about a bag of dirt or about rocks. What I've learned in the time that we've been researching this and debating it is that we're literally talking about the foundation of what we build our province on. That's important stuff. We are building Ontario on a foundation, and we need to ensure that that foundation is as strong as possible.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm happy to speak and, like the member from Haliburton, I think we have so much to say about this bill. It was a fascinating experience to see the industries that are related to aggregate resources. Again, some of the ironic things I've found in this whole issue over the years—I know, even in my own riding, I had these signs on front lawns of big stone houses saying, "Stop the mega quarry." And I said to people, "Well, where do you think all the rocks and stone to build your big stone mansion come from, and your swimming pool and your paved driveway?" I said, "Maybe you should

build your house of wood, if you really want to do the environmental thing."

So there is a disconnect between people who use the aggregates and where the aggregates come from. They don't know the challenges that people in small rural communities have with the aggregate hauling, with the extraction, the impact on the environment, the water table, the wetlands. There's a need to try and educate people in cities about the relationship between building all these mammoth homes made out of extracts from quarries, and building highways. People are driving up and down the new 407 there and they're talking about how we need this 407, yet they don't realize that it comes from aggregates. Without the aggregate pits and the excavation, you're not going to have the highways; you're not going to have the new schools, the hospitals. So that's the reality that sometimes makes things difficult.

I remember it was a very interesting deputation we had from the former Environmental Commissioner. He said that he had the answer to all this conflict. He said what we should do is basically extract aggregate only from northern Ontario and ship it by train into the urban areas in the south. That was his simple solution. I said, "Yeah, in a dream world you might be able to do that. Who's going to pay for the building of all these railroads all across the province and hauling aggregates off trains onto trucks in the cities?" There's no simple solution, as proposed by the former Environmental Commissioner.

But we've heard from some very knowledgeable, intelligent people. We visited aggregate sites. We walked them up in Manitoulin. We walked them up in Ottawa and all throughout the Guelph and Kitchener area. We saw first-hand the incredible industry and the challenges they have. One of the challenges they have is that to get approvals for an aggregate pit, it takes up to 10 years, and that adds to the cost. I think one of the recommendations we made is to try and streamline this approval process, which shouldn't take 10 years.

On the other hand, the 10 years and the delays occur because there are many objections. Every aggregate pit has countless numbers of objections from local communities, agricultural groups and environmental groups, so it is a very painful, slow and costly process to get one of these approvals. That's the challenge, I think, the ministry had in trying to come up with this legislation: to try and be fair with everyone. That's why it's been a very deliberate process of examination, of consultation, of changes that have to be made, because it's also a changing industry, with the new technologies that are occurring in the whole area of using recycled materials and the whole area of mitigating impacts on water tables.

But there is, as I've said, a need to bring this legislation up to date, and it is a very comprehensive bill. Is it going to solve all the conflicts? By no means, no. There are just too many very difficult, challenging issues.

I can recall talking to the members who represent areas where there's aggregate extraction. The challenges they have from what happens on the roads, what happens

with the dust, what happens with the impact, perhaps, on water tables, the whole issue about getting the aggregate—because the aggregates have to be close to markets to make it affordable. So if you're hauling trucks full of aggregates from northern Ontario down to the GTA, it's not going to work financially, because there's a cost in terms of trucking, etc.

These are some of the things that came up. Again, as I said, we had people with scientific backgrounds, geologists; we had agricultural community representatives come forward and talk about the need to take into account the impact on agricultural land, like we had in Melancthon. But, as you know, in Melancthon, what happened is that the Ministry of the Environment did an unprecedented thing and asked for a full environmental assessment of the Melancthon application, and that basically killed it. The American company who tried to get in there disappeared, thankfully.

We just have to remember, though—I think it's essentially an awareness issue—that we are all connected. Therefore, if we demand more aggregates to build our homes, to build our roads, to build our office buildings—and we have a lot of construction, thank God, in Ontario. But remember, the construction material—raw materials—comes from generally agricultural rural areas. There's an impact there, so there's a price to pay.

Again, I think many members have mentioned that they would like to propose amendments and make the bill stronger. I think this is very important, because I think we have a number of members who have got good backgrounds in this legislation, and we know that there are some issues that may be missed in this bill. I know that a number of us have taken an interest in this and there's a need to really ensure that the experts—again, the stakeholders, their cultural community, the industry—are brought forward to the Legislature in the committee so that we can make amendments to make this bill the best we can. Again, it's not going to be easy, but we need to hear from those people so that we can finally get a bill that's going to be workable to the benefit of the economy of Ontario and the environment of Ontario. It's something that is really needed, because it is a backbone.

I think there has been over nine and a half hours of debate, and I think we should go listen at committee, where we can make this bill stronger. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I move that this question be now put.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Eglinton—Lawrence has moved that the question be now put. Having listened intently to the debate from all parties this morning and considering the amount of time, I am satisfied that there has been sufficient debate to allow this question to be put to the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion that the question be now put, please say “aye.”

All those opposed to the motion that the question be now put, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, this vote will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing as how it is almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M^{me} France Gélinas: We have some very important guests in the west gallery this morning, starting with Mrs. Theresa Agnew. She is the executive director of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. We have Jane Fahey-Walsh; Alana Halfpenny; Barb Sbrolla; Beth Cowper-Fung; Beth Gerritsen; Jennifer Clement, who is the clinic director of the very first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in Sudbury—welcome; Marnee Wilson; Shawn Dookie; Donna Kearney, who is the chair of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario; Katherine Trip; Kim Demers; Mary Geroux; Suzanne Tobin; Wendy McKay; and Debbie Graystone.

Please help me welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: From my riding of Barrie, I would like to welcome nurse practitioner Tina Lesk to the Legislative Assembly. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to welcome guests of page Sage Nakamoto. Her father, Craig Nakamoto, is here today, but also her grandmother Anne Heggie is here.

Please welcome as well Donna Kearney, who was just introduced. She's from Muskoka, a nurse practitioner. I'm very happy to have her visiting as well.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to introduce a young man from my riding who is here working as a page, Jackson Louws. Jackson, I know you're going to do good work today, and I can't wait to take you to the Leafs game tonight.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Page Henry Klinck has a very special guest today. His mother, Terra Klinck, is down to see him at work. Please welcome her to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm pleased to announce guests of page Fallon Gervais. This is on behalf of Cindy Forster, the MPP for Welland. Her father, Eric Gervais, is in the public gallery today. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: On behalf of all the members from Ottawa, I want to recognize the nurse practitioners who are visiting from Ottawa. I want to apologize to them as well for missing the meeting because of other obligations.

Please welcome Hoa Duong, Debbie Tirrul, Chelsea Cameron, Yvonne Makosz, Joanna Binch and my very good friend Hoda Mankal to Queen's Park.

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to introduce Francesca Grosso, mother of page Giulia Paikin, the daughter of Steve Paikin.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I also would like to welcome a nurse practitioner from my riding, Connie Denomme. Thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, I'd like to introduce a guest of page William Cross: his mother, Anna Cross, who will be in the public gallery this morning.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I know that there have been other introductions, but I'm pleased to also welcome the more than 75 nurse practitioners from the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario here with us today to celebrate nurse practitioners'—day? Week? Month? It should be a year.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We'd like to welcome the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario. They've come here from all over the province. Their honorary president is Elizabeth Dowdeswell, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario. Thank you for joining us today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): My colleagues, we have a new batch of pages. I would like them to assemble for introduction.

From Oak Ridges–Markham, Adrian Rassaf; from Timmins–James Bay, Anne Quevillon; from Mississauga–Erindale, Calida Nguyen; from Markham–Unionville, Charis Liu; from Beaches–East York, Charlie Scholey; from Richmond Hill, David Zhou; from Durham, Emma-Rose Hoog; from Don Valley East, Eric Pei; from Welland, Fallon Gervais; from St. Paul's, Giulia Paikin; from Hamilton Mountain, Helen Kottaras; from Oakville, Henry Klinck; from Niagara Falls, Jackson Louws; from St. Catharines, Kaitlyn Spaan; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Lauren Riha; from Northumberland–Quinte West, Reagan Smith.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That was nice. You got brownie points, dad.

From Parry Sound–Muskoka, Sage Nakamoto; from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Victoria Armstrong; from Scarborough Centre, Vishmen Aynkharan; from Huron–Bruce, Liam Cronin; from Eglinton–Lawrence, William Cross; and from Kitchener–Conestoga, William Dixon. These are your pages.

APPOINTMENT OF FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to the French language commissioner.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

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

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of François Boileau as the French Language Services Commissioner for a term of five years, commencing on November 15, 2016, as provided in section 12.1 of the French Language Services Act.”

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that a humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled”—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Did I hear a “dispense”?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Therefore it is time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Michel, a gentleman in Ottawa–Vanier, called the Liberal campaign headquarters just the other day. Like most people, he was fed up with his hydro rates. Michel asked the Liberal campaign about his hydro bill. Can you imagine what he was told? Someone in that office told him to lower his thermostat and wear a coat.

Is that the Liberal's new solution to skyrocketing hydro rates? Should everyone simply have to turn down the thermostat and wear a coat inside in winter? Are they that out of touch?

Interjections.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The indication is that I'm going to have to consider moving into warnings. For those individuals who believe that that will be the case, continue speaking.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I certainly expect that any resident of any part of the province, but certainly in a by-election—I would expect that any resident who calls any of the offices of the parties involved would get good information.

In this case, the reality is that we are working very hard to reduce people's electricity costs. We know that the costs associated with the rebuilding of the system

which we inherited, which was degraded, had not been invested in, had not been kept up, was dirty—the electricity grid was dirty, Mr. Speaker. The work that we have done to shut down the coal-fired plants, to rebuild over 10,000 kilometres of line, to clean up the electricity grid and make it reliable—there's a cost associated with that.

We are working to take costs out of the system for people across the province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: It makes me shake my head to think that's an acceptable answer—to just wear a coat in your own home.

The Royal Victoria hospital in Barrie is doing their best to lower their energy use. That's because they are seeing a six-figure increase in their hydro bills this coming year. The hospital will see a 4% to 6% increase in the hydro costs. It will cost the hospital approximately \$200,000.

In the local media, in the Barrie Advance, RVH spokesperson Jane Cocking said, “We know hydro rates are going up,” but “we have to keep the lights on” in the hospital. But at what expense? Should money not be going to front-line care instead of forcing hospitals to struggle to pay their hydro bills?

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell us what she's doing to help hospitals that are struggling to pay their hydro bills?

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Health care, not hydro.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

The indicators are still there that I may have to go to warnings. This is getting very close.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm delighted that the Leader of the Opposition has made the connection between electricity and health care, because I know that he knows that the shutting down of the coal-fired plants—the fact that we moved from brownouts, blackouts and smog days to no smog days—means that we've saved \$4 billion in health care costs. And kids with asthma and people with respiratory disease have a much easier time breathing in this province because of the work that we've done. Thank you for asking that question.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: When it comes to Michel in Ottawa–Vanier, it's “wear a coat.” When it comes to a hospital that's struggling to pay their hydro bills, it's more Liberal spin, trying to say everything is fine and everything is rosy. It isn't. We're seeing hospitals having to fire nurses because of hydro bills. It's not right. It's not appropriate—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie, the member from Davenport, and the Minister of Children and Youth Services, come to order.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: Let me share with you another hydro horror story: Adrienne in Smiths Falls. Adrienne has autism and is on ODSP. She shares the cost of living with her mother, a pensioner. They live in a small wartime house and are as energy-wise as they can be, but their hydro bill is almost the same as their mortgage payment. They are juggling other bills, but they can't make ends meet. Adrienne says that they can't afford to live. That's not hyperbole; that's the legacy of this Premier because of the unmitigated failure of her hydro policies.

My question to the Premier: Does she really want energy poverty to be her legacy for Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, the work that we have done to clean up the air in this province to make a clean electricity grid, to rebuild a system that was degraded, has a cost associated with it. We recognize that. Adrienne and all the people across the province who are struggling with their electricity bills—we recognize they need support. That's why we have taken the debt retirement charge off their bills. It's why, in January, there will be an 8% reduction across the province. It's why we've put in place programs to help people of low and middle incomes with support on their electricity bills.

We recognize that there's a challenge. We recognize that there needs to be support, which is exactly why we have made the changes that we have made.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, public hearings began on the government's new health care bill. One thing is resoundingly clear: Nothing in this bill puts patients first.

In fact, just hear what Michael Decter from Patients Canada had to say: “We strongly support a patients-first agenda for health care. It is, in fact, long overdue. However, we are hard pressed to find how patients are first within the actual substance of Bill 41,” when you read it.

Patients Canada is right. This is an investment in administration. This is an investment in bureaucracy. It is not an investment in patients.

It is not too late to put patients first. Can the Liberals explain why high-paid management is more important than caring for patients in the province of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

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

comment, but let me make it very clear that the impetus behind the legislation that has been proposed is exactly about making sure that patients, that people in communities across the province, can access primary care, that they will know where to get that care and they will get the appropriate care. In fact, many of the things that critics have been calling for in terms of that access is exactly what is in the legislation.

So that's what this is about. It's about making sure that people have access to those primary care physicians and primary care practitioners, like nurse practitioners, without having to spend an enormous amount of time finding those people—that they have access and that they know where to go to get the appropriate care. That's what the legislation is about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: This high-paid-administration bill does nothing to curb years of Liberal attacks on the health care system. Just look at the Liberal track record: They cut \$815 million from physician services. They cut 50 medical residency spots. They cut \$50 million from seniors for physiotherapy, and this government has fired 1,400 nurses since the start of last year. That is their record. This doesn't sound like you're putting patients first.

The government spin is absurd. They'll go back 13 years to hide what's happened in the last few years. The front-line workers know the truth. They don't buy the Liberal spin. When will this government finally put patients first?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, don't even get me started on referring back to their promise to fire 100,000 public sector workers, many of them in the health care sector. They're good at putting patients last, Mr. Speaker, and this bill does the opposite of what they would propose to do.

In fact, I wish their spin on this was at least original, because they're just copying the position of the Concerned Ontario Doctors, the coalition of Ontario doctors that represents those high-paid specialists that are perpetrating and propagating the mistruths that that sector—

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

1050

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I will withdraw, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to withdraw that. I wasn't referring to the opposition; I was referring—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. No explanations, just a simple withdrawal, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I withdraw.

Mr. Speaker, the Patients First Act's aim, at its heart, is to actually improve services for patients across this province, to provide quicker access, same-day, next-day services and outside of regular hours; to better integrate health care services; to find administrative savings and

management savings so that they can be reinvested in front-line health services. That is the core of the act.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: We are joined by nurse practitioners from across the province today. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America that doesn't allow nurse practitioners to prescribe controlled drugs and substances. In some places in northern, rural and remote Ontario, nurse practitioners are the only primary care provider able to provide timely access to care.

Mr. Speaker, this government needs to commit to making sure that every person in Ontario has access to the care they need. We don't need vague promises. The government has hinted that they're going to do something, but it's hints and vague promises. I want a commitment. I want a date when they're going to honour their promise.

Directly to the Premier: Will this happen this year? Yes or no?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Coming from the third party, I would understand the motivation. I just find it incredible coming from the official opposition with the commitments that they've made in election campaigns to gut our health care system.

When it comes to nurse practitioners—

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —they know the commitment that I've made for prescribing controlled substances. They understand that it requires a bylaw to be posted and approved by the College of Nurses—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. First of all, we are that far away from warnings.

The member will address the Chair.

Finish your answer, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I'm just so excited that our nurse practitioners have joined us here today. They know the commitment from me personally, the commitment from the ministry.

I recently wrote to the College of Nurses as well, to ask them to expedite this process as fast as they can possibly do. I expect that in the very, very near future, they're going to have the opportunity to prescribe controlled substances.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This Sunday, the Sudbury Star published the results of a poll that showed that 71% of its readers think their MPP, the Minister of Energy, should step down from cabinet until the Sudbury by-election scandal has been resolved.

It appears, Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm now moving to warnings.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To be clear: I'm moving to warnings.

Finish, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It appears the people of Sudbury understand—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is warned.

Carry on.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It appears the people of Sudbury understand the concept of integrity and honour. When will this Premier follow their lead and ask for her Minister of Energy to step aside?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party understands that there is a court process under way. This issue is before the courts.

I've been very open in the Legislature, in the media over many months about the circumstances around the Sudbury by-election. Under the presumption of innocence, we're going to let that process play out in the courts. Really, there's not any appropriate way that the issue should be litigated here in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker. There's a process outside of the Legislature that has to be allowed to unfold.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, one reader called in to the newspaper to explain why she thinks the minister should step aside. "It would be the honourable thing to do," she said. Does the Premier think that it is honourable to continue to protect Liberal insiders like the Minister of Energy while ignoring the wishes of the people of Sudbury?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I think we had this conversation yesterday in the House on this precise topic. You also made a very, very clear ruling on the nature of questions, discussion and debate—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, you also outlined a very clear ruling yesterday, talking about this issue and the limits around the discussion around this issue, both in question period and debate. I think the member opposite, the leader of the third party, very much knows that this matter is before the courts. It would be highly inappropriate to deal with this issue.

As it relates to the Minister of Energy, it's also clear that the Minister of Energy is under no investigation. There are no charges laid—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham and the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek are warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: There are no charges laid against the Minister of Energy. His responsibilities as the

Minister of Energy are not a subject of this investigation. Therefore, the minister will continue to do his job and serve the people of Sudbury.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Another caller told the Sudbury Star, "I definitely think MPP Glenn Thibeault should step down." Yet another said, "I say he should resign completely, along with Wynne—they're all in this together."

How can the Premier continue to put the interests of Liberal Party insiders ahead of the wishes of the people of Sudbury when we clearly see what a detrimental effect this is having on their faith in this government? When will the Premier do the honourable thing, the thing that was done by other cabinet ministers across all parties? Conservative cabinet Ministers Runciman and Wilson, and Liberal cabinet Minister Sorbara: All of those folks did the honourable thing and stepped aside.

I ask the Premier: When will she ask her Minister of Energy to step aside until the OPP allegations regarding his role in the Sudbury scandal are fully dealt with?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier, the member from Sudbury and all members on this side of the House continue to focus on working for their constituents. The member from Sudbury is focused on getting Maley Drive built. He is focused on delivering the PET scanner for the good people of Sudbury. These are the kinds of public services that the member for Sudbury is providing. He is under no investigation whatsoever and the member from the third party very much knows that. There are no charges against the Minister of Energy either.

There is no reason whatsoever that the minister should be considering stepping down. He is focused on his job not only as the Minister of Energy but, most importantly, as a very good member from Sudbury.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. If the Premier needs a reason other than the Sudbury bribery scandal to ask her Minister of Energy to resign, I would suggest it could be the mess that he has helped her make in our energy system.

