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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 13 April 2017

Jeudi 13 avril 2017

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Todd Decker

Greffier
Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 13 April 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 13 avril 2017

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, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA MODERNISATION
DES SECTEURS DES RESSOURCES
EN AGRÉGATS ET DES MINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2017, on the motion for third 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.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say, I'm not exactly thrilled to be, at this point, debating this particular bill. I think what the government tried to do, in its intent of putting forward a mechanism by which we're able to better manage aggregate in this province, is commendable. I think that was a good idea. Certainly, the changes to the Mining Act, although there are parts of it that I personally don't support—most of the industry is pretty onside when it comes to what we're doing within changes to the Mining Act.

But what I find disconcerting is how we're not dealing with one of the major components of what reconciliation is supposed to be all about when it comes to First Nations. I want to turn our attention in this debate to the presentation that was made by the chief of Six Nations, Ava Hill, who came to our committee along with others and spoke to this particular issue, and said the government has done the right thing in the past by saying that in fact they were going to respect First Nations and deal with issues such as revenue sharing, but more importantly, take the duty to consult seriously and actually give that meaning.

I think for most First Nations—I would say all First Nations across Ontario—they were quite hopeful that those words spoken by the Premier and spoken by ministers of the crown were something that meant there was going to be, finally, some action taken.

Certainly, the ministry went out under the direction of the minister to do some consultation on this bill before it was in draft form and brought to this Legislature at first reading. In those consultations, First Nations, like Six Nations, pointed out that in fact this is problematic. What you have in this bill is not what is supposed to happen when it comes to the basis of the declaration by the United Nations when it comes to the duty to consult. They were pretty specific in providing the ministry with what they thought and understood the UN was trying to do, and they echoed those sentiments in discussions that they had with the ministry. They were hopeful that those concepts would find their way into the bill, and unfortunately, they didn't find their way into the bill, so they felt they needed to come to committee to present and to deplore as to the reason why they would not be supporting this bill.

I just want to quote a couple of things that were said by Chief Hill when she was here. She made the point and said: "The Premier made a promise to engage with indigenous partners on approaches to enhance participation in the resource sector by improving the way resource benefits are shared, and to work with the federal government to address the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. She was quoted as saying that Ontario will consider 'how to advance resource benefit-sharing opportunities, including resource revenue-sharing in the forestry and mining sectors.'"

She goes on to talk about the whole idea behind subsections (1) and (2) under section 32 of the UN declaration and said, "That has to be given life. That has to be given real meaning. That has to be given weight." What she's left with when she comes to our committee is looking at a bill that stops short of that. To say that she's disappointed I guess is a bit of an understatement; surprised, probably not, because her people have been down this road many a time before. Be it Six Nations or Attawapiskat, we've seen this type of relationship between federal and provincial governments with First Nations for the better part of 150 years, since this nation was born.

It leaves us with a conundrum in this Legislature: If we truly do believe—as we said we did when we brought the First Nations leadership to this Legislature to talk about reconciliation and to reaffirm our intent to work with First Nations in order to make sure that they are full partners with Ontario and that we respect their right when it comes to the issues of the duty to consult and the UN declaration. We at that point voted in an affirmation of those principles, and we find ourselves with legislation

now that falls short of it. It leaves me as a New Democrat with the issue of: How can I support this legislation knowing that we're not amending the legislation as was proposed at committee in order to make it do what it should have done in the first place?

So I'm not excited about having to vote against this at third reading, because, you know, we did vote in favour of this bill at second reading. We think that the principle of what the government was trying to do in setting up a mechanism by which we can better deal with the development of resource aggregates in this province was a step in the right direction. I and others in my party have pretty well said that. We went to committee hoping that there were going to be some changes to the bill that were to deal with the issues that we thought were important when it came not only to First Nations but also to the aggregate community and also to the mining sector.

At this point, I just want to stay on the First Nations component to say that one of the principal reasons why we will be voting against this bill at third reading is because the legislation as it stands now is not anywhere near in the spirit of what was intended in this House when we affirmed our support to First Nations. Certainly it is not in the direction of what the UN declaration is all about, which is our real responsibility: the duty to consult First Nations.

We hear the Six Nations come to committee and talk about how they had a discussion with the ministry, but that the First Nation didn't consider that a full consultation. It was a point of information. "Consultation" means to say that you give us the information, we study it, we look at it and then we have a discussion about what we're going to do and do we agree or not agree and if it needs to be amended. All of that was missing.

What they were left with was that somebody came and knocked at the door of the First Nation and said, "By the way, here's what we'd like to do," and walked away. The next thing they know, they've got the legislation. The chief is pretty clear. She's saying, "I cannot support this legislation as a First Nations leader because it stops well short of what the UN declaration calls for."

I wanted be clear on what she was saying, so I asked her the following question in committee—this is according to Hansard: "I think I know the answer to my question, but I'm going to ask it anyway: If you were in my shoes and this legislation was not amended"—that's specifically to the motions that we put forward in order to deal with the UN declaration—"would you vote for or against it at third reading?" "I would vote against it," said Chief Hill.

We find ourselves in a position of having to vote against this bill even though there are parts of this bill that we support and think make some sense, but it falls far short of what First Nations are expecting when it comes to actions from the provincial government, when it comes to respecting the rights of indigenous people and making sure that we're serious about the duty to consult and that we're serious about revenue sharing and we're

serious about land use planning. I want to now turn my attention specifically to those issues.

0910

On the issue of the duty to consult, I think where the government has got it wrong is that the duty to consult is not something that you can just transfer onto the private sector and say, "Mining company, aggregate resource company, forestry company"—whoever you might be—"there is a requirement that you consult First Nations." That's not what duty to consult is all about. The duty to consult is also about the province, in our case, having a responsibility to consult First Nations as we work on policies and as we develop laws that are going to affect them and their territory, their traditional territories. That's what is in the UN declaration, but that also was within the Constitution of Canada, based on the decisions of the Supreme Court. It's a not question of the province saying, "Well, duty to consult means I'm going to tell the mining company to go do it," or in this case the aggregate resource company to go do it, "and as long as you do something that's reasonable from the point of view of the government, we'll say our obligation to consult is over." That's not what that is all about.

What we absolutely need, if we're serious as a province, is for the province to take its responsibility seriously when it comes to consultation with First Nations. That means, yes, as you develop bills or as you develop policies such as we did with the Aggregate Resources Act, to sit down with the political leadership of the First Nations and say, "Here's what we want to do," and have a real discussion about what the end product is going to be. Now, there is going to be disagreement. I don't for one minute think that we're going to be in a position where we're always going to agree, between First Nations and the provincial government, on issues. At times, the government will use its majority to go do what it needs to do. But at the very least, consultation means that you sit down with First Nations and you do some real discussion around what is being proposed, and there's a real attempt to try to find a way that we can work together toward the end product and agree.

That is where this process, under the Aggregate Resources Act, failed. That didn't happen. If we were to do that, I think we would be in a position where First Nations would be willing to be at the table and they would be able to develop the capacity to do those things. But the more important thing is that if you did that when it came to land use planning or the Aggregate Resources Act, once the First Nations are engaged, are part of the process and sign off, we would be in a position of providing certainty to the private sector when it comes to development.

Let me give you an example. I raised this in the House a couple of weeks ago during the interim supply debate. Let's look at what didn't happen with the Ring of Fire and what should have happened. In the case of the Ring of Fire, one of the reasons that First Nations are reluctant to give their approval to the development of the Ring of Fire is not because they are opposed to mining; quite the

contrary. First Nations, like any other communities, are in favour of jobs, wealth and the creation of opportunity for their people. So they want to see their people in their communities benefit in the same ways that we all do from the economic activities that take place in their territory. But what ends up happening is that the government, on the Ring of Fire, has never taken their responsibility seriously when it comes to the duty to consult and to make sure that First Nations are at the table when it comes to the development of policy, to make sure that they're there developing policy that allows those mining projects to go forward. As a result, that whole process at the Ring of Fire has come to a grinding stop.

We, as New Democrats, have said for a long time that one of the things that has to happen is that, of the various ministries that are responsible for permitting mining or forestry projects or whatever projects may be on traditional territory, we need to carve out part of those ministries and create a secretariat or ministry, whatever you want to call it, that gives First Nations a place at the table along with the province to deal with the issue of how we go ahead and plan policy for development on that territory so that the policy is respecting First Nations' wants and wishes, that it is done in an environmentally sustainable way and is done in a way that makes sense to the private sector so that they are able to go forward and say, "Yes, you know what? There's a project here." If the First Nation is there at the beginning and is part of the process of doing the approval and development of policy, once you have actually permitted something, they would then have to stand behind the permit and say to their own people, "No, you are not going to boycott and protest. This is something that we've approved, something we've agreed on." They would have to defend their decisions the same way that we would have to defend together.

I am prepared to say—because I have seen it in examples with the Detour Lake gold, with the development of the Mattagami River basin, certainly with the De Beers situation—that where First Nations have been at the table and have been able to agree, it has been to the mutual benefit of everybody. But this bill falls short of that. It doesn't give the kind of policy, the kind of ability for First Nations to be on the ground floor when it comes to development of policy.

On the first thing, on the duty to consult, we're missing the point by not consulting with them. Number two, we are not developing the policies by which they can be at the table to help us develop the actual rules about how we are going to do the development in the first place.

The other part is revenue-sharing. Revenue-sharing—the idea, the concept—has been around for a long time. It's something that I first raised in Attawapiskat, at an assembly there some years ago, back in the days of the Conservatives being in power. At the time, it was being talked about in First Nations because they recognized that they had to undo the damage that had been done for so many years when it came to the development of traditional territories, and they needed some mechanism, as

municipalities have, a way to be able to get revenue from the development on their traditional territories.

Dating back to the late 1990s, I guess, this whole concept of revenue-sharing has been out there. But we're no closer today than we were in the late 1990s when it comes to having a mechanism in place that allows for revenue-sharing to happen. Again, this is where the government—this particular government, the Wynne government—has fallen short.

There was great fanfare, great hope at the beginning when she became Premier because we know who Premier Wynne is: She is a decent person, and normally wants to do the right thing, but she seems to be unable to deliver on things that are as important as revenue-sharing to First Nations.

Here we are, all of these years later, no closer to a solution on revenue-sharing than we were at the beginning. One of the things that Chief Hill said at the committee when she came to see us was, "You've got to deal with those kinds of issues before we can stand behind this type of legislation. If you don't give us the real ability to have a say when it comes to land use planning and you don't give us a real say when it comes to an ability to do revenue-sharing, why would we agree to any of this, because it's counter to our interests?"

Again, I say, we as New Democrats will vote against this legislation at third reading. One of the primary reasons is because we have failed to do what we set out to do when we affirmed our support to First Nations in this Legislature some time ago when it came to the reconciliation process.

If we are truly serious about reconciliation—which I believe we were—well, then, this should have never happened. We should never have found ourselves in a position where we bring a bill to this House and in the end the bill does not live up to the spirit of reconciliation and actually deal with what we are supposing to do. On that basis, we have to vote against the bill.

The other part of it that I want to speak to is the difficulty that I have with this bill, and it's something that's been going on for some time here, and that is the delegation of authority to cabinet. This bill is probably one of the bills that I see where it's almost to an extreme. There used to be a time we would draft legislation in this House and other Houses around the world, in Parliaments, where regulation was only utilized in order to deal with some of the technical parts of the bill. In other words, you would draft the bill and you said, "This is what we wanted in the end." If there were some technical things that had to be done in order to get there, that's what the regulation was all about. Regulation was never about intent. It was about how to carry something out.

What this bill does say, "We are going to do a bunch of stuff when it comes to how we govern ourselves as a province and as an industry, when it comes to the development of aggregate resources, but everything is left to regulation." In other words, this bill gives this minister and future ministers of the crown the ability to

radically change the resource permitting process, and the public won't have anything to say about it.

0920

Why should we, as legislators, do that? Why are we, as legislators, all of a sudden saying it's okay for us to delegate our authority as an assembly, and give that power to the executive? To me, it's the wrong way to go.

I think the test is that if a bill comes to this House, we should, as legislators, make sure that the bill does what we intend it to do in the end. If a future government decides they don't like the bill, and they don't like the process that's established in the bill, then let them bring another bill to this House, and let a future Parliament decide, "Hey, maybe these guys got it wrong, and we have to make some kind of a change." It wouldn't be the first time that has happened.

But what this bill does is say that, no, you'll never have to do that in the future, because we will delegate all authority on the mechanisms of how we deal with resource extraction, when it comes to quarries, to future ministers and cabinet to decide. I think that's wrong.

On that point alone, I find that very distressing. I can tell you that, personally, it's one of the things that drove me, in this whole process of committee hearings and clause-by-clause, where we tried, on a number of occasions, to get amendments that would tighten up the bill so that what you ended up with was a bill that clearly sets out the intent of what needs to be done, and the regulations would just drive what the final product is, not what we intend it to be.

Instead, what we end up with is a bill where we have delegated pretty well all of our authority directly to the cabinet. I think that was the wrong thing to do, as well.

I also want to have an opportunity to turn my attention to the mining section of this bill.

I would say that the majority of the mining community supports what the government has done in this bill. I would say that would probably be a fair statement. However, it's not unanimity. This whole idea of map staking, where we're going to entrench a system where, rather than having somebody be on the ground to stake the claim when looking for a mine but, instead, allowing the staking to happen by way of a map—somebody sitting in an office in downtown Bay Street or Rio de Janeiro stakes a claim by way of a map, and all of a sudden, they've got title to a piece of land—is something that some people in the industry don't support. I have great trouble with it as well. It will be interesting to see what my colleague from Sudbury has to say, because she represents a large mining district as well.

There are a lot of people in the mining sector that make their living working on the ground, being the people that go in and actually stake the claim, the people who go out there and do the work that needs to be done to bring that claim and to register it. We are eliminating that whole sector of the economy.

It's not a lot of people. I'm not going to pretend this is thousands and thousands of people. It's probably in the hundreds of people. But we're doing away with some-

thing that has long been done by people in northern Ontario, a lot of which are people who are First Nations, who get their employment from going out and actually doing the staking for the junior mining company or for the geologist. I think that's a bit problematic. When there are so few employment opportunities for some of our people in northern Ontario, including First Nations, to take away any opportunity for employment, I think, is wrong.

I'm not going to use his name, because I didn't get permission to use it, but I was talking to one particular individual in my riding who essentially lost everything as a result of map staking. He used to run a business and do quite well. He was married and had a couple of kids. Everything was going just fine. Along came map staking, and eventually there's no more work. It all dried up.

As a result of the work drying up, the family fell apart, because the stress of trying to maintain a family and keep a relationship going when there is financial pressure on the family certainly brings conflict. Now these people are separated, and there is such a nasty separation going on that this fellow has really found himself in a pretty bad way. He hasn't done anything wrong as far as his ex-wife, but it's just that they couldn't get along because of the financial pressure, and he was probably short-tempered over what was going on.

But the point is, I understand why we are moving to map staking, and I understand that a majority of people in the mining industry thought that was a good idea and still think so. But I just want to put on the record that there are those in northern Ontario who made their living from this who are no longer, and who can't make their living from the new regime of map staking. I think that just needed to be put on the record.

Again, I just want to say—and I'm probably not going to take all of my time on this debate unless somebody here wants to share some of that time. I see you jumping up and down wanting to share the time—no?

M^{me} France Gélinas: No.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, that was funny. That's called trying to find the follow-up speaker while you're giving your speech.

I just want to be clear why New Democrats voted for this at second reading and won't vote for it at third reading.

The other point that I want to put on the record is the environmental part. I've got to say that, again, I remember that during the committee process we had environmental groups that came before committee. A number of them spoke in favour of the bill and clearly said, "This is a step in the right direction. We think this is going to work." There were a few exceptions where they didn't agree. I think the environmental law commission was one of them, if I remember correctly. I may stand to be corrected there, so I apologize if I got the group wrong. But primarily, the environmental groups were okay.

Where they were not okay was on the delegation of authority. I asked the question at committee when they came before us. I said, "Listen, do you think it's a good

thing that we delegate authority to cabinet, because some future government could probably weaken the environmental component of this whole process?" They said that they would rather have this than nothing. I remember one group basically used the words, "I stay up at night worrying about that, but you should vote for the bill anyway."

I think the environmental movement sees this at least as a step in the right direction, and I would agree. There's stuff in this bill that is a step in the right direction. I'm not going to say that everything in this bill is bad, but my point is that even the environmentalists see that there is a problem with delegating authority to cabinet when it comes to how this bill is going to work.

It's one thing to delegate regulation on how you implement a bill; it's quite another thing to have delegation of authority where you can actually change the intent of what the bill is all about. I think that's got some environmental people nervous, but they're trusting that this government and future governments are not going to abuse that power. I tend to live in a world where I think those things do happen, and that's why you have to be pretty clear up front in the legislation what it is that you set out to do.

With that, Madam Speaker, those are the comments that I make. I don't know if anybody else wants to speak to this, but I've got to tell you that this particular bill, we will not be voting for at third reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: I listened intently to the comments of my colleague from Timmins–James Bay. I think this bill has been debated very thoroughly. I think it's probably time now to send it to committee to see whether or not some of the ideas that he has proposed could stand up to scrutiny.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to follow the member from Timmins–James Bay this morning on Bill 39.

First of all, I think it's a good thing that the Aggregate Resources Act was reviewed. It hadn't been properly reviewed for some time.

I just wanted to talk about the importance of aggregate to our society and to our economy.

Mr. James J. Bradley: The 417.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My colleague from St. Catharines says, "The 417." Well, the reality is that we can't build a single road in this province without aggregate. We can't build any of the apartments or condominiums or any office towers or anything in the city of Toronto or any other community without aggregate. Without aggregate, our economy would grind to a halt. It would grind to a halt. We have to bear that in mind when we're looking at the resource in general, and access to aggregate.

If you look at what's going on and has been going on in Toronto with regards to building, every time that you have to reach farther afield to acquire that aggregate, the

cost goes up and so does the impact on the environment. If you're trucking aggregate from 100 kilometres or 200 kilometres away to build something in the city of Toronto, that has a far greater environmental impact than if there is a source of aggregate near to where the aggregate is needed. I recall a few years back, and I think my colleague from St. Catharines was the Minister of Transportation at the time, there was an application for an aggregate deposit in the riding of the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale. I thought it was a good application, but it was turned down and, I think, completely—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Question and comments?

0930

M^{me} France Gélinas: I must say that when you represent the riding of Nickel Belt, we are in the centre of the Canadian Shield. We are where most of the good aggregate and most of the mining actually takes place. This is the kind of bill that I would say the majority of people in Nickel Belt followed step by step. I know that for a lot of people, talking about rocks and talking about mining is not that interesting, but when you live in Nickel Belt it becomes interesting really quickly. Why? Because it brings conflict at the local level. There is not a season that goes by where there isn't an application for a new pit some place—gravel pit, aggregate pit of some kind—in my riding. Then there is conflict with the people that live around that area.

There hasn't been a good way forward to make sure that we find the right balance. The way those things end, the person who has put the application for the aggregate pit always wins. The campers who have wanted peace and quiet around their summer camp and around their lakes end up having dozens of big trucks up and down their camp roads, end up having huge machinery that makes noise—you can be five kilometres away and you know there is a crushing plant happening in this pit because you can hear them five kilometres away.

All of this, they were hoping would have been settled. They were hoping we would have found a compromise, that they would have been listened to, and they were not. So they won't be supporting this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. James J. Bradley: May I just say that there's great opportunity in northern Ontario for us to have some mining take place, in other words aggregate being removed and shipped down to southern Ontario by ship, because we have a great shipping industry here in Ontario in terms of being able to move the aggregate from one place to another. That's something that should never be forgotten.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Timmins–James Bay to wrap up.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, to my friend from Mississauga–Streetsville: With regard to sending this bill to committee in order to be amended, I don't know if he is proposing unanimous consent that we do so, because

we've already done that. The bill has gone to committee. We're now at third reading. If the member is intending for unanimous consent in order to resend this to committee, I just want to put on the record: I'll be okay with that. I'll say yes, because maybe then we'll be able to get the amendments that we sought during the process of committee.

Again, I just want to be really clear, there are things in this bill that are supportable. I'm not going to stand in this House and say, "Oh, everything's terrible." The government tried to do some stuff in this bill that we can support. The problem is what we ended up with. This final product can't be supported on a couple of principles.

The very first one is what doesn't happen for First Nations. When we stand in this Legislature and we affirm our solidarity with First Nations, and we say that we're going to be real partners in a process of reconciliation, and that we're going to make sure that we live up to the Constitution of Canada when it comes to the crown's duty to consult, and the UN declaration on indigenous people, that we believe in those things, and that we're going to live up to those expectations set out both by the UN and the Canadian Constitution—well, then, it's for us to put it into action. When I see, as a New Democrat—and I know our leader, Andrea Horwath, feels exactly the same—that a bill is not respecting First Nations in the way that they're asking, well, then I say we can't support the bill. Primarily that's why we will not vote for this bill at third reading.

There are parts of this bill, as I said, that we can support. But the biggest, biggest problem is that we either mean that we are serious about reconciliation or we're not, and I don't see this bill as resolving the issue of reconciliation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this place and represent the fine constituents of Niagara West–Glanbrook and the riding that I was elected to represent. I'm very pleased to stand today to speak to Bill 39, An Act to amend the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act.

My colleague the honourable member for Renfrew–Nipissing mentioned the impact that aggregate and mining has in our society in very tangible ways—whether that's through the inability of people without aggregate to supply the needed resources to build up our society.

In my home riding of Niagara–West Glanbrook, this is especially pertinent. In my riding, we have several aggregate sources. I think of Waterford aggregates, which I just visited several weeks ago, in the Binbrook area. I think of Walker Aggregates, which is right on the corner of Fly Road and Campden and is very close to my hometown.

I had the opportunity while I was growing up to actually visit this regularly. I got to know some of the people there, as when I was growing up we would hear the dynamite or the TNT or whatever it was they used go

off. I was very curious about the sourcing of stone and the sourcing of this material that helped build up not only my community but really the province in a very broad and significant way.

I had the opportunity to go fishing in some of the springs. There's a spring at the bottom of one of the aggregates in my area. That has managed to turn into quite a beautiful lake—but also to interact with some of the people that work there and to interact with those in some of the smaller sites.

Just a couple of weeks ago, actually, I had the opportunity to visit Waterford aggregates in my riding, who were part of the consultation process here for this bill and had the opportunity to present and bring forward their suggestions and recommendations on reforming the Aggregate Resources Act and the Mining Act.

When I toured the area with them, it was in response to a constituent who had recently moved into the area and expressed particular concerns surrounding blasting and perhaps concerns with the potential for a cracked basement or a damaged well. Not being an expert in either mining or dynamite, for that matter, I had the opportunity to tour with the honourable member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. He and I toured the centre but also visited some of the neighbours in the surrounding area to see what the impact was on their quality of life and to see what sort of impact this aggregate source is having on their wells and their homes.

I have to say, I was incredibly impressed with the level of corporate responsibility that the aggregate sector has shown to those in their areas—in my community, whether or not it's in the development stage, letting everyone know when there's a blast coming, having open houses so those in the community can come forward and see what's happening in the aggregate sector but also its development after the mining has been completed, after the ground has been used.

We saw in Fonthill, which is in the eastern portion of my riding and an absolutely beautiful town, that there is an area that used to be an aggregate quarry and is now actually a gorgeous golf club. We've seen that potential in Niagara for people to use these resources in innovative and creative ways and to really utilize that land after it has been—I wouldn't say "exhausted"—but after the aggregates have been removed for that portion.

0940

Madam Speaker, I wish to also touch on one piece in the Ontario Mining Act that this bill seeks to modify, with respect to the staking of and record-keeping of mining claims shifting to an electronic program. In this place, we've had discussions about the need for broadband access in rural communities, in northern communities and especially in communities impacted by a lack of direct communications.

Unfortunately, this government really does have an abysmal track record when they roll out electronic systems, whether that's e-health or SAMS. Unfortunately, we've seen quite a bit of neglect, failing to do due diligence on rolling out these systems.

I want to speak to something that yesterday my colleague from Parry Sound–Muskoka mentioned. He said, “The website that will be used to stake a claim must be simple enough that it will work properly using dial-up Internet access. I say this because large parts of northern Ontario still don’t have access to broadband. We should make sure that the new system doesn’t give southern Ontarians—and, for that matter, people around the world—an advantage over northern Ontarians when it comes to staking a mining claim in northern Ontario.”

That was from the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, who has been a strong advocate in our caucus and a strong advocate in our party for the north, for mining concerns, and also the ability of this government—and pointing out the inability, perhaps, of this government to sometimes recognize the needs of the north, even when it comes to mining and aggregate sourcing.

I agree with my colleague’s concerns, because unfortunately this is a reality that not only impacts aggregate sourcing, that not only impacts mining, but also impacts people in a wide variety of entrepreneurial pursuits. I just recently had someone coming from an area in my riding called Caistor Centre. I like to joke that if you know where Caistor Centre is, you know you’re a true Niagaran, because not a lot of people do. But Caistor Centre is in a low-access area where residents can’t access broadband. Because of that, they feel it’s very difficult for them to engage in the entrepreneurial pursuits and the productive business activities that they want to be part of.

I fear that although this shifting to an electronic program, in many respects, is a beneficial and progressive move, it has the potential to truly, by not having adequate access through dial-up, create an unlevel playing field. That’s something that has come up from constituents in my riding, and I can only imagine that in these remote, rural, northern communities where they don’t have that access to broadband, they may feel disadvantaged, and not only feel but in fact be disadvantaged, when it comes to staking a mining claim in northern Ontario.

I think that’s something that we have to be aware of in this House. That’s something that we have to be careful of, that we’re creating an equal playing field and doing everything we can to ensure those in the north have equal access to the economic stimulus that comes from an aggregate source and that comes from mining. So I wanted to mention that specifically.

That also ties in to my critic portfolio, digital government. I hope that we will see a lot of good work being done by the Chief Digital Officer perhaps in this area also, when it comes to mining aggregates and being able to access broadband, and being able to access government services in industry. We can often speak about the need for individual access to services, we can speak about the need to be able to access health records etc., but we also have to recognize the needs of industry and the importance that that industry can have on economic stimulus in these areas, including northern and rural Ontario.

Another area that I wanted to touch on, Madam Speaker, if there’s time, is that, quite frankly, there are some good components to this legislation. There are also areas where, as in any government, there could be improvements. The PCs and NDP wanted to work with the Liberals on this piece of legislation to improve it, because we believe that we can work together and come up with a good piece of legislation that addresses all the needs and all the realities of those in the aggregate and mining sectors and that has the potential to really demonstrate to Ontarians that as we collaborate on these issues, we can actually have a productive discussion that leads not just to consultation, but to significant and substantial change.

I want to touch base on our critic Todd Smith’s—and we’ve seen that, initially, the honourable member really supported this bill, with amendments. As a caucus and as a party, we supported this bill, but we needed to see amendments. We needed to see six things, really, that had to be changed or clarified in this bill in order to improve it. This wasn’t for any partisan purpose. This was to see that we have a bill that really does what’s best for industry here in Ontario and really does what’s best for the residents and our constituents here in Ontario, for all parties. We were hoping to see that. Instead, what actually happened in a 37-page bill with dozens of sections, subsections and clauses, is that there were only two really substantive amendments that emerged from committee.

But the unbelievable failure of the government to address recycled aggregate in any way punts the problem down the road for us to have to deal with later. That’s a real issue. Punting down the road the issue of recycled aggregate, not dealing with recycled and unrecyclable aggregates, is a serious concern.

Look, at some point, as with any resource, we will have a resource scarcity issue to deal with if we’re going to maintain a close-to-market policy. The further you haul in your aggregate—I know the honourable member for St. Catharines mentioned we should be shipping all this aggregate down south. But the reality is, the more you ship, the more it’s going to cost and the more you will increase your greenhouse gas emissions and have lands that we seal off from development. Unfortunately, with the cap-and-trade cash grab and the cash scheme that we’ve seen put into place by this government, it’s disproportionately impacting not only those who are lower income by addressing transportation needs, but the cost of food and the cost of basic necessities that are being transported from source to market. So we’re not only seeing that cap-and-trade is having a hugely negative impact when it comes to the cost of living for those who may perhaps live below the poverty line, but now we see, unfortunately, that cap-and-trade could have another disproportionate impact on housing prices, on the cost of infrastructure.

If we’re talking about failing to maintain a close-to-market policy, the farther that we are hauling our aggregates—not only are we going to increase our greenhouse gas emissions, but as the cost of that transportation goes

up, that cost has to be transferred. Unfortunately, that cost will be transferred to the cost of roads. That cost will be transferred to the price of housing. That cost will be transferred to infrastructure investments in a wide variety of traditional hard infrastructure investments, unfortunately.

I think that is a discussion we need to have: dealing with recycled aggregate and the failure of this government to address that in any real way, even though we brought forward ways that we could have worked together on this bill. It's disappointing.

Another thing I would like to touch on, as we approach the five-minute mark, is the issue of increasing regulation.

0950

I have been in this House for several months now, and I must say it has been an enormous honour and an enormous privilege. But I also have to say that it gets incredibly frustrating sometimes, sitting here and hearing the Minister of Economic Development speak about all these ways that he feels they are addressing the red tape disaster here in the province of Ontario. I hear that, and I go out to my riding and see bills like this that increase red tape, that are hurting businesses, that are hurting industry by increasing regulation.

Unfortunately, the government seems to be speaking out of two sides of its mouth on this issue. On the one hand, they say, "We are cutting red tape to ensure that we have a competitive market." On the other hand, they are increasing regulation through bills such as this.

I had the opportunity to tour a greenhouse in my riding, Hendriks Greenhouses, which produces a lot of herbage—and very excellent herbage—that they ship across not only the country, but across North America.

They informed me that they did renovations and built an addition onto their greenhouse facility. It was an investment of a couple of million dollars in their operations. But it took almost 18 months longer for the permissions to come through than they were initially told—for the zoning requirements, but also for the regulatory burdens from the MOECC etc., and the MTO as well; they are located beside the QEW.

They said to me, "Sam, if we had to do this again today, we would cut our losses and not do the development. The 18-month waiting time was simply outrageous." They were very concerned.

What I'm hearing there is, for every person who still went ahead, for every business that still went ahead, and invested in a new development, there are businesses that, because of over-burdensome red tape, because of the increasing regulatory burden, are not going to invest, are not going to be making those investments and upgrades that they need to.

In this government, and in this bill, we are seeing that the increasing regulatory burden is a good way to end up with really expensive roads really quickly, something that no municipal property taxpayer wants to hear—and that's true.

We see that the small, family-run aggregate companies don't have big compliance departments. They're not huge corporations. These are small businesses that are working to provide essential services, that are working to provide for their families. They can't deal with this over-burdensome burden of red tape.

Complying with the law has to be simple. The process should be transparent. If something needs to be done, the first resort should be to do it in legislation instead of through regulation. That way, everyone knows what the law is.

This is a basic premise that I think we need to speak about more often: that we, unfortunately—and this government especially—seem to create obscure, opaque legislation that gives a lot of powers to the minister to create regulation that a lot of these people, unfortunately, don't have the resources or time to go through and deal with in any sort of timely fashion. They are being burdened down by the increasing burden of red tape.

I think that we can do so much better. I very much wish that this government had collaborated with the NDP and the PCs on helping to reduce the red tape burden.

Mining and aggregation is a valuable contributor to Ontario's economy. Since this government came to power in 2003, Ontario has dropped from being the seventh most attractive place to invest in mining to 18th. They've dropped 11 places, according to this year's Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies.

There isn't an established framework for what consultation is required with indigenous people in the province of Ontario, and that's a major concern as well. In the north, there are many of these communities that are impacted by mining and aggregation. We need to ensure that indigenous people have their voices heard in these types of decisions and that this growth in mining and aggregation is one that benefits their communities and benefits all of Ontario equally.

I'm very pleased to have been given the opportunity to speak to this legislation. I look forward to hearing from other members in this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: First of all, I appreciate the comments made by my colleague from Niagara-Glanbrook—something like that. Sorry, I don't do that intentionally; I just didn't know the name of the riding. Anyway, I appreciated his comments. I think he's bang on.

Again, the government, as I said in my comments, has tried to do something in this legislation which is a step in the right direction. I think both of the opposition parties recognize that. That's certainly why we voted for it at second reading. But the devil is in the details: When the bill comes out of committee, what is it going to look like?

The amendments that were sought by the public and that were proposed by the opposition weren't accepted. That could have strengthened this bill and done what the bill intended to do. It leaves us with little in the way of choice but to vote against it. As I said, one of our primary

reasons to vote against it is what we did not do for First Nations. We were very clear, and the First Nations were very clear, that they wanted to make sure that this bill lived up to the spirit of what we had agreed to—reconciliation—which includes our responsibility when it comes to the duty to consult and to make sure that they're full partners in decisions that are made about their territory.

As Chief Hill said when she came before the committee, if those amendments aren't given in the legislation, she recommended that we vote against it. That is exactly what we will do as New Democrats. I think we need to be serious and be clear about what it is that was intended. What was intended when it comes to reconciliation is that we are serious about that and that we give reconciliation some breath and some life. You do that by putting it into legislation. Unfortunately, it's not in this bill and, for that reason, we will not be supporting third reading of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm pleased to stand and talk about this bill. As we all know, aggregate resources such as sand and gravel are important to Ontario's economy. They're used to build roads, subway tunnels, hospitals and schools, and are part of the revitalization and renewal of our urban infrastructure, which is what this government is doing. This bill will also serve to strengthen and modernize our management of aggregate resources. That's why we've introduced this new legislation.

I heard one of my colleagues say that he was concerned about consultation. We received valuable input from the public, from the indigenous communities and from our stakeholders. They will continue to support the province in moving forward with a strong and modern policy framework for aggregate resources. This bill is just the first step in a phased process. Should the bill pass, Ontario intends to move forward with consultation on regulatory and policy changes.

To improve oversight of the aggregate operations, we're proposing to broaden the ministry's ability to require information or studies related to aggregate operations and enhanced enforcement, including higher maximum fines and clearer offence provisions for false reporting; and to increase penalties with fines up to a maximum of \$1 million plus \$100,000 for each day that an offence continues. We're also proposing a customized approach for unique applications, such as those in the bed of a lake or a river, which may require additional studies.

I urge everyone to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakubuski: When I was last finishing, I was talking about the application for a pit or a quarry in the riding of Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, and the government turned it down because of political reasons and pressure against it.

The member from Nickel Belt talked about the balance and always the challenges between those who are

requesting permits to extract aggregate and those who oppose them.

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But you know, there's that old saying, "It is what it is." When it comes to aggregate, it is where it is. We can plant trees and we can plant corn, but we can't plant aggregate. When this earth was formed, the aggregate was where it is and it's not moving. The only thing that we can do is extract the resource that is there, for the work that needs to be done.

As I was saying, there is nothing we can do in order to build our economy without aggregate. If we don't have roads and bridges and highways and sidewalks—concrete and asphalt are part of that, which require aggregate. We can't build anything without aggregate, and the further we have to go afield, as I said, it's going to drive up the cost and have more impact on the environment. So we have to find a balance.

I think the changes to the Aggregate Resources Act are important. We support them. It was something that had to be reviewed; it had not been reviewed for a significant period of time. But let's not lose sight of the fact that if we want our economy to prosper and our province to grow, it is not something that we can invent in a test tube or in a laboratory. Aggregate is aggregate. It was formed as the earth was formed. We have to be able to extract it where it lies, or we'll stop growing.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting listening to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook talk about some of the conflicts that aggregates have brought to his riding and some of the good things that come from the extraction of aggregates. I would say he is right: Extraction of aggregates sometimes does lead to new quarry pits where people can go swimming in the summer. I have some of them in my riding. It's really to try to find the right balance, and I see it as the role of this bill to make sure that people feel like they have been heard.

I'm from Nickel Belt. I represent all of the mines that you know in Sudbury; they're not in Sudbury, they are in Nickel Belt. I know what it is to live in a mining town. I know what it is to live in a town that has more quarry pits and aggregate pits than anywhere else in the province. It creates conflicts with human beings.

It is our role as legislators to put in place fair play, to put in place the needs of urban infrastructure development with the needs of the people who choose to live in northern and rural areas, where most of this aggregate comes from. The aggregate comes from where I live, to build where you guys live. We have to be able to all agree as to how the aggregate should be used. I have no problem with this. I have hundreds and thousands of people who work in mining and who work in aggregate extraction. It's to put in place the rules that will make it fair, so that everybody can prosper.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook to wrap up.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I want to thank the member for Timmins–James Bay, the member for Barrie, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member for Nickel Belt for their contributions and responses to my speech this morning.

I think we can all agree that there is a huge need in Ontario for aggregates. There's a huge need for making sure that in the quarries and mining industry they have access to the land they need, and that they can access these mines without an overdue burden. Unfortunately, although I sincerely do believe that the government agrees with that goal, they seem to be doing everything they can in the meantime—by their failure to listen through the consultation they did and the increasing regulations that this is placing on those who wish to get involved in aggregate and mining, it seems that the actual end result is not reflective of the intent, unfortunately.

But we believe that in spite of the many positive benefits to local economies, even though, unfortunately, pits and quarries sometimes encounter opposition when they file for expansions, we have to increase the transparency between proponents and their communities. I know that's what the member for Nickel Belt was referring to as well, coming from Nickel Belt where they have many quarries and mines. We need to ensure that there is a comprehensive buy-in from that community.

I was very pleased to be able to speak to this debate this morning and I wish to thank all the members for their reactions and contributions.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I know that I won't have time to do my full 20 minutes, so I'm going to pick and choose and jump around the bill a little bit, if you will allow me, so that I put on the record some of the issues.

The first part I want to talk about is map staking. For those of you who don't know how it used to be done, we used to have hundreds of people, many of them coming from my riding, who every spring would buy new camping equipment, head out into the bush and actually stake the claim. They would walk it, they would measure it, they would live in the bush. They would get to meet who else was in that area, get to start a first conversation as to, "Yes, we are claiming. We think that there may be a deposit of" whatever—copper, nickel, platinum, gold, it didn't matter. It mattered to the prospector because they wanted to make money out of it—but I want you to understand how it was done.

Now the government is changing this to map staking, which means you sit at the map with your computer and your mouse, you click and you have your stake, without ever having set foot in that area, without ever having talked to the people who live there, who camp there, who harvest there, who hunt, fish, whatever in those areas. It's all done on a map.

The example I always use is that when the Ring of Fire was developed, one mining company went click, click, click all the way from the Ring of Fire down to the next available road and claimed all of the high ground.

Speaker, they had absolutely no intention of ever mining that series of claims. They had the intention of selling it, because they now owned the claim, to make money because it was the highest ground and therefore there's a good chance that if and when we ever get a road to the Ring of Fire, they would make money—not by mining, not by extraction, but simply because they were the first one to click on the map to stake all of those claims.

For the people of Nickel Belt, that means what had been good jobs—not everybody wants to spend their summer in the bush, with the bugs and the bears and everybody else, but a lot of people do. In a lot of families, there were generations of people who had done this, raised their families from the earnings they made from it, because they were there, because they were on the ground, because they got to interact with the people.

Those people still have to eat. They will still come into Wawa and Westree and Gogama and go to the grocery stores. They need all sorts of camping equipment. I can tell you that Ramakko's Source for Adventure used to have an entire section of their store just for the type of equipment that those people who lived in the bush for the summer staking their claims were using. The store is still doing very well, it's still a very nice store in my riding, but the section that used to be devoted to those people now has a very nice line of ladies' clothing, and I buy clothes from there.

But I am telling you the impact that this is having on jobs in the north. I don't want anybody to lose the fact that when you have real people on the ground, you start that first conversation. You prepare the ground for making sure that everybody who has skin in the game, everybody who lives there, has a chance to see it coming, has a chance to prepare for it. If they are opposed to it, they have a chance to have things worked around so that we can find that middle ground. But none of this happened.

I will flip this argument on its head and say that there are large territories of my riding where people who are knowledgeable about staking claims for mining don't have high-speed Internet. We still rely on XplorNet and other types of what my husband calls "space junk" on the roof of your home to be able to connect to a satellite so that we could have an Internet connection. I still have this what my husband calls "space junk" where I live, and it don't work that good, Speaker. It don't work that good.

I mean, dial-up is—forget it. You cannot download a picture of anything through it. If you use the satellite Internet, when the weather is good, it's pretty good, but God forbid you want to try to watch a movie when there is a rainstorm out there, because your Internet goes down to such a slow pace that you can see every frame of that movie. Did you know that there were eight frames to a second in a movie? Well, where I live, you can see every one of those frames. This is the speed of the Internet. I'm talking to you about this because where people who have the knowledge and the skills to do this map-staking live, we don't have high-speed Internet.

What does that mean? That means that people down in Toronto can easily sit at their desk and click and do the staking of claims, but yet people who live in the north, people who will be affected by those claims, by those mines, by those aggregates, don't have the same chances of doing that.

Because time is going very fast, I will talk about the conflicts with aggregate pits and quarries. I have more aggregate pits and quarries by square inch in my riding than anywhere else, and I'm really proud of this. We have lots of very good entrepreneurs that have built very strong businesses dealing with quarries and pits. We have new entrepreneurs who go into that line of work.

When Highway 69 was being developed, you can follow the corridors where we go from two lanes to four lanes, and about every 15 kilometres or so you will see a new quarry, a new pit being developed. I have no problem with development. I'm on the record and will continue to be on the record that I cannot wait until Highway 69 is four lanes all the way to Sudbury and that we can—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And all the way to Timmins.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And all the way to Timmins—and that we can safely travel. I have no problem with this.

But I want a balance. I want a balance so that if there is a lake, an area where people have been camping for a long time, where people own cottages—we call them “camps” where I live—for a long time, they have an opportunity to be heard.

What sometimes happens is that they will have an opportunity to be heard, they will put restrictions as to when and how they can make the big noise—because if you have ever stood beside a crushing plant, Speaker, you will never forget how loud this is. It can be in the dead of the summer, when there is no wind and all you hear are the bugs, and when the crushing plant starts, you will hear it far and wide.