The Liberals' short-sighted sell-off of Hydro One is hurting businesses in Ontario. Last week I was in Windsor and had a chance to visit the Arner Stop, a local diner just outside the city owned by Gabe Saad. Gabe has owned the Arner Stop for 12 years. He told me that his hydro bill is now his second-largest expense after his mortgage. It hit \$2,000 this summer, and he's bracing for an even bigger bill now that winter is coming.

He's tried hard to keep costs down. He's reduced the number of coolers he keeps in the diner, he's replaced the roof, but still he's struggling, Speaker.

1100

When will the Premier realize how much damage her sell-off is doing to families and small businesses across Ontario and put an end to it?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Trinity–Spadina is warned.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I will say to the leader of the third party—and I know that the Minister of Energy will want to comment, because he is working every day to find ways to help people with their electricity bills, to take costs out of the system, because he knows that the work we have done to build the system up had a cost associated with it, and that that’s exactly why we need now to find ways to take costs out of the system, as we have been doing by putting programs in place, taking the debt retirement charge off people’s bills and, as of January, taking the provincial portion of the HST off people’s bills.

Again, the leader of the third party, as she is wont to do, conflates issues. The reality is that she refers to Hydro One and the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One, which is related to the investment in infrastructure, in transit and roads and bridges—the very infrastructure that the member for Sudbury has been fighting for—and that she also knows that the electricity prices are not set by Hydro One. They’re set by the Ontario Energy Board.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I think the Premier just admitted that the government, the Liberal government, made a mess of our electricity system and now we’re supposed to trust them to fix it. I don’t think anybody trusts them to fix it, Speaker, but we’ll leave that to the people.

I also met a gentleman named Mark Stannard when I was in the Windsor area last week. Mark is a second-generation dairy farmer in this province, in Essex, and his small business is also struggling under the burden of exorbitant hydro bills. He tries to conserve as much energy as he can, but the reality of his business is that his cows need to be milked and they don’t wait for off-peak hours.

Will this Premier—in fact, when will this Premier—wake up and realize that this sell-off of Hydro One is hurting farm operations like Mark’s and do the right thing and make a commitment to stop any further sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is so interesting to me that in this whole discussion, the NDP has never talked about the importance of building infrastructure. The NDP has never talked about the importance of clean air. The NDP has never talked about how important it is that we have a reliable electricity system. I’ve never heard the NDP talk about what the electricity system would look like, had they not cancelled the deal with Manitoba for clean hydro power when they were in office, Mr. Speaker. I’ve never heard the NDP talk about how important it is that we continue to build out the system so that northern communities can be connected to the grid. I’ve never heard the NDP talk about how important it is that we have an electricity system that is clean, that has a

low-carbon footprint. I’ve never heard the NDP talk about any of those things, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: And I have never heard the Liberals admit that the sell-off of our electricity system is costing the people of this province bills that they simply cannot afford and is ruining the future of the next generation of the people of this province.

Bernard Nelson is yet another example of a dairy farmer I met in Essex last week. Bernard has seen his hydro bill double over the last three years—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport is warned.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Bernard as well has tried to conserve. He switched to energy-free water bowls for his cows. He changed out the barn lights. He bought new variable-speed fans that are more energy-efficient, to keep his cattle cool in the summer. But still, Bernard is worried about having to lay off some of his staff because the cost of hydro means that he cannot afford to keep everyone working on the farm.

Small businesses are hurting. Farmers are hurting. Families are hurting. When will this Premier finally admit that the sell-off of Hydro One hurts families, hurts agriculture, hurts business, and stop any further sell-off?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I’m very pleased to rise and answer this question, Mr. Speaker.

The broadening of the sale of Hydro One has allowed us to invest in many things that the Premier has talked about, and let’s just talk about some of those. Some \$13.5 billion is being invested in the GO regional express rail in the GTHA, which will quadruple the number of weekly trips to 6,000. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT: \$5.3 billion in capital investments.

Mr. Speaker, you know what? We are making sure that businesses and farms right across this great province of ours are getting a rebate. We’re working hard to ensure that happens. Just yesterday, I was in the great riding of Hamilton, working and talking with Dofasco where they’re saving over 170,000 megawatts of power, saving over \$10 million and creating 81 jobs in that riding.

That’s what we’re doing on this side of the House: creating jobs and helping our economy.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday’s fall economic statement revealed the government is significantly hiking service fees and taxes to pay for their years of waste, mismanagement and scandals. Vehicle and driver registration fees have increased by \$503 million in just four years. If you drive a car, you pay more. If you heat your home with gas, you

pay more. If you hunt or fish or camp, you pay more. In fact, the Financial Accountability Officer told us this Liberal government has hiked service fees on everything by nearly 40% in just five years. Yesterday's news did absolutely nothing to address this half-a-billion-dollar driver's fee hike.

Can the government please explain why it's insisting on making life more affordable for the people of Ontario?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Unaffordable.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Unaffordable.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Housing is warned.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the fall economic statement that we delivered yesterday—the tremendous amount of work we are doing to stimulate economic growth and create more jobs. Independent economists have understood and are actually indicating that Ontario is surpassing and exceeding the growth in Canada. In the last quarter, we outpaced the United States and the G7. As a result, we're taking the necessary steps to come to balance next year and the year after that.

The member opposite makes reference to a number of programs that we are revising as we proceed to take cost recovery measures necessary in that program. At the same time, we're doing many other things to help everyday Ontarians by providing free tuition to many students, by enabling us to provide more child care spaces to young families, and we're providing a doubling of the rebate for first-time homebuyers to \$4,000, all of which will help our economy and help our families at the same time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Minister of Finance.

We know that their waste, mismanagement and scandals have made life more unaffordable for Ontario families. Yesterday, they presented a fall economic statement, but the independent Financial Accountability Officer told us their numbers just don't add up. He also told us that we have unprecedented debt levels, and interest on that debt is \$1 billion a month. It means that Ontario now pays more in interest than it does on post-secondary education and community safety combined. For taxpayers, this government's reckless mismanagement means higher taxes, higher hydro rates and less funding for front-line services.

Can the government please explain why it insists on making life more unaffordable for Ontario families?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite began by speaking about the implementation of an additional \$30 in savings for Drive Clean, which we are proceeding to do, but then he referenced interest costs. Let's be clear, Mr. Speaker: Under this government, we've taken steps to reduce our overall percentage of costs for interest to 8.9% of our budget. That has been consistent over the last four years since we've been providing for some of the work.

Under the Conservative government, it was 15% of the budget that the interest costs were attributed. Under the NDP, it was 12%. We have taken steps to control our spending—we are the leanest government in all of Canada—without sacrificing the things that matter. We're investing more in health care. We're investing more in education. We're producing 641,000 net new jobs, all of which is providing for a growing economy, all of which is enabling us to come to balance next year and the year after that. The FAO knows that because we now have updated information that he didn't have the benefit of, and we are moving forward with our plan.

GOVERNMENT FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday's fall economic statement does little to address the real issues facing Ontarians. It's nothing more than a distraction.

1110

People in Ontario are facing energy bills that they can no longer afford. Life in Ontario is less affordable every day. But instead of stopping the sell-off of Hydro One, Ontarians found out yesterday how well the Liberals' asset sales are going. Basically, they were boasting about the public sell-off of these assets.

We now know that the Liberal government is selling off Hydro One to meet the Liberals' promise to balance the books next year. On page 48: "By broadening Hydro One ownership, the province expects to generate ... \$5 billion to reduce debt." The Financial Accountability Officer has already told us that once the sell-off of Hydro One is complete, it will cost Ontario \$500 million every year.

Speaker, why does the Premier continue to put the needs of the Liberal Party ahead of the needs of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite again makes reference to an asset that we are repurposing and actually augmenting to provide for greater investments into new assets.

The member opposite also talks about the wholesale value of that asset, which does go towards debt and which is done by law. But she fails to mention that there is \$4 million in capital appreciation that's being re-invested, dollar for dollar, through the Trillium Trust to be reinvested into programs and into assets, even in her own riding, in order to achieve a better quality of life for all Ontarians.

At the same time, we're taking steps to reduce the overall cost of hydro through the elimination of the 8% portion of the province's charges. We also have eliminated the debt retirement charge, another \$70 a year that's being benefited to those bills.

So we'll continue on our plan. We'll continue to reinvest, dollar for dollar, all of those assets so that we can build new assets for the long-term benefit—

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: The finance minister should follow the money, because we know from public accounts that the Trillium Trust wasn't used last year.

Also, this Premier, if she was actually concerned about Ontarians' priorities, could have proved it yesterday. Instead, we got another distraction from this government. Rather than actually addressing the crisis in affordable housing, the Liberals adjusted real estate transaction costs. A senior Bank of Montreal economist said that it "hardly makes a dent in worsening" housing "affordability, and, if anything, just adds more fuel to the housing fire."

Yesterday's report describing Toronto as the child poverty capital of Canada pointed to the lack of affordable housing as a key contributor to poverty and inequality. We know that investing in affordable housing is an investment in social justice and makes economic sense.

Speaker, can the Premier explain why her fall economic statement did not address the affordable housing crisis in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let me correct my record: Of course, I meant "billion" dollars in new investments for the people of Ontario as a result of the work we're doing.

The member opposite doesn't feel that a doubling of a rebate to young families who are starting to buy into their new home—that it matters little to them. The \$4,000 does help, as well as the work we're doing to increase child care spaces for young families; as does our ability to provide free tuition to many students who are entering the education system so that they're not burdened by debt. All of these efforts are designed to help those young families get started.

In fact, because of the work we've done on this side of the House, we're also helping them with retirement security in the future, all of which requires us to be diligent and assemble some of these programs. It's not one item in particular; it's all of them combined that are enabling us to provide for greater service and greater help for our young families.

HOME OWNERSHIP

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is also to the Minister of Finance. Just yesterday we know that the minister delivered the fall economic statement, which detailed the economic outlook and the fiscal review for the province. Then, last night, I attended the Woodbine Gardens Homeowners Association annual general meeting, chaired by president Briar De Lang, and they were delighted to hear that we're on track to balance the budget while we continue to invest in Ontario.

I know that as part of the announcement, the minister committed to helping first-time homebuyers enter into the housing market. I also know that many Ontarians have expressed concerns about the difficulty first-time buyers are currently facing as they try to get into the housing market.

Speaker, would the minister please outline and explain how these recent changes outlined in yesterday's financial economic statement will benefit Ontario homebuyers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I thank the member from Beaches—East York for the question.

I think we all recognize and appreciate that many people have benefited from improved equity in the increased valuations of their homes. But for some young families and others looking to buy their first home, it's becoming more challenging, and that's understood in this housing market as we stand today.

Buying your first home, as we all know, is one of the most exciting decisions in a young person's life. But many are worried about how they will be able to afford that first condo or house, as the member just asked. To address this and to help young families, we are doubling the maximum refund for first-time homebuyers to \$4,000 starting January 1, 2017, enabling them to also benefit from entering the marketplace and having the same benefits as many of us have had as we started at that young age as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to the Minister of Finance for the leadership he's showing for young people to buy their first homes. I know the people at Woodbine Gardens were excited because there are still opportunities for affordable houses in the north part of my riding, and these people will benefit. It will be a significant savings for them.

This is a very important step for first-time homebuyers who are looking to enter the housing market. I'm pleased to hear that the government is taking these steps to invest in supports that help people, and especially young people, in their everyday lives.

I know that the province is also taking steps to modernize the land transfer tax system. Will the Minister of Finance outline and explain further how these changes will also make life easier for first-time homebuyers?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Again, thank you for the important question, recognizing that there is inventory available for many first-time home buyers.

In fact, these changes will mean no land transfer tax will be payable on the first \$368,000 of the cost of your first home. That also means that more than half of first-time homebuyers will pay no LTT because of this refund. We're also modernizing, as mentioned, the land transfer tax system for the first time in a generation to reflect the current real estate market in Ontario.

The housing market is an important source of economic growth and employment in Ontario. Improving housing affordability will help more Ontarians participate in the market. That is an exciting opportunity for them to take their first step in buying their first home.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. Sadly, we did not get a response yesterday from the

Deputy Premier, so we'll try to get an answer today from the Premier.

Ratepayers deserve answers as to why the Liberals hired David Herle and the Gandalf Group to conduct polling about whether ratepayers want relief from skyrocketing hydro prices. From the response our opposition has received, ratepayers are astonished that the Liberals needed a poll to tell them the obvious: that there is an electricity rate crisis in this province. They're also appalled that the Premier would waste money on such a redundant poll that benefits an individual who is a senior Liberal strategist.

Speaker, will the Premier finally come clean and tell us exactly how much money she gave her campaign manager to conduct this wasteful and unnecessary poll?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member opposite knows full well that every government does polling, that every government taps into the opinions of the people in the province.

I also know that the member opposite knows there is a process. I believe there were five bidders. There's a process. It's not a political decision which group is chosen to do the polling. I think the member opposite knows full well that that process is in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakubuski: When the number comes back at 94%, it is proof that no poll was necessary.

As we have said on countless occasions, families all across this province are struggling to pay their hydro bills each and every month. Yet instead of providing meaningful relief, the Liberals would rather give money to their campaign manager, David Herle, to tell them what they should already—and, I believe, do already—know. Moreover, this contract strikes taxpayers as entirely wasteful and just another example of Liberals helping their well-heeled friends.

Will the Premier live up to her lofty rhetoric, actually be open and transparent for once, and tell this House exactly how much her campaign manager was paid for this totally redundant poll?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just go through the process. All public opinion research conducted by the government of Ontario is procured through a fair, transparent and competitive process. The member opposite, I think, is a member of a party that actually believes in competitive bidding.

The final decision about which vendor is best suited for the project is made by a committee of at least three non-partisan public servants, Mr. Speaker; that's who makes the decision.

1120

Every company has to be a qualified vendor of record and has to compete for a project with no less than five competitors. In fact, the record shows that five other companies competed for this contract with the Gandalf Group. I believe that the member opposite knows full

well that that process means that there is not a political intervention. It is a process that is transparent and is applied in every situation.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Premier. Access to clean, drinkable water is a systemic issue in the province of Ontario if you are an indigenous person living on a First Nations reserve. For more than a week, Weagamow First Nation, a community in my riding north of Sioux Lookout, has gone without drinkable, usable water. The aging water mains have burst. They've got staff working with what they've got to fix it. I'm sure the Premier will tell the House that it's a federal jurisdiction—their responsibility—but surely abdicating the province's role will not sit well for the more than 800 people who are without usable water.

My question is simple: What is your government doing to aid the situation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I completely agree with the member opposite that it is unacceptable that anyone in Ontario would not have clean, drinkable water, and I understand that it is absolutely critical that this be addressed. As recently as yesterday, the Minister of Indigenous Relations and I had a conversation with Regional Chief Day, with Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler and with Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee. We are part of a tripartite process. The federal government, First Nations and the provincial government are working together because each party, each order of government, brings something different to the table. The provincial government has expertise and has capacity, there's funding that comes from the federal government, and First Nations have community knowledge. Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely working to make sure that all of these systems are being worked on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: The provincial government is responsible for First Nations' health through its responsibility for education. No clean water and sewage means no school. Children and elders are developing skin rash breakouts just like they did in Kashechewan. There are over 80 First Nation communities—mostly northern, mostly remote—in this province that do not have access to clean water. For some communities, it has been decades. That number wouldn't stand in any other community in this province.

The Premier met with her federal counterparts at the privatization conference here in Toronto yesterday. My question is simple: What did she ask them about the situation in Weagamow?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm happy to respond to this question—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will wait until I acknowledge, please.

Carry on.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you, Speaker. Here are some things that we're actually doing to alleviate the problem. The Ontario clean water energy act is providing operations and maintenance services on a fee-for-basis service. The Walkerton Clean Water Centre provides operator training. The Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has provided engineering and technical advice to First Nations and carries out conformist reviews of proposals for First Nation water systems upon request. First Nations are included in showcasing water innovation programs in which Ontario is funding innovative, cost-effective solutions for managing drinking water, wastewater and stormwater sewers. The Canada-Ontario First Nations drinking water improvement initiative is a partnership with four small First Nation communities to provide innovative solutions. The clean water act—

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

CHILD CARE

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is to the Associate Minister of Education responsible for child care and early years. We know that the earliest years of a child's life are important to their future development. From the day they are born, they are human sponges, absorbing everything around them and learning basic skills at an astounding rate.

I've spoken with many parents and soon-to-be parents in my riding of Brampton–Springdale who tell me that it is challenging to find quality, affordable child care. That is why I am encouraged by this government's speech from the throne in which Ontario committed to creating 100,000 new licensed child care spaces, and yesterday, building upon that announcement in the fall economic statement, made a sizable investment in children four and under.

Would the minister, through the Speaker, please explain to the House the details of this investment in child care, and help shed light on what it will mean for Ontario families?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to thank the member from Brampton–Springdale for this very important question, and I want to tell her what a great job she is doing for her constituents.

Mr. Speaker, in the recent throne speech, we unveiled our government's vision for the early years, and we made a bold new commitment for Ontario's child care and early years sector. We committed to transform the way we deliver child care in this province by creating 100,000 new licensed child care spaces within five years for children four and under.

Yesterday, the fall economic statement revealed our first step in this commitment to child care modernization. I'm proud that the fall economic statement announced an additional \$65.5 million in the 2016-17 school year to create approximately 3,400 new child care spaces across the province. This is fantastic news, and this investment means more—

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

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you to the Associate Minister of Education for that answer. I was glad to see that yesterday's fall economic statement includes a significant investment in child care, because the creation of new licensed child care spaces is a part of our government's plan to invest in the earliest years of a child's life, and create jobs and help families in their everyday lives.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard the minister say in this House that engagement and consultations are very important to ensure that we get the new child care framework right. Can the minister please inform the House of the status of her consultations, and when we can expect to see these new spaces open?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the hard-working member from Brampton–Springdale.

Planning and engagement are currently under way to inform the framework and distribution of the 100,000 new child care spaces. Over the next few months, we will be consulting with the child care and early years sector, parents and communities to get their advice and perspectives.

In fact, province-wide consultations are now under way. We want to ensure that we make informed decisions, so that our children can get a head start in life and families can get the support they need. This feedback will help us develop a renewed early years and child care policy framework and the five-year plan to create 100,000 licensed child care spaces.

These will be the first steps towards the 3,400 spaces announced yesterday, the first spaces to count towards the government's historic commitment to build 100,000 new spaces for children zero to four years old.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. At the justice committee's hearings into the gas plant scandal on December 3, 2013, the Premier testified this: "I know that when I'm going to do an important interview or appear before a committee or go into the Legislature to answer important questions posed by the opposition, I take some time to read documents, talk with my staff and understand the issues."