It happened in my riding. You have this beautiful cottage-style wedding where you have rented all sorts of tents and equipment, and it is a beautiful summer day and it's going to be the best day of your life that you've worked on for a year and a half. Then the crushing plant does not live within the time frame that they are allowed to crush because they have this big job, and you phone MNR and there is nobody working there on the weekend. Then you cannot hear the priest do your wedding vow because the crushing plant is going on—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It puts that relationship on a rocky start.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It puts that relationship on a rocky start. That was a really bad joke.

It creates major conflict—and I see you want—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Seeing that it's 10:15, we will recess the House until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: I know my mum and dad are watching at home on television. I want to wish my dad a happy 60th birthday.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm pleased to acknowledge at Queen's Park today Layla Popal-Sharif. She has been invited by our Lieutenant-Governor to a panel discussion today on women's empowerment called Trailblazers and Pathmakers. She is also the constituency office manager for MP John McKay and she's in my riding association. Welcome to Layla.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to introduce to the members of the Legislative Assembly two constituents from my riding of Leeds–Grenville. I would like to welcome my executive assistant from the riding, Michael Jiggins, and his partner, Tamara Baldwin. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to welcome Julia Cluet McCullough to Queen's Park today. She was part of the remarkable women's assembly, and she loved every moment of it. Welcome, Julia.

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: This is an important day for the Sikhs, so I want to take a moment to extend my best wishes to everyone celebrating Vaisakhi in our great province and throughout the world. I am expecting some guests, so I just wanted to say happy Vaisakhi to all of them.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to welcome from Oshawa Ben Fleming, who is visiting. He's a clinical facilitator at the Canadian Mental Health Association in Durham. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Page Joshua Geddes, who is working hard on the floor today, is joined at Queen's Park today by his aunt, Catherine Poling. Please welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I would like to welcome a special guest from Gothenburg, Sweden: Nathalie Banaszak.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to welcome Charisma and Allan Hodgins, parents of Keira Hodgins, one of our pages from my riding, as well as her brother, Andrew Hodgins, here today.

M. Shafiq Qadri: J'aimerais accueillir les représentants du Centre culturel islamique de Québec.

I ask all members of the Legislature to welcome representatives of the Islamic Centre of Quebec: Imam Hassan Guillet; Mr. Al-Rawni, president of Islamic Relief Canada; Dr. Benaissa, manager of Islamic Relief Canada for Quebec; and Mr. Yangui, president of the Islamic Centre of Quebec. Also, Speaker, a special welcome to His Excellency Imran Siddiqui, the consul general of Pakistan and host of a calligraphy exhibit today in Parliament.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, I'm pleased to welcome Andrew Simpson, family friend and guest of page captain Catherine Rootham, who is with us today.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: We have a very special guest here today visiting us at Queen's Park on her first visit to Queen's Park and first visit to question period: Anna Semansky. She's joined by her loving parents, Mike and Paris Semansky. Welcome, Anna.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm delighted, Chair, to welcome students from my riding high school of TL Kennedy. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'd like to welcome my constituents Jim Frizzle, Jeannette Frizzle and Hunter Frizzle here to Queen's Park. Welcome. It's great to have you here with us.

Hon. Chris Ballard: It's my great pleasure to introduce a good friend of mine, Steve Congdon, to the House. Welcome to Queen's Park, Steve.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome some guests who are in the east members' gallery: John Kafieh, Ron Cowan and Glenn Christoff.

I'd like to wish a happy birthday to one of my staff here at Queen's Park, Travis Hoover.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to welcome the family of page Kishan from Don Valley East. Joining him is Renuga Sathasivam, Sahana Muhundhan and Sorna Sathasivam. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I want to wish a happy new year to all my Bangladeshi friends. Shubho Noboborsho.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to welcome students from the great riding of Scarborough-Guildwood from West Hill Collegiate. Please welcome them.

Hon. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today Daphne Jaques, who is here from my constituency office. Welcome to Queen's Park, Daphne.

QUEBEC MOSQUE SHOOTING

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker. With respect, I believe we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence in memory of the six individuals who were shot while praying at a mosque in la ville de Québec.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Etobicoke North is seeking unanimous consent for a moment's silence in honour of the six murdered people. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all people in the galleries and the members to please stand for a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

Before we start question period, I just want to acknowledge that, for the very first time, a very, very small and newborn baby is here: Don't make her cry.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Did the Premier order the Minister of Energy and Hydro One to keep the ombudsman's departure a secret?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: Hydro One is a company notorious for terrible customer service. The former ombudsman ended their investigation into Hydro One after—hear this, Mr. Speaker—10,000 complaints. And how did the Liberals respond to this? They want to get rid of oversight. They take away oversight that was under the purview of the ombudsman's office and replace it with an office that is a shell of itself. Now, what is unbelievable is, the Liberals want to keep secret that shell of an office they created for oversight, and that ombudsman is now gone.

Here we have Hydro, where we know there are 10,000 complaints, and this government wants no oversight? How can they allow this to happen?

Mr. Speaker, can we please get a justification from the Premier why they believe it's appropriate to have no oversight at Hydro?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very pleased to rise and talk about the continued work that the ombudsman's office is doing at Hydro One. They're doing some great work addressing the issues and the complaints that are coming forward from the millions of customers that Hydro One has.

Ombudsperson Fiona Crean did an excellent job with Hydro One, contributing to the company's ongoing transition to a better-run, customer-focused company. She recently accepted a new position at another organization, and has stepped down from that role as ombudsperson. A search is under way for an appropriate replacement.

In the meantime, staff member Sophie—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean-Carleton and the Minister of Infrastructure are not helpful to the debate; come to order.

1040

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: In the meantime, staff member Sophie Petrillo has been named the interim ombudsperson. She'll continue to do the work of the ombudsperson for Hydro One, and we'll continue to work forward on a hydro plan that works for everyone in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Leeds-Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier: It's more than a coincidence that just as the hydro scheme ad blitz hits the airwaves that the Hydro One ombudsman is MIA. The former ombudsman used to hold town hall meetings where customers could speak publicly about the nightmare high rates and inaccurate bills continue to cause. But that doesn't fit this government's narrative. In my riding, instead of a town hall, Hydro One is planning an open house that sounds more like an opportunity to spin for this government.

Will the Premier order Hydro One to stop wasting money on these travelling road shows to promote the government scheme and get back to the public meetings that actually fix the problems?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. I'm concerned about the safety of the member from Oxford. I'm hoping he's not hurting his hand.

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Hydro One goes out to talk to their customers, and the opposition doesn't like it. It makes no sense. They have no plan for hydro. It's been 42 days since the Leader of the Opposition said they'd have a plan for how to deal with electricity, and they do nothing.

Hydro One has an acting ombudsperson—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm getting the impression warnings are coming.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The ombudsman office continues to operate as normal, with a full staffing complement while the search for a—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, we're there. The member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order. You asked the question.

This is the last time I'll stand without doing warnings.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As I mentioned, the ombudsman office continues to operate as normal with a full complement of staff while the search for a new ombudsperson continues. We have full faith that they'll continue to operate with an ombudsperson in the acting role and with a full office contingent to address all the concerns.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. There is no monopoly on a good idea, no matter where that idea originates. Too often in this Legislature, you see parties oppose an initiative simply because another party proposed it. The federal Leader of the Opposition, Rona Ambrose, and the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock have led the charge for mandatory sexual assault training for judges. This is a good idea. Even the Liberal member for Davenport has put forward a similar suggestion and supports mandatory sexual assault training for judges, and I applaud her for that support. Unfortunately, we are now hearing from the Attorney General that he does not support that initiative; from the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services that they don't support that training.

The reality is, everyone here knows this is a necessary step. This is a good idea. It shouldn't matter that an opposition member raised a good idea. This is about sexual assault victims. This is a right step.

My question is to the Premier: Will you support this great initiative from the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is an issue of not whether we support or not, because I know, for example,

that the Attorney General and our caucus absolutely support everyone having the training they need to be able to, in a responsible, sensitive and compassionate way, deal with issues of sexual assault. The issue is the actual jurisdiction and the purview that government has over training of individuals in the judiciary, and I know the Attorney General will speak to that.

But this is not a matter of whether or not, in our opinion, something should happen. This is about the mechanism for actually making it and having it get—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Back to the Premier: Mandatory sexual assault training won't threaten judicial independence. What it will do is give women more confidence in our justice system. Sexual assault survivors must feel comfortable coming forward.

Mr. Speaker, mandatory training is what needs to happen. Why won't the Premier call for mandatory sexual assault training for judges in Ontario? You can do it.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is a very important issue. First of all, I stand here very proud of my Premier and our government for taking the charge and taking the lead on putting an end to sexual violence and harassment for our province. Speaker, we are a leader in the country, and that charge has been led by the Premier herself.

The It's Never Okay campaign has been held now around the world as one of the most progressive and proactive strategies to deal with issues around sexual violence and harassment. It is focused on providing supports for victims. It is focused on, most importantly, changing the attitudes of people around our province, and hopefully around the country, when it comes to putting an end to sexual violence and harassment.

I look forward to speaking in the supplementary as to the roles of the judiciary as well in that.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Back to the Premier: We don't need blind partisanship on this. The federal government received a report called Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada. That report details the importance of improving training in the field of sexual assault law for the Canadian judiciary.

It's important that we do the same at the provincial level, but Liberals at all levels stall. It's time for Liberals provincially and federally to wake up to the reality that we need to do more. Will the Premier give the Prime Minister a call, get on the same page and support mandatory sexual assault training for the judiciary? Will you do that?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is not a partisan issue. The member is right, to that point. However, she continues to make this into a partisan issue. Speaker, this is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned. We're on warnings.

Minister.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, this is an issue of respecting our constitution. This is an issue of respecting the judicial independence that is key to and a cornerstone of our democracy. I don't think anybody in this House or across our province or the country would say that politicians somehow should interfere in the manner in which our judiciary—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton is warned. Somebody else just missed one.

Minister.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's clearly within the scope of the judiciary to determine the training that they set themselves. Most recently, at a parliamentary committee in Ottawa, that's exactly what the judiciary presented as well.

I'm in conversations with the chief justice. I know she takes this matter seriously, and we look forward to the action from the judiciary.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. The NDP recently received a letter from Lynn Ohanian in Burlington. In January, Lynn got a hydro bill for her trailer in Burk's Falls with a nearly \$500 delivery charge. She wrote to us because she was concerned. She received at the same time the delivery charge for her home in Burlington, which was just \$135.

Out-of-control rural delivery charges mean that Lynn could lose her trailer, the place where she spends time with her partner to relax in the summer. Why has the Premier done nothing to address the outrageous delivery charges, the outrageous prices when it comes to hydro bills? Why is she leaving people like Lynn wondering if she can keep her trailer?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to comment in the supplementary. I hope that when the member opposite got the letter from Lynn, he responded to her and let her know that she will see a 25% reduction, come the summer: 17% on top of the 8% that she already has.

I don't know the specifics, but I imagine from the location of her home, the trailer, that she may also be eligible for up to a 40% or 50% reduction, because the distribution charges will be reduced.

1050

So I hope that the member opposite—and if he didn't have all that information, we would certainly be happy to provide it to him so that he can get back to this constituent and give her the good news about the reductions that she's going to see.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Canadian Transportation Museum in Kingsville has also reached out to the NDP, specifically through my colleague the member from Essex. The museum is facing bills so high that staff don't know if they can keep the museum afloat—they're not sure if they can keep a community museum afloat. They

cannot hire the needed staff, they can't grow their children's education program, and they're putting exhibition design and capital projects on hold because they don't have the resources.

The museum needs help now—not months from now, not years from now. Why has the Premier done nothing?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: That organization can call their local utility and get one of the many programs through the saveONenergy program that will help them save their money now.

On top of the many programs we already have in place that help thousands of businesses across the province, we're also bringing forward Ontario's Fair Hydro Plan. Our fair hydro plan will help many businesses—500,000 of them, small businesses and farms in this province—see a 25% reduction or more. On top of that, if these businesses are larger, they can qualify for the ICI program.

When it comes to our museums, there are numerous programs in place that will help them. We have done that before the fair hydro plan. And when you take that into consideration, many of these places will see significant reductions in their bill come summer.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, families like Lynn's, small community museums, hospitals, municipalities—Ontarians—everyone is waiting for the Premier to actually act. PR, press releases, paid government ads are not a plan; they are a desperate attempt to salvage the Premier's dismal approval numbers. That's all they are.

Why is the Premier prioritizing her political career over the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Families, individuals, small businesses, farms, large manufacturing, greenhouse growers—they will all be seeing significant reductions on their electricity bill by summer.

We have made sure that everyone is going to see significant relief that's going to last, to ensure that they can plan.

On that side of the House, we've got one party that has no plan, that has no idea on what to do with electricity, and another one that makes a pamphlet that relies on some pie-in-the-sky negotiations with some committee, some day to be determined. I know this expert panel hasn't really reported back anything yet. They also want to have negotiations with the federal government. Well, when he's touring around Ottawa, maybe he can have a conversation with them and see if they'll actually help.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My next question is to the Premier.

Another day has passed and the 1991 rent control loophole remains open. While the Premier was out politicking yesterday, it was another day on which tenants throughout the GTA may have received another devastating rent hike.

When will the Premier knock off the political games and close, once and for all, the 1991 rent control loophole that leaves renters in this province unprotected?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we absolutely share the concerns of the member opposite about housing affordability, generally, in the GTA, and beyond, quite frankly. We know that it's important that people are able to find an affordable place to live. But there's no simple answer to this.

We have been working to put together a package of options, because there are many different issues at play here. There are issues around housing affordability in terms of being able to buy homes. There are issues around rental affordability. There are issues around supply in order for units and homes to be built, and there are issues around the regional demand for housing.

We are looking at all of those issues. There is a lot of advice that's coming at our ministers and at our government, and we will be bringing forward a package very soon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Instead of getting her picture taken, the Premier could have been in the House passing the NDP—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. As a reminder, the member does not make reference to someone's attendance in the House. But he may continue with the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You've given me a choice as to whether or not I want to take that or leave it.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, instead of prioritizing pictures, the government could prioritize passing bills like the NDP private member's bill that would immediately protect people facing unfair rent hikes. By saying that she's doing one thing and then not doing it, she's signalling that now is the time to increase rents, and people and tenants are rightfully scared. They're scared.

How can she continue to delay and do photo ops when the people of Ontario need action now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the member opposite is referring to yesterday, when we were opening a new urgent care centre in Peel, at Peel Memorial Centre, or if he's referring to the meeting that I held with GTHA mayors—yes, the media came in and took a picture of the meeting at the very beginning of the meeting, and then left, and we had a very important conversation.

If the member opposite is referring to either of those instances, then I just want him to know that the work that we are doing is extremely important to get to the right answer. It's very important that I talk to the people who are on the front line, whether it's from the home building industry, who I also met with yesterday, or whether it's

the mayors. We need to hear what's going on on the ground so we can come up with the right package of remedies.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Premier's meeting with the mayors was a desperate attempt to get a good headline, but do you know what would have gotten her a good headline? Taking immediate action to close the 1991 rent control—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier could have gotten a good headline if she had immediately closed the 1991 rent control loophole. That would actually help real people in Toronto, the GTHA and across the province.

When will the Premier stop stalling, close the loophole and protect all renters in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I can tell you how hard this Premier is working every day, in and out, to make sure that life is affordable for the people of Ontario. Unlike the member opposite, she's not taking time off to do photo shoots for GQ Magazine, nor is she taking time to do photo shoots for fashion shows, nor is she modelling in this province. She is working hard every single day to make Ontario move forward, to ensure that the people of Ontario have opportunities to be prosperous.

It takes a lot of nerve from the member opposite, who appears in GQ, to talk about photo ops. He might be careful asking the Premier about issues that are important to Ontarians every single day when she is working hard.

1100

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the government hit a new low. Instead of acknowledging the growing debt burden, they opted to keep their heads buried in the sand and ignore reality.

Our leader, Patrick Brown, put forward a motion that called on the government to immediately begin paying down the debt, but the government voted against our motion. They clearly demonstrated that they would rather spend more money servicing a growing debt than spend it on essential programs people rely on. Their lack of commitment to pay down the debt is both troubling and reckless.

Will the Premier take our party's advice, and the advice of the Auditor General, and provide a long-term plan to get their debt under control now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Of course, as we all know, we are going to be balancing the budget again this year—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Again?

Hon. Liz Sandals: This year—again I am telling you.

But I think there's actually some news about this year's budget that the member opposite would be really interested in, because the borrowing for the year we've just come out of, the 2016-17 year, will be our smallest borrowing program since the beginning of the recession. We've actually borrowed \$2.6 billion less in 2016-17 than was indicated in the budget, so in fact we are beating our targets.

One of the other things we've been able to do is to beat our target on the payments for interest. We have a lot of very good news about managing debt that you just choose to ignore.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: That answer, by the way, is 180 degrees opposite of the advice of the Auditor General.

Under this government, the people of Ontario have been subjected to crisis after crisis. Families are facing a hydro crisis, a housing crisis and a growing debt crisis.

Our party brought forward five critical budget asks to get this province back on track: take action on the growing debt, end the hydro crisis, address the housing crisis, make cap-and-trade revenue-neutral, and save our schools.

Speaker, does the Premier agree with our recommendations or does she agree with presenting an artificial balance of the budget?

Hon. Liz Sandals: We made a very conscious decision at the beginning of the recession about how we were going to manage the economy. We made a conscious decision that we were going to continue to invest in education, that we were going to continue to invest in health care, that we were going to continue to invest in the infrastructure that this province needs to move forward, that we were going to invest in job growth and that we were going to invest in the future of the people of Ontario, despite a global recession. That's the decision that we made.

There were a whole bunch of recommendations at the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs made by the opposition party. Do you know how many of those 43 recommendations were about education? One was about education. Do you know how many were about health care? Zero.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Premier. Speaker, our hospitals have been pushed to the breaking point by this Premier. Hamilton Health Sciences is taking care of 138 more patients every single day than they have beds for. Their occupancy rate has soared to 114%. Of course, surgeries had to be cancelled, and people are

waiting longer in the ER. In the last three months, there have been 36 times when there was either just one or no ambulance at all, for all of the emergencies in Hamilton.

When will this Premier own up to the crisis that she is creating in our hospitals, and when will she do something to fix it?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We recognize that some of our hospitals face challenges as we go forward. That's why, last year, we allocated nearly half a billion dollars for our hospitals and for operating costs, to allow them to address those challenges, wherever they might be. That included 29 million new dollars for Hamilton Health Sciences, for example. It included, for St. Joseph's in Hamilton, \$15 million—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Carry on.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I should mention that that was more than a 3% increase for Hamilton Health Sciences last year alone.

We're working on an ongoing basis with all of our hospitals to ensure that they—and we have a program called Pay-for-Results in ERs, to address capacity issues there. We're working with them on ALC challenges that they might face.

I'm happy to speak in more detail in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: This government has been living in denial, completely out of touch—freezing hospital budgets for four years straight, pushing health care to the breaking point.

St. Joseph's in Hamilton has been overcrowded since January; we're now in April. Brampton Civic has been in gridlock, and their premier new urgent care centre won't fix the overcrowding. In London, we're seeing horror stories—people who need mental health care waiting for seven days, nights and days, on stretchers in hallways, with the lights on 24/7, because there are no beds to care for those people.

Why is this Premier failing the people of Ontario who need care, and failing to fix the overcrowding in our hospitals?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's important that Ontarians know that the vast majority of hospitals in this province operate at significantly less than 100% capacity routinely.

We have increased the number of acute beds in Ontario, since 2013 alone, by 600 new additional beds. We're making the largest infrastructure investments in hospitals in this province's history right now, with new hospitals like Humber River Hospital and Oakville hospital and many others, and expansions, like at Joe Brant—many, many examples of expansions in hospitals.

We're going to make sure we continue to invest. We're not going to do like that party did when they were in government, when they closed 24% of the acute hospital beds in this province, when they closed 13% of the mental health beds in this province.

We continue to invest. We continue to fund.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Harinder Malhi: My question is for the Minister of Labour. Before I came into politics, I was often asked what the government was doing to strengthen protections for workers—in particular, temporary workers. This was an issue that I wanted to explore after becoming the MPP for Brampton–Springdale. My constituents care deeply about employment standards, and believe that everyone who works in Ontario deserves a fair chance.

That's why I was proud to have introduced a private member's bill on temporary help agencies, to highlight some of the changes that I would like to see come from the Changing Workplaces Review.

Can the Minister of Labour please share with the House some of the things that our government is doing to help temporary workers in the province?

1110

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for her question, and I want to thank her for the advocacy that she does for ordinary working Ontarians who live in her riding.

We've been making great strides for temporary workers in the province of Ontario. We've put in place a number of safeguards for employees of temporary help agencies. They empower them to assert their rights. They protect them from illegal fees.

The Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, which was passed by this House in 2014, added even more protection. This legislation makes Ontario the first province, and one of the few jurisdictions anywhere in the world, that specifically addresses temporary help agency employment in legislation.

We're very proud of that, but we haven't stopped there. Our government is making sure that temporary help agency assignment employees have the same rights as all other employees under the Employment Standards Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and labour legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I want to thank the minister for his answer. As the minister is aware, the House will vote on a motion from the third party today that piggybacks on much of the work we're already doing. In fact, I highlighted many of the same points in my own PMB this past year.