The Premier knew that standing by Pat Sorbara put the integrity of her office at risk. And she didn't just stand by her; she publicly stated she didn't expect charges. We know she likes to talk with staff and understand the issues, so will the Premier tell us what Pat Sorbara told her in those conversations? And does she now regret believing her?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I was wondering, at the beginning of the question, where the member opposite was going with that question. He was, I think, trying to put a different flavour to the same question that he has been asking for a few weeks, fully knowing that his question may be

offside and that the answer he is seeking—this is not the venue or the forum for that answer.

I think the Premier and I, on behalf of the government, have been very clear, as you also have suggested, that this would be an inappropriate place to discuss any matters that are before the courts. The issue at hand, Speaker, as you know, is before a court, and there are charges laid against two individuals who do not serve in this House. It is only appropriate and advisable to all members not to discuss those matters—or the evidence or any questions relating to those issues—in this House.

I know the member opposite knows this. He may continue to ask me these questions, but I suggest that he should reconsider.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier: Speaker, I want to remind the Premier of something else that she said at those gas plant hearings. On April 30, 2013, she explained her reason for testifying. Here's the quote: "I thought it was very important for me to be open and to let everyone know what I did know and what I didn't know." Wow. It's hard to believe that that's the same person who now has so little to say about this very important issue.

1130

Since the Premier won't live up to that pledge of being open and answer our questions in the House, we're left with this: Premier, you and your minister are not required by law to testify as MPPs. Speaker, will the Premier commit to Ontarians that she and her Minister of Energy will waive their privilege and testify at trial?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The Premier has co-operated in this matter. The Premier has co-operated in the investigation that took place. The Premier has been absolutely transparent in terms of answering questions that are posed in this House, to Ontarians, and through the media. The Premier will continue to serve her role, her duties and obligations that have been given to her by the people of Ontario.

The Premier also recognizes that it is not advisable to prejudice a legal proceeding. There are two individuals who are charged in this matter. As we know, the fundamental principle of our system is that everybody is innocent until proven guilty. I think we owe it to those individuals to—

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

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Ontario's 3,000 nurse practitioners do remarkable work each and every day. Some of them are with us today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Nurse practitioners continue to face barriers that only make it harder for Ontarians, for us, to get the care that we need. You see, salaries for nurse practitioners working in our community have been frozen for eight long

years while the scope of practice and responsibility has increased exponentially.

This year the minister offered \$85 million over three years to all primary care agencies. After eight years of salary freeze, the minister offers 10 cents on the dollar. It is wrong, it is disrespectful and it needs to change. Does the minister agree?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm proud of the fact that since this party, this government, took office in 2003, the number of nurse practitioners in the province, as the member opposite alluded to, has gone from approximately 500 to more than 3,000 nurse practitioners. It's extraordinary and it reflects the incredible talent that they have and they provide.

It was this government, as well, that began the first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in Sudbury. In fact, in the north we now have 25 nurse-practitioner-led clinics. I know having worked hard with the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario and others led us to this year's budget decision to invest \$85 million, an increase to the compensation for nurse practitioners, but importantly, attached to that was their ability to come into a new form of pension, which dramatically and substantially increases their pension entitlements as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The nurse practitioners are here today asking the government to help them help their patients. Primary care agencies cannot recruit and retain nurse practitioners after eight years of wage freeze, and that has a direct impact on their patients, on us. Nurse practitioners cannot do a urine dip for pregnancy although any one of us can walk into a pharmacy and do one. That impacts their patients and patient care. Nurse practitioners cannot use a defibrillator in their clinic, but their secretary and all of us can. That impacts patient care.

When will the government remove all of the barriers to quality care and let our nurse practitioners practise to their full scope for the benefit of the patients of Ontario and pay them what they're worth?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm pleased that I'm getting this question from the member opposite. I do believe it's the only time we've actually had a conversation about nurse practitioners specifically, including their compensation.

But the nurse practitioners in Ontario understand and know that we are continuing to work to expand their scope of practice. In fact, as alluded to earlier this morning, we're working with them on controlled substances. We know that they're going to have an exceptionally important role in the delivery of medical assistance in dying as well. We know that, in many cases across this province, they are the only care and the best care that's provided for Ontarians who depend on the highest quality of care.

I have a list of how, over this government, we've expanded the scope of practice of nurse practitioners. I'm working closely with them to ensure that we continue to make progress. I look forward to achieving success on prescribing for controlled substances and moving on to

the next challenge, which they so deservedly require and will provide.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. There is no doubt that health care is a top priority for our government, and that is one of the reasons why we're so glad to see the nurse practitioners here today. As a matter of fact, providing all Ontarians with timely access to the care they need—whether at home, in their community or in one of our outstanding hospitals—is of the utmost importance to our government, but also to me, as the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I know our government increased funding for health care by \$1 billion, to \$51.8 billion. Because of these continued investments in our health care system, we have seen changes and progress in Ontario. We've experienced reduced wait times for surgeries, we've increased the number of Ontarians who have a health care provider, and we have expanded services for Ontarians at home and in their community.

Can the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please tell this House about this important new investment?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Kingston and the Islands for this important question and for giving me the opportunity to talk about the important investments that our government is making in health care.

As we know and remember, in the 2016 budget, we increased our investments in health care by \$1 billion, and \$345 million of that went specifically to our hospitals—more than a 2% increase in hospital operating budgets.

But with yesterday's fall economic statement, we made another important investment in our hospitals. We announced that our government will be investing an additional \$140 million this fiscal year across all hospitals in Ontario. Every single hospital is getting an increase. In fact, the amount of increase to our hospitals in operating costs is now more than 3% this fiscal year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Minister, for that response. I know that all of the hospitals across Ontario will be very excited to hear that our government is continuing to make important investments that will help patients and their families receive better care and quicker access to services at every hospital across Ontario.

This investment will also be very well-received, of course, by every hospital in my riding of Kingston and the Islands. These investments will translate to better care for Ontarians, lower wait times and, as a result, improved health outcomes.

Minister, yesterday our government's announcement of \$140 million for Ontario hospitals was the centre point of a great fall economic statement, but it was not the only important health announcement made yesterday. Can the

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care please inform this House on the work that our government is undertaking to improve services for older Ontarians and their families?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We all know that, as our population ages, Ontarians face new health care challenges. Today, one in 10 Ontarians over the age of 65 suffers from dementia. That's why our government is committed to helping the growing number of Ontarians who do suffer from dementia and helping their caregivers and their families.

With the fall economic statement, we announced the introduction of our dementia strategy, which will build on current investments of \$85 million to further enhance services for older Ontarians and their families. This strategy will include consultations taking place across the province. They've already taken place in Thunder Bay, North Bay, Kingston, Windsor and Barrie. There are more to come across the province.

The fall economic statement continues our commitment to helping all Ontarians, including our seniors, with the challenges that they face with their health.

SCHOOL TRIP

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Education. Waterloo Region District School Board students hoping to commemorate 100 years since the heroic Canadian capture of Vimy Ridge were devastated on Remembrance Day when the board cancelled a once-in-a-lifetime overseas opportunity this April.

I wrote the board chair yesterday to reconsider the decision that was made due to travel Canada's advice advocating caution, and I'm hopeful following a board reversal last night to review the matter. Travel Canada is not telling Canadians to avoid France. It would be a shame to see some students who worked for a year to earn their way across the Atlantic denied while thousands, including neighbouring Waterloo Catholic students, participate in this important learning opportunity honouring Canadian Vimy heroes.

Will the minister direct the Waterloo region board to reverse its decision and prevent Waterloo students from being denied the vital learning opportunity to commemorate one of Canada's most important moments in our history?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Obviously, last week was very important, as we paid respect to and honoured all of our veterans who afforded us the freedoms that we hold dear as Canadians and as Ontarians. I know all members in this House participated in that, and in fact, all schools across Ontario participated in that. I know that as I go through schools, I see those images inside the classrooms.

One of the things I want to remind the member opposite about is the role of our school boards. We have 72 school boards in this province. The very important role that they play is making sure that there are local con-

siderations that are made and that they are the ones that are working together with all of our education workers to ensure that we deliver the best possible education for all students in Ontario. We have to respect the role of those school boards.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: While the Waterloo board is reviewing the decision, at this point students, who have had their hearts set on this trip, still don't know if they'll be allowed to experience first-hand the international history that changed our world a century ago. It's as disappointing as it is ironic that while visitors to Vimy will be celebrating the victory of freedom over fear and terror 100 years ago, fear and terror may now prevent our students from enjoying those same freedoms to honour our heroes.

Speaker, all students in Ontario deserve the same learning opportunities. Thousands will be getting a unique opportunity to recognize Canadian heroism overseas while others may in fact be denied. Will the minister tell us what she will do to have provincial ministry officials work with school boards across the province to ensure consistency and equal opportunity for all Ontario students to honour this historic battle?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to just make it very clear for the two million students who attend Ontario's publicly funded education system that the focus on student learning and student achievement is our top priority. That's also balanced with student well-being. We want to make sure that all of our students are safe and that they have an opportunity to receive the best possible education, which they are receiving, in Ontario.

I respect the role of our local school board trustees. They understand the needs in their local communities, in each individual school in their communities and in the classrooms. That's something that we want to ensure that we support and that our Ministry of Education and all of our officials are supporting. We make decisions that are in the best interests of all of our students in their safety, in their well-being and in their student achievement.

DEFERRED VOTES

PROTECTING STUDENTS ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 PROTÉGEANT LES ÉLÈVES

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

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007 and the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance et la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario.

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

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

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

On November 14, 2016, Ms. Hunter moved third reading of Bill 37. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Ballard, Chris	Hillier, Randy	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Hoggarth, Ann	Oraziotti, David
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Kiwala, Sophie	Sattler, Peggy
Coe, Lorne	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Vanhof, John
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Duguid, Brad	McDonell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

AGGREGATE RESOURCES AND MINING MODERNIZATION ACT, 2016 LOI DE 2016 SUR LA MODERNISATION DES SECTEURS DES RESSOURCES EN AGRÉGATS ET DES MINES

Deferred vote on the motion that the question be now put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act / Projet de loi 39, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en agrégats et la Loi sur les mines.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for closure on the motion for second reading of Bill 39.

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

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1153.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 27, 2016, Mrs. McGarry moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act.

Mr. Colle has moved that the question be now put.

All those in favour of Mr. Colle's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Campbell, Sarah	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedell, Victor	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Fife, Catherine	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 46; the nays are 44.

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

Mrs. McGarry has moved second reading of Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: The Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1157 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Last spring, our community experienced the tragic loss of five youths to suicide. No one knows the cause, but this tragedy has opened new conversations with local youth about the challenges they are facing.

As I have been meeting with youth, they told me about their significant struggles with bullying. This week is Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. It's a time to speak up about bullying and talk about how we can stop it in our communities. Bullying is happening in our schools, but it doesn't end when school is over. Cyber-bullying follows the kids home. As many of the youth told me, people may not think words have an impact online, but they do.

People in Oxford are working to create a more inclusive community where bullying doesn't have a place through campaigns like Sea of Pink. They know that bullying doesn't show strength and that it isn't acceptable in any form. It takes a strong person to reach out to people in need and build them up instead of breaking them down.

If you see something, say something and do something to help those who are being bullied. Reach out to those who are being bullied and be an encouragement for them. You never know the struggles they may be facing. I encourage everyone to be a someone and take a stand against bullying.

BRIAN BROWN

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's my pleasure to use my member's statement to recognize this year's winner of the Charles E. Brooks Labour Community Service Award. As you know, Speaker, the labour community has been the backbone of Windsor and Essex county for generations. Each year, the United Way of Windsor-Essex along with the Windsor and District Labour Council honours one local activist with the Charles E. Brooks labour service award. It gives me great pleasure and pride to also honour this year's recipient, Brian Brown, here today in the Legislature.

Brian began his career in 1977 at the University of Windsor as a sessional instructor and shortly thereafter became involved with the Windsor University Faculty Association. He then played a key role in leading the fight to gain rights and benefits for sessional instructors under the collective agreement.

Over the years, Brian has also served on numerous committees, including the Windsor University Faculty Association and the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, as well as the Canadian Association of University Teachers. Brian has also volunteered his time as a member of the Art Gallery of Windsor planning committee and the Windsor Endowment for the Arts board. He has been a staunch supporter of the

United Way by championing the university campaign, but also as a member of the United Way Community Impact Council.

Brian exemplifies the spirit of Charlie Brooks through union and social activism. We want to thank and congratulate Brian.

Also, I would like to send a special thanks to Maureen Curtis of the United Way of Windsor-Essex. Maureen works hard every year to organize this year's event, and each year is always better than last. Thanks, Maureen, and congratulations to Brian.

INNOVATIVE AUTOMATION INC.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Today I would like to recognize an important company in my riding of Barrie: Innovative Automation. This manufacturer of robotics and assembly automation technology was formed in 1989 and has since become a success story and a model for other businesses to follow.

IA consistently demonstrates their dedication to their employees. This year alone, they have invested over \$150,000 in new training initiatives. They also believe in allowing their employees to grow in the company, including through the hiring of high school co-op students who they mentor through their post-secondary training and apprenticeship until they are fully qualified innovators.

In recent years, they have partnered with companies like Tesla Motors and Faraday Future, which has allowed them to grow. In the last two years alone, they have doubled both their production and their workforce all while being recognized as one of Canada's safest employers.

Last Tuesday, I was pleased to join president Stephen Loftus, his daughter Stephanie and his other employees at the groundbreaking ceremony of Innovative Automation's new 62,000-square-foot facility, which they plan to expand by a further 24,000 square feet within five years.

In an age when even high-tech manufacturing jobs are going overseas and on-the-job training is becoming increasingly rare, I'm proud that my city is home to this innovative business which continues to thrive and provide good-paying, much-needed jobs for my constituents in Barrie.

MERVYN DENNEY

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, it's a real honour for me to rise today to tell the House about Mr. Mervyn Denney, a much-loved and respected resident of my riding of Simcoe-Grey. Sadly, Mr. Denney passed away at Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston on Sunday, October 23. He was 87 years old.

Over the years, Mr. Denney invested so much of his time in our community, and he did so in many different ways. From 1960 to 1961, Mervyn was the reeve of Essa township. In a story on Simcoe.com, current Essa mayor

Terry Dowdall described Mr. Denney this way: He was "one of the good ones." I certainly agree with that sentiment.

Mr. Dowdall also said of Mervyn, "He was one of those guys that whenever people moved to town and needed a hand, Mervyn was there. He was probably one of the most respected people in the township."

For many years, Mr. Denney served on Essa's committee of adjustment and planning board, providing sage advice on matters of local importance.

He was a lifetime member of the Orange lodge in Baxter.

When I was first running for the nomination for the PC candidacy in Simcoe-Grey in 1990, Mervyn was a great supporter. He was one of the few people at that time who believed in me, as a 26-year-old, and for that I am forever grateful. I remember his tenacity, his energy, his great humour and the tremendous respect that the people had as he took me through Essa township from farm to farm to farm to farm to farm to farm to farm.

Our condolences go to his wife of 63 years, Rogean, and to his three children.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Last night, I had the opportunity to attend a private screening of an upcoming television show on life-saving organ transplants. Dr. David Suzuki was the host. The program will be seen on the CBC this Thursday night at 8 o'clock. I recommend it to all members of the House. The bottom line for me is that we're just not doing enough when it comes to signing up to be organ donors.

One organ donor can save as many as eight lives, and tissue donations can benefit more than 75 people.

Surveys show that more than 90% of Canadians support organ and tissue donation—but, for whatever reason, fewer than 20% of us have actually made plans to do so.

Every year more than 1,600 people are added to the waiting list for transplants, and the sad fact is that too many Canadians are dying every year on that waiting list because not enough people have registered to be donors.

Here in Ontario, we can register at beadonor.ca.

The Nature of Things on Thursday night is a behind-the-scenes look at an organ transplant team at a hospital in Alberta. It's a very emotional experience. I don't mind telling you that I had tears in my eyes several times while watching the preview at the ROM last night, as did the member from Nickel Belt.

Talk to your family, talk to your friends and register at beadonor.ca.

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, L'AMOREAUX

Ms. Soo Wong: This year marks the 175th anniversary of St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Anglican church in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt. St. Paul's Anglican church has been serving their congregation since 1840, when the first bishop of Toronto consecrated the church.

Since then, St. Paul's L'Amoreaux church has achieved many milestones. They are a leader in protecting the most vulnerable in our community. This includes the establishment of affordable seniors' housing on the church property, along with the creation of the St. Paul's L'Amoreaux Centre, established in 1978. For almost 40 years, this centre has provided affordable diverse care, services and housing for seniors.

Recently, St. Paul's L'Amoreaux church has expanded their community outreach to involve youth in a music program. The original choral program now also includes a string ensemble, a wind ensemble, a South Asian dance ensemble and a children's choir.

Mr. Speaker, the achievements and growth of St. Paul's L'Amoreaux church and their continued community service are commendable.

I would like to recognize Father Dean Mercer and his entire congregation for their tremendous work and their exceptional vision in service to their community.

I look forward to this Sunday's service where I will be joining the 11th Archbishop, Colin Robert Johnson, in celebrating the 175th anniversary of St. Paul's, L'Amoreaux Anglican church.

1510

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think it's fair to say that many Canadians are deeply troubled by the results of the US election. The fact that someone could campaign on a message that was misogynistic, racist, xenophobic and that was based on fear and division, and could win, is something that troubles all of us.

I think it also points to a deeply flawed electoral system. The reality is that the majority of Americans didn't actually vote for Mr. Trump, but Mr. Trump has now won and is the president-elect with all power. It shows that we really need to hold our federal government to account to ensure that we have a more just electoral system. That's why we really need to work for having a proportional representation system in our politics.

Often we see that Canada is influenced by the US. The US is a larger country and it often influences us. It's troubling that that might influence the climate in Canada, to make it acceptable to be racist, xenophobic or misogynistic. That's why many people in the States are now looking north, to us, for guidance. We can provide a vision where you can build a fair society that's not based on blaming minorities, religious or otherwise; you can actually build a fair society by working together.

We need to show that leadership, that a fair and just society is made more powerful and strong when we work together. When we work on inclusivity, that's when we come up with a more powerful and fair society.

WOMEN'S HOUSE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Today I stand alongside my colleagues as we wear purple to shine the light on the fact

that November is woman abuse awareness and prevention month. In light of this, I wish to take this opportunity to commend the Women's House in Kincardine, an organization that has been helping women and children in my riding for 30 years. For over the past three decades, the Women's House has helped over 15,000 women and 2,000 children escape abuse. Every year they field over 4,000 calls, an alarming number.

The Women's House is a significant operation that requires support on all levels in order to operate and offer these services. I have toured the Kincardine facility and recognized immediately that this safe haven is so much more than accommodation. The vast supports offered to women and children are invaluable. That's why I would like to thank everyone who supports Women's House.

This past October, the Women's House hosted their annual gala in Kincardine. It is their biggest fundraiser and the event helps them help so many in our communities. I want to congratulate the Women's House not only on their 30 years of service, but also on their successful gala. This year, it raised a whopping \$28,000, which will go towards helping the Women's House continue their efforts in making our community a safer place.

I want to encourage everyone to wear a purple ribbon or clothing during the month of November to show support in ending violence against women and children, to help make our province, country and world a better place to live.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm pleased to rise today to talk about a very unfortunate incident that happened in my riding of Beaches–East York. Parents going to school yesterday morning came across a whole series of hateful posters posted around Stan Wadlow Park, and it was very disturbing to many of them. I don't want to spend any time dignifying the commentary. It was clearly hate-fuelled and possibly Trump-induced.

What I want to do is focus on the incredible community reaction to it. Local constituent Kevin Kerr immediately posted on Twitter, Joseph Travers put it on our Woodbine and Danforth Facebook group, and immediately all the residents started to rise up and go down—they found the posters. They dispatched the city staff. We went all over the community and they were ripped down and pulled down. It was so incredibly quick, the reaction of the community, to take issue with the messaging that they were seeing on these posters, concerned both about what their children would be reading and what their children would be seeing. They took action.

I especially want to applaud Jen Leis, who is an artist and a local high school teacher. She has prepared an alternative poster, which has the words "Welcome" and "Love" in many, many different languages that she's going to be posting around all the window fronts and the retail stores of my community.

The Danforth East Community Association is also taking this issue up so they can have a positive message to take back to the community about the inclusiveness of our country and of the kinds of values that we share.

As well, a local group called East Toronto Young Mothers made it their mission to make sure these posters did not last more than a few hours.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Vanthof assumes ballot item number 27 and Ms. Fife assumes ballot item number 36.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated November 15, 2016, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NURSE PRACTITIONER WEEK ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SEMAINE DES INFIRMIÈRES PRATICIENNES ET INFIRMIERS PRATICIENS

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 63, An Act to proclaim Nurse Practitioner Week / Projet de loi 63, Loi proclamant la Semaine des infirmières praticiennes et infirmiers praticiens.

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: The bill proclaims the second full week of November in each year as Nurse Practitioner Week.

Nurse practitioners are registered nurses with advanced university education who provide personalized, quality care to patients. Ontario nurse practitioners

provide a full range of health care services to individuals, families and communities in a variety of settings, including hospitals and community-based clinics in cities and smaller towns in Ontario. They work in partnership with physicians, nurses and other health care professionals such as social workers, midwives, mental health professionals and pharmacists to keep Ontarians well.

It is appropriate to celebrate and recognize the valuable contributions made by nurse practitioners in Ontario. It is also important to draw attention to the remaining barriers to their full integration into Ontario's health care system.

The short title of this act is the Nurse Practitioner Week Act, 2016.

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Mr. Del Duca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d'autres questions.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Steven Del Duca: This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to address the ability of municipalities to set speed limits within their borders and the use of automated speed enforcement systems and red-light camera systems.

Specifically, the legislation will, if passed, allow municipalities to: use automated speed enforcement in school zones and community safety zones; establish a zone within an urban area in a municipality within which a reduced speed limit may apply to all roads, unless excepted, but with signs only posted at the perimeter of the area; participate in a red-light camera program without requiring individual regulatory approval; and make consequential amendments.

FAMILY CAREGIVER DAY ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR LES AIDANTS NATUREL

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to proclaim Family Caregiver Day / Projet de loi 66, Loi proclamant le Jour des aidants naturels.

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): Before I call on the member for a statement, I want a reminder that comments are to be taken from the explanatory notes and that any editorial is to be left for debate.

The member for a short statement.

1520

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. The bill is quite simple. It proclaims the first Tuesday in April in each year as Family Caregiver Day.

MOTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Motions? The Minister of Government and Consumer Services and francophone affairs.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

FORMAT OF PRINTED BILLS

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice with respect to the format of printed bills.

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

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I move that, effective January 1, 2017, the format for printed bills of this assembly be revised from two-column side-by-side bilingual format with paragraph notes to English-French flip format.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Madame Lalonde moves that, effective January 1, 2017, the format for printed bills of this assembly be revised from two-column side-by-side bilingual format with paragraph notes to English-French flip format. Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: L'année 2016 marque le 30^e anniversaire de l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français en Ontario, laquelle était adoptée à

l'unanimité ici même dans cette Chambre le 18 novembre 1986. Ce jour-là, l'honorable Bernard Grandmaître, le ministre des affaires francophones, s'adressait à l'Assemblée en affirmant :

« Cette loi a été conçue comme un levier qui favorisera la participation des francophones aux prises de décisions des pouvoirs publics à l'égard de ce qui les concerne. Je pense sincèrement que c'est grâce à cette participation aux institutions que celles-ci refléteront davantage les aspirations des francophones.

« Les francophones de cette province ont atteint une telle maturité ... qu'ils peuvent désormais envisager leur avenir moins en termes de combat et de plus en plus en termes de légitimité. »

Suite à ce discours historique, il est évident, monsieur le Président, que la communauté franco-ontarienne a fait beaucoup de chemin en 30 ans. La francophonie ontarienne est plus forte que jamais, avec plus de 600 000 citoyennes et citoyens, jeunes et moins jeunes, venus d'ici et d'ailleurs, qui la dynamisent au quotidien et dessinent son avenir pour les générations futures.

Si la communauté franco-ontarienne réussit à persister, c'est d'abord et avant tout parce qu'elle s'est donné les moyens de nourrir sa langue et sa culture. À force de courage et de conviction, elle a surmonté les écueils qui ont jalonné son parcours et s'est affirmée au rythme de ses paroles et de ses actions.

Le rayonnement de la francophonie ontarienne passe par une foule d'institutions comme ses écoles, ses collèges et ses universités, ses médias, ainsi que ses organismes culturels et communautaires qui alimentent son appartenance à un patrimoine culturel riche qui dépasse nos frontières.

Ce rayonnement passe par un cadre de gouvernance et des lois qui garantissent à une minorité linguistique comme la communauté franco-ontarienne l'accès à des services gouvernementaux en français dans toute une gamme de domaines.

Telle est la raison d'être de la Loi sur les services en français. En 30 ans, la Loi sur les services en français nous a fait faire de grandes avancées. Sans vouloir en dresser une liste exhaustive, en voici quelques exemples saillants.

L'Ontario compte maintenant 26 régions désignées pour les services en français. Plus de 85 % des francophones de l'Ontario habitent dans ces régions, dont celle de Markham, où d'ailleurs la Loi sur les services en français s'appliquera à compter du 1^{er} juillet 2018.

Grâce aux 243 organismes désignés en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français, l'éventail de services publics offerts aux francophones s'accroît d'année en année. Ces services se manifestent dans divers domaines, dont ceux de la santé et des services sociocommunautaires et de l'éducation postsecondaire.

Par ailleurs, la province a élargi la définition de l'appellation « francophone » de sorte à la rendre plus inclusive. Nous savons bien que beaucoup de gens font le choix de vivre en français ou d'adopter le français

comme langue d'intégration. Ainsi, plus de 50 000 Ontariennes et Ontariens s'ajoutent à la francophonie au sens de la Loi sur les services en français.

La population francophone, à l'image de la province, affiche de multiples visages et accents venus de partout dans le monde. Cette diversité ethnique et culturelle ne fait que renforcer le dynamisme de la francophonie en Ontario.

On se souviendra du rôle de la Loi sur les services en français dans la préservation de l'Hôpital Montfort. L'arrêt Montfort tel qu'adopté par la Cour d'appel de l'Ontario aura d'ailleurs défini le statut quasi-constitutionnel de cette loi.

La Loi sur les services en français a continué d'évoluer au cours des années pour mener à la création du Commissariat aux services en français. Monsieur le Président, le gouvernement a voulu doter la communauté francophone de cet important levier d'imputabilité et de transparence pour veiller à une prestation des services en français de qualité. Aussi, depuis presque deux ans, ce Commissariat aux services en français relève directement de l'Assemblée législative.

Le 18 novembre 1986, les membres de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario évoquaient le caractère historique de cette journée. Trente ans plus tard, on peut affirmer sans l'ombre d'un doute que l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français marquait effectivement un tournant historique en Ontario.

Dans un peu plus d'une semaine, je serai à Madagascar où se tiendra le 16^e sommet de l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie. Comme vous le savez, monsieur le Président, la première ministre a déposé au nom du gouvernement de l'Ontario une demande d'adhésion comme membre observateur à cette organisation. C'est lors de ce sommet, le 26 et 27 novembre prochain, que les chefs d'État et gouvernements statueront sur notre demande. Nous espérons que la réponse sera positive.

Nous avons accumulé bien des avancées au terme des 30 ans de la Loi sur les services en français. Je tiens à remercier tous mes collègues députés—francophones et francophiles—pour leur appui continu et leur engagement envers la francophonie ontarienne. Ensemble, nous allons poursuivre notre chemin et continuer à contribuer au bien-être et à la prospérité de la francophonie et de la province.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.
Statements by ministries.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

Hon. David Zimmer: I rise today to speak about Treaties Recognition Week. I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are on the traditional territory of several indigenous nations, and that this was once a gathering place and continues to be a gathering place for many indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. I wish to recognize the long history and contributions of First

Nations, Métis and Inuit in Ontario and also give special acknowledgment to the Mississaugas of the New Credit.

1530

Two years ago, I spoke in this House about the treaty relationship and our commitment with indigenous partners to establish a treaty awareness day. Together with indigenous partners, we decided to expand on that commitment by introducing legislation to designate the first full week of November as Treaties Recognition Week, making Ontario the first province in Canada to dedicate a week to raising awareness of treaties, treaty rights and treaty relationships.

In May of this year, the Treaties Recognition Week Act, 2016, was passed with the support of all parties of this House, and I want to thank all parties for their support. This legislation was passed the same day that Premier Wynne apologized to residential school survivors and announced our government's statement of commitment and reconciliation with indigenous peoples. We were honoured to be joined by indigenous leaders and residential school survivors on that historic and hopeful day.

Before I touch on these initiatives, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the importance of Treaties Recognition Week for all Ontarians. This province was founded on treaties. They shape its past, present and future. They are the reason we know Ontario as it exists today. Treaties represent solemn agreements to live together on this land through the formal exchange of promises that created rights and responsibilities for Canada, Ontario and First Nations. They formalize a relationship between the crown and First Nations based on principles of trust and mutual respect, and were meant to be lasting, meaningful agreements.

Sadly, governments have not always lived up to the promises in treaties. We are working to change this. Ontario's treaty strategy is guiding the way we work with indigenous partners to revitalize treaty relationships. Treaties Recognition Week supports these efforts by helping to build public awareness and promote education about these important issues.

Everyone should have the opportunity to learn more about the importance of treaties, because as Ontarians, treaties are at the heart of our shared history. Understanding this shared history is the necessary first step on our journey toward healing and reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Treaties Recognition Week is about creating a lasting dialogue in Ontario to help everyone understand where we came from and how we can move forward together in a spirit of reconciliation.

Last month, we partnered with Anishinabek Nation to mark the beginning of Treaties Recognition Week at the David Bouchard school in Oshawa. This event also marked the launch of a high school treaty learning kit, Understanding Our Nation to Nation Relationship. It was produced to help educators teach students in grades 9 to 12 about treaty relationships.

On the same day, Premier Wynne visited Northern Secondary School in Toronto for the first Living Library presentation of the week with Michael Etherington of the Native Canadian Centre and elder Dr. Duke Redbird.

Throughout the week, we continued to work with indigenous partners and the Ministry of Education. Together, we identified and brought more than 25 presenters into nearly 60 classrooms, gymnasiums and auditoriums. We worked with 14 local school boards across the province to support educators in teaching students about the importance of treaties and how they are relevant today. I want to especially thank the partners we worked with and everyone who offered their time and energy to travel to schools to bring this message to students.

Education was the central theme of this first Treaties Recognition Week. The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation worked very closely with Minister Hunter and the Ministry of Education to reach students and educators in school boards across this province.

In addition to the Living Library series, we wanted to give educators the resources they needed to make treaty learning a part of classroom learning throughout the school year. The Ministry of Education is supporting that goal by working to embed learning about First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures and histories in the Ontario curriculum.

To help students build on the knowledge they have gained from the Living Library presentations, the Ministry of Education has created a special curriculum link to resources available to educators on EduGAINS and ÉduSource Web pages. These supports are designed to highlight treaties, treaty relationships and treaty rights in classes like grade 7 history or grade 10 civics and citizenship.

These new supports build on existing treaty learning initiatives such as the First Nations and Treaties map of Ontario and the accompanying teaching resources which were sent to every school in the province in 2014. These efforts from the Ministry of Education support our government's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. The Calls to Action included working with indigenous partners to enhance Ontario's curriculum with mandatory learning about residential schools, treaties and the legacy of colonialism.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me say that Treaties Recognition Week was created because treaty rights and treaty relationships are a part of the story we all share in this province. We need opportunities to learn more about that shared history and shared responsibility going forward so together we understand the wrongs of the past and build a future based on strong relationships of respect and trust. I am proud to say that this first Treaties Recognition Week has helped all to take a step in that direction. We look forward to building on this initiative next year and for the years to come, as we walk with indigenous partners on the path to healing and reconciliation. Thank you. Meegwetch.

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

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Gila Martow: Bonjour, chers Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes, mes chers collègues ici à Queen's Park et tous nos visiteurs.

Comptant près de 612 000 membres, la communauté francophone de l'Ontario est la plus nombreuse au Canada à l'extérieur du Québec.

Bien que la Loi sur les services en français a 30 ans cette année, le commissaire veut que les ministères et agences gouvernementales soient obligés non seulement d'offrir des services en français, mais de s'assurer que les citoyens savent que ces services existent. Le commissaire veut surtout s'assurer que les citoyens n'ont pas besoin de demander et même souvent de se battre pour obtenir ces services.

Les recommandations que le commissaire Boileau a présentées dans son dernier rapport annuel démontrent que nous avons besoin d'une révision complète de la loi afin de refléter les normes d'aujourd'hui. L'histoire de notre province est bâtie sur deux langues : le français et l'anglais. Comme le commissaire Boileau a expliqué dans un article publié dans *Le Devoir* le 12 mars dernier : « Les mentalités ont beaucoup évolué... Même Patrick Brown, le chef de l'opposition, se targue de parler français. C'est un changement de culture génial. »

Monsieur le Président, comme j'ai dit à tous les élèves qui ont visité Queen's Park pour le lever du drapeau, on a de nombreux francophiles dans la province de l'Ontario. J'ai expliqué que les étudiants des écoles francophones en Ontario devraient être les ambassadeurs pour les communautés francophones. Les élèves ont écouté attentivement. Après tout, nous avons besoin des générations futures de Franco-Ontariens and Franco-Ontariennes si nous voulons développer des services en français dans notre merveilleuse province.

Donc, je vais demander à nos invités estimés et ceux qui nous écoutent à la maison de se joindre à nos étudiants et de devenir des ambassadeurs pour les services en français. Il y a beaucoup de francophiles partout dans la province qui ont besoin d'un peu d'encouragement pour améliorer le niveau de leur français.

Je voudrais terminer en répétant une histoire que j'ai déjà racontée à l'Assemblée législative, mais il faut la répéter constamment. Quand j'ai assisté à un événement sud-asiatique à Brampton, j'ai rencontré plusieurs nouvelles familles canadiennes qui ont été déçues par les longues listes d'attente pour l'immersion dans les écoles françaises. Cette histoire doit être répétée pour la simple raison que nous devons nous rendre compte que les services en français ne sont pas seulement pour les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes; ils sont également pour les nouveaux Canadiens, et pas seulement pour les nouveaux Canadiens qui viennent des régions francophones autour du monde.

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Nous devons aussi nous rendre compte qu'il y a des générations futures de francophones qui ont seulement besoin d'apprendre le français, d'améliorer leur français et de conserver leur français.

Nous bénéficierons tous si un plus grand nombre de citoyens de l'Ontario peuvent vivre, travailler et jouer en français.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Patrick Brown, in recognition and in celebration of the inaugural Treaties Awareness Week. Recognizing, of course, that Treaties Awareness Week in fact was last week while the Legislature had a constituency week, it is an honour to again have an opportunity to speak to the importance of treaties from the floor of the Legislature.

Ontario, as a province, just as Canada as a nation, was founded on treaties. A number of these agreements in fact even predate the current borders of our province and the founding of our nation. It is incumbent upon us today to continue to govern with respect for these treaties and to honour the nation-to-nation relationship that was the heart of them.

By agreeing to coexist on traditional lands of our indigenous peoples, the foundation for the Ontario we know today was laid. Remembering this, I feel it is extremely important as we continue to walk together on the path of reconciliation.

Treaties are an integral aspect that lie at the core of the relationship between First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and the provinces and the government of Canada. With 46 treaties and other land agreements covering Ontario, I feel raising awareness is very important. In this way, the education component is central to this.

Mr. Speaker, I see I'm out of time, so I'll just say, as Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day aptly put it this week, we are, after all, all treaty people. I could not agree more. Thank you. Merci. Meegwetch.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ça me fait plaisir de répondre à la ministre déléguée aux services en français au sujet du 30^e anniversaire de la Loi sur les services en français.

J'aimerais commencer par nous ramener un petit peu de quoi ça avait l'air en 1986.

Dans un premier temps, les francophones, on avait déjà nos écoles francophones primaires et secondaires, on avait déjà droit aux services en français dans les tribunaux et les cours de justice, mais c'était à peu près tout. La Loi sur les services en français nous donnait accès aux programmes et services du gouvernement provincial en français dans les régions désignées. Une « région désignée » était une région où il y avait plus de 5 000 francophones ou 10 % de la population qui parlait français, et ça, c'est demeuré.

On a fait bien des avancées depuis ce temps-là, mais je dois vous dire que, à la fin des années 1980, le début des années 1990, ce n'était pas rose. On se souviendra tous que la municipalité de Sault Sainte Marie avait passé une directive qui disait que Sault Sainte Marie était une ville

anglophone seulement. Des douzaines d'autres municipalités se sont déclarées unilingues anglophones elles aussi. Mais on a gagné cette bataille-là, et on en a gagné plusieurs autres grâce à la Loi sur les services en français.