I was also disappointed last week when they called the Changing Workplaces Review a waste of time, and made no mention of the Employment Standards Act. Unfortunately, they're not acknowledging that we have been taking improvements for temporary workers seriously, and have introduced many changes that will not only help

my constituents, but also people who work right across this province.

Can the minister please share with the House the importance of the review, and why our plan to help precarious workers makes sense?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member again for an excellent supplementary.

The goal of the Changing Workplaces Review is to make sure that all workers in Ontario feel that they have the protection of the law. The Changing Workplaces Review is a key part of that. After all, why wouldn't we want to hear from expert special advisers on this issue, who have been studying this issue for some time?

The reality is that we know that fundamental change is needed, and the incomplete plans that are coming forward from the opposition parties simply miss the mark. We've made significant changes. We're doing a very comprehensive review. The private members' bills that I'm hearing will do nothing to create a sustainable framework where everybody can share in the success of this great province.

No person in Ontario should ever feel underappreciated or undervalued. No person should feel that they can't get ahead. The Changing Workplaces Review is going to help us get there.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My constituent Lori Leckie contacted me after her daughter Jamie-Lee was forced to wait in a hallway for five days because there was no hospital bed for her at Brampton Civic Hospital.

From the Brampton Guardian, Lori's daughter said, "I spent five days in the hospital afraid, in pain and staring at a white partition wall as I anxiously awaited answers." Lori wants you to explain why her daughter had no hospital bed for five days.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I have to say I was distraught when I learned of this particular individual, in a very vulnerable state, and what she had to endure at one of our hospitals.

It's important that all of us who have a role to play in providing that highest-quality care remember specifically that we're dealing with individuals in an extremely vulnerable state. We need to do everything we can to ensure their safety and that they are taken care of in a compassionate way.

As a result of that, I am looking very carefully and specifically in terms of measures that we can and should take so that hopefully this situation doesn't happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, I'm sure that Lori and Jamie-Lee appreciate your sympathy, but you are the Minister of Health. You have an opportunity to fix this issue. It's not new; we just heard about it in Hamilton. It's happening in Brampton. It's happening all over Ontario. Please do something. It's unfair to people like

Jamie-Lee. It's an example of hallway medicine: no privacy, no beds, just another justification.

There's no way it's acceptable that someone has to lay in a hallway for five days without a bed in the province of Ontario. When will the minister ensure that our loved ones get a bed when they need one?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I was asked this question yesterday by the media. I was asked at the brand new Peel Memorial health and wellness centre that the Premier and I opened yesterday, which has a vast array of services available to individuals of Brampton and neighbouring communities, including an urgent care centre, which is drawing away some of the patients that previously would have gone to Brampton Civic, which is the hospital that the member opposite referenced.

It has dietitians, chiropractors, day surgery, cataract surgery, dialysis—many, many services in this brand new facility, which has been so well-received and appreciated by the community. It's measures like that which will draw individuals in the community to the appropriate resources and reduce the overcrowding the member opposite mentioned.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The question is to the Premier. Premier, you would know that last week, on behalf of our constituents on the James Bay, I raised the issue of Ornge shutting down the helicopter base in Moosonee.

I was told by Ornge in a subsequent phone call that they had consulted with chiefs in other communities such as Moosonee, and everybody was fine. That is not the case. I've talked to Kashechewan. I've talked to Fort Albany. I've talked to the mayor of Moosonee. I've talked to the deputy chief in Moose Factory. I've talked to the Mushkegowuk deputy chief. Nobody's onside.

The question here is: The people living on the James Bay are no different than anywhere else in this province. Why would we allow that base to shut down, when we don't do it anywhere else, when it comes to servicing helicopters?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the advocacy by the member opposite on this issue. I appreciate, actually, the opportunity to collaborate. We've had a number of conversations. I'm pleased to hear, as well, and I'm aware that Ornge reached out to him, as well, because they specifically wanted to discuss the issue with him and explain what was being anticipated in terms of the necessary—and necessary for a whole variety of reasons, particularly safety reasons—when we're thinking of Moosonee, I think we all recognize just how vitally important that is. So they had an opportunity to have that discussion.

As I've mentioned to the member opposite, my goal is to ensure that the services in Moosonee and those that depend on the Ornge services that come out of Moosonee are of the highest quality as well. This maintenance is necessary for the safety of the pilots, the paramedics and

others, as well as the passengers and patients. We're looking to see what we might be able to do in terms of finding a replacement helicopter during that period of time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: If heard you correctly, I think you just said that you're looking for a replacement helicopter? If that is the case and that's what we do, the people of Moosonee and the people of the James Bay will say thank you, but I've got to make the point again.

We have helicopter bases in Sudbury. We have them in Thunder Bay, Kenora, Toronto and Moosonee. None of the other bases are shut down. We're able to shift equipment around to make sure that those bases continue to operate at the times the equipment is out for maintenance.

It is not acceptable that we shut down that helicopter base in Moosonee. Utilizing the ambulance boat is good sometimes, but due to tides, due to wind, due to weather, there are all kind of times that you cannot use that ambulance boat, and we're putting people at risk—not to say what that helicopter does when it comes to emergency extraction out of Kash and other places when things happen.

I ask you again, on behalf of the people of Moosonee and James Bay: Will we put in a replacement helicopter during the time that that machine is out for servicing?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As the member referenced, the vast majority of transports that take place out of Moosonee involve in the first instance the marine transport, to make that hop to the island where the hospital is located. The majority of transports on James Bay and the surrounding area take place by fixed-wing as well.

But there is an important role for the Ornge helicopter at times. I know that the member opposite will agree with me; in fact, it's my commitment that if there is a safe way—and this is about safety of passengers, safety of the paramedics, of the pilots in and around Moosonee—that we can keep rotor wing service throughout the summer, the two months when this maintenance is due to take place, we will make sure it happens.

1120

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Over the last decade, more and more people in Toronto have chosen to live in high-rises; in fact, over 40% of homeowners over the age of 65 live in high-rises. Every day, families, especially seniors, children and people with mobility restrictions, find themselves trapped because their building's elevators are out of order and often remain that way for a long time.

This morning at the press conference, Mr. Gonzalez, a gentleman in a wheelchair, told us that he missed his blood transfusion appointment because of elevator outage. That is why I have introduced Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act, which, if passed, will ensure future

buildings will have enough elevator capacity and broken elevators are repaired within a specific deadline.

Can the minister share her perspective on the importance of creating stronger protections for the growing population—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Government and Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina for this question and for introducing a very important piece of legislation on elevator availability—fantastic work.

I know that out-of-service elevators can be a great source of frustration for tenants and condo owners. It's especially concerning, as we've heard, for elderly persons or people with disabilities, who have no alternative or other means of getting from floor to floor. For people who rely on elevators to get in and out of their buildings, disruptions and slow repair times cannot only create barriers to daily activities, they may also pose health and safety risks.

Currently, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority does have a mandate to ensure elevator safety. However, it does not have set-out time frames in which an out-of-service elevator must be returned to operation. I agree it is the right time to start looking at how we can ensure greater reliability and availability of elevators.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for her answer. As our province continues to grow upwards and buildings are frequently reaching the 70-plus-storey range, access to elevators for Ontarians who own or rent condominiums is not just a convenience; reliable elevators are essential.

Not too long ago, residents of the 79-storey Aura building on Yonge Street were trapped on their floors unless they took the stairs. While some of the tower's elevators have since been repaired, weeks later many elevators remain out of service.

Bill 109 is a direct answer to the changing needs of Ontario's residents and tenants and offers them increased consumer protection. Will the minister support creating greater protection for Ontarians by strengthening the rules and regulations pertaining to elevators?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, I couldn't be in stronger agreement with this bill to make changes that reflect the way we can enhance consumer protection for renters and owners. This issue is important to me not only as Minister of Government and Consumer Services that oversees the TSSA but as the minister responsible for accessibility, recognizing that barriers disproportionately impact people with disabilities.

Under our Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, all organizations in Ontario, including multi-storey residential buildings, are required to post a notice of disruption for an out-of-service elevator and prepare a document outlining the steps it would take to accommodate persons with disabilities in the event of a temporary service disruption.

I know more can be done. That's why I'm really looking forward to the debate this afternoon on this bill. Again, I want to thank and congratulate the member for Trinity–Spadina.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question is to the minister responsible for accessibility. I recently met with the joint accessibility advisory committee of Niagara, as well as hosting my own round table in Grimsby, to learn more about the obstacles faced by 1.85 million Ontarians with a disability.

This allowed me to hear from Aleksandra Stanojevic, a student with hearing challenges who faced great obstacles in high school after being assigned a poorly educated interpreter who failed to interpret the course properly.

The Premier agreed to establish an education accessibility standard last December. However, four months have gone by and an education standards committee still does not exist. How much longer will persons with disabilities like Aleksandra have to wait for this government to take action?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, I want to thank the member so much for hosting that round table. I think it's fantastic when any members of the Legislature can engage with their communities. We know also that every municipality in Ontario has an accessibility advisory committee. I think it is so important that we listen to what the issues are, listen to what barriers still exist, and bring those forward.

But, Speaker, I'm also very proud of our legislation. In fact, this year, 2017, is the first year where all organizations have to start reporting on their accessibility plans and their progress. We know that the legislation is important, but it's also about changing attitudes and removing barriers.

I'll be very happy to speak in the supplementary about the new education standard that we'll be developing to complement the other standards that already exist.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: That answer let down over a third of a million students in elementary, secondary and post-secondary study. These students have been waiting for equal opportunities for 11 years, since the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was passed in this Legislature. It is letting down students, such as Aleksandra, who have faced unnecessary obstacles in education because of this government's failure to act. Students are losing hope that educational barriers will be removed through the establishment of standards.

Did you forget about the Premier's promise, or is this just another one of your government's stretch goals?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's an important question, but it's also important that the member knows that we already do remove barriers in schools, whether it's elementary or post-secondary education.

We have obligations in place for the education sector, under our standards, that policies be in place, that educators are trained on programs, and that libraries and other services are provided in accessible formats. These all help our students.

But we know that there is more to be done. That's why the Premier announced the education standard in December of last year. She made that a public commitment.

I am working with my colleague ministers in education, and advanced education and skills development, to get that standard going, to strike an SDC—a standards development committee—as we have done recently with health care.

We know that improving and enhancing inclusion and accessibility for students is an important thing, and we'll continue to work hard on it.

ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Good morning, Minister.

Speaker, last September, my riding had record rainfalls. In a short period of time, storm sewers overflowed and thousands of homes were flooded. It was 110 millimetres of rain in five hours, 190 millimetres over 48 hours—more than what we would normally get in two months.

The minister came to see the damage first-hand. The minister promised financial help from the provincial disaster relief fund. It has been six months, yet only 36 people have received relief payments. Twenty more have partial payments, but their file is still open.

When can the rest of my constituents receive the relief that they were promised?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Thank you to the member for the question. I know that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will want to weigh in on this in the supplementary.

The member is right: I was in southern Ontario within a very short period of time after the flood occurred. I met with Mayor Bain in Lakeshore, Mayor Dilkens in Windsor, and Mayor McNamara in Tecumseh. We visited a number of the homeowners who were affected by the flood.

Speaker, I can tell you that, very quickly, the program was activated. In fact, on October 3, 2016, we had activated the program. The deadline for applications was January 31, 2017.

One of the significant changes that I want to mention, that we brought to the program under my predecessor, Ted McMeekin, was that no longer are local municipalities required to fundraise, as was the case under the old ODRA program. That is significant.

Another change that was brought in that I want to share with the Legislature is very significant: Unlike every other province in the country, where sewer backup is the result of heavy flooding and insurance is usually the default mechanism, low-income people are now eli-

gible to apply in Ontario for coverage where there has been sewage backup.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Two thirds of those applying for disaster relief have been denied. I heard from a constituent this morning who is still waiting for her phone calls to be returned.

1130

The provisions of the disaster relief fund were established in the last century. Climate change is here. It's a reality. This Liberal government has got to come to grips with that and realize that communities can't cope with rainfalls of this magnitude.

Speaker, when will the minister update the disaster relief plan so more homeowners will be protected in storm events of this magnitude?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, on Monday I had the opportunity to be in beautiful Picton, Ontario, to announce a number of projects under the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund. Part of that announcement on Monday was to assist the town of Tecumseh with in the neighbourhood of \$806,000 to repair the damage that occurred in that flood back in September.

I was particularly interested when I looked at the damage in wards 1 and 2 in the town of Tecumseh, where within a very short period of time 2.7 billion litres of water surged through the town's pumps and eventually overwhelmed the system.

Mr. Speaker, what we're encouraging now throughout the province of Ontario is to move from disaster management to disaster prevention. We're asking our municipalities to separate their rainwater from their treatment water to make sure that the system isn't overflowing. That's why we're giving \$806,000 to the town of Tecumseh.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

LUTTE CONTRE LE RACISME

M. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme, the Honourable Michael Coteau.

Speaker, as you know, we have the privilege today of being joined by Imam Hassan Guillet and his colleagues from Quebec. Some two months ago, Imam Guillet addressed the Prime Minister, the Premier of Quebec, thousands of people in an arena, and indeed all Canadians when he stood and spoke bravely, celebrating the lives of six men who were killed while praying at their mosque in Quebec City. These men were fathers, husbands and neighbours, and on that murderous day, 17 children lost their dads. These men lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow, loved and were loved, and now lie in a French field. They dreamed of their own futures and the futures of their children, the youngest of whom is 18 months old.

En tant que député, que père et que musulman, je comprends l'exigence de lutter contre l'islamophobie en Ontario.

Minister, can you share with this House what our province is doing to address this latest round of racism?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I would like to thank the member from Etobicoke North for the question, and I'd like to thank the imam and our other guests for joining us here in the Legislature. It is a true privilege to have you here today from Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy that took place in Quebec reminds us all that Islamophobia is real here in the province of Ontario and it's a problem right across this country.

Ontario is home to 61% of all Muslims in Canada and we are home to 90% of Muslims who are racialized. Here in the city of Toronto, 5% of our population is Muslim. This is the largest population in all of Canada, and including the United States.

A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan includes specific initiatives to address Islamophobia. The Anti-Racism Directorate is engaging with community organizations and researching better ways to understand the causes and impacts of Islamophobia so we can move forward on future initiatives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister Coteau, for your ongoing work, and thank you, Premier Wynne, for your leadership on this and many other fronts of intolerance.

Over the past few days, Speaker, I've been heartened to hear members from all three parties deliberate and respond to Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures. The content of the proposed legislation is substantive and has opened up an important and indeed essential conversation in our Legislature.

I note that the bill proposes the collection of key data, an anti-racism impact assessment framework and proactive methods to apply an anti-racism perspective to government decision-making.

Monsieur le Ministre, pouvez-vous partager avec la Chambre comment le projet de loi 114 et le travail de la direction contre le racisme contribuent à l'avenir de la province?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The scope of Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures, is unprecedented in Canada. Through the strategic plan in Bill 114, we're working to ensure that Ontario remains a place of inclusion, where everyone feels safe and has the ability to fully contribute to society. This bill ensures that government is held accountable and that the anti-racism work we are doing today continues for future generations.

Mr. Speaker, I was so inspired by the words of the imam joining us here today when he said, "Let's go from today to be a real society, united. The same way we are united today in our sorrow and in our pain, let us start today to be united in our dreams, our hopes and our plans for the future."

Thank you again for being here and joining us in the Legislature today.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is for the Minister of Housing. After I called for an expert housing affordability panel, the minister claimed that he had a housing affordability team. But it seems that no one has heard about that team. Can the minister tell us who is on the team and what they have actually done thus far?

Interjection: I'm on your team.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I know that everyone on this side of the House is on that team.

We'll continue to answer the call to provide more affordable housing across the province. As we heard yesterday as we met with our municipal partners, affordable housing is a very complex issue. It requires close coordination with our municipal partners, with builders and with members of my ministry and other ministries, and that's who we've turned to. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and myself have put together a team of senior people within our ministries to look at some of the issues that have been raised by municipalities and builders and environmentalists, just to make sure we get our solutions right.

The most important thing that we're doing is continuing our consultations with municipal leaders, with our builders and with other stakeholders in the field to make sure we get our solutions right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Minister, the housing crisis has developed under this government, under your watch. This team of insiders has done nothing to stop it. This team has piled cost after cost on new housing, without any realization of what the impact will be.

It's time to consult with the people who actually understand the housing sector. We proposed a housing affordability panel with clear goals, broad membership and short timelines. Since the minister's team doesn't seem to have any of that, will he simply agree to support our panel so we can actually address the challenges of housing affordability in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Chris Ballard: What I will agree with is that there is a growing concern right across the GTHA and beyond about the impact of the booming housing market. I absolutely understand that Ontarians are worried about affording homes in this region. They want the peace of mind knowing that they'll have an affordable place to call home.

The fact is, Speaker, we have been working on this in a number of areas. I will say that it's nice that finally the member opposite and his party have joined the conversation to talk about affordable housing.

I can tell you, Speaker, that the question that I would put back to them is that they have been late to this game. We have been working on this game. We're talking to renters. We're talking to municipalities. We have legislation coming forward. We're getting it right.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a rather sad announcement to make.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have to say it. This is the last day for our wonderful pages. I want to thank them for all of the hard work that they've done, and I want to appreciate the fact that they've done such a good job for us. Thank you to all of the pages.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We might start a new program that's basically a survey of the pages to ask them who their favourite MPP is. I'm not sure how that would work out.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.—oh, sorry; a point of order. Just in the last second. The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: Since it's Passover and Easter, I've invited all the pages to share some of Moishe's world-famous cheesecake in room 212 after question period.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As I normally do, I want to wish all of you a happy Easter and some time with your family during the break. To repeat myself over and over again, thank you for all the hard work that you do every single day.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CYCLING IN WHITBY

Mr. Lorne Coe: I rise today to congratulate the town of Whitby on being designated a bicycle-friendly community by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition. This designation highlights the great work of the town's committee on active transportation and safe roads. Formed in 2016, the committee is comprised of community members, town staff and the mayor of Whitby, Don Mitchell.

A core component of the committee's mandate was the development of a plan for cycling and leisure trails that would allow commuters to get to work and families to enjoy paths and trails comfortably, and to link the waterfront with Brooklin, Ashburn and Myrtle Station.

The town of Whitby was presented with a formal award during the April 2017 Ontario Bike Summit hosted by Share the Road. Congratulations once again to Mayor Mitchell, his town council and the other members of Whitby's committee on active transportation and safe roads for their accomplishment.

ANOVA

Ms. Peggy Sattler: On Friday, March 31, I joined with Londoners to celebrate the launch of Anova, an agency formed through the merger of Women's Com-

munity House—our local women's shelter—and the Sexual Assault Centre of London. Anova was born of the idea that integration and coordination will provide better services for survivors of gender-based violence by offering a single point of access for survivors to heal from the trauma and rebuild their lives. I want to congratulate the boards of both agencies for having the vision and the tenacity to take this unique and innovative step, as well as Anova's executive director, Kate Wiggins, and community programs director, Jane McGregor, who come to Anova from the merged agencies.

By launching Anova, my community is demonstrating the kind of leadership this government has failed to show. In 2011, domestic violence coordinating committees came together across Ontario to call for a much more integrated and cohesive approach to violence against women and for the removal of barriers that prevent coordination on the ground. Building a Bigger Wave, the initiative formed at that meeting, noted that "government funding and program delivery has separated the issues of domestic violence and sexual assault, and created a false dichotomy between service providers and within coordinating committees...." Yet to date, little has happened in response.

Anova is an exciting and path-breaking initiative that will bring us closer to an Ontario that is free of gender-based violence, regardless of where the violence occurs or who the perpetrator was.

ANTI-RACISM ACTIVITIES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Recently in my riding of Kitchener Centre, I hosted a community town hall with the title "Demystifying Islam." It took place in a meeting room at the Kitchener farmers' market and was open to the public.

After the tragic events in Quebec City in which six men were shot and killed while praying in a mosque, Islamic members of my community reached out to share their desire of addressing Islamophobia and the perceptions that fuel fear and discrimination.

Our special guest that day was Fauzia Mazhar, who chairs the Coalition of Muslim Women in Kitchener-Waterloo. She answered many questions from the audience, and here is a sample of what people asked that day: "If Islam is a religion of love, why are there some members who carry out acts of violence in the name of Islam?" "Should newcomers be subjected to a Canadian values test?" "Are Muslim women oppressed?"

Fauzia answered all of these questions very thoughtfully and very respectfully. Our mayor, Berry Urbanovic, was in the audience, and he stressed that it is the many diverse voices in Kitchener that make our community unique and vibrant.

Diversity is an important cornerstone of Ontario's culture and heritage. What we heard that day is that each and every one of us has a responsibility to speak up against prejudice and racism. I want to thank everyone who attended our town hall, and especially I want to

thank members of my staff for planning such a successful event.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to speak out against rural school closures. In my riding, Honey Harbour Public School is under review. In October, the board recommended that the school close and the students attend Glen Orchard Public School, an hour-long bus ride away, or parents can apply to have their children attend school in Victoria Harbour, which is closer but in a different school board. It's in Simcoe county school board.