Bien entendu, il faut mentionner SOS Montfort. SOS Montfort, c'était dans le temps du gouvernement Harris qui avait décidé de faire une restructuration des hôpitaux et qui nous enlevait, à nous les francophones, le seul hôpital universitaire dans tout l'Ontario. Les francophones se sont mobilisés. On a sorti notre drapeau franco-ontarien—et là je dis un gros « merci » à M. Gaétan Gervais, qui est l'auteur de notre drapeau. On a sorti la Loi 8, grâce à M^c Caza, et on a su gagner devant les tribunaux pour que Montfort reste ouvert, et il est encore en place.

Par contre, la loi ne permet pas l'offre active d'une façon où tous les gens peuvent y avoir accès, même les gens qui sont dans des situations vulnérables. C'est quelque chose que notre bon commissaire aux services en français, M. Boileau, nous dit régulièrement.

En parlant de M. Boileau, je suis très heureuse qu'après trois projets de loi des néo-démocrates, on a finalement fait de lui un officier de l'Assemblée législative. Oui, on en est très fiers. Aujourd'hui il a été nommé, en fait.

Dans un dernier temps, je voulais juste mentionner que, même en ce moment avec le projet de loi 41, on a des défis pour que la Loi sur les services en français s'appliquent dans les soins de longue durée.

TREATIES RECOGNITION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I also want to respond to the Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation about treaties. New Democrats acknowledge that each and every one of us in Ontario are treaty people. We recognize that the numbered treaties, for example, that began in 1871 through the 1920s, created this province as we know it now.

It started in the northwest. The Europeans, whether they be of French or English descent, in exchange for their use and settlement of the land—this vast, beautiful land and waterways that we know as Ontario, from Sachigo Lake in the northwest all the way to Walpole Island—agreed to provide various items, money, supplies, all of which translated into obligations that we hold today. This is what the treaties were all about: an exchange with the people who were the First Nations.

Here in Ontario, we are bound by Treaty 3, Treaty 5—which is in my riding of Nickel Belt—Treaty 7, Treaty 27, and a number of other ones.

New Democrats support the implementation of the 93 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but we see a difference between reconciliation and respecting our treaties. This is what this week should be all about. For example, in the treaty, the provincial government has a duty to consult. Yet, while we were in estimates, I asked: “Have the First Nations been consulted on the sale of Hydro One? Has the duty to

consult with First Nations been met?" It wasn't. We got an answer that made it clear that they had not respected their duty to consult.

To be a treaty person means that we are bound by those treaties. It means that treaty persons should have access to clean drinking water; decent, livable housing; schooling, and all of the other materials and wealth that the land and the water provide to us. This is what respecting our treaties is all about. It's not simply to put lines on the map, but it's to live with our obligations.

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

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the minister.

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: A point of order. Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will entertain the member for a second kick at this. I heard a no.

Minister?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: I'm going to have a good time today. Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding Bill 41, An Act to amend various Acts in the interests of patient-centred care.

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

Minister?

Hon. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you to my colleagues. I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House of July 16, 2014, respecting meeting times for committees, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly shall be authorized to meet, in addition to its regular meeting time, on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, from 3 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; on Monday, November 21, 2016, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and on Wednesday, November 23, 2016, from 3 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Madame Lalonde moves that, notwithstanding the order of the House of July 16, 2014, respecting meeting times for committees, the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly shall be authorized to meet, in addition to its regular meeting time, on Wednesday, November 16, 2016, from—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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PETITIONS

DENTAL CARE

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I want to thank Lara Mylly of the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre for meeting me last week and bringing this petition to my attention.

"Whereas lack of access to dental care affects overall health and well-being, and poor oral health is linked to diabetes, cardiovascular, respiratory disease, and Alzheimer's disease; and

"Whereas it is estimated that two to three million people in Ontario have not seen a dentist in the past year, mainly due to the cost of private dental services; and

"Whereas approximately every nine minutes a person in Ontario arrives at a hospital emergency room with a dental problem but can only get painkillers and antibiotics, and this costs the health care system at least \$31 million annually with no treatment of the problem;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in public oral health programs for low-income adults and seniors by:

—ensuring that plans to reform the health care system include oral health so that vulnerable people in our communities have equitable access to the dental care they need to be healthy;

—extending public dental programs for low-income children and youth within the next two years to include low-income adults and seniors; and

—delivering public dental services in a cost-efficient way through publicly funded dental clinics such as public health units, community health centres and aboriginal health access centres to ensure primary oral health services are accessible to vulnerable people in Ontario."

I support this petition and I send it down with Giulia.

SHINGLES VACCINE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario announced that starting September 15, 2016, the shingles vaccine would be available to all seniors 65 years to 70 years free of charge (until December 31, 2016, any senior born in 1945 is also eligible);

"Whereas seniors over the age of 70 years will still be required to pay for the vaccine if they choose;

"Whereas the government of Ontario claims that studies show that the vaccine is highly effective when seniors are vaccinated between the ages of 65 and 70 and will not cover the vaccine for all Ontario seniors;

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

“This is unfair to seniors over the age of 70 and we urge the government to expand the coverage so that all Ontario seniors are eligible for the free shingles vaccine.”

I fully agree. I'll sign this and give it to page Sage to bring up to the desk.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital is challenged to support the growing needs of the community within its existing space as it was built for a mere 7,000 visits and experiences in excess of 33,000 visits annually; and

“Whereas the government-implemented Places to Grow Act forecasts massive population growth in New Tecumseth, which along with the aging population will only intensify the need for the redevelopment of the hospital; and

“Whereas all other hospital emergency facilities are more than 45 minutes away with no public transit available between those communities; and

“Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals;

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

“That the Kathleen Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area.”

I agree with the petition and will sign it.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to thank Mr. Ghislain Joncas from Garson in my riding, who signed the petition.

“Time to Care.

“Whereas quality of care for the 77,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

“Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in LTC homes to keep pace with residents' increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

“Whereas several Ontario coroner's inquests into LTC homes deaths have recommended an increase in direct hands-on care for residents and staffing levels and the most reputable studies on this topic recommends 4.1 hours of direct care per day;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Amend the LTC Homes Act (2007) for a legislated minimum care standard of four hours per resident per day adjusted for acuity level and case mix.”

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

HYDRO RATES

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I will affix my signature in support, of course, and give it to page Henry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Boy, you said that quickly: 300 words a minute, with gusts of up to 500.

Further petitions?

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “Nurses Know—Petition for Better Care.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas providing high-quality, universal, public health care is crucial for a fair and thriving Ontario; and

“Whereas years of underfunding have resulted in cuts to registered nurses (RNs) and hurt patient care; and

“Whereas, in 2015 alone, Ontario lost more than 1.5 million hours of RN care due to cuts; and

“Whereas procedures are being off-loaded into private clinics not subject to hospital legislation; and

“Whereas funded services are being cut from hospitals and are not being provided in the community; and

“Whereas cutting skilled care means patients suffer more complications, readmissions and death;

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

“Implement a moratorium on RN cuts;

“Commit to restoring hospital base operating funding to at least cover the costs of inflation and population growth;

“Create a fully-funded multi-year health human resources plan to bring Ontario’s ratio of registered nurses to population up to the national average;

“Ensure hospitals have enough resources to continue providing safe, quality and integrated care for clinical procedures and stop plans for moving such procedures into private, unaccountable clinics.”

I’ll sign this petition and give it to page Emma-Rose to deliver to the table.

HYDRO RATES

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

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current Liberal government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the Liberal government’s lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this Liberal government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians’ electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;”

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

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

1600

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’aimerais remercier M. Emile Prudhomme, qui demeure à Val-Thérèse dans mon comté et qui est un bon ami.

La pétition s’appelle Privatiser Hydro One : une autre mauvaise décision.

« Attendu que la privatisation d’Hydro One est un aller sans retour; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre des centaines de millions de revenus fiables d’Hydro One pour nos écoles et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que nous allons perdre le plus gros atout économique provincial et le contrôle de notre avenir dans le secteur de l’énergie; et

« Attendu que nous allons payer de plus en plus pour l’électricité, tout comme ce qui est arrivé ailleurs; »

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« D’arrêter la vente d’Hydro One et de faire en sorte que les familles de l’Ontario, comme propriétaires d’Hydro One, en bénéficient, maintenant et pour les générations à venir. »

J’appuie cette pétition, je vais la signer et je demande à Giulia de l’amener à la table des greffiers.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Laurie Scott: Many petitions keep rolling in.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the Liberal government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment; and

“Whereas many rural customers will see delivery charges soaring by as much as 25% in 2017, which will increase their total hydro bills by up to 11.5%; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced into energy poverty, having to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

These come from Kirkfield, Head Lake, Lorneville, Cambray, Bethany, Cannington, Sunderland, Woodville, Little Britain, Cameron, Coboconk and Bobcaygeon, and they keep on coming.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to present “Petition to Battle Energy Poverty” that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas our hydro rates have tripled since Conservative governments started privatizing our electricity system, and since Premier Wynne took office less than four years ago, peak hydro rates have increased by more than 50%—faster than the rise in family income and more than 10 times faster than inflation; and

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) has reported that the number of residential customers’ hydro accounts in arrears skyrocketed between 2014 and 2015 from 2,172 to 6,078, representing \$1,180,762 in the city of Windsor” alone; “and

“Whereas the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has reported that it expects one in 20 businesses to close in the next five years due to rising energy costs; and

“Whereas the Minister of Energy has stated that he has no intention of requesting the OEB to lower or reassess the affordability of hydro rates in the province, claiming the OEB is an independent regulator with a mandate to protect the interests of Ontario; and

“Whereas the OEB and the Minister of Energy have failed in their mandate to protect the interests of Ontario consumers, preferring the interests of the energy suppliers, with policies that raise prices and exacerbate problems faced by families and businesses which are in energy poverty, or on the cusp of energy poverty; and

“Whereas the high incidence of energy poverty in Canada, particularly when gasoline expenditures are included, should be of central concern when policies regarding energy are devised; and

“Whereas the Minister of Energy has the power under the Ontario Energy Board Act to issue directives to the OEB with respect to fees and pricing, including the power to compel the OEB to take steps specified in the directives to promote fairness, efficiency and transparency in the retail market for gas and electricity;

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

“To take immediate and tangible steps to reduce the costs of energy paid by Ontarians, including:

“(a) using the minister’s authority under the Ontario Energy Board Act to issue directives to the OEB to ensure fair and reasonable energy costs are being paid, including the need to take into account low-income needs and other factors driving people and small businesses into energy poverty, and

“(b) stopping the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families and not private business benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I’m pleased to support this petition, will affix my name and send it to the Clerks’ table with Giulia.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the current government took office; and

“Whereas over half of Ontarians’ power bills are regulatory and delivery charges and the global adjustment;

“Whereas the global adjustment is a tangible measure of how much Ontario must overpay for unneeded wind and solar power, and the cost of offloading excess power to our neighbours at a loss; and

“Whereas the market rate for electricity, according to IESO data, has been less than three cents per kilowatt hour to date in 2016, yet the government’s lack of responsible science-based planning has not allowed these reductions to be passed on to Ontarians, resulting in electrical bills several times more than that amount; and

“Whereas the implementation of cap-and-trade will drive the cost of electricity even higher and deny Ontarians the option to choose affordable natural gas heating; and

“Whereas more and more Ontarians are being forced to cut down on essential expenses such as food and medicines in order to pay their increasingly unaffordable electricity bills; and

“Whereas the ill-conceived energy policies of this government that ignored the advice of independent experts and government agencies, such as the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) and the independent electrical system operator (IESO), and are not based on science have resulted in Ontarians’ electricity costs rising, despite lower natural gas costs and increased energy conservation in the province;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the total cost of electricity paid for by Ontarians, including costs associated with power consumed, the global adjustment, delivery charges, administrative charges, tax and any other charges added to Ontarians’ energy bills.”

As a former energy minister, I certainly agree with this petition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BURDEN REDUCTION ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 SUR L'ALLÈGEMENT DU FARDEAU RÉGLEMENTAIRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 5, 2016, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to reduce the regulatory burden on business, to enact various new Acts and to make other amendments and repeals / *Projet de loi 27, Loi visant à alléger le fardeau réglementaire des entreprises, à édicter diverses lois et à modifier et abroger d'autres lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): When we last left off, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex had time left, so take it away.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to carry on debate of Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act.

I'd like to start today by clearly saying that we desperately need to cut regulations in the province of Ontario and get government out of the way so our businesses have the best chance to succeed. It's going to take decisive action to send a signal to the world that Ontario is open for business and to kick-start the investment and innovation that we so desperately need here in our province.

It's been said many times before, but I'd like to reiterate today that Ontario currently has over 380,000 regulations on the books. The CFIB conservatively estimates that the cost of regulation in Ontario has grown from \$12.7 billion in 2005 to almost \$15 billion in 2014. The Liberal government has clearly taken us down the wrong track for over a decade when it comes to red tape and the overregulation of Ontario businesses.

As I said in my opening about a month ago, when we started debating this bill, we will be supporting it because we desperately need some action on red tape, but clearly this bill is missing a lot. Even with an hour to speak in total to Bill 27, it's difficult to cover much ground because this is such a large omnibus bill which covers such a broad assortment of issues.

I'd like to pay credit to our leader, Patrick Brown, and our caucus, who have identified the key economic challenges faced by businesses and the business community in the province. Our leader has laid out his four pillars for economic development, and he identifies red tape as being the first pillar of economic development of a PC government. He talks about energy costs, infrastructure and the skills mismatch, which we all hear about from the businesses in this province.

When I left off talking about the Burden Reduction Act, I was giving some real-life examples of red tape from around the province. That is where I'll be picking up today. Again, it seems like the government was mostly concerned about reducing the burden on the government, rather than families and businesses, when they crafted this bill, so I think it's important to bring these examples to light.

1610

There's a lot of work to do in reducing the burden of regulations on our businesses, and this bill, despite its promising title, barely scratches the surface. I would like to highlight the case of one business owner from northeastern Ontario who was told that to renew her TSSA registration, she must get confirmation from the Ministry of Government Services that her corporation is in good standing. If she lived in Toronto, she could just pop by the office and obtain that confirmation for \$22, but because she lives in northeastern Ontario, she has to hire a company to get the confirmation for her, and it will cost over \$50.

I understand that we live in a large province, so there will naturally be some barriers that arise because of geography, but there is no reason something like this

couldn't be done online. There's a feeling in many places in this province that politicians and bureaucrats are living in a Toronto bubble, and this is a pretty classic case. A downtown location may seem convenient when you're sitting at Queen's Park or in Whitney Block, but it can represent a logistical nightmare for anyone doing business outside the GTA.

It's common sense today, and we all know it, that we have the ability with current technology to overcome what were previously unavoidable inconveniences for these businesses. There are a few things in this bill which update the way in which paperwork and documentation are processed, allowing for more to be done online, but it doesn't go far enough.

This government needs to be sending out a very strong signal to the bureaucracy, to crown corporations and to government contractors that it's time to streamline. It's time to modernize and use all the tools available to make doing business in every corner of the province as simple and as efficient as possible. These types of solutions represent a trifling cost to implement, and it's really the lowest-hanging fruit in terms of what government can do to support Ontario's businesses.

"Streamline" is really the watchword here because we have seen unfortunate examples of this government's attempts to modernize, resulting in new headaches for businesses. One such example was brought to my attention by the CFIB. It relates to small manufacturers and importers in Ontario who have to report on product packaging and printed paper. Some companies are exempt, but they have no way of knowing if they are exempt or not until they fill out a long, poorly designed online form. Instead of stating the exemptions up front, the form simply stops working and instructs users to call the agency for clarification.

There has to be an easier way to do this, Mr. Speaker. What a waste of time for both companies and agency employees. These types of processes are in serious need of some common sense.

Speaking of a lack of common sense, we might turn our attention to this government's policies relating to alcohol. I doubt very much that even the members across the aisle, let alone the public, can understand the tangled web of who can sell alcohol, how much they can sell and when they can sell it.

CTV News highlighted just one of the convoluted and redundant policy knots attributed to this complicated system. The Old Third winery in Prince Edward county was having issues with the LCBO licensing process—a not uncommon problem for wineries, I understand. The LCBO charges the vineyard for selling wine by the glass on vineyard property, so it's as if the winery had sold the bottle to the LCBO for distribution and then bought the bottle back for sale, despite the wine never having left their property. Additionally, the LCBO monopoly prevents a small winery from selling internationally. It has to go through the LCBO. So we have a homegrown business facing hurdle after hurdle because the provincial government wants to micromanage their sector.

Half the frustration with red tape is not about compliance, but trying to understand what the government actually wants. Regulations are made much more onerous when individuals and companies aren't able to easily decipher what applies to them and how much they can comply.

When a government accumulates regulations the way this government has, it drains resources from the private sector. These resources are therefore unavailable for research and development or capital investment, which would fuel economic growth, productivity and job creation.

Speaker, I've heard a broad range of complaints like this when it comes to the Ontario Electronic Stewardship program. Headaches continue to arise from this program because information is both hard to find and difficult to understand.

The time and other resources that go into these efforts to adhere to regulations translate into lost productivity that is ultimately detrimental to Ontario's economy. We don't want employers and employees tied up, taking them away from their operations and pulling their hair out in frustration as they struggle to understand confusing or contradictory regulations.

Speaker, I've also heard a lot of concern around the environmental compliance approval system, which is long overdue for modernization. What Bill 27 does right here is allow for more business activities to move to the Environmental Activity and Sector Registry, the online self-registration system available for certain low-risk activities. I also applaud the government moving to allow inspectors from the environment ministry to gather more information by phone or email rather than requiring face-to-face meetings. The parliamentary assistant mentioned this as a great time saver for government personnel, but I've certainly heard from private sector stakeholders that having to take time away from their operations to deal with various government proxies is an ongoing aggravation.

With the high cost of doing business in Ontario, many businesses are running as lean as they possibly can, with a minimum of staff, so pulling a manager or business owner away from their regular work is a major imposition. But unfortunately, as pleased as I am to see some work being done to simplify these processes, this is still an area where this government seems to be working at serious cross-purposes.

The approvals process needs to be addressed more comprehensively than what we've seen in this bill. Companies are facing delays that average around two years, which is a real deterrent to new investment and results in delayed implementation of more environmentally beneficial technologies in GHG reduction initiatives.

Speaker, I spoke with a representative from one company in particular who wanted to reduce their energy consumption and reduce emissions by investing in a new piece of machinery. Unfortunately, because the approvals process for bringing in new machinery is so convoluted and the Ministry of the Environment was never able to

offer definitive specifications, this turned into a procurement process that lasted two and a half years, so machinery that reduced emissions and cut power consumption sat unused in the shop waiting for the government to sign off. That doesn't sound to me like a government that is prioritizing the environment. It doesn't sound to me like a government that supports innovation. If I were a business owner, that doesn't sound to me like a government I would want to deal with.

Another case of nightmare bureaucracy came from a company that was also doing its best to be environmentally friendly. This manufacturer had their facility inspected by someone from the ministry and was told that there was good news and bad news. The good news was that there were no problems and he was impressed with the facility. The bad news was that the company would have to hire a consultant to the tune of \$60,000 to confirm that. "You just have to pay the money and wait," they were told; wait and wait and wait, because it takes the government up to three years to review the consultant's report.

Speaker, during those three years, companies are expected to freeze their operations so that the report remains accurate, so no new machinery or processes are to be introduced, which is plainly absurd and certainly not what a government that prioritizes innovation should be requiring. When the company raised this as an issue, they were told they should go ahead and make changes but to hire a lawyer to deal with the complications this may cause, which goes to show just how out of touch this government has become.

These are precious resources for companies already pushed to the brink by high energy costs. Why should these companies pay the price for this government's redundancies and backlogs? That last example, Speaker, in particular really highlights a problem that goes hand in hand with red tape here in Ontario. The high-level bureaucratic intervention here is being exacerbated by the financial constraints that high debt and ongoing deficits are imposing. With inadequate resources to enforce and administer these hundreds of thousands of rules and regulations, people and businesses are left waiting far longer than is reasonable for paperwork and approvals. The government has overspent and overregulated, and the result is that they can't afford to maintain their own protocols effectively, which leads to a drag on the private sector, slowing productivity growth and reducing overall real economic growth in our province.

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The Fraser Institute recently highlighted a study conducted in the United States which tracked government regulations over 35 years across a broad array of sectors. This study found that regulations distorted investment choices that lead to innovation and "created a drag on the US economy amounting to an average reduction in the annual growth rate of the US gross domestic product of 0.8%."

The Fraser Institute holds this study up as a warning for us. I'll quote Professor Steven Globberman here: "The

US productivity experience should be a cautionary tale for legislators everywhere, including Canada. Regulations are difficult to remove once implemented, as they create groups in society with vested interests in preserving regulations that shield those groups from direct or indirect competition. The available evidence suggests that there is a potentially large economic payoff to eliminating regulations that have net social costs, as well as to forbearing from implementing new regulations with unfavourable benefit-cost ratios.”

Now that the incoming government in the United States has signalled that they plan to pursue an aggressive economic agenda, there has to be a wake-up call to the province of Ontario and to this government in particular. We are in direct competition with the United States. Our companies here already have states like New York, Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana banging down their doors, offering them all sorts of incentives to move south.

We need strong leadership from this government today. We need a real plan to create a business climate in Ontario that can compete with the United States. We can't afford to continue to tinker with a system that needs a complete overhaul.

In the last week, I have heard from businesses that are seriously concerned about this. I've spoken with business owners who want to stay in our province because it's their home and because they care about their employees, but they know that at some point it's not going to be viable for them to operate in Ontario. I know that my Liberal colleagues are hearing the same concerns, and yet, to date, there has been no signal from this government that things are going to improve.

I spoke last month about how the proposals in this Burden Reduction Act are, unfortunately, absolutely dwarfed by what we've seen come forward in the Changing Workplaces Review interim report.

I think it's also pertinent to mention the tremendous burden this government plans to impose on the private sector with its cap-and-trade cash grab. Even before the scheme is implemented, it's costing our business, as managers and business owners dedicate days and weeks trying to decipher what cap-and-trade will mean for their company. The stakes are very high for them because they're already coping with the most expensive energy costs in all of North America.

One long-time Scarborough-based family business, Automatic Coating, which employs 75 people, spoke with the media recently and shared that they expect cap-and-trade to cost their business around \$127,000 annually. Jocelyn Williams Bamford, a vice-president at Automatic Coating, said, “For the past two months, I spent more time on cap-and-trade and energy policy than I have on growing my business.... It's a recipe for disaster.”

Automatic Coating is not alone. High energy costs coupled with the spectre of cap-and-trade have led to a no-growth-in-Ontario mandate for many businesses. It's led to many companies formulating an exit strategy from Ontario.

Manufacturers in this province are saying that many Liberal policies seem to be designed to run them out of town. They need something much more substantial than what the government is offering them at this point.

I have talked a lot about red tape in general, as did the minister and his parliamentary assistant when they spoke on Bill 27. But there are few schedules of this bill I'd like to get into more detail on today as well, because this bill isn't simply about red tape reduction.

Concerns have been raised already in the Legislature by the members for Parkdale–High Park and Toronto–Danforth about schedule 16 of this bill, and I would like to draw the government's attention to it once again. Schedule 16 includes the provision of a mechanism which enables Ontario Place Corp. to acquire and dispose of “land, buildings and structures, or any interest in land, buildings and structures, by purchase, lease or otherwise.”

The government has thus far refused to justify this inclusion of a provision that would allow for the sale of Ontario Place assets. Yes, the Premier has previously committed to keeping Ontario Place public, but she also promised the same about Hydro One. So as Hydro One is being auctioned off, it begs the question of why anyone should believe the Liberal government when it says it will keep Ontario Place public, especially when the government is bringing forward new legislation buried in this omnibus Burden Reduction Act which would allow them to sell it off. The precedent of broken promises around privatization has been set by the government sell-off of Hydro One. Here we see the government changing the laws to allow them to privatize Ontario Place.

I would like to hear some justification for this from the Liberals, besides the same tired talking points about how excited they are to revitalize Ontario Place. The people of Ontario deserve straight answers about whether the government intends to continue disposing of public assets to pay for its years of waste and mismanagement. If they legitimately don't intend to do that, I'm not sure why they have included the ability to more easily dispose of Ontario Place assets in this bill.

I would also like to speak for a moment to schedule 2 of the bill, which retains the industrial exception in the Professional Engineers Act. The industrial exception allows unlicensed people to practice engineering if the work is done on their employer's machinery or equipment.

I take issue with this provision for two reasons, the first of which is that the government has not been open with the engineers before bringing this forward. The associations who represent engineers in this province, who are the experts in this field, quite reasonably expected they would be invited to the table to discuss this move by the government. But this latest step came out of left field for them. This government announced the repeal of the industrial exception in January of 2013, only to backtrack a few months later. Since then, it was radio silence from the Liberal government, leaving industry and engineers to guess at what erratic move might be

next—which is an unfortunate hallmark of the government, creating uncertainty and volatility for Ontario's businesses.

My second issue with this is that this provision of the bill is retaining the industrial exception, not introducing it, so it's misleading for the government to claim that this is a move that means money will be saved. It's like announcing you won't introduce a new tax on kitchen tables, and claiming you've saved people money. The amount the government is claiming they're saving through this measure is significant. They're putting it at between \$118 million to \$196 million in cost-avoidance. So when the minister stands up and claims this Burden Reduction Act is going to save millions of dollars, it's mostly based on this malarkey about the industrial exception. This is smoke-and-mirrors economics and ultimately, a PR exercise.

The government needs to get serious about creating better economic conditions in our province, instead of focusing on trying to make themselves look good. As we continue down this path of being preoccupied with tinkering and taking a piecemeal approach to policy in this province, our economy is falling further behind. We are disadvantaged because of disjointed policies, which is what happens when the government has no cohesive plan to pursue prosperity and sustainability. This bill, which chips away haphazardly at the province's massive red tape burden, is just another example of this.

As I approach the end of my time here, I want to say that I look forward to the debate continuing on this bill. As an omnibus bill that affects over 11 ministries, there is a lot to delve into. I look forward to hearing the other members as we just begin the journey of debating this bill.

But I want to reiterate for the Liberal government in particular, and to the people working within the ministries and to the bureaucrats who quite frankly are many times driving jobs out of the province, that we have over 380,000 regulations on the books today. The reality is, for our neighbours to the south, it appears they elected a business-friendly government. This has to be a wake-up call. We have 380,000 rules and regulations on the books. We have the most expensive energy costs in all of North America. We have a debt now that's set to hit \$318 billion. Businesses know that at some point they're going to be the ones that are going to pay for the years and years of mismanagement by this government.

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For the life of me, I don't understand why they're not taking action to make Ontario the best place to do business in. We need to hang over Ontario an "Open for Business" sign, Mr. Speaker. According to the 2014 numbers, red tape is costing our economy about \$15 billion per year. That's not the signal that we want to send to the world.

As I said, this bill sounds good. It has a catchy title, but frankly, Mr. Speaker, even though our caucus will be supporting it, it's just window dressing. We need to take action and to go much, much further.

In closing, I again want to just highlight the four pillars of economic development that our party is focusing on and that our leader, Patrick Brown, is focusing on. He's touring the province talking to chambers of commerce, BIAs and other business organizations, and really focusing on four pillars.

(1) Red tape: I've already covered that—380,000 regulations costing the economy about \$15 billion every year.

(2) The highest energy costs in all of North America: We need to stop the sell-off of Hydro One. We need to stop signing contracts for energy that we don't need.

(3) We need to build that infrastructure. The best example of infrastructure not being built in the province that would stimulate huge benefits for the people of the province is the Ring of Fire. We've heard this government make three announcements about building infrastructure, building that road to the Ring of Fire, and it's not happening. Three times—they love photo ops, but the reality is that the Ring of Fire is not being developed as we speak.

(4) Lastly—and I'm really happy our leader is focused on this because it's something that we all hear from the private sector and from the business community in Ontario—there is a skills mismatch in the province. There are employers across Ontario today who can't find people to fill jobs. Our leader, Patrick Brown, has highlighted many times that in Ontario today we're graduating kids and students for jobs that don't exist today and tomorrow.

We're going to continue to advocate to create better economic conditions in the province. This government has to wake up to the fact that every single day we have businesses calling us, telling us that they're barely hanging on. In fact, a lot of businesses can't even hold on until the next election—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock. I just want to remind all members of the Legislature that if you want to comment on something that is being said, you must be in your seat in order to do so. Just a friendly reminder.

I will now turn it back to the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex to finish it up.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I just want to send a crystal-clear message. Mr. Speaker, I've spoken to hundreds of manufacturers, and many of them—I don't know if they can survive until the next election. They want change in the province of Ontario, but they don't know if they can hold on for another 18 months.

I would urge the Premier to get out of the bubble and get across the province. Things are serious in the province. You've got to do more to create the winning conditions in Ontario.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I listened to the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and I was surprised to see that I actually agreed with quite a bit of what he had to

say, which does not happen very often, so I will put it out there.

Nickel Belt is where mining happens in and around Sudbury. All of the mines are in my riding. I have numerous industrial parks, all of them full—or used to be full—with mining supply companies; you're talking about small and medium-sized businesses that employ local people who do fantastic things.

I can talk about Penguin innovation. They are the ones who do robotics that will go underground, so that you can actually drill and blast with people on the surface with joysticks that direct robots underneath so that the work is safer. All of this was done in Sudbury by small entrepreneurs.

We have Marcotte Mining, renowned mining equipment all over the world, and the same thing with Herold Supply that supplies the mine. All of them are struggling, first, because of the price of electricity and, second, because of some of the burdens that exist in the way that Ontario does business. Those are examples of small business, but I have many, many more in all of those industrial parks that could create jobs, that could create wealth, that could use the brainpower that we have in northern Ontario to move mining forward. But they come to me, and there's always a million reasons why permitting took longer than it was supposed to, and the EA has to be redone because we've asked for this—there's a million reasons why they can never move forward. This has to change. We need to be open for business.

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

Mrs. Cristina Martins: As the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, I'm pleased to rise here this afternoon to also weigh in and speak on the Burden Reduction Act, Bill 27.

I want to start off by thanking the members opposite, the members from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and Nickel Belt, for their comments here this afternoon.

I want to remind everyone that Ontario is open for business. It never closed its doors, and it continues to see a number of businesses sprouting up here in Ontario, coming to Ontario because of the conditions that we have created. But we know that there is more to do. I'm very glad, when I sit across on this side of the House, to hear the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex say that both he and his leader are in agreement with what we are doing here in terms of trying to reduce and cut red tape that businesses often have to encounter when trying to do business here in Ontario.

Reducing regulatory burden is part of the government's economic plan known as the Business Growth Initiative: to build Ontario up and deliver on its number one priority, to grow the economy and create jobs. This initiative is built on the following principles: creating a strong, innovation-driven economy; catapulting Ontario businesses forward through scaling up; and lowering business costs through modernized regulations.

Through this act, through this bill, if passed—and it sounds like we've got approval from the other side as

well—we'll be simplifying, streamlining and creating more user-friendly services for our businesses so that we can continue growing Ontario up as we have up until now. This will provide ministries with a regular and ongoing instrument for future legislative changes.

I want to remind the House that the last Open for Business bill was passed in 2010. That is more than six years ago. This bill will serve as the model for future burden reduction proposals in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from—here we go.

Mr. Bill Walker: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's one of your favourites, and you never seem to get that. That's okay.

Mr. Speaker, it's always a pleasure to stand and provide comment when my colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex has spoken. On this one in particular—he comes from a family that has owned a very successful business, a thriving business in their area. His father was the owner and his brother is in the company. So he comes from the ground. He understands what's happening out there in small-town and big-town Ontario. Business is business and, really, the reality that we hear not only in his riding but in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is certainly about the burden of red tape: the 370,000 regulations that we have out there, and when they keep adding to them, it's burying particularly those really small businesses, where they are everything in the business. They're the procurer, they're the developer, they're the salesperson, they're the bookkeeper, and yet this government continues to ask for more and more paperwork which takes more time away from the front line, from the customer.

He referenced the energy costs, the highest in North America. I hear this every single day of the week—whether it's from business people, large or small, whether it's from single-parent families, whether it's from seniors on fixed incomes, every day the concern is there. The hospital: Grey Bruce Health Services shared with me that their hydro costs have gone up 40%. And with fixed budgets, that means they are actually either going to lay off staff or they're going to cut services at the front line, and we already know how many nurses have lost jobs. So it's very challenging.

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What we hear out here all the time is that there's more consultants being hired. Just this morning questions were asked about David Herle and the Gandalf poll. We asked the government how much they spent on that study to tell them something that every single Ontarian out there has been telling them for months and months and months. And we've certainly been telling them that these hydro prices are starting to have huge ramifications and impact. Businesses are leaving Ontario because of that, Mr. Speaker. We need to lower the red tape. We need to

lower the hydro costs. Ontarians are living life harder because of Liberal policies.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House and, as this is my first opportunity to talk to Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act, to follow the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I too—surprisingly—agree with a lot of the points he put forward. A lot of the points he put forward make some sense, because a lot of us have experienced some of the regulatory burden in Ontario. Regulations should be there to work for people, and in some cases regulations seem to be there for the sake of regulation. He mentioned issues that he's been told about and experienced in northeastern Ontario and the rural parts of Ontario. It seems that the farther you go away from the mega centre, the less the understanding is. I think that's something that hopefully this act can address.

We are all experiencing huge repercussions from the cost of electricity. It's obviously out of control in this province, which he mentioned as well. I am a bit perplexed—and perhaps he could answer that in his response. We are incredibly disappointed with the Liberals, with their sale of Hydro One. We don't believe it's the right way to go. We don't believe that privatizing essential services is the right way to go. But privatizing services has traditionally been the Tory way of doing things. That's what they believe. And yet with Hydro One it seems to be something different. And I'm quite frankly a bit perplexed. As well, the member brought up schedule 16 about the possible sale of Ontario Place, which we are very concerned about.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: That's why I raised it.

Mr. John Vanthof: To the member, I agree. He raised it, and I'm happy that the Conservatives were concerned about it as well, because he did mention that the sale of Hydro One was denied by the Liberals and then they did it, and here they're opening the same hole for Ontario Place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for final comments.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I would like to thank the members from Nickel Belt and Davenport, my good friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Look, Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Ontario is becoming less competitive. I'm hearing it all the time, especially from those small and medium-sized manufacturers in the province. They're hamstrung by energy costs, rules and regulations, cap-and-trade. The one example I used is that it is going to cost this company \$127,000 a year—and taxes. This is all adding an enormous burden and challenge to the companies that are left here in Ontario. We today export about \$159 billion a year to the United States. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to grow that number in order to ensure that government can continue paying the costs of our health care system,

education system—our priorities. In order to pay for these social programs, we all know that we have to have a strong economy.

And the warning that I give to the government—and it's just a fact—is that I believe that south of the border they're going to be more aggressive in trying to recruit jobs to the United States. I want our government to create those conditions in Ontario that we get investment here. I think the Premier should make this her number one mission as Premier over the 18 months to keep the businesses we have here and start creating new jobs here in the province. Unfortunately, they've been in power for 13 years and they've gone in the opposite direction. I'm concerned, and I want that on the table.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's always a pleasure and an honour to speak on behalf of our caucus, the Ontario NDP—specifically today to the bill before us, Bill 27, the Burden Reduction Act. I've had the chance to listen to my colleagues, learn a little bit and understand what their position is on the bill. But it brings up some more questions in terms of what their position is; I will try to elaborate.

But first and foremost, let me start off by, for the sake of the viewers at home, explaining what this bill is. It does give an explanatory note:

“The bill is part of a government initiative to reduce the regulatory burden on business and to achieve a cost savings for government.

“The bill amends or repeals a number of acts and enacts a number of new acts. For convenience, the amendments, repeals and new acts are set out in separate schedules. Schedules with the name of ministries include amendments to and repeals of acts that are administered by the ministry involved or that affect that ministry. The commencement provisions for each of the schedules are set out in the schedules.”

What does that mean in English, Speaker? That means that this has a whole series of—it's what we would call an omnibus bill. “Omnibus” is a Latin word that means “to carry all,” and if you look at this bill—it has 166 pages—it certainly attempts to carry as much as they could.

New Democrats support reducing burdensome regulations. We support eliminating redundancies. These are things that I think are common sense and have been applied over governments for time immemorial. We hate to see waste, mismanagement and regulations that are overly burdensome.

But we have to be cognizant as legislators in here—anyone who has the responsibility that we carry—to very closely analyze how we tweak at the margins. That's what I would say here. Of course, as we've heard, some regulations certainly pose an enormous burden on businesses of all sorts; some are just common-day operations or mechanisms of that industry.

Some regulations that we see, that we know of, have actually been brought about by industry and business, requesting that their industry be regulated in some

fashion or another. When the number of the 370,000 regulations that exist is touted, let's recognize that they're there for a reason. Let's recognize that a whole host of stakeholders have at one point or another had their say on these, and also that they've been brought in by successive governments. These regulations didn't happen overnight; they are a culmination of what I would expect was several tenures of different governments. We have to be diligent in reviewing those from time to time. This is what this bill attempts to do.

That being said, Speaker, again I'll reiterate that New Democrats support the review of our regulatory regime in Ontario. We support, I would say, 98% of the content of this bill. It is some innocuous stuff, not very contentious.