One mother has concerns that her child, who is finally receiving speech therapy through the school, would now be back at the bottom of the wait-list at a Simcoe county school.

Representatives of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario raised another issue with me this week: What about those children who have behavioural challenges? Does the government have a plan to accommodate them on an hour-long bus ride?

Last week, upwards of 70 people attended a public meeting in the small community of Port Severn to have their voices heard before a decision is made about Honey Harbour Public School later this month.

The minister's planned consultations with rural communities sound promising. It is my hope that those consultations are genuine and prevent the closures of more rural schools. Let's hope it's not too late for Honey Harbour Public School, as it was for Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School. I urge the government to put a moratorium on rural school closures until the consultation is complete and they have addressed the unique needs of rural communities.

GIRLS' GOVERNMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a privilege to stand up today and talk about some young women from my community who came to Queen's Park yesterday. I have been meeting with 12 students from Our Lady of Lourdes elementary in Waterloo over the last six months as part of the Girls' Government program. It's available to all MPPs from all parties. Set up by Equal Voice and championed by our own member from Parkdale-High Park, it's an educational program that encourages girls to become politically engaged and teaches them how to become advocates about the issues that matter to them.

These girls chose to advocate on gender equity issues and, in particular, sexual harassment and gender-based violence. I was so proud of them during their press conference yesterday afternoon when they talked about how sexual harassment and gender-based violence has had an impact on their lives. They spoke candidly about their own experiences at school, and it was powerful to witness. They were very courageous.

These young women spoke about the need for more public education and school-based campaigns on sexual

violence and harassment to challenge the myths and misconceptions about social constructs like masculinity and femininity. The gender wage gap, which we addressed earlier this week on pay equity day, exists in part because of entrenched gender norms.

We need to teach the next generation of girls to challenge the expectations that constrain women. The girls in my program told me that their experience has made them realize that their voices matter. They called it life-changing. Their voices do matter.

I challenge every MPP in this House to engage with the Girls' Government program and make equity a reality for everyone in the province.

PASSOVER

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise today to speak about a most significant time in the Jewish year. It's the time of Passover, or Pesach in Hebrew. Passover started on Monday, April 10, and goes right till the 18. It's an eight-day festival which commemorates the emancipation of all Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt.

The story of Passover, the telling of the Israeli people escaping slavery in ancient Egypt and starting a free life, is inspiring and has been the motivation behind many songs, prayers and sermons. The idea that the future can be better than the past or present is one that we as humans find fundamentally inspirational.

On Monday night I was walking my daughter's dog through the neighbourhood. It was so wonderful. The windows were open because it was a nice, warm night. You could see the Jewish families celebrating their Seder meal. They were singing. They were laughing. It was a very, very refreshing thing to see: families enjoying this historical week of Passover and doing it right here in our wonderful province. It made me feel good. It made me feel very proud of living in Canada.

I want to thank the pages who are celebrating Passover today with some of the world's best cheesecake from Moishe's on Bathurst Street, and Milk 'n Honey. Moishe, you're the best cheesecake-maker this side of Tel Aviv. God bless.

1310

BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Bill Walker: Having just returned last evening with my friend Kitchener-Conestoga MPP Michael Harris from my journey to Vimy Ridge, and with the feelings still heavy in my heart and fresh in my mind, I rise to share some of this humbling experience with my good colleagues in the House and those watching at home.

I once read that, "Soldiers' graves are the greatest preachers of peace." At Vimy, where I walked the fields of craters where, 100 years ago, our soldiers fought and died and where our 3,598 brave Canadian men now lie peacefully, their places marked out in tidy and perfectly spaced rows, I recalled that quote and felt an overwhelm-

ing sense of Canadian pride with a solemn yet grateful heart.

Having observed in reverence the sight of thousands of Canadian Armed Forces boots dotted over the ridge, I was reminded how places like Vimy profoundly shape the way we think about the sacrifices of those who gave their lives so we could enjoy the peace, democracy and liberty we cherish in the greatest country in the world that we call home.

The sight of this towering monument on this infamous ridge, along with the soldiers' boots, was also a stark reminder of our continued struggle for peace around the world and that we must remain ever diligent in carrying the torch handed to us.

With Canadian soldiers, men and women, continuing to serve around the world against a constant background of danger, it is important to remember the past. I am a believer that how we remember the past determines how we will shape our future.

I was humbled to share this appreciation with 25,000 fellow Canadians who paid homage to our forefathers' contributions and brave sacrifices in the First World War, and what many believe was the birth of our great nation at Vimy.

And that we stood there on those hallowed grounds, shoulder to shoulder with some of our war veterans; the chief of defence for Canadian Forces, General Vance; members of the Royal Canadian Legion; members of the Vimy Foundation and the True Patriot Love Foundation; and some 15,000 students from across Canada, including Mr. Ryan McManaman's students from the Owen Sound District Secondary School, made this homage special and a memory that I will never forget.

I had goose bumps during the ceremony and especially when we sang our Canadian national anthem. I'm honoured and humbled to have attended this sacred ceremony, and to have received my pilgrimage medal. I shall wear it on April 9 and also on November 11 annually, as my way of showing my respect to the brave men who made the ultimate sacrifice and our veterans who were able to return home, proud in their victory.

As retired chief of defence and passionate patriot General Rick Hillier shared, "Every Canadian should make this pilgrimage to Vimy to honour our valiant heroes and truly appreciate our history and how fortunate we are to be Canadians." I shall wear my pride with honour, General, and salute you and every man and woman who wears our armed forces uniform.

Lest we forget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I apologize for losing track of the clock; I forgot.

VAISAKHI

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish everyone a happy Vaisakhi and Sikh Heritage Month. Vaisakhi marks the Sikh New Year and commemorates the formation of the Khalsa panth of warriors

under Guru Gobind Singh in 1699. It is additionally a spring harvest festival for Sikhs.

Sikhism is a major world religion that traces its origins back to the 15th century in what is now known today as Punjab. Sikhism was started as a social revolution by the first guru, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who laid the foundation for a distinct and unique monotheistic faith based on the principles of equality and social justice. Sikhism espouses the values of admiration of the creator, harmony, sharing, honest earning and help of fellow mankind.

Sikhism traces its roots here in Canada to the early 19th century. In Ontario and throughout Canada, family and friends gather today at gurdwaras and participate in Nagar Kirtans across the province to celebrate Vaisakhi.

In Ontario, we speak many languages, embrace every culture, have links to every part of the world, and the Sikh community has enhanced our society on many levels.

Many flag-raising ceremonies have been held throughout the province, many of which I have attended, including right here outside the Legislature, on Parliament Hill, in Brampton and at Toronto city hall, just to name a few.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone celebrating a very happy and joyous Vaisakhi and a happy Sikh Heritage Month.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Minister of Transportation announced earlier this week a request for qualifications to design, build and finance what they're calling the Highway 401 expansion project. Highway 401, we're told, will be widened between the Credit River in Mississauga and Regional Road 25 in Milton, adding new lanes to relieve significant traffic congestion which occurs in both directions many times through the day.

What the government overlooked, however, when they were patting themselves on the back on Monday, was the significant role played by the town of Halton Hills mayor, council and staff in encouraging a widening of the 401 as a preferred option to other projects that were being considered as part of the GTA west corridor study.

Having expressed strong opposition to what the ministry called alternative 4-3, and working with local residents in the region of Halton, the town engaged the respected engineering firm Hatch Mott MacDonald to do a study which concluded that widening of the 401 would be a better option than building a new highway along the alternative 4-3 route. As Halton Hills MPP, I supported the town's position and repeatedly advocated for it at Queen's Park, making this issue our number one legislative priority in the fall of 2011.

Some questions remain unanswered by the government's announcement on Monday. When will the shovels be in the ground to initiate the project? When will it be completed? Is this finally the end of the GTA west corridor study, after 10 years of uncertainty for local communities and residents? If not, what is happening

with it? Will the government be turning the HOV lanes that they're promising into toll lanes? Can they guarantee that they will not charge tolls in the future?

I urge the minister to answer these important and relevant questions, and publicly acknowledge the role the town of Halton Hills played in the idea of widening the 401.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on University Intellectual Property, section 3.14 of the 2015 annual report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee at the time this report was written: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; Vic Dhillon; Han Dong; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Randy Hillier; Monte Kwinter; and Arthur Potts.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Science, the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth, the University of Toronto, McMaster University and the University of Waterloo for their attendance at the hearings.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and staff in the Legislative Research Services.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Debate adjourned.

PETITIONS

APRAXIA

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

"Whereas all children in the province of Ontario deserve every opportunity to reach their full potential; and

"Whereas speech and language pathologists in Ontario are afforded the capabilities to provide a diagnosis of

childhood apraxia of speech and receive specialized mandated training; and

"Whereas intensive and frequent individualized professional speech therapy, multiple times weekly, is needed to facilitate verbal speech; and

"Whereas school-aged children with severe and significant speech and language disorders like childhood apraxia of speech are not receiving the quality or quantity of speech therapy outlined as essential by current evidence and research, by either CCACs or school boards;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the government of Ontario to declare that May 14 is Apraxia Awareness Day."

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

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

"Whereas Ontario's energy system was founded with the principles 'Power at cost' and 'The gifts of nature are for the people,' which built Ontario into an economic powerhouse;

"Whereas people and businesses should be able to count on affordable, reliable energy to ensure a bright future for Ontario's next generations;

"Whereas privatization of our hydro system by Liberal and Conservative governments has driven up generation costs from 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour in 2002 to an on-peak price of 18 cents per kilowatt hour in 2016;

"Whereas Ontarians have reason to be concerned the Liberal government is planning to facilitate the privatization of local distribution companies;

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"Whereas the Liberal Party did not run on a plan to privatize Ontario's hydro system, and as many as 80% of people across Ontario oppose the privatization of Hydro One;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take immediate steps to stop any further privatization of Ontario's hydro system, including both Hydro One and any local distribution companies."

It's my pleasure to affix my signature and give this petition to page Coleton.

ELEVATOR MAINTENANCE

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to read this petition that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas elevators are an important amenity for a resident of a high-rise residential building; and

"Whereas ensuring basic mobility and standards of living for residents remain top priority; and

"Whereas the unreasonable delay of repairs for elevator services across Ontario is a concern for all residents of high-rise buildings who experience constant

breakdowns, mechanical failures and 'out of service' notices for unspecified amounts of time;

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

"Urge the Ontario government to require repairs to elevators be completed within a reasonable and prescribed time frame. We urge this government to address these concerns that are shared by residents of Trinity-Spadina and across Ontario."

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

SCHOOL CLOSURES

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

"Whereas under the current Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline (PARG), one in eight Ontario schools is at risk of closure; and

"Whereas the value of a school to the local economy and community has been removed from the PARG; and

"Whereas the PARG outlines consultation requirements that are insufficient to allow for meaningful community involvement, including the establishment of community hubs; and

"Whereas school closures have a significant negative impact on families and their children, resulting in inequitable access to extracurricular activities and other essential school involvement, and after-school work opportunities; and

"Whereas school closures have devastating impacts on the growth and overall viability of communities across Ontario, in particular self-sustaining agricultural communities;

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

"To place a moratorium on all school closures across Ontario and to suspend all pupil accommodation reviews until the PARG has been subject to a substantive review by an all-party committee that will examine the effects of extensive school closures on the health of our communities and children."

I fully support it, affix my name and send it with page Catherine.

KOMOKA PROVINCIAL PARK

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition signed by constituents across London West, and it reads:

"Whereas Komoka Provincial Park has long served residents and visitors to London, offering free access to beautiful views and numerous recreational hiking trails; and

"Whereas evidence has shown that access to the natural environment helps to reduce stress, improve mental well-being, and lower risks for chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart attacks and cancer; and

"Whereas new parking fees ranging from \$5.75 to \$14.50 for daily use of Komoka Provincial Park have

been imposed without consultation and without additional amenities to justify the new costs...; and

"Whereas the lack of bike lanes and bus routes connecting Komoka Provincial Park to London, and the prohibition on roadside parking, requires almost all visitors to drive to the park and pay to park their vehicles; and

"Whereas the new fees are likely to decrease park visits with negative consequences for community health and well-being;

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

"That the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry eliminate the parking fees introduced in August 2016 to ensure that Komoka Provincial Park remains accessible to residents of the city of London and all Ontarians."

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

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

Mr. Arthur Potts: I too have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government needs to strengthen primary care as the foundation of the health care system to achieve health system transformation goals of Patients First; and

"Whereas research shows that interprofessional primary health care delivers better outcomes for people and better value for money; and

"Whereas an investment in primary care will help address recruitment and retention challenges, build strong interprofessional primary care teams and ensure high-quality people-centred primary health care delivery in Ontario; and

"Whereas over 7,500 staff in over 400 community health centres, family health teams, aboriginal health access centres and nurse practitioner-led clinics are being paid below rates recommended in 2012 and as a result are facing challenges recruiting and retaining health providers, including nurse practitioners, dietitians, registered nurses, health promoters and managers;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to invest in interprofessional primary health care teams with a commitment of \$130 million annualized, with an implementation plan over two years, to ensure interprofessional primary health care teams can effectively retain and recruit staff."

I agree with this petition, sign my name, and leave it with page Keira.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here that was presented to me by Gordon Serroul to present in the Legislature. Gordon is from Mississauga, but he asked me to present this on his behalf in the Legislature. It's a "Petition to Stop Partisan Hydro Ads.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government is spending millions of taxpayers’ dollars on advertising that seems to be solely for the purpose promoting the Liberal government for partisan political purposes; and

“Whereas the government did not feel the need to inform the people of Ontario by advertising any of the many hydro rate increases; and

“Whereas this money could be used to lower hydro costs for people who are choosing between heating their homes and buying essentials such as food; and

“Whereas this money could instead be used to provide health care, keep rural schools open, increase long-term-care beds and other services for the people of Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on the government to stop running partisan hydro ads with taxpayers’ money.”

Thank you very much for the opportunity to present this petition. I would say I totally agree with it, and I shall give it to Coleton to bring to the table.

ENERGY POLICIES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition, and I would like to thank Sharon Chartrand from Whitefish, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of citizens from northern Ontario oppose the sale of Hydro One;

“Whereas the majority of citizens of northern Ontario oppose the rate increase which is the direct result of successful initiative to conserve and reduce electrical power consumption;

“Whereas the majority of citizens of northern Ontario oppose the installation and continued use of the smart meter program due to the unreliability of their metering and billing as well as incidents of causing fire;

“Whereas the majority of citizens from northern Ontario oppose the current inclusion of the delivery fee charges on power bills due to the unfair and confusing policies;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Call upon the Liberal government to stop the sell-off and privatization of Hydro One, stop further rate increases caused resulting from lower-than-expected consumption, stop the practice of billing rural customers for line loss charges, and reverse the ill-conceived decision to install smart meters without passing on the expense for replacing equipment to customers.”

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I present a petition 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;

“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;

“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’m pleased to support this petition, add my signature to it and give it to page Taylor.

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LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: After listening to the last speaker, I think our translators need an increase in pay, because that was really quick talking.

I would like to thank the Family Council Network, region 4 for their petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas chronic understaffing is the number one concern of families and friends of residents in long-term care;

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) empowers the provincial government to create a minimum care standard—but falls short of actually creating one;

“Whereas current care levels fail to recognize the increased levels of sickness and rates of Alzheimer’s and dementia of LTC residents;

“Whereas the most detailed and reputable studies of minimum care standards recommend at least four (4) hours of direct care per day;”

They petition “the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“(1) Amend the Long-Term Care Homes Act (2007) so that a long-term-care home will have to provide its residents with a minimum of four hours a day of nursing and personal support services, averaged across the residents...;

“(2) Calculate the average number of direct hours of nursing services and personal support services as prescribed by the regulations and exclude hours paid in respect to vacation, statutory holidays, sick leave, leaves of absences and training time;

(3) Increase funding to long-term-care homes so they can achieve the mandated staffing and care standard and tie public funding for them to the provision of quality care and staffing levels that meet the legislated minimum care standard;

“(4) Make public reporting of staffing levels at each Ontario LTC home mandatory to ensure accountability.”

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

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

“Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

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

“Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge.”

I agree with this. I affix my signature and I will send it with page Ethan.

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 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;

“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 totally agree with this petition. I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with Ayesha.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for petitions has expired.

VISITOR

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Before I begin with my motion, just a point of order: I wanted to introduce a friend of mine for over 50 years visiting from Vancouver, Gary Christall. Welcome, Gary.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the following should be included as part of the 2017-18 and future budget processes to:

(a) incorporate an intersectional gender equity perspective into the design, development, adoption and execution of all budgetary processes;

(b) develop an intersectional gender-based framework with indicators that will help determine the impacts of provincial revenue tools and provincially funded and operated programs and services on diverse women and various genders during the budget process;

(c) restructure and target the allocation of public expenditures to promote women’s economic opportunities and equal access to productive resources, and to address the basic social, educational and health needs of diverse women and gender minorities, particularly those living in poverty;

(d) conduct reviews of provincially funded and operated programs to eliminate any existing bias against diverse women and gender minorities, working with ministries to develop a disaggregated data collection strategy

for the province that will assist in, among other things, assessing the intersectional gendered impacts of provincial budgetary and policy decisions; and

(e) facilitate, at all levels, more open and transparent budget processes, including consultations with diverse women, particularly those living in poverty, including those with complex, intersecting identities, and gender-diverse members of equity-seeking groups and vulnerable populations, experts in gender-based analysis, and representatives from staff from community agencies serving women and gender minorities, to review and advise on the development and implementation of the intersectional gender-based framework/index.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. DiNovo has moved private member's notice number 50. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This has been an auspicious week here. We've celebrated 100 years of women beginning to get the vote in Ontario—because, of course, it was only white women who got the vote 100 years ago; our indigenous and First Nations women had to wait till the 1960s to do that. We also celebrated—I should say “mourned”—equal pay for equal work day, because women still don't get equal pay for equal work. And we celebrated the International Day of Pink. We also celebrated, in 2017, 100 years of women, really, overthrowing the czar in Russia; that was 100 years ago, too. And we listened to Malala in Ottawa, speaking about why it is so important for women to be taken seriously in terms of the budgetary process. As she said, you don't have an economy unless you include women in that economy; you can't progress as a country unless you include women in that progress. That's what this long-winded motion is about. It's about doing exactly that.

When we celebrated 100 years of women beginning to get the vote—celebration is hollow if funds don't follow. That rhymes; I like it. Celebration is hollow if funds don't follow. This is about following up with funds.

Let me remind you about why that's important, if we don't already know these stats. I'm sure most of us are aware of them. One in four women is sexually assaulted during her lifetime. Women's deaths at the hands of their partners is almost weekly news in this province. Women lead poverty statistics, housing wait-lists. They don't lead the sunshine salary list—that's for public employees; one can only imagine what that list would look like in the private sector. We're still fighting for equal pay—again, it varies from 50 cents on the dollar to 70 cents on the dollar of what men make. We're still fighting for affordable child care; we don't have it in this province. We're still fighting for seats on panels and boards—and of course, racialized women face double discrimination. We lead temporary workers, contract workers, part-time workers—all mainly women.

This follows on the heels of Kristyn Wong-Tam, councillor for Ward 27, who tabled a very similar motion at the city of Toronto. It passed, and they're into the second year of it. It follows, by the way, the federal

government at least also paying lip service to this at the federal level. We're the only level of government here in Ontario that does not have this as part of their budget process, so it's time to correct that wrong.

The question really is, how does having a gender lens on a budget actually make a difference? What does that mean, to take women into account? Let me give you some examples.

First of all, the Ontario Child Benefit supports about 500,000 families across the province. The largest group of those who receive the assistance are single mothers. So there's a budgetary promise that impacts some more than others.

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Ontario has the highest cost of full-time child care for children across the country. Gender-based budgeting could make that more affordable for women and children. I'll give you an example of who has done that right in Canada. In Quebec, where they do have affordable child care, each \$100 of subsidy for child care paid out by the Quebec government resulted in an additional \$104 in tax revenue for the province and a windfall of \$43 for the federal government. That's because—if you look at it through an economist's lens and not a bookkeeper's—if you invest, if you put money into social service programs, you see a return, because if we put money into child care, women go to work and then women pay more taxes. It's a direct result of investment.

On a single day here, as many as 302 women and 221 children, many of them individuals of colour and First Nations, are turned away from shelters in Canada because they are full. Gender-based budgeting can improve conditions for those in poverty.

In Ontario, we still have about 1,000 trans individuals waiting for transition counselling and health care. Remember, that population has a 50% attempted suicide rate and a 50% poverty rate. So again, looking at a gender-based budgeting process might correct that as well.

If you look at the other side of the issue, what doesn't help women and what doesn't help folk of various genders: tax cuts. Let's look at that. Tax cuts, as they've been implemented in Canada and Ontario, have mostly benefited men. They don't affect about 38% of women. Whenever we cut taxes on the so-called “middle class,” mostly men benefit, because 38% of women do not qualify for the tax cuts that have been implemented by both governments, federal and provincial. And there's less money, of course, available for public services when you cut taxes. Public services are mainly used by women. Women rely on them more than men.

Federally, the pension income-splitting program cost over \$1 billion in 2012, of which 89% was claimed by men. My colleague sitting next to me, from—

M^{me} France Gélinas: Nickel Belt.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Nickel Belt; thank you—brought up a wonderful example of how infrastructure dollars spent could benefit one sex over another. That is, there's nothing wrong with putting money into bridges and

roads, but when you put money into bridges and roads, who gets those jobs? Mainly men. If you put money into long-term care, you're benefiting the women who mainly are the residents of long-term care and the women who work in long-term care—ditto child care and ditto education, especially at the elementary level. Health care generally benefits women more than men. So again, a gender lens on all of us makes a huge difference.

To be aware of our history on this: Canada committed to doing this in 1995. Twenty-two years ago, Canada committed to doing this in Beijing, with mixed results. This new government in Ottawa has reaffirmed that commitment in many ways, but when we look at the results, we're still falling short. So the very first step is at least to make the commitment, and that's what we're asking for here today.

I'm going to give you a list. There are over 200 jurisdictions internationally that already apply a gender lens on their budgeting process and require of all of their ministries that they do this. Some of the countries: the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Scotland, the Philippines, Norway, the Netherlands, Mexico, Korea, Japan, Italy, Israel, Ireland, Iceland, Finland, the European Union, El Salvador, Denmark, Chile, Bolivia, Belgium, Austria, Australia, Andalusia and Albania. Many, many, many countries use a gender lens on their budgets to try to equalize what, of course, isn't equal in this country and in this province. There are some individual suggestions, too, around that.

Again, just in a general way, if we're going to ever address our labour issues, if we're going to talk about temporary agencies even, if we're going to talk about how we use our educational institutions, what we do in our health care systems—if we don't look at the impact on women, then we're really not dealing with the population that we have before us.

It was interesting: Nancy Ruth, a Conservative ex-Senator—she's now retired—was on my panel and on my radio show talking about this. She gave the example of Vimy Ridge. We just celebrated 100 years of honouring those young men who died in that most bloody of wars. She made the point, she said that when we start to talk about how that formed us as a nation, why aren't we talking about what women have done in herstory, not just in history, in terms of forming us as a nation?

What was women's labour like back then, in terms of child care, in terms of nursing, in terms of working at that time in the factories in the manufacturing sector? Everywhere in Canada, women's labour is often overlooked. If we don't look at budgets through a gender lens, this gets skewed. If we don't look at our history through a gender lens, we miss 52% of the reality of that herstory or history.

Again, it's a very simple demand, even if it's a little wordy, and I apologize for that. It's a very simple demand. That's simply that this government, which has the opportunity—rumour has it the budget is going to be tabled at the end of this month—actually goes through it—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: The 27th.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The 27th; there you go. Thank you.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They announced it at lunch.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: So no rumour anymore?

M^{me} France Gélinas: No.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Now we know. You have a couple of weeks, my friends across the aisle, to actually look over what you're about to propose and to actually apply a gender lens to that and to see how it affects women. By the way, I would ask that you give an explanation of that when you deliver the budget, that you show this assembly and you show Ontarians how what you're proposing does affect women. How does it affect sexual minorities? How does it affect racialized women? What impact does it have? I can tell you—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Disabled women.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: And disabled women, absolutely, which is why it's an intersectional gender-based motion. Exactly.

Please, when you deliver your budget, perhaps for the first time in Ontario, take this motion to heart, make this motion so. Don't just pass it; actually use it. Actually do it so that we can hear how it's going to affect us. If you do, I warrant it will have an impact on poverty. It will have an impact on joblessness. It will have an impact on every aspect of our community here in Ontario.

The ask is not only to pass the motion; the ask is to actually implement the motion and, by implementing the motion, to send a signal to those incredible young women who gathered here yesterday that we really do care about equality in this province, and that we really do care about 52% of the population in this province. We care what happens to them.

Going forward, we want to affect what happens to us all, because, as Malala said, without women's health, there isn't any health for a community. Without women's progress, there is no progress. Without women's economic development, there is no economic development.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am pleased to rise today to speak to motion 50, gender equality in the 2017 budget. I want to thank the member opposite for her motion calling for a gender-equity perspective to be included in the provincial budget cycle.

Absolutely, this is a very important issue. We know that budgets are not always gender-neutral instruments. Think about the recent examples of gender budgeting in the federal government and at the city of Toronto. But I also want the member opposite to rest assured that empowering women and ensuring security are vital to this government. Closing the gender wage gap is absolutely an important initiative on behalf of this government.

That's why the province has created Ontario's first-ever stand-alone Ministry of the Status of Women, because we get it. We know that it's important to put a lens, when it comes to how women are doing throughout our province in Ontario, by creating the Ministry of the

Status of Women. The fact is that Ontario is committed to strengthening the use of gender-based analysis within the government. We are absolutely committed to making sure considerations of gender are an essential component of the policy development process. We completely understand the importance of this work.

The need for a strengthened gender-based analysis tool was raised during our Gender Wage Gap Steering Committee consultations. In fact, it was one of the 20 recommendations they made to government in their final report. The Ministry of the Status of Women has been mandated—mandated—to develop gender-based analysis tools and resources to support the development of policies and programs across this government. And, of course, the number one and number two recommendations by that committee were to invest in child care in the province.

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I want the members opposite to be assured that here on this side of the aisle, we are very concerned about how women are doing. We are very interested in ensuring that, when it comes to the status of women, we are working hard. In fact, another example of that is that our Premier has created a minister responsible for early years and child care, and asked me to transform the way that we deliver child care.

The member opposite talked about child care and the important role that it plays in all of this—absolutely. We're working on developing a framework that will take affordability, will take accessibility, and will take quality and responsiveness into account. The fact is that gender-based analysis is an important practice to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of policy-making. Why? Because this is about fairness.

Absolutely, my ministry works across government to ensure that policies being developed do consider the unique needs of women in Ontario. In fact, at the cabinet table, I play the role of working with my colleagues to recognize the unique needs of women and girls in our province. When something comes across our table, I am always very happy to speak up about the needs of women and girls in Ontario.

But, Speaker, the fact is that the government's diversity office actually plays a key role in supporting the Ontario public service to be an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible workplace through their inclusion lens. And look at the work that has been done across government already to support women and girls. Speaker, I want you to know that Ontario has made great strides.

We've made great strides toward improving women's economic and personal well-being, including, of course, as I mentioned:

Our commitment to creating 100,000 new child care spaces in the province; our commitment to end sexual violence, harassment and gender-based violence; the Ontario Child Benefit; efforts to alleviate and reduce poverty, which we have Minister Ballard working on.

We're also taking steps to reform student aid so that 210,000 Ontarians, many of whom will be women, will receive free university or college tuition.

That's not all, Speaker. We are also increasing the number of women on our private and public boards, and committed to changing the representation of women on provincial agencies so that they make up 40% per board. And, as one of the first jurisdictions to introduce "comply or explain" regulations, we are going even further. We're calling on private TSX companies to set a target of 30% women by 2017 and reach that target in the next three to five years.

So, absolutely, we know that 74 cents on the dollar is what women make in comparison to what men make, and it's inexcusable and unacceptable. We need to close the gender wage gap. This is about fairness. We're making sure that we're going to take steps to ensure that the aggregated OPS salary range data is available by gender, strengthening the applications of gender-based analysis in government decision-making and, of course, working on our child care sphere and transformations.

There's a need for an integrated, whole-of-government approach that shapes the way forward for continued growth and empowerment of women and girls across Ontario. We're working on it because we know that when women are treated fairly, everyone benefits; when women succeed, we all succeed.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join the discussion on this motion today. I want to commend the member from Parkdale-High Park. We don't always agree, but one thing I am always most certain of is that there's no doubt about her passion on the issues which she brings forth to this Legislature. Since I've been here—well, I guess she came a little after me, but since she came here, that's always been her trademark.

M^{me} France Gélinas: If you mean it, you'll sing us a song.

Mr. John Yakabuski: If I mean it, I'll sing her a song; I'll sing her a song before we leave here—maybe in June.

On the motion today, on the budget, as the minister mentioned, we heard the announcement. It will be tabled on April 27. I don't want to be too down, but I suspect it's already written. It might be in translation. I suspect that Minister Sousa is already starting to practise his speech for the budget. So any changes between now and the 27th are unlikely.

Having said that, I would hope that a motion such as this is unnecessary. I would hope, and I would actually expect, that every government takes that lens throughout any budgetary process and ensures that every person in this province, regardless of their race, their creed, their colour, their sexuality or otherwise, is considered during the budgetary process, and any group of persons, regardless of what group they are a member of, is considered in the budgetary process, and we see that reflected.

The one thing is—and I expect that this government is doing that, to be fair. I may differ on the decisions they make, the budgetary decisions. I am quite sure that I will differ and disagree with where they put some of the

money. But in the budgetary process, you can be a revenue tool or you can be a group that requires the support of government, or you can be both. In fact, in many cases we are both. The very wealthy have to be treated as a revenue tool, but they also get free health care in this province. So you are one of each of the categories.

When we are talking about budgets, it should be automatic for me that no matter who you are—and the needs change from time to time. One thing that the member is very clear about: We live in a very diverse province. This may be one of the most diverse jurisdictions in all of the world because we are so welcoming to people. No matter where they originate from, they are welcome here in Ontario. No matter what their background, they are welcome here in Ontario. That makes Ontario an extremely diverse place.

It would be sort of expected that any government that is drawing up a budget in the province of Ontario would take into consideration the makeup of its people and ensure that every one of them is considered when they are going through the budgetary process. As the member said, how can you ignore from the gender point of view 52% of the population? It would be impossible. If I was drawing up a budget, which I am not—I don't know if I'll ever get the opportunity; probably not. But if I was, I would be ensuring that gender equality was part of what my budgetary considerations were. So I would hope and expect that the government is doing that. At the end of the day, we may not like what we get in the budget and we may not believe that it truly reflects what could be described as equality, but that is part of the budgetary debate as well.

I know on our side of the House, we hope that—you know, the government finally did move on Bill 96, the human sex trafficking bill that was championed not as a government bill but as a private member's bill by my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. So I hope that in this budget, that bill is backed with the resources, the funding, to make sure the government can actually tackle this heinous crime where, quite frankly, while not exclusively, it is largely women, young women and adult women, who are the targets of this crime. I hope they put the money in the budget to make that happen.

As the member said, the celebration is hollow if the funds don't follow. Well, the words are hollow as well if the funds don't follow. If the government brings in legislation to tackle human sex trafficking but doesn't back it up with funding, then the words were hollow. So as we're debating that bill—that bill is before the Legislature, going to committee after second reading—we have an opportunity to show that we are not only talking the talk but walking the walk.

As in all budgetary processes, I would hope that what the member is asking for is a matter of course, and it doesn't matter who you are in the province of Ontario; we are all equal. No one should be considered above another when you're talking about budgets in the province of Ontario, to ensure that everybody, of every walk

of life, of every race and creed, is considered equal in the budgetary process, and the lens should be viewed from that perspective.

1400

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm pleased to join the debate on motion 50. I want to commend the member from Parkdale-High Park, who has been a staunch advocate for equality in this place, and I appreciate the fact that she has brought this motion to the House today.

My parents are watching; I want to give them a shout-out. They told me, "Smile, Cath." But I have a hard time smiling in this place when we are still debating, in 2017, a basic concept which would level the playing field for both men and women, from a budgetary perspective, in the province of Ontario.

It is very significant that the member has brought this motion this week, because this week, the equal pay commission issued a piece of legislation to this government, because they have waited for 14 years. It is 30 years since the pay equity legislation passed, for equal pay. Women are still making 30% less than men in this province.

A key factor, which is also my critic portfolio, is early learning and care. I've heard the government side saying, "We are doing this, this and this." They are spinning on this issue, because I will tell you that Ontario has the highest cost of full-time child care, with a median cost of over \$700 per month. Gender-based budgeting can make this more affordable for women and families. This is from StatsCanada, 2011.

Investing in child care has immediate payback within the same fiscal year, according to research from Quebec. In 2008, each \$100 of subsidy for child care paid out by the Quebec government resulted in an additional \$104 in tax revenue for the government.

This is a government that is hungry, that is desperate for revenue, because they can't sell anything else in the province. Everything else is for sale. Soon, our chairs in this Legislature—they'll be renting them out.

On a single day, as many as 302 women and 221 children, many of them individuals of colour and First Nations, can be turned away from shelters in Ontario because they were full. Gender-based budgeting can improve conditions for those in poverty.

If this government applied a gender lens through all of the budgets that have come before this House, these stats would not exist.

I will leave you with one other one. Only 20% of the people—women and families—in this province have access to quality, affordable child care, and 23% of women in Ontario say that they only work part-time because they don't have access to quality child care. That is this government's legacy.

We need a gender lens on this budget, so that we can actually create equality for women in the province of Ontario. It needs to happen today, and it needs to be acted on.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: As the first female MPP for Davenport, and as we celebrate 100 years of women's right to vote in Ontario, I'm proud to rise to speak on this issue.

I want to thank MPP DiNovo for her advocacy on this and so many other important issues.

Our government has committed to strengthening the use of gender-based analysis within government, to make sure considerations of gender are an essential part of the policy development process.

We understand the value of women in the workforce, and what their contribution means for economic prosperity in Ontario. That's why the government has played a leadership role in promoting women's economic empowerment and corporate leadership.

That's why we have taken a government-wide approach to supporting women, including the creation of a stand-alone Minister of the Status of Women, dedicated to the security, equality and empowerment of women and girls in Ontario.

One of the strongest supports of women was when our government launched It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment. Our multimedia, award-winning public education campaigns have sparked discussions and increased awareness in Ontario, across Canada and around the globe.

But that's not all. Ontario continues to be a leader, establishing strong policies, programs and targeted strategies to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. As of January 1, 2017, all publicly assisted colleges, universities and private career colleges have a stand-alone sexual violence policy in place.

We have gone further than that. Our government has increased our investment in preventing violence against women by over 50% since 2003. Our government has provided \$85 million for 96 emergency shelter agencies to support over 2,000 beds. Our government has given \$29 million for counselling services that have helped over 40,000 women and 4,000 children. Our government has spent \$14.5 million over three years to support front-line workers and an additional \$6.2 million for programs to help children recover from witnessing violence.

We have done even more. We've also made improvements to the justice system itself to strengthen the prosecution of sexual assault cases, including a Sexual Violence Advisory Group that provides advice to police, crowns and victim witness workers on ongoing sexual assault investigations and prosecutions; the sexual violence mentorship program, which pairs a crown trained and experienced in prosecuting sexual assaults with a crown who would benefit from mentorship; enhanced education and training for crowns and victim services workers, which has already provided special training to 600 crowns in 2016 alone on conducting sexual violence prosecutions; and we have improved data collection to help identify areas that require attention and improve the justice system's response to sexual assault survivors.

With all of that said, I believe there is still more that we could be doing in this province to strengthen the justice system when it comes to sexual assault. That is why last week I introduced the Judicial Sexual Assault Education Act. The bill amends the Courts of Justice Act to require candidates for appointment as provincial judges to have completed comprehensive education or training in the law of sexual assault, including the law of evidence as it relates to sexual assault proceedings, the principles of consent for sexual activity, and the myths and stereotypes associated with sexual assault complainants.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that this government and this caucus support women, be it through our action plan, through the work that we do to ensure justice for victims of sexual violence and assault, or through legislation on the floor of this House. We are committed to ensuring fair and equitable outcomes for women in this province, and we will continue to strive to ensure that women are better represented, better paid and have access to the same opportunities that anyone does.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the motion put forward by the member from Parkdale—High Park in my capacity as the representative for Ontario for the Canadian region of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, or CWP, as it's known. I firmly believe that we need to ensure that women have a strong voice at the table when it comes to policy decisions that have impacts on us all.

We need to be inspired and inspiring for young women to become engaged and involved at all levels of government and at every stage of policy-making. That's one of the goals that CWP champions have and one I'm proud to be a part of.

Early in March, I participated in the historic Daughters of the Vote in Ottawa to mark the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. We had an amazing event yesterday as well, but first I'd like to touch on Daughters of the Vote. Again the word "inspiration" comes to mind. I was very pleased to be present when 338 young women from across our country sat in the House of Commons representing their ridings and spoke about the issues that they are most passionate about. We heard 30 amazing speakers who all had unique perspectives. They earned every right to be in that seat in the House of Commons.

Speaker, you would have been absolutely speechless at the grace and eloquence with which these young ladies expressed themselves. It certainly was a celebration of girl power.

As I mentioned, just yesterday we had the opportunity to celebrate our own remarkable assembly right here in Queen's Park. I have to share with you that Shannon Edwards—she represented my riding of Huron—Bruce—in particular, stood out to me. What she has done to inspire young people at the local level in her town of Goderich is just over the top. To hear her humbly speak about how she wants to become a nurse so she can pay it

forward and help young people—and people of all ages, to be quite honest—find their best selves was truly remarkable.

1410

During the event, I was very proud of our leader, Patrick Brown, who joined us for breakfast yesterday morning. He shared with all 107 ladies participating yesterday how Conservative women have been trail-blazers. Just to name a few, I'd like to salute Margaret Birch, Kim Campbell, Elizabeth Witmer and our very own Julia Munro. They are Conservative ladies who led the way and broke down walls for the rest of us to follow. So as a PC MPP, as a member of the CWP, and as a woman, I fundamentally understand and appreciate the importance of ensuring women have a voice at the table when it comes to policy development.

With a budget coming down the pipeline on April 27, and to the people fine-tuning this budget for the Liberal government, I would like to share this: Government has a duty to ensure the voices of women everywhere are considered when drafting that budget. So as they're tweaking it over the next couple of weeks, please, please, keep that in mind.

With regard to the MPP from Parkdale–High Park's PMB, I would like to point out that she's very passionate and very sincere in all she does, and I thank her for that, but I'd also like to share that legislation already exists which provides for the equitable consideration of all residents of Ontario when drafting a budget or monetary policy. In case anyone is interested, for those of you watching, it is the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004. The third principle governing the development of fiscal policy, under section 2 of the act, specifically relates to the subject of equality and equity. It states: "Its impact on different groups within the population and on future generations should be considered." So while we absolutely agree that the voices of women and other gender groups are very important, all voices of Ontarians are important. It is already part of the government's policy process, and it should be employed. Again, as they put the final touches on the budget that we will hear about on April 27, I truly hope the Minister of Finance's folks keep that in mind.

In the few seconds that I have left to speak, Speaker, I'd like to touch on the fact that the member from Parkdale–High Park mentioned Malala. She is an amazing young lady. A few years ago, I received a book from Deidra for Christmas—best Christmas gift ever. It was the book called *I Am Malala*. At that moment when I had time to read it, I couldn't set it down. I read it in a day. I was inspired then; I continued to be inspired to this day. I agree with the member from Parkdale–High Park. May we all embrace Malala's spirit and always remember that everyone matters.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It is a real pleasure for me to rise today to speak in support of the motion that was brought forward by my colleague the member for Parkdale–High

Park. I want to congratulate her for her advocacy and her leadership on this very important issue. She mentioned that the city of Toronto has gone in this direction to introduce gender-based budgeting throughout their budgeting process. I also wanted to share that my own community, the city of London, has incorporated a gender lens into their strategic plan. So this is something that is happening across our province at the municipal level and, as my colleague said, at the federal level. We need to look at this now at this level of government.

My colleague talked about the fact that, just a couple of days ago, April 11, we marked Equal Pay Day. There is a perfect example coming out of that day of what happens if you move ahead with initiatives that are supposed to respond to discrimination on the basis of gender, but do not put resources behind them.

We know that the Pay Equity Act was passed in this province 30 years ago, and yet 30 years later, we have a 30% wage gap between men and women in this province, and that is because we have not put the resources that are necessary into enforcing the act. We know that the Progressive Conservatives, when they were government in 1997, cut in half the budget that was available to the Pay Equity Commission. The Liberals have flat-lined the budget for the Pay Equity Commission over the last decade. As a result, more than 50% of the employers in this province are not complying with their legal obligations.

I want to give you one very striking example of what happens when you don't apply gender-based budgeting principles. We know that the gender pay gap represents about \$18 billion of forgone income annually for working women in this province, and that is a statistic that was reported in the government's own closing-the-gender-wage-gap steering committee. That represents about 2.3% of GDP. We also know from other budget documents that the underground economy represents about \$15 billion of forgone tax revenues on an annual basis, representing about 2.3% of GDP.

But do you know the difference in the resources that have been allocated to hunting down the underground economy, to rooting that out, to closing those loopholes, compared to what is allocated to closing the gender wage gap? And who works in the underground economy, Speaker? We know that these are people who are working in the roofing sector, in the construction sector. These are mostly male workers, and give them their due: They should not be exploited on the basis of pay. We should not be, as a province, unable to take advantage of those tax revenues that we should be collecting.

But by not closing the gender wage gap, we are disadvantaging child care workers, long-term-care workers and developmental service workers, all of whom are women, so we need this motion. We need it now.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: As the member from Parkdale–High Park has pointed out, when women workers are treated equitably, everyone benefits.

Here's what we're doing: We're making aggregated OPS salary range data available by gender and strengthening the application of gender-based analysis in government decision-making. We are committed to making 100,000 new child care spaces. We will be providing employers with resources, including training materials on anti-discrimination, and developing other education products for employees.