Let me again, for the sake of the viewers who have stuck around during the first four minutes and haven't tuned out so far, explain to them one of the regulations that is to be changed here:

"12. (1) Subsection 166 (1) of the act is repealed and the following substituted:

"Passing street cars

"Standing street car, etc.

"(1) Where a person in charge of a vehicle or on horseback or leading a horse on a highway overtakes a street car or a car of an electric railway, operated in or near the centre of the roadway, which is stationary for the purpose of taking on or discharging passengers, he or she shall not pass the car or approach nearer than two metres measured back from the nearest door of the car that the person is approaching and through which passengers may get on or off until the passengers have got on or got safely to the side of the street, as the case may be, but this subsection does not apply where a safety zone has been set aside and designated by a by-law passed under section 9, 10 or 11 of the Municipal Act, 2001 or under section 7 or 8 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006."

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"(2) Subsection 166(2) of the act is amended by striking out 'No person in charge of a vehicle or on a bicycle or on horseback or leading a horse' at the beginning and substituting 'No person in charge of a vehicle or on horseback or leading a horse'."

Wow, what an incredibly consequential regulation that we are changing here. This is mind-blowing, Speaker. It's going to alter the fabric of the province of Ontario, I can tell you. And there's a whole bunch of these. You can read them. Look them up. They are incredible.

To say that this is revolutionary, as the title of the act, Burden Reduction Act—I mean, that's going to reduce a lot of burden, with the horses and how you can get out and get in and all that stuff. This is common sense. This is stuff that absolutely we should be reviewing, not contentious. We can deal with this and I would expect that any legitimate and proactive government would be doing this all the time.

What we don't find in here are some of the regulations that we all hear about in our communities every day. The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex raised a few. As a small business owner, he knows. He's been involved and he's had to comply with these regulations.

I've met with chambers of commerce, as have members around the House. I meet with them regularly. Inevitably, and unquestionably, their number one burden is the cost of hydro in the province of Ontario—100%. In fact, the government just commissioned a poll by somebody—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, I'm going to try. Thank you.

They commissioned a poll by someone closely connected to the Liberal Party that told them as much: 94% of people in Ontario believe that the cost of hydro is a burden. But yet, we don't really see anything in this bill here, Speaker, that's dealing with it. If anything, we've seen the efforts on behalf of the government exacerbate that problem. I will elaborate a little bit further.

Again, the omnibus bill carries 40 different amendments and over 17 schedules, which is a lot. Some of these were previously introduced as Bill 218, including the Consumer Protection Act, 2012, the Electricity Act, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act, the Ontario Place Corporation Act and Protecting Child Performers Act. Most of these are housekeeping. That's the word; they are housekeeping measures, as I pointed to as an example.

Where we find a problem, and the questions that arise for me from the previous speaker from the Conservative side, is how in fact they are supporting it. I'll tell you, and I'll let the members of the Liberal government know, that New Democrats won't be supporting this bill.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Really?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes. Sorry to tell you; we aren't. We don't understand how the Conservatives are supporting the Liberals on this bill, actually. It's quite interesting that they're going ahead with it, given some of the glaring poison pills that are built into this bill. It was referenced, but yet they don't seem to think it's a big enough problem to actually ask for more. We would say that there are more regulations that you could have looked at, that Ontarians deserve more.

For instance, I just met, during our break week, with John Fancsy, who is the owner of the Viewpointe Estate Winery. And I met with Matt Marchand, the president of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce. Matt invited me out to speak with John and meet with him to tour his operations. It's a beautiful winery on the shores of Lake Erie. Speaker, I don't know if you have ever seen it or visited Viewpointe Estate Winery. You're talking a massive investment in land alone. Some of the most fertile soil in Ontario exists right there along the Lake Erie North Shore. Also, the investment in the vines to produce wine, the investment in his facility, which not only is first-class but it also—he has built amenities to host weddings and other events. He is the epitome of what Ontario should be asking for and should be promoting when it comes to small businesses, ecotourism and culinary tourism. John is doing it right, and he has laid everything on the table to do this.

So when I sat down with John over a glass of water—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No, it was a glass of wine.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I wish it was a glass of wine. I didn't have time to sit and have a glass of wine. This is a common-sense guy, a practical guy who has been involved in business his entire life, actually, in tier one manufacturing. That's where his background comes from. He said, in terms of the regulation or the regulatory burden on a small winery in Ontario, the manufacturing industry doesn't hold a candle to what the wineries have to go through. You've got to deal with the LCBO. You've got to deal with the AGCO. You've got to deal with the Ministry of Finance. You have got to deal with the ministry of consumer affairs. These are all provincial ministries that are involved in the sale and production of wine. You've got to deal with all sorts of—the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of the Environment. That's just provincial, Speaker. Now tack on the federal aspect of producing wine in Ontario, and there's some serious redundancy in their regulatory regime there, and serious burden. All they want to do is produce wine.

I would argue that some of the best wine in the world comes right out of my hometown in Essex county, Colchester. So you wonder why—here's one example, Speaker. John Fancsy from Viewpointe would love to ship and get his wine to various LCBO outlets across the province, but he's not allowed to store his wine off-site. He can't warehouse his wine, if you can imagine that. If he gets a request for a skid of his wine up in North Bay, he can't store any off-site in Toronto to be able to lessen his transportation costs. He's got to go directly from the winery in Colchester, Ontario, up the 401 and straight up to anywhere points north.

That doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any sense economically. It doesn't make any sense for him as a small business person. It doesn't make any sense environmentally. He is doubling or tripling what his energy costs could be, or should be, for transportation. We don't see anything that remedies that specific aspect of business. What we see is tinkering around the edges, as I've talked about.

But for new Democrats, in reviewing and doing our due diligence on this bill, we have seen two very consequential amendments that make it a no-go zone for us, that we cannot support and that eliminates our support. Sometimes we wonder if that is done on purpose by the government, to put us in a position of making us look like we're not in support of lessening regulatory burdens on business. Of course we are. But if you're going to put a poison pill in there that does harm to our communities, that is not in the public interest and that is not good public policy, then it is our responsibility to oppose that, and that's what you'll see today. I'll try to lay out that case, Speaker.

One of the amendments that's proposed is the potential sell-off of Ontario Place. It opens the door to something that the Premier said she was never going to do. It is found in schedule 16, under "Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport." It's controversial, Speaker. It opens up Ontario Place's corporation lands to "development"—privatization—"acquisition, construction, oper-

ation, maintenance, and management powers." Under the schedule, Ontario Place Corp. will be given "the power to acquire and dispose of land or any interest in land, subject to the Lieutenant Governor in Council's approval."

1700

In February 2012, the Ontario government shut down Ontario Place. We know it has been stagnant and not utilized since then. We're talking about one of the most profound—I mean, it's certainly a place that is recognizable in Toronto. It's akin to the CN Tower. I used to drive past it as a kid on my way to wherever—typically to a protest or to a rally—and wish that my parents would bring me to Ontario Place instead of some protest in downtown Toronto.

Mr. John Vanthof: First place I ever took my kids.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: There you go: the first place the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane brought his kids. I've actually never been there; I've never had the chance. And I guess, if the government goes ahead with this, I won't get the chance to bring my kids there, to this wonderful public place and public space that offered lessons in culture and diversity and entertainment—a great place. Where can you find that these days?

I was just talking to somebody this week, the mayor of Amherstburg; that's who I was talking to. We used to have Boblo Island in Amherstburg. Anybody remember Boblo Island? My goodness, it was the heyday of southwestern Ontario, where our economic engine was booming. Boblo Island sits in the middle of the Detroit River, between Windsor—well, effectively between Amherstburg and Detroit. For years and years, that was an amusement park. It was unbelievable. You'd take the ferry there. It took you about five minutes to get on the ferry, load up, get across the river and, man, oh, man, you would have a day at Boblo Island with your friends. There were public areas to have a picnic. It was a full day. There were school retreats. It was remarkable, a really important part of our history in Essex county.

For whatever reason—obviously, economic conditions and so on and so forth—Boblo Island shut down. Geez, it must be going on 20 years now, unfortunately. If you go over to Boblo Island and take the ferry there, you can still see some remnants of the amusement park. The big building is still there and some of the pillars for the roller coasters.

Boblo Island has some significant historical markers there as well, as it was sort of a port at the beginning of this country, the foundation of Canada. It was a strategic island for British forces to use, and you can see some of that there as well.

The point is, Boblo Island has now become a residential area. It's been built up. There are some beautiful homes on there. In fact, our former colleague the member from Beaches-East York lives on Boblo. Michael Prue is my constituent now, and I love having him. It's great. I love that Michael is on the island, but I'll tell you, I certainly would love to know that there was a place where I could bring my kids that was right in our com-

munity, that I didn't have to travel all the way up the 401 and the 400 to Barrie to go to Canada's Wonderland, or even to the States, to Cedar Point. We had that right there in our community and it was something that was important.

I guess as inconsequential as you think a public space like that—even though it was privately owned, it was dedicated to the public, where we could all go. It accepted everybody. It slowly degraded the fabric of our community—I hear lots of people talk about it all the time: “I wish we had Boblo back.”

Well, I can only imagine how people living in downtown Toronto must feel about the fact that Ontario Place, something that has had generations of families and kids go to be entertained and have a day—

Mr. John Vanthof: They had bumper boats.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: That's what I remember, the bumper boats. You would drive by—you remember the bumper boats—and you'd say, “Mom and Dad, take me there. I want to go there now.” And they'd say, “No, you can't go there. We have a protest to go to.”

So when that's taken away, what else do you have? What do you have? Our fear is that with this amendment, this schedule here, of all of this stuff that I've just pointed to—the inconsequential stuff, the stuff that's not contentious, the stuff that we would absolutely look to support the government on—they throw in this thing that will allow them to sell off the Ontario Place lands, throw up some high-rise condominiums and block out the beautiful scenery of Lake Ontario, of which you're not getting any more. They're not building any more lake-front property, as they say, Speaker. You're going to take that out of public hands. You'll sell it off for pennies on the dollar, as you do with every one of your other privatization exercises. You'll make up some grand excuse that this is the only way you can fund infrastructure in Ontario, because you have no other ideas, and it will be lost forever. It's really, really unfortunate. It's almost tragic that this will be the first government in history to have to sell off Ontario Place, and the greater fear is that they'll turn it into a private casino.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: “They paved paradise.”

Mr. Taras Natyshak: “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot,” as the song says. Who sings that song? We don't know. Somebody research that. But definitely, that's what our fear is.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Joni Mitchell.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Joni Mitchell; thank you very much. This is turning into a little bit of Jeopardy. All right, Joni Mitchell.

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: No, someone else has done it, Speaker. Someone else has done the song. I digress.

Nothing in the schedule, nothing in this act prohibits them from eventually bringing in a private casino. In fact, I've warned this government, and I've sounded the alarm many times dating back—

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville on a point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: Is a quorum present, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'll direct the Clerks' table to count to determine.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I return to the member for Essex to continue, please.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks, Speaker. I appreciate the increase in audience.

I was on a roll—I thought I was on a roll. So where was I? I was at bumper boats. This is one of the reasons why New Democrats won't be in support of this bill, because we believe there are better ways to fund infrastructure. There are more economic ways to fund infrastructure without affecting what holds us together and what is such an important part of the fabric of our communities.

Another aspect of the bill that we find incredibly contentious and really should point to how this government makes its decisions or comes to its decisions and their priorities: A couple of years ago—well, since I was elected, of course, I've had the privilege of meeting with, speaking to and learning from the professional engineers of Ontario. These are folks who go about their business every day in our communities unknown. They're not heralded as the grand speakers. They're not feted like we are as politicians. When we do something good, we make sure everybody knows. We put out press releases; we take pictures; we cut ribbons. We want all the credit, unfortunately. That's the name of the game when it comes to politics. But for professional engineers, they go about their day-to-day business ensuring that we are living in a society that is safe, efficient, effective and competitive. It's through their knowledge and their expertise that they bring into every aspect of our society—we are better off because of their expertise.

1710

If you look at a list of professions in Ontario or anywhere in the world for that matter, politicians, in terms of how well they are revered, might be at the bottom, I would imagine. Lawyers, politicians—engineers are way up there. The Liberal government may want to commission another poll to find out whether people like them. I don't know how much they'll spend on it, but I can save them the money. People don't like politicians. If you haven't gotten it yet, they don't like you. They're not revered, especially this government because of the tenure that you've had and the disaster that you've created. I'll save the government some money on that one.

Engineers do us a good service; they do us a good public service, and we definitely need to support them and give them the tools to be able to do their job. But

buried in the context of this omnibus bill here is a schedule that will continue the industrial exception when it comes to professional engineers in Ontario, and they are dismayed. What that means is that professional engineers will not be required to do their job on machinery that a company owns or an industry owns, and unlicensed people will be able to carry out what typically and should be engineering work on machinery and equipment in manufacturing.

Now at one point in time, in 2013, this government understood that they should fall in line with all the other provinces in Ontario and remove that industrial exception. Why? Because it's good public policy, quite frankly. This is not a partisan thing; this is a matter of good public policy. I think time will tell and history will tell that the government and now the Conservative Party are on the wrong side of this issue because first and foremost, aside and above our partisan roles in here, we have to ensure that we are enabling good public policy and not blocking it.

So Professional Engineers Ontario, upon understanding that the government was going to backtrack on their promise to remove the industrial exception, issued this media release. I'll read it into the record in its entirety:

"June 9, 2016—Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO), the body that licenses and regulates professional engineering in Ontario to protect the public interest, is extremely disappointed with the government's decision, first announced last fall and confirmed with the introduction yesterday of the Burden Reduction Act, 2016, to halt proclamation of the repeal of section 12(3)(a) of the Professional Engineers Act, often referred to as the industrial exception. The industrial exception allows unlicensed people to carry out engineering work on machinery or equipment in manufacturing.

"It's interesting that the government also had third reading yesterday of An Act to proclaim a Workers Day of Mourning. We simply cannot understand why, under such circumstances, the government would not honour its commitment to the repeal, which would improve worker safety, improve profitability of Ontario manufacturers, bring Ontario in line with other provinces, and ensure work requiring specialized design and problem-solving knowledge is done by professionals with obligations to the public interest—in the guise of reducing red tape,' PEO president George Comrie ... said.

"The government has described red tape as regulatory requirements that are 'unclear, outdated or costly' and do not protect public interests or safety. The repeal of the industrial exception simply does not fit this definition." And I wholeheartedly agree.

"In fact, the repeal:

"—would eliminate confusion about engineering activities that have always required a professional engineer and would standardize Ontario with the rest of the provinces;

"—is not outdated or redundant, as the currently required Pre-start Health and Safety Reviews under the

Occupational Health and Safety Act occur after the design process is completed and serious potential equipment design issues may no longer be evident; and

"—is not a costly requirement, as there are potential cost savings to businesses from reducing worker injuries and competitive advantage through innovative design solutions to production problems. PEO estimates that the impact to industry of proclaiming the repeal would be only \$1 million to \$1.9 million, whereas the value of one life saved is immeasurable"—undoubtedly.

"The repeal would have been implemented without any expense to taxpayers and little cost to employers, since PEO had committed to offsetting almost half of the licensing fee of anyone required to be newly licensed as a result of the repeal,' Comrie said." They were already going to work with you. They were already putting into place provisions to work with you and to make it cost-effective. "PEO had also put in place a regulation to enable employers to transition over a one-year period."

Speaker, I would imagine that that transition period could have been extended as well. Maybe if the industry needed more than one year—these folks are practical. They are good-public-policy-oriented. They are easy to work with, but they need a willing partner on the other side.

Many of you spoke with them. You've attended events. You know that this is important. You know that this is good public policy, so to watch your government slide this in here under the guise of reducing red tape and burden is wrong, Speaker.

The letter goes on to say, "'The Ontario government's troubling decision to reverse its previous commitment to repeal section 12(3)(a) of the PEA leaves a gap in PEO's ability to regulate acts of engineering and continues to put workers at risk,' said PEO Registrar Gerard McDonald, P.Eng. 'Engineers are committed to public safety and are professionally accountable by law for all acts of professional engineering. Not requiring engineers to carry out work in this narrow area is not a red tape reduction. It is a significant missed opportunity to protect the public.'" I can't argue with that.

"PEO is committed to working with governments and industry to achieve a stable and prosperous economic future for Ontario, which it continues to believe would be enhanced through the repeal of section 12(3)(a) of the Professional Engineers Act."

Speaker, a little bit about Professional Engineers Ontario: "Under the authority of the Professional Engineers Act, PEO governs ... 85,000 licence and certificate holders and regulates professional engineering in Ontario. PEO's mission is to regulate and advance the practice of engineering to protect the public interest. Its vision is to be the trusted leader in professional self-regulation. Professional engineering safeguards life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare and the environment. Professional engineers can be identified by the P.Eng. after their names. Holders of limited licences can be identified by LEL or LET after their names."

There you have it. I couldn't say it any clearer than Professional Engineers Ontario did. This is a matter of public policy, of public safety. If you're saying it's a matter of burden reduction, we don't understand how it could be that a workplace injury, a lost-time injury or a workplace fatality which will result by the lack of oversight that professional engineers provide gives any advantage to industrial manufacturers in the province. You shut down the entire facility after somebody gets hurt and you review the processes. Sometimes it'll cost you—well, what's the price that you can put on someone's life, as was stated here in the media release?

That, just again, goes to show you how this government, at one point in time, can see the light, can make those commitments to professional engineers, can say all the right things and make all the right moves but yet buckle at the first hint of any potential effect on their support levels. They're playing politics here, Speaker. This isn't about good public policy; this is about politics.

1720

On that basis alone, I would say that New Democrats would—

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is the most boring bill ever.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, it really is.

New Democrats alone would vote against this—on this alone, we would vote against it. When you wrap in the Ontario Place amendment, then for sure we have to vote against it because this is a double-edged sword here that is not going to improve the business climate in the province.

Where is it that we see the government assist homeowners and ratepayers with their hydro bills in this bill? It's nowhere to be found. There's nothing in here that alludes to any remedy or any reduction in cost for ratepayers in our province. Speaker, again, the focus of the bill was to support businesses and to support our competitiveness by reducing red tape. They had a Red Tape Commission. They asked people to go on the website and submit their ideas about how to reduce regulations in the province, and I would assume they received thousands of submissions. There aren't thousands in here, and the ones that are in here are, frankly, inconsequential. I'll tell you why: because the amendments in these schedules really bring us in line with international trade agreements. These are things that modernize and harmonize regulations that already exist and that we have to become compliant with. This isn't anything novel that the government has come up with on their own; they're things that have been identified through trade agreements that require them to take action on. So they bundle it up, they package it up and say, "Look at how great we are doing when it comes to burden reduction."