As a kindergarten teacher, I want to remind people that we have done something very big in the past, which is all-day, every-day kindergarten. That frees up a lot of women so that they can have employment earlier, and it saves about \$13,000 in daycare for those women and for families over two years. Not only do the women benefit from this, but so do the children. They get a better start to life so that they can be the best they can be, and most of those children are girls.

The changes the government has made to student assistance will enable many of those women to go back to school.

I think this is a great bill, and I urge you to support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is my honour to rise to speak to the motion before us, brought forward by my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park. I'm going to keep my remarks very short. I don't have much time left, and I know my colleague from Nickel Belt would like to have something to say, and I know my colleagues have covered a lot of ground.

Specifically on the pay equity piece, through my portfolio as the critic for the Ministry of Community and Social Services, we find that many of the female workers within that ministry itself—these are the workers who actually service and support those people who are some of the most vulnerable people in this province, and their employers are not meeting their pay equity requirements.

1420

The shocking part, aside from these requirements not being met, is the reason they are being given for these requirements and obligations not being met. They are actually being told, "If we fulfill our obligation to pay you equally to your male counterpart, we are going to have to cut services to these vulnerable people that you are helping. So you choose: Do you want to take the pay that is due to you, or do you want to help these people that you are meant to help?"

I think it's disgusting that it's being put that way, that somebody has to choose between being treated equally to their male counterparts—that they're being guilted into choosing to not take this pay, in order to provide service to some of our most vulnerable citizens. That is something that this government needs to take a good, hard look at.

That is a problem that can be solved by putting action behind the word "equity." Equity is not just a word; it's an action. These are publicly funded organizations. If this government was to actually provide the funding to these organizations, to help fulfill their obligations and to

provide proper supports to the people that these organizations are meant to serve and support, then employers wouldn't be having these discussions with their employees. They wouldn't, and they shouldn't, be saying to a female employee, "You either take less than you're allotted or should be getting—less than your male counterparts—and we help these people, or you get what is owing to you." This shouldn't be an either/or. It should be both. They should be getting both.

It's up to this government to make sure that the pay equity obligations are being met, and not just to talk about it, and to make sure that these organizations have enough funding to do that and to service the people they are meant to serve.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was so proud when the member from Parkdale–High Park decided to bring this motion forward.

I do belong to the association of francophone parliamentarians. I had the opportunity to learn about this type of budgeting. Did you know, Speaker, that 60 other countries are doing this? The general assumption is that budgets are gender-neutral, because they talk about finance. What they really are is gender-blind. A budget is not gender-neutral unless you make it so.

The best example of this is Australia. Australia has been working at this since 1984. They have a list of criteria that they go through. It goes from security—threats to security are being lived differently for men and for women. It looks at health and health care, because the way our health is affected is different, depending on your gender. It looks at education, because the way we go through our formation in education is different for men and for women, for boys and for girls. It looks at public works, because building a stadium in Australia for men to play soccer is really different than building a community park where you can bring your children to play.

They have this list; it exists. They have been using it since 1984. To this day, 33 years later, they still publish information, every single time they table a budget, about the budget's impact on women. We could be doing the same.

When you start to do this, when you start to report, it changes everything. You see opportunities that you have never seen before. You see ways to make real gender equity a reality, because it opens people's minds. You stop being blind to gender, and you start to see, as you work through your budget, as you work through your different bills, that it does have a different impact. And the more you work at it, the better you get at it.

Let's get on with this. Sixty other Parliaments are doing this. We can do that too.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Parkdale–High Park to wrap up.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to everyone who weighed in. There were so many of you.

I want to focus on a couple of things. First of all, I'll start at the last speaker, the member from Nickel Belt.

Yes, Australia is one. In fact, there are 200 jurisdictions—municipal, provincial or state, and federal—who are already doing this, and it makes a substantial difference. That's why we ask you to do it. It actually changes how money flows and where money flows to.

The member from Huron–Bruce—the fiscal accountability act of 2004: It didn't work. That's why I'm bringing forward this motion. You need to have a specific gender analysis; otherwise it doesn't happen. The proof is in the budgets: It hasn't happened. So that's why we are bringing this forward. She also mentioned that all voices are important. Yes, they are, but not all voices are heard. So what we're doing is bringing forward that 52% of the population's voice who haven't been heard and who were all here yesterday celebrating 100 years of women beginning to get the vote.

I want to emphasize too the intersectional aspect of this: because white women, yes, but racialized women experience a reality that's twice as grim. So again, to look at the intersectional gender equity aspect of budgeting is so critical here. It's not just covered with blanket flowery language; it needs data collection, which is the other thing. We want proof that they've done it. When the budget comes through, we want to hear those words and we want to see proof of the impact of their last budget. Did it do it? Will this one do it? What does it look like for the gross domestic product? RBC has said that if women were engaged to their capacity in this province, we would see a 21% increase in our economic output. The fact that we're not results in less.

To reiterate: Celebrations of women getting the vote are hollow if the funds don't follow.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will go on to vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should protect workers employed through temporary job agencies by committing to the following:

- ensure that all workers employed through a temporary job agency receive the same benefits, wages and working conditions as permanent, full-time workers doing comparable work; and

- proactively enforce employment standards at all temporary job agencies, and end the practice of long-term temporary assignments; and

- require that temporary job agency workers become permanent employees after working a cumulative total of six months for a client company; and

- reduce barriers to permanent employment for temporary job agency workers by eliminating the agency's ability to charge employers a fee when agency-assigned workers are offered full-time employment by a client company.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number

54. Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I had the opportunity to speak to this issue on a local TV channel. When speaking about the issue, I spoke with some of the staff at this media outlet. Initially, people didn't know what the issue was. When I told them that sometimes people are employed through an agency—a company connects an employer with a client company, and at that company, the temporary worker often sees a portion of their salary clawed back, and they don't receive the same pay as a permanent full-time employee—then, all of a sudden, some of the staff remembered being through that and working in those same conditions and being in that same scenario.

The reality, Madam Speaker, is that far too many Ontarians find themselves in a situation where they're working beside a co-worker doing the same job, putting in the same hours, putting in that same effort, and they find that their salaries are being clawed back by the temporary job agency. That's simply unacceptable in this province. It doesn't make sense to me that people should not receive equal pay for equal work.

On top of that, we see that temporary job agency workers—people working through the agency—don't receive the same benefits, and often don't receive any benefits whatsoever.

This motion would seek to address these two key issues, these two key problems. If you're working through an agency, you deserve and have the right to the same pay and equal benefits. That's the starting point.

The reality is, in Canada, there is a trend towards more and more unstable or insecure employment. That's what's happening. That does not have to be the trend, though. That is the trend right now, but we, as legislators, we as people in positions of power, can shift this tide and can work against this tide to ensure that people are treated with dignity.

1430

There is a lack of leadership on this file. When it comes to precarious employment or insecure employment or unstable jobs, temporary job agencies are one of the major driving forces behind it. The problem we're seeing is that we have government on all levels, whether it's provincial or federal, that are not taking this issue seriously.

If we look at provincial leadership on this matter, we have a government that has suggested a private member's bill where they said that an employee should only be entitled to at least 80% of their wage. That means that they're accepting that an agency could claw back 20% of their salary. They're saying that that's okay. I don't think it's okay. More importantly, New Democrats don't think it's okay. And most importantly, the people of Ontario don't think that that's okay.

Not only on the provincial level, but if we're looking for leadership on this matter, we're not seeing any leadership at the federal level either. We have a finance minister who said to the people of Ontario, to the people of Canada: "Get used to insecure employment; that's just

the way things are going to be. Get used to not having a stable job. Get used to it, and deal with it.” That’s coming from the finance minister of this country. That’s setting a horrible precedent. That’s suggesting to young people in this country that it’s okay that you don’t have protections, that it’s okay that a government is not standing up for you. I reject that notion, New Democrats reject that notion and the people of Ontario reject that notion.

What makes matters even worse is that we have a Prime Minister that endorsed his finance minister’s position. He said, “Yes, that’s the reality. Get used to it. Job churn is going to happen. Insecure employment is a reality.” Madam Speaker, if we have the Prime Minister of this country accepting that precarious employment, insecure and unstable employment is okay, that is sending such a horrible message to young people in this country. That is not acceptable.

This is why we’re bringing forward this motion. This motion makes it really clear. Not only should we ensure that workers through an agency receive equal pay and benefits, but there are two other very important ingredients. One is that we’re seeing—in my riding, this is a top issue; probably one of the top three major issues when I was first elected going door to door. To the present day, this continues to be a major issue. It’s an issue that impacts racialized people, impacts new immigrants, and particularly and disproportionately impacts women. This an issue that we need to address if we want to see the income inequality issue, which is probably one of the biggest problems we’re facing as a society—if we want to address income inequality, we need to look at some of the root causes, and this is one of them.

What we’re seeing is that people work through an agency at a particular client company. It makes sense. There can be an argument that a company might have a limited need for a number of new employees. They might have a contract where, over the summer, their production increases for a limited period of time, and they hire people additionally for a month or two months. But we’re seeing the same employee working at the same client company not just for one month or two months; we’re seeing that happen for years. There are people that come to my office and tell me about working at the same client company for multiple years and still being employed through an agency and not being able to get hired directly. That is shameful.

This motion will require that, if you work six months cumulatively—if you work up to six months of time at a particular client company, the company should be required to hire you permanently. That should be a requirement. In addition—and this is probably one of the most heinous things. This is just so extremely offensive. If you’re working through an agency right now and you’re working at a particular client company, and the client company says, “You’re a great employee. I would like to hire you permanently”—if it’s within six months, the client company has to pay a penalty to the temporary job agency to hire someone directly. That is a direct barrier to permanent employment.

That is the law of the land in this province. That is offensive. Think that through. It is not acceptable. I do not accept this proposition; we reject this proposition that you have to pay a penalty to get a full-time job. That should not happen. That should not happen in our province.

The motion here seems to be common sense. It seems to be things that just make sense intuitively. But the reality is, for the past decade, this government has done nothing on this file to address these issues. These are the real issues that are impacting people. These are the issues that are causing such difficulty in the lives of people who work through these agencies. But this government, which has been in power for 14 years—over a decade—has done nothing to address these fundamental problems that are impacting the lives of people. They have failed to do that.

That’s why this motion—some might say that it seems pretty obvious. Of course people should get paid equal salaries, equal pay, for equal work. Of course people should get the same benefits, even though they’re working through an agency. Of course they should be able to get hired full-time without any barriers. Yes, Madam Speaker, it seems obvious, but it doesn’t seem to be the case when we are dealing with a government that has failed to protect workers in this province for over a decade.

I want to highlight some of the realities of the circumstances and what is going on in our province.

If we look at the entire country, a third of young Canadians working in this country are working at temporary jobs. As of 2014, we have research that indicates there are 1,300 temporary employment agencies in Ontario—1,300—and over 700,000 temporary workers are in this province.

If we look at the trend, Madam Speaker, there was a comparison done—I have to give a special shout-out to a Toronto Star reporter, Sara Mojtehdzadeh, who has done phenomenal work on this file. She is particularly interested in workers’ rights, and she has done a phenomenal job of covering these issues.

She writes in her article that from 2002 to 2012, in a 10-year period of time, the revenues for temporary job agencies increased by 72%, an almost 100% increase. Their revenue is 5.7—wait for it—billion dollars. In the temporary job agency market—people who are connecting an employer to an employee—that revenue that they are generating is \$5.7 billion, and that is as of 2012. Over a 10-year period of time, they have increased 72%. We don’t know what the increase is to date, five years later. Maybe it’s another 30% increase. It is an industry that’s increasing at such a staggering rate, and we are seeing more and more exploitation of the workers.

There was a blitz done in 2015, a blitz of 50 temporary employment agencies. Fifty agencies were blitzed; they were randomly checked by the Minister of Labour. Thirty-seven of those agencies had multiple violations—37. That’s over 74% of the agencies, randomly selected, had violations.

But, Madam Speaker, listen to what the violations were. They weren't even violations of workplace conditions, which there probably were, and they weren't violations of the treatment of the worker. The violations were related to payment for overtime, public holidays and vacation pay. We're not even talking about the conditions for the workers, which we know are deplorable. They weren't even getting paid, Madam Speaker, by over 74% of the temporary job agencies.

Another major issue is, we don't see this government ensuring that there's enough enforcement of these agencies. People are being exploited and mistreated, and they're not even getting paid appropriately. This is so offensive. This is so unacceptable.

I hope that this motion will be supported by all members. We need to then move beyond that. Once this motion is passed, we need to see this government take some real action. It's clear that they don't care. It's clear that they have not shown that they understand the problem. But, hopefully, after this motion, we can at least push them to do something, to get some action for the people who are being treated so poorly in this province.

In the last seconds that I have, I just want to make it clear, again, that people working through temporary agencies do not deserve to be mistreated. They deserve dignity, they deserve respect, they deserve equal rights, and we are going to fight for that. New Democrats believe in that. We will continue this fight. We'll continue to stand up for them.

We ask for all parties to support this motion.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to acknowledge my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton for bringing this issue forward. This is an issue that's not only important to that side of the House; it's also very important to our side of the House. We have been working on this. We have made strides on this. We've done the review. We're working toward making these work conditions better for precarious employment.

I also brought forward a motion last year that entailed a lot of the same things that the member across the aisle is talking about: protecting employees; making sure that temporary agencies are fulfilling temporary needs and that they aren't looking for full-time fulfillment from temporary workers.

So I want to say that we've put forward a number of safeguards specifically for employees of temporary agencies. This includes protection from reprisals for asserting employee rights and prohibiting agencies from charging fees for taking a job.

Our Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, passed in 2014, added more protections by establishing joint and several liability between temporary help agencies and their clients for failure to pay certain wages. I completely agree that it's not fair that somebody shouldn't get paid for the work they're doing, and we have been cracking down on it. There have been crack-

downs. When we have people come to us, we do file those complaints through the Minister of Labour. I hear about those things in my riding, as well, all the time. We've been working with those individuals. We work to try to help them to find out why. This is why we did consultations. This is why we received written submissions. This is why the ministry is focused on finding a way to make work conditions better for everyone.

This legislation made Ontario the first province and one of the very few jurisdictions anywhere to specifically address temporary help agency employment in legislation. This is something that we're very proud of. But the protections don't stop here. The Employment Standards Act:

- prohibits agencies from preventing clients from hiring assignment employees directly;

- prohibits agencies from charging assignment employees fees for taking a job or for resumé writing;

- requires the agencies to provide assignment employees with information about their assignments and about their employment standards rights;

- prohibits clients of agencies from reprising against assignment employees for asserting their employment standards rights; and

- limits the period in which agencies can charge employers for hiring assignment employees directly to six months.

Employment agencies are meant for temporary fulfillment of their needs. They should not be using this as a full-time solution. We think that people should have the right to find those permanent jobs, to have that job security. Everybody in Ontario should have the right to find job security, and we support that. This is why we're continuing to focus on making conditions better for temporary workers. We want to ensure that all temporary workers know their rights when they're working under these conditions and they know what they're entitled to so that they can advocate for themselves when they are in these situations. We've been providing ways to do that through legislation, through education campaigns, through specific posters that are required to be posted throughout places of employment. We want to ensure that they feel comfortable asking questions at work without being afraid of any kind of reprisals—and for making their workplace fair.

Our government has also made changes that ensure temporary help agency assignment employees have the same rights to public holidays, notice of termination and severance pay as other employees do.

The Changing Workplaces Review is a comprehensive review, and our goal is to make sure that all of those who work in Ontario feel protected. A lot of the things outlined in this bill are things that we are looking at through this review and changes that we have begun to make.

We acknowledge that we're not all the way there yet. There is more work to be done, no doubt. We'll continue to do that work, to ensure that all workers in Ontario feel safe and can look for stable employment, and that all

workers will have the same rights, anywhere they're employed—whether it be occupational health and safety, whether it be termination or severance rights, sick benefits, or equal pay for full-time employment.

I look forward to supporting the member's motion today.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakubuski: I want to commend the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton for bringing forth this motion—if nothing else but to draw attention to what is in many cases an unfair working circumstance.

No one who gives a fair effort in providing enhancement to an employer through their efforts, through their work, should ever have to fight to get their wages, and that happens far too often.

There is no question that that is a serious problem that genuinely exists. The sad part about the world we live in is that there are always going to be people who will try, if they can, to take advantage of others, and usually it is the most vulnerable and the most needy and the most desperate who get take advantage of. Because someone needs a job, they'll sometimes take whatever is out there, and they'll get exploited as a result of it.

Having said that, the member's motion is just that: It is a motion of this Legislature. It is a non-binding motion that has no legislative authority. If the government truly wants to act on it, they would bring in a piece of legislation.

But there are some concerns as well. I think it should be pointed out that not everybody is going to get a permanent job the first time they get into the labour market. Precarious employment is a challenge—there's no question about it—and we have more precarious employment today than we used to have because of the nature of our economy. So, more permanent jobs for people would be absolutely preferred, but there will be the need for temporary workers.

Some of the things the member is asking for—I had a discussion with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and also got some feedback from the chamber of commerce as well. They have concerns about a motion such as this and how it could impact the ability of business to function in a competitive world, in a competitive environment. For example, if the same benefits had to apply to anyone, to a temporary as a permanent, you would have to look at the pension benefits—after six months—you would have to look at maternity leave, which could be up to 18 months for someone who could have worked for a very short period of time.

We cannot in any way stand and allow vulnerable people to be exploited, but at the same time we have to make sure there is a balance. We live in a complicated economy in which there will always be some temporary work. Agriculture, for example, and the nature of agriculture—I mean, harvest time is harvest time. You're going to need a lot more people on the farm at the time the crops have to be brought in than at other times of the year. So there will be a need for temporary workers.

There's nothing in his motion about an exemption for agriculture. It's always been a sticking point for the agriculture industry when they're wrapped in with other types of businesses in the province, because of the uniqueness of the agriculture sector. It has to be taken into consideration if you're talking about legislation—in this case, it's only a motion—that governs employment and how you treat temporary workers versus permanent workers.

As I say to the member, I understand his advocacy and I commend him for taking that position—which he always has, by the way. But at the same time, this motion in and of itself is not going to change any laws in the province of Ontario, because it is just a motion; it is not a bill. But at the same time, should the government decide to act on this and bring forth a piece of legislation, they need to take into consideration the balance that is necessary to make sure that we don't institute rules that actually hurt the prospects for people to get jobs more than they help. If the employers cannot create the employment because they're no longer competitive, that's not going to create any jobs, permanent or otherwise.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: It's always a pleasure to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. First, I'd like to thank both my colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and my colleague from Welland for their dedication to workers' rights, for their hard work on this motion and for bringing it forward today.

New Democrats always, and always will, fight to get Ontario workers better jobs, better wages and better benefits. Sadly, over the last few years, under the Premier's watch, I've been hearing from more and more constituents about the anxiety and hardship that unstable work is causing them. Week to week, they don't know if they have enough hours to pay the rent or if they'll be working night shifts or day shifts. They're worried that if they get sick, they'll be fired or not called back.

Over 700,000 workers in Ontario are employed through temporary job agencies. Roughly 22% of the jobs in the province are characterized as precarious. Racialized workers experience disproportionately higher rates of precarious and temporary employment. People are being exploited left, right and centre.

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I had a constituent come into my office last month, struggling to make ends meet, who hadn't been paid for 10 hours of hard work on a Saturday in an assembly facility. He is a temporary agency worker. He doesn't know from one day to the next if he will be working or not. While he was on an assignment, his supervisor at the firm called him over and asked him if he could come back in for an extra day of work on Saturday. He anxiously agreed, but he didn't know that the firm never told the agency, and neither of them will pay him. They haven't created any records of him ever working. Ten hours of hard work, and not a penny to show for it: It's outrageous, Speaker. Despite going to the Ministry of

Labour, he hasn't seen his money yet. That's the reality of work in Ontario in 2017.

When it comes to workers' rights in the province, the laws are very weak, the regulations are worse, and the enforcement is close to non-existent. We heard some of the stories about temporary workers at the press conference this morning. I hope the members from all parties were listening, because if you haven't worked in that kind of environment—and a few of them have, I suppose—it's almost impossible to understand it.

If you are a temp worker in this province, it's hard to plan any future. Sometimes you can't even sleep at night before you get worried about getting sick or unemployed. Every day you're thinking, "Will I be called tomorrow or not?" When you are at work, you know that the person next to you doing the exact same job might be earning twice as much as you. I've met temp workers who made only half of what the permanent staff did in these environments. Not only is it demoralizing, demotivating and unfair; it's absolutely, I think, illegal. The agency takes the other half of their money, and for what?

People working in this province should get equal pay for equal work: same job, same pay. If you work somewhere for months, even years, you should have the same protections, the same status and the same dignity as anyone else working at that same place for months or years.

It's hard to get off the treadmill of agency work. The agencies don't make it easy, and our laws keep it that way. Currently, in Ontario, agencies can charge client companies a hefty fee if they want to hire a temp within the first six months on the job. That's a huge disincentive for hiring people on a permanent basis.

It's time to end all of this treatment. We don't have to accept this as the future of Ontario's working families. No more unfair, unequal treatment of workers in this province. I encourage members of this House and all parties to support this motion, and I ask the government to implement it as soon as possible. Enough is enough, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'd like to thank all the speakers who have been addressing this important issue, and, of course, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton. I think this is a conversation that we need to have in this Legislature. I join the member from Hamilton, who talked about people coming into his office and talking about current workplace conditions.