That doesn't help people in our riding, Speaker. It doesn't help Gabe Saad, who is the owner of the Arner Stop. It's like the Corner Gas gas station in Colchester, in Harrow. It's at the end of the Arner road—right at the end. We walked in there a couple of days ago—our leader, Andrea Horwath, and my colleagues from Windsor-Tecumseh and Windsor West—and we met

with some dairy farmers at Gabe's Arner Stop. Some of the locals are in there. It's a little restaurant. It's your quintessential greasy spoon. It's pure Canadiana. It's where you want to go to learn about your community and to chat with your fellow community members. If you ever, as a politician, want to know how you're doing, or if you want to save money on commissioning a poll, go to your local Arner Stop. Find the greasy spoon in your community, sit down and have a good cup of coffee—because that's where you're going to find the best cup of coffee.

Mr. John Vanthof: Ninety-four per cent of people think hydro is too high.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, 94% of the people in there—guess what? Your poll was wrong. One hundred per cent of people—my question is: Who are those six people who don't think hydro is too expensive? Who are they? Are they major users—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: One of the Liberal members—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Because she's making \$130,000 a year. That's okay. You can afford hydro, but people don't make that, Speaker. You're out of touch with the reality of people in the province. People are living on the margins, and they can't afford \$600-a-month hydro bills. So go visit your greasy spoon and raise your hand and say, "Oh, I've got no problem with hydro"—because everybody else in there does. Where is it in this bill that they affect hydro? I don't see anything.

Our agriculture sector, Speaker: Arguably, economically speaking, they contribute the second-highest effect on our GDP, after manufacturing. But if you add the fact that we'd like to eat in this province, and you can't eat cars or widgets, then they're probably, I would say, the most important industry in the province. You need to eat. You need to get food, and they're the ones that do that for us, every day without fail.

So we sat down with Bernard Nelson and Mark Stannard—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: You know Bernard? Bernard is a great guy. He's an unassuming guy. He's a wonderful guy, actually. He's got common sense. He's straightforward. He doesn't mince words, as many farmers don't, as we know. Our in-house farmer, John Vanthof, doesn't mince words. You get the truth from these guys.

They have done everything they can in their operations to make themselves absolutely, 100% effective. They can know what's going on in their operations through their phones, these days. This is high-tech agriculture. They have changed the motors so that they're low-voltage and low-draw motors—to a huge expense. They've changed the lighting. They've changed the fans. They've put new roofs on. They have everything that they can do. Many of them, also, are part of green energy and renewable energy projects as well, so they've got geothermal on their farms. And they're having a hard time making ends meet.

Now, here's the thing, and particularly dairy farmers, because they're regulated—in other industries, that cost would be passed on to the consumer. Dairy farmers don't have that ability, Speaker, to pass on that cost, so these guys—these men and women and families—are carrying that burden of the skyrocketing costs of hydro on farms. Here's the hazard and here's the cautionary tale: Once you lose your ability to produce your own food as a nation, you are absolutely vulnerable; the sovereignty of your nation is vulnerable. So what we're doing is, we're creating the economic conditions, or disincentive, to even get into farming, let alone sustain a farm, and once we start to see those dominoes fall—because again, these guys are at the margin in their operations—you're going to lose the ability to produce your own food. You're going to have to rely on imports coming from other areas that have already cut their regulations, that have slashed and burned or never had any regulations to begin with, and you're going to get products that may be sub-standard. I don't want to point out any specific areas or jurisdictions—I'll just say, maybe China. Do you want to get your food from China when you lose your ability to get it from Ontario? No, I don't think so.

When speaking with Bernard Nelson and Mark Stannard and Gabe Saad, they want to know what this government is going to do for them. They want to see, if you're going to put an omnibus budget in there, that there's something in there for them. We don't see it. In fact, what we see is a continuation of the plan to privatize our largest public asset, which is Hydro One. What's the rationale for that? We've been told that they need to find funds, that the government requires funds to pay for infrastructure. This will be the first government in the history of Ontario that has to burn the furniture to heat the house and sell off Hydro One.

Now, when that 60% share is turned over fully to private industry, Speaker, do you think that their incentive will be to provide the lowest rate for consumers? Do you think that their incentive will be to ensure that consumers are using less power? I don't think so. That's not a business model that will keep them in business very long. What we think and what we know from experience is that privatized power is more expensive. You will see an unregulated power regime as was brought in, in the late 1990s and the early part of the millennium, by Mike Harris. Rates skyrocketed and the uncertainty of an unregulated system sent the economy into chaos. That's why it was backpedalled so quickly, because we saw the effects quite immediately. This is the road that we're going down, and if you don't want to believe me, Speaker, if you don't want to take it from me, take it from the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario. These are the big dogs, Speaker. These are the ones that eat up the majority of the power or consume the majority of the power in the province. They've got some great facts and figures. I would encourage any member who has a chance to sit down with them.

1730

They represent some of the largest corporations in our province. I'm going to just try to find the list—here we

are. Some of their members are Air Liquide, Air Products Canada, Dofasco, Atlas Tube, Nova Chemicals, Sudbury Integrated Nickel Operations, General Motors, Goodyear, Hamilton Specialty Bar and Invista. They're got lots of major power consumers, Speaker, that are telling this government quite clearly that they can't afford to stay here. They will not be able to afford to keep up their operations in the province.

Do they see any remedy in this omnibus bill? Do they see any burden reduction in this bill? No, not where it counts, most definitely. Will this bill keep them in business? It's highly unlikely that any of the efforts out of this massive omnibus bill will keep them in business.

And in the future for these companies, they say the forward curve is daunting. There's a 69% increase over five years being sought by OPG, and 11% to 14% increases in hydro rates being sought by Hydro One. The Toronto Hydro distribution rate increase has been 43% over the last five years, and of course they have questions around cap-and-trade and its impacts.

So what do they say? Their outlook is that in terms of operations, post 2020 is a significant question mark. We've got three years to figure this out, essentially, three years to bring our energy system in line with other jurisdictions that are more competitive, like Quebec and Manitoba.

Now, we could argue ad nauseam about why Manitoba is more cost effective or why Quebec is. Quebec certainly has more run-of-the-river hydro capacity and generation, but the common denominator there is that they're both public utilities, publicly owned, publicly run for the benefit of the public in good public interest. You're not letting the privateers, the vulture capitalists, come in and eat up an enormously valuable public asset. They use it as a strategic asset to incentivize economic development.

Why can't we do that here? How many energy ministers have we had, and no one can figure it out? It's an indication of failure. Our current energy minister might be preoccupied with pending charges that are about to come as a result of the Sudbury by-election. However, we would hope that this focus would be on lessening the burden for businesses in the province that are sounding the alarm and saying, "We need help here."

Speaker, in the last 12 minutes that I have here—I know everyone's been just totally engaged in my speech here and I hope that they're absorbing all the wonderful information. I want to get back to the two bugaboos that we have—Hansard will have fun with that word—the two no-go zones, the two areas that really prohibit the Ontario New Democratic caucus from supporting this bill.

One is that they're going to sell off Ontario Place, the public lands that have been a fixture of—

Interjection.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Well, you're laying the groundwork. In the amendments, in the schedules, it lays the groundwork. It opens the door to privatization and the sell-off of those lands.

They wouldn't actually be able to do it. Even if they say they don't want to do it, they couldn't do it unless the provisions of these schedules were enacted. It gives you the key to unlock the door to welcome in private interests to buy that up and potentially build a massive casino. We have to surmise that this is what will happen because we've seen it before time and time again. We've seen them say, unequivocally, "We are not going to sell off Hydro One." Here we are: We're about to sell off 60%.

We've heard them say, "We're not going to privatize the OLG, and we're not going to hand over control of our gaming sector to private industry." Guess what's happening in the horse racing industry? Massive amounts of control, billions of dollars' worth of gaming dollars, are going to be in the hands of Woodbine Entertainment, putting at jeopardy all other horse racing activity in the rest of the province. The Premier said she wasn't going to do that; it's happening today.

So we have to question this, Speaker. It's our obligation as opposition members to wonder what they are doing and try to project into the future the effects of what their bill will be. We're telling you quite clearly here that, when it comes to Ontario Place and the public lands, they're setting the stage for privatization. New Democrats are against that.

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Fair enough. You can do whatever you want. I think it could be—again, it's about priorities. I think it could be something special again for the communities of Toronto. I think it's something that holds value, more than simply the real estate value, because you can't put a price on those memories that families have and those experiences, especially when they are not available anywhere else in the area. Sometimes government's obligation is to understand that they have to play a role in culture and community building.

It is easy: Anyone could take that land, put a price tag on it, open the doors and say, "Go ahead. Build the condominiums of your dreams." That is so simplistic. It's so easy. You could put a casino down there, and you know what? People will go, and they'll spend lots of money. It will generate lots of money. That's basic. Any government can do that.

What we ask is that you strive to see something bigger, better—better public policy. I mean, do something innovative. Do something good. Don't do something simplistic. Don't apply the Trump economic plan to downtown Toronto.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Are you going to sell it to Donald Trump? Because, actually, this could happen. He has casinos, and he could put a bid on it.

Thank you very much, Speaker. I digress.

The second point—

Mr. Mike Colle: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry. I recognize the member from Eglinton–Lawrence on a point of order.

Mr. Mike Colle: It is unparliamentary to mention the President-elect of the United States here in a debate about reducing red tape. It's totally out of order. He's inciting all kinds of vitriol here by invoking the name of Donald Trump, and that is not—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I've been listening closely, and I will allow him to continue, please. Thank you.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you so much, Speaker. That intervention I didn't mind. I did need a glass of water, so I appreciate that.

The industrial exception for engineers that was promised to be repealed by this government, who at one point in time understood, or we thought they understood, how this was something that I think would make our workplaces safer, more productive, would legitimize industrial activity in the province and would propel us to a status of quality and effectiveness that we deserve worldwide—I've got a lot of friends that work in the tool, die and mould sector. For some time, there was a real penchant for off-shoring to China for manufactured goods. I'm sure there still is. A large amount of manufactured goods are made in China. But when it specifically came to the automotive sector—the tool, die and mould sector—a lot of the tools and moulds were being made in China. What they found, after some time, was that the quality of those products coming through was so substandard that they couldn't use them. Not only could they not use it because of the quality of it, but it started to jeopardize the overall product, whether it be a car or anything else—aerospace. But there has been a recognition of that, and we've seen a massive amount of on-shoring because of that simple fact: that the quality in Ontario in manufacturing is the best. We are world leaders, and by ensuring that we have the proper oversight and bringing in professional engineers in Ontario and their expertise, we can propel our industry to heights that I think would set us alone in manufacturing and still maintain cost-effectiveness, because we know how to do that.

1740

The workers in those plants and the management know that they have to work together, but it takes leadership at the provincial level, through various levels of government, to understand that they can achieve that and they can work within the boundaries of good public policy. That's gone. That won't happen, and I cringe at the thought of any worker being harmed because of the result of this. I don't want to be the guy who stands up and says, "We told you so. We told you that this could have been avoided. We told you that potentially, had engineers been involved in the overall manufacturing process of some of the components of the Nipigon bridge, that thing might not have buckled."

Let's ensure that we learn from the lessons of the past and bring about the changes that I think society is looking for. Let's not be overly ready to knock out all burdens—or all supposed burdens—because of a political position. Let's do it because it is good public policy. That's what we're calling for.

We know that the PEO are reasonable. We know that they put a lot of effort into educating each and every one of the members of the Liberal government. If you haven't met with them, it's because you weren't here, because you were out of the building or you weren't elected, but they have done their due diligence in informing us about the fact that this is something that could be a positive, and should be a positive, to modernize our industry. That's gone, and I don't think this government has any intention of ever revisiting it. I think that because of a measure of embarrassment, they're reluctant to pull that out into a stand-alone bill. They've buried it into the content of this bill so that it doesn't receive individual oversight or criticism by us.

We would say, pull those out—pull that clause out and pull the Ontario Place provision out of this bill—and we'll support your burden reduction bill. The things that you have in here are not contentious. We look forward to other areas where we can see the government recognize and address burdens for small businesses like wineries, like the Arner Stop in Harrow, like all of the businesses that are begging this government to do something on the hydro file. We look forward to that day, Speaker, but unfortunately today is not that day, and we will most definitely have to vote against this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before we get into questions and comments: I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Mr. Tabuns assumes ballot item number 30 and Mr. Natyshak assumes ballot item number 66.

Questions and comments?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm very pleased to respond to the comments made by my colleague opposite, who, generally speaking, I think, usually demonstrates really good decorum in this place and usually provides sensible advice. In his comments, there were a few kernels of sensible advice that I'd encourage him to speak further to us about, in particular his suggestions about reducing regulatory burden for the wine industry—an industry we've supported greatly as a government, in fact seen blossom here in this province into a world-class industry, but an industry that we want to do everything we can to advance. So if the member has ideas about how we can reduce regulatory burden for the wine industry, we're all ears.

I've said often—as a minister who's been the champion, I guess, through the years of reducing regulatory burden—that we've reduced 80,000 regulatory burdens in this province. And you know what? You know how you do it? You do it one at a time, and that's the only way to do it. That's why, in these bills, it's really important that we bring forward these ideas and we do them in bills that are fairly significant. In this case, there are 50 different statutes that are impacted, with 11 different ministries participating in trying to fulfill our destiny of making Ontario the easiest place in the world in which to do business. We're getting close, Mr. Speaker. We're

seen now as a global best practice when it comes to reducing regulatory burden. Our Red Tape Challenge opens up the opportunity for every single Ontarian to participate in our efforts to reduce regulatory burden. We started in the auto parts sector. We've gone into the food processing sector. We've got four other sectors we're tackling in the next couple of years. It's opening up regulatory burden to front-line workers.

This government is a champion of reducing regulatory burden. What we need are good ideas. What we don't need is further fearmongering, which I think was the majority of the speech that we heard from the member opposite.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to pick up on something that the minister said about the hour-long speech that the member for Essex had. I don't hear the same fearmongering. I think the member was very clear on two sections of the bill that he hoped you would comment on, and I didn't hear you comment on either one of those.

Let's face it: I've been here for six years, and PEO has been very clear on some of the points that they've made and some of the public policy that they'd like to see from this government. Obviously, the member for Essex talked about the industrial exception that is in this bill. The minister didn't address that. I think, honestly, the member had a very valid point. He wanted to hear from the minister. He read from the PEO letter. I think if he had given some clear indication, engineers would know where the government stood.

We've got a process where we have debate. Listen, there's people who agree with this; there are people who disagree with this. But, Minister—through you, Speaker—do you really want to engage PEO and all their membership in this process, have them come to committee, have them go out after the Liberal MPPs? I think the member was respectful to say that his caucus would support the bill, with two exceptions. One was PEO; the second was Ontario Place.

As the critic for tourism, culture and sport, I think Minister McMahon needs to come clean on her discussions with the Ontario Place board. What is she proposing? The member was very respectful for his hour-long conversation.

The only other thing I'll say to the minister—he wanted to get some ideas on some industries. He mentioned the wine industry. We've been great with wine and craft beer. I'd like to see him pass my Free My Rye bill and help those craft distilleries, to make it easier for those people to do business.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to be able to add my thoughts in response to my colleague's hour-long lead today. The member from Essex did a great job breaking down the bill for us, recognizing that the majority of this bill—I don't know if it's 94%; that's kind of the key percentage today—is not contentious. To

his point that a review of regulations and burdens out there faced by various businesses and industries should be ongoing and constant, we, as policy-makers, should constantly be reviewing and ensuring that we can tidy up or, as he said, tinker around the edges as needed. I think all of us stand in support of fine-tuning and ensuring that those who are doing business in our community are not overburdened.

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But as he said, there are some glaring poison pills in this bill. I think he worded it as two “no-go zones” for us as New Democrats, and they should be no-go zones for my colleagues around the room. Certainly, when we’re going to talk about safety and we’re going to talk about government commitment to safety, this is a prime example, when we’re talking about professional engineers. As he said, they are disappointed that the government is backtracking on a commitment. They’re backtracking on a promise to repeal the industrial exception.

I was sitting here, listening to this, and it begs the question: Why? They made a commitment that would have been based on consultation and an understanding of the industry, and working with the professional engineers. Why are they backtracking? Where is that push coming from? When the result is questions to safety, where is that coming from?

Interjections.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: By the way, it was also rich, getting a lecture about decorum from those who were sitting there and heckling through the entire presentation, and to hear the member from Barrie say that we’re saying the sky is falling. No, we will forever hold this government accountable, since they can’t seem to hold themselves accountable.

So there we are. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 27. I listened intently to the member from Essex in terms of his concerns and his support for a majority of the bill.

I’m going to highlight a couple of themes about this particular bill. I think the member from Essex also would be supportive.

One piece of the bill talks about harmonization, aligning child performers’ protections with industry practices. The member’s colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek supported the bill. I remember that, very intently, we had a huge debate on the child actors piece. This is a very important piece of the legislation. That particular harmonization, a theme of Bill 27, will address this issue, making sure that we have harmonization, making sure to reflect industry practices, but at the same time, protecting child performers with safety.

The other theme is with respect to streamlining the processes when it comes to the issue of police escorting—the safety of the delivery of inmates. The proposed bill, if passed, will streamline that process, meaning streamlining the delivery of “superload” permits by eliminating the requirement for police escorts but ensuring safety by allowing for qualified non-police escorts.

Coming from my ministry, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, it is absolutely very important, because we know we’re constantly hearing from various municipalities about the costs of policing, whether it’s in rural areas—I come from the city of Toronto. Policing is an expensive cost, but we cannot compromise that safety with the costs.

I encourage everybody—I’m looking forward to more conversation about this particular bill.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thanks to the member from Leeds–Grenville, the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, the member for Oshawa, and the member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Essentially, there are amendments that are fulfilling an already-existing obligation under international law and agreements that Canadian commercial trade is subject to. That’s what they’re doing. The majority of the bill is that, or a transference of power to a proxy from the LG in Council. Housekeeping is what we’re talking about, with the exception of the industrial exception and Ontario Place. If they are so inclined, people need to look into those provisions of the bill. Again, they’re not contentious—to reduce any burden or regulation that doesn’t affect public safety, that doesn’t affect the environment, that doesn’t affect the economics of other businesses. Those aren’t contentious for New Democrats. We think we should always be reviewing those and addressing them as often as we can. That makes sense to me.

But to set the stage for another massive exercise in privatization through a bill that should be about burden reduction and reviewing regulation is sneaky. It’s not what people expect. People expect the government to actually be clear about their purpose and their intentions, not to try to sneak something in. To take that position with the engineers of the province, who provide a real public good and a public service, is again, I think, underhanded, and something that I hope people in this province recognize when it comes to the priorities of this government.

Thank you, Speaker.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Looking at the time on the clock, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o’clock.

The House adjourned at 1755.

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