I recently had someone come into my office. She was placed through a temp agency, and she said that she felt so disrespected as a Canadian and as an Ontarian, where even at her workplace she was referred to as a number. Everyone was just assigned a number: 1 to 60. It's like, "47, come here and do this now." Can you imagine that type of an environment where you've just been broken down to a basic number? I think, in many cases, temp agencies here in the province of Ontario—as the member from Hamilton was saying, there are 700,000 people working through temp agencies—really take the human side out of what it means to be in a workplace.

Maybe this is personal for me. I know my mother worked at a place where there was a threat to bring in contract workers through a temp agency, and my mother was the person who brought forward the union at that workplace. You know, it was very difficult, and at the very end, they lost that battle after a year.

I think it's a shame when companies put in place a process that—you can make money off the consumer, the consumer has a choice, but when you start looking at the worker to grow revenue, I think that's always a big problem. It's a shame, because it doesn't have to be that way in Ontario. There's so much wealth in this province that everyone who works hard deserves the right to have a family, grow that family, send their kids off to school, and be able to save some money to put down on a house and go on a vacation once in a while.

Through a temp agency model, benefits are removed and people are not given stable work hours. The middleman comes in, and a lot of that revenue is diverted to other interests. I think there's a lot more work we could be doing in this space.

I think that people deserve to have benefits here in the province of Ontario. Really, the model that we've had for many, many years in this province is that when someone is hurt, we all come together and think of ways—through our social policies and programs, but also workplace programs—to make sure that people have the resources they need, if they work hard, to be able to take care of themselves and their families.

I'm very supportive of this motion. I think that there's a lot more we can be doing in this space as we prepare for the next generation of young people entering the workforce. We need to make sure that the workforce is offering the types of jobs that when people contribute and work hard, it protects their interests as well. It can't be a one-sided give-all. When you work for a company and you put your heart into that company, that company has a responsibility to make sure it protects its workers as well.

I'd like to thank the member for bringing this forward and bringing this conversation here today. I know that there has been work that has been taking place through the Minister of Labour when it comes to our Changing Workplaces Review, but I do believe that there are next steps, and hopefully we can go forward together to continue to build the type of Ontario that protects workers' rights and allows people to reach their full potential.

The last thing I'll say, Madam Speaker, is that I know that this affects racialized communities in a different way. Growing up in Flemingdon Park, I know that if you go out there and you talk to the young black men who are in that neighbourhood about going to get a job, they don't say, "I'm going to apply to this company; I'm going here; I'm going there"; they say, "I'm going to the temp agency," which I think is a shame. The disconnect between the employer and the employee in that responsibility has been taken over by these entities that are there, really, to make money.

There's no question in my mind that temporary services are necessary for temporary reasons, because

sometimes you may have a store that comes up for a couple of weeks and you need some workers to come in to provide a service. That's how it traditionally was. Now it has become a natural way in many jurisdictions across North America.

We need to change the dialogue there. We need to change the conversation. We need to move forward on putting in some strong policy that will accomplish better rights for workers and, in the end, build a stronger economy here in Ontario, a stable economy that gives people the right to reach their full potential and reach their dreams here in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm pleased to rise and speak to this motion from the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. This motion has quite a few parts to it, and I only have a few minutes, so I will focus on the big-picture aspect that concerns me most, and that's certainly the impact on small and medium-sized businesses.

The wording of the motion is interesting. It claims to be in favour of protecting workers, and that's a good thing. As I read further into it, I realized that the changes proposed by my honourable colleague could hurt workers more than they protect them. Take, for example, the idea that temporary workers should get all the same wages, benefits and working conditions as full-time employees.

Temporary workers play an important part in our labour market. They allow employers to better manage their staffing levels based on fluctuating demands and unexpected events, like a full-time employee having to take sick leave. A print shop may have a few contracts a year that require extra hands on deck. The profit margins are slim to begin with, so they bring in temporary help. Another example is a restaurant or a tourist attraction that sees an uptick in demand during summer months. It might hire temporary workers to balance the load.

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Then there are sectors like agriculture that, by their very nature, rely on flexible labour in order to turn a profit. The member from Pembroke was talking about the harvest and how temporary workers come in and work very hard in the harvesting of fruits and vegetables in the fall. Speaker, that also starts in the spring—in fact, actually, before spring. You'll see ads in our local papers in the country asking for temporary help to put machinery together for the spring work, so you'll see people getting work there for a couple of months before spring and during spring. What they're doing is putting new machinery together that farmers have bought. They look forward to that work, actually, and a lot of our farm children take advantage of that.

Requiring employers to offer temporary workers the same wages and benefits as full-time employees could impose a potentially huge cost. Many small and medium-sized business owners would do the math and realize they can't afford to bring in temporary help. The result is that those jobs that would have been previously filled by temporary workers may no longer exist.

Another aspect of the motion would require that employers convert a temporary worker into a permanent employee after they've worked six months cumulatively. So if a worker has banked two months per year for the last three years, they somehow must be hired as a permanent employee, as I understand it. This is troubling, because it drastically increases labour costs for small businesses. I would argue it also boxes in workers who might not want a permanent job with a given employer. The six-month period also seems arbitrary. It makes me question how much consulting my honourable colleague has done with actual business owners.

It brings to mind a letter I received from a small business owner in Perth–Wellington recently. Chuck owns two McDonald's franchises that employ 73 members of the community, 50 full-time and 23 part-time. He wrote me because he's concerned that the Liberal government might bring in reforms under the Changing Workplaces Review that will hurt businesses and employees. I would like to read a few lines from Chuck's letter:

"As a small business owner, I am deep concerned by the proposals that were set out by the appointed special advisers in the interim report. The proposals are far-reaching and I fear that, if implemented by the Liberal government, they will hurt not just Ontario businesses but the employees themselves.

"Changing laws and adding administrative burden to employers who are doing the right thing should not come before enforcement of existing laws. Businesses that do not comply with existing employment standards should face severe consequences, and this should not come on the backs of employers who are doing the right thing."

Speaker, this is related to this motion in that this motion runs in the same vein. It could put an unnecessary burden on employers that, in the end, will suppress labour demand and hurt job seekers.

I do hope the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton will address the agriculture situation as we have put forward. It does concern us in rural Ontario that it could have far-reaching effects and may be unmanageable for the people who own our orchards, our grape vineyards and that type of thing. So I do hope that the member has thought about this. However, I don't see that in this bill, and it's something that does concern us in rural Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: First of all, I want to commend the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. It's an absolutely essential piece of legislation, and I urge the government actually to act on it.

I want to first of all address the minister and the story about his mother. If you had card-check certification, if you had anti-scab legislation, maybe your mother would have organized that union.

I want to also talk to the concerns that were raised by my colleagues to the right, figuratively and literally. What we're talking about here is equal pay for equal work. That's the principle behind this. It's not saying that you can't do temporary work. It's saying that if you do,

you should get paid the same hourly rate and the same benefits as a permanent employee. That's all. I can tell you, that simple concept—if we had that in place federally and provincially, we would do away with most part-time contract and precarious work.

Why do employers use part-time contract and precarious work? Because it's cheaper. It's cheaper; that's why. That's why they do it. They don't have to pay the same benefits; they don't have the same responsibilities.

It's not just for assembly-line workers. Most of our colleges and universities are balancing their budgets on the backs of contract faculty. They're doing our teaching jobs now, and they're being paid sometimes 50% of what the tenure-track faculty are getting paid. They have no job security, and they're working year in, year out. My partner is one of them; I can speak from experience.

This is also an argument for why we need a gender lens on everything we do, because this affects mainly, and mostly, women, and racialized women at that. Again, that's the other point that we're making here.

I just want to say it again, because it cannot be said often enough: What is the moral or ethical justification for two people, side by side, doing the same job, and one gets paid more than the other? This is a basic human rights issue. It's an ethical issue.

This is a question that businesses can address. And it's not a small business issue. I owned a small business. My son owns a small business. There's nothing in small business that says you can't pay people fairly. Even if you use part-timers, there's nothing in small business that says you can't pay them the same hourly rate and the same benefits that you pay full-timers—nothing at all.

In fact, what business wants is an even playing field, and if you had that even playing field in legislation, then everybody has to follow the same rules, so competition is still there.

Again, equal pay for equal work, and, I would add, equal benefits for equal work as well—because this would make all the difference in the world. Immediately, if the government acted on this, you would see a rise in full-time employment and a drop in precarious work.

Again, there's only one reason employers do it: It saves them money. Let's take away that loophole. Let's make the workplace fair.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton as well for his leadership here.

There are some issues I have with some components of this. I don't have enough time to get into that in great detail, but I'll say that, generally, I think this is a good thing to do, and I certainly plan on supporting it.

But I do want to talk a little bit more, and I'd like to speak to our friends in the third party, because I think if you look at the Employment Standards Act and some of the things that the government does—this is the first province that actually started to deal with temporary agencies.

I remember my grandmother, wearing a babushka, working as a cleaning lady, as a char, in apartment buildings—and it wasn't a temp agency, but she was so terribly exploited. Her husband, who worked for the rail yards, had a stroke and couldn't support the family. She had nine kids at the time. Two died in childbirth, which was not unusual. They lived in a two-bedroom cold-water flat. I always remember talking to my mom's older sisters about the level of exploitation of that.

When I was in college, my dad lost his company through a very serious downturn in the economy in the 1970s, and I remember going to work to stay in college. I would work from 9 o'clock at night to about 4 o'clock in the morning, but I was only paid until midnight. I started with a temp service, and I was the only English-speaking and -educated person working there. It was men and women. They were people of colour. They were often landed immigrants. It was massive exploitation of people, and it was very hard to organize.

There are issues around this that need a larger strand. There are differences in agriculture—I've heard some of the members of the official opposition. We deal with agricultural employment supply, and seasonal employment, and I think we probably need some more protections there. But this isn't something that's likely going to negatively impact on farmers, and I'm sure that long before legislation like this would be further elaborated, you'd be engaged with the OFA and the farm community to make sure that this wasn't a cookie-cutter model.

I just want to say that I represent a lot of people who represent precarious employment. While I would say we have done more in this Legislature, as the governing party—and I will give credit to the third party for raising this issue—I'm just struck by how much more we have to do to create security and safety—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

1510

M^{me} France Gélinas: I wanted to put a little bit of a health care lens as to what agency nursing looks like in Ontario, and I'll quote from a pretty reliable source, the Auditor General's report. I'm on page 470 of the 2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario. She has audited three large community hospitals—no name is required, although we know what it is. It's the principle that I want to drive through. This particular hospital reported an increase of 335% in agency nursing. That is an increase of \$2.5 million in its agency costs from 2012 to 2015.

It is easy to make the link here, Speaker, that this is also the period of time where hospitals saw four years of no budget increases, where we were we saw thousands of nurses losing their jobs. Those nurses had families. Those nurses had spouses. Those nurses had mortgages to pay. They needed to stay in their community, so they went to work for agency nursing and ended up working back in the same hospital that had laid them off. But you know what? At two thirds or half of the salaries they used to make, no benefits, no pension plan, no seniority, none of the above.

The auditor goes on to say that for the amount this particular hospital spent in 2015 on agency nursing and only in its emergency department, “it could have hired four full-time or seven part-time emergency room nurses.”

It goes on to say, “At the same hospital, one registered practical nurse from a nursing agency had worked more than 1,530 hours in 2015. This is considered excessive,” and she goes on to explain, “Overreliance on agency nurses is a concern because, in addition to being costly” to the hospital, “it creates a lack of continuity that may lead to inconsistencies in care delivered to patients.” I couldn’t agree more.

But we have created those massive layoffs of the best-trained and the best nurses, I would say, on the planet right here in Ontario, and they have been laid off by the thousands. They are now working for half of the wages they used to make before. In agency nursing, they’re doing night shifts, doing afternoons, doing weekends and doing statutory holidays. Why? Because if you are a nurse working a statutory holiday, you get paid time and a half. If you are an agency nurse, you get paid the same price, no matter when you work. What does that mean? That means the nurse beside you is being paid one and a half times what you are being paid to do the exact same work at the exact same time.

This is a human right. This is not okay, and this has to change. This is why we have to pass this motion that is put forward by my colleague.

I also want to talk about something that’s happening specifically in Sudbury. In Sudbury, we have the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre. It is one of just four workers’ centres in Ontario and the only one in northern Ontario. It had applied for an Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, and it was turned down, although this is one of their main sources of funding to grow this new agency. Why do I bring this forward? Because 52% of the people the Sudbury Workers Education and Advocacy Centre helps are women, 38% are youth and the great majority of them work for temporary agencies where they don’t get paid when they’re supposed to, they don’t get paid the number of hours they have worked and where their contract is not being respected. Not only are their contracts way too low, they are not even being respected. Let’s pass this motion—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. I will return to the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton to wrap up.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you to all those who spoke. Thank you for your show of support of the motion.

I just want to highlight a couple of key components at the end. One of the biggest things we need to do—and that this motion calls for—is proactive enforcement of employment standards. We’re seeing far too often that we have laws that are in this land, but they’re not being proactively enforced. Without enforcement, legislation is meaningless, so we need to ensure that there’s proactive enforcement.

I want to leave you all with a quote from Stephanie Nakitsas, who is a cofounder of the Urban Worker Project. She says with regard to this type of scenario of precarious employment and unstable employment, “No one should get used to not getting paid on time, not getting paid at all, working for less than minimum wage on a contract, being misclassified as an independent contractor when you are an employee, working without protections under employment standards laws, working without access to health and dental benefits or income security measures like EI or parental leave.”

We know that workers in this province are being exploited. We know that precarious employment is a rampant issue, and we know specifically that temporary job agencies are one of the major sources of unstable employment. We know that the two key issues, the two principle issues that we need to address are equal pay for equal work and equal benefits. This is what we need to implement.

I hope this motion passes, but more importantly, I hope this government is paying attention to the will of this Legislative Assembly. We as New Democrats will ensure that the will of this assembly will be pushed forward and that we have protections for these workers. We will implement these protections and ensure that people receive justice in this province. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will vote on this item at the end of private members’ public business.

VISITOR

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I want to recognize a visitor today in the visitors’ gallery: the former member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock in the 39th Parliament, Rick Johnson. Welcome.

RELIABLE ELEVATORS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017

SUR LES ASCENSEURS FIABLES

Mr. Dong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 in respect of elevators and elevating device mechanics / Projet de loi 109, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment et la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur en ce qui concerne les ascenseurs et les mécaniciens d’ascenseurs et d’appareils de levage.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Han Dong: Before I begin, I want to recognize a few guests of mine in the members’ gallery, starting with Mr. Alan Yew, a resident of 91 Augusta in my riding of Trinity–Spadina; Brad Brave, Al Ververgaert, Dan Vinette and Ben McIntyre from the International Union

of Elevator Constructors, Local 50; as well as Kevin Vuong of the Southcore Community Association; Fred Taylor from KJA Consultants Inc.; and Bill and Kristine Currie, who are the parents of a member of the staff who helped me to draft this very important bill.

Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to begin the second reading of the Reliable Elevators Act, known as Bill 109. I have been in consultation with industry professionals on this bill for months, and I am very pleased with the results. Bill 109 is among the first of its kind to address the need for regulatory changes when it comes to elevator repairs.

Before I continue, I would like to acknowledge those who helped to strengthen this piece of proposed legislation: representatives from the Technical Standards and Safety Authority; thyssenkrupp Elevator Canada; Andrew Wells, Rob Isabelle and Fred Taylor from engineering consultants KJA Consultants Inc.; Kevin Vuong, chair of the Southcore Community Association; Gary Pieters, president of the CityPlace Residents' Association; Todd Hofley, chair of the Liberty Village Residents Association; Sean McCormick and Dan Vinette with the International Union of Elevator Constructors; and Allen Yew, a local resident from Trinity–Spadina.

A year ago, while meeting with constituents in my riding, I was told of a senior who was put at risk because of an out-of-service elevator. Before the holidays in 2015, a resident living on the fifth floor of a community housing complex began experiencing pains in her chest. She phoned emergency services. Help arrived quickly but was delayed for over an hour because the building's only freight elevator was shut down. According to another resident, it had been shut down for weeks.

1520

After hearing this story, I began consulting with my community about the state of their elevators. In the riding of Trinity–Spadina, which I am proud to represent, we have seen unprecedented growth, with a mix of commercial and residential high-rise buildings. Elevators are essential to their daily lives. I'm sure that my colleagues across all parties can attest to the increase in Ontario's vertical communities, which all rely on elevators.

When the elevators go "out of service" for long periods of time, seniors who are unable to manage stairs become afraid to leave their homes to go out for groceries or medical appointments. In talking to high-rise property owners and tenants, I heard about the delays and the long waits that they experience going to and from work when elevators are down. This poses a serious risk to health and safety, and it infringes on consumers' rights to access their homes.

Madam Speaker, unreliable elevator service has been so troubling that over the last two years it has been reported on by many major news media. To quote the Canadian Press, "Every day of the year, Canadians across the country are finding themselves trapped in faulty elevators, while countless more are suffering through inconvenience and isolation because of elevators that are out of service—and the problem is worsening."

In seeing a clear need for action, I, with the help of my team, began to research and to try to come up with possible solutions. I would like to recognize the members of my staff who put in countless hours of work towards this bill: Peter Maragos, Shannon Currie—I believe her parents are in the audience as well—and Jacob Larocque-Graham.

Ontario has approximately 40,000 elevators. In numbers obtained by the Canadian Press, 2,200 of these elevators are over 50 years old, and 14,750 are between 25 and 50 years old, making 42% of Ontario's elevators 25 years of age or older. It is critical for the province to address proper regulation for maintenance and legislation for repair time, ensuring the reliability of all elevators.

Therefore, we put together Bill 109, which proposes a maximum time frame in which to bring elevators back into service. For most buildings the limit will be set at 14 days, and for long-term-care facilities and retirement homes seven days, enforced through an amendment to the Consumer Protection Act, 2002.

This bill will also amend the Building Code Act, 1992, by asking for a mandatory elevator traffic analysis to be included in the building permit application process for any new development of seven stories or higher.

To be fair, Ontario is one of the safest jurisdictions for elevators in the world, thanks to the regulatory framework for safety through the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. However, once an elevator is put out of service for repairs, there is no specific legislation, nor regulations, to bring them back into service within an acceptable time frame.

This is a complex issue with many contributing factors. In consultation with industry experts, I've been told that the ecosystem of elevator parts and delivery has changed within the industry. The majority of parts are made out of the country, and to "order as needed" has become the standard practice, which can contribute to wait times for repair.

Madam Speaker, another observation was brought to my attention in consultation with the International Union of Elevator Constructors. I have been informed that the ratio of licensed mechanics to elevator units has dramatically increased. A decade ago, a licensed mechanic might only be responsible for servicing 70 to 80 units, whereas today that number could be as high as 140 units, posing a challenge to preventive maintenance.

The bill, if passed, will request all aspects of the industry—TSSA, contractors, mechanics and device owners—to work together to ensure acceptable outage times and more reliable service.

To enforce this maximum time frame, Bill 109 would amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002. The elevator device owner enters into a maintenance contract with the elevator contractor, essentially making them consumers. As consumers, the services purchased through the agreement should be subject to protection under the consumer protection branch of the ministry.

I believe that, if passed, the Reliable Elevators Act will lead to better and clearer contracts in order to comply with the act.

Another important aspect is updating the Building Code Act. This is particularly important, given the dramatic increase in the cost per square footage in high-rises, and the anticipated rapid growth in our communities. Architectural designs must ensure sufficient vertical transportation devices in these high-rises. Therefore, I see a great need for legislation to be updated.

A quote given to the Toronto Star from Canderel Residential Group says that a decade ago, “The average highrise was 30 to 35 storeys. Today, 60 is becoming commonplace.”

However, the current Building Code Act does not have specific language to address the requirements for elevators. It is through the Ontario fire code that we see a requirement for at least one operational elevator in buildings greater than six storeys. Surely, legislation needs to be updated.

Many developers already use elevator traffic analyses to advise them on the architectural design of their buildings. Bill 109 seeks to ensure that the good design practice of these developers is reflected industry-wide.

I have here a quote from the Ontario Home Builders' Association: “On behalf of the 4,000 member companies organized into a network of 29 local associations, the Ontario Home Builders' Association supports the principle of the Reliable Elevators Act (Bill 109) that new buildings will have enough elevator capacity to service their residents.” You can see the support that this bill has been getting in the industry.

If passed, it calls for mandatory elevator traffic analyses to be included as part of the building permit process for any building proposal of seven storeys or higher.

Madam Speaker, in my consultation with the elevator contracting community, I recognize that the majority of independent contractors complete their repairs within two to three days. However, there can be special circumstances that are not in their control; for example, elevator modernization or natural disasters that may prevent them from meeting the required deadline. Therefore, if passed, this bill will provide the ministry with the legal tools to establish conditions for exemptions through regulation. I look forward to future discussions with ministers and experts in the field to establish these details.

Madam Speaker, I want to give some final numbers to show the growth that we are seeing. Construction data firm Emporis reported that as of this month, Toronto is the site of 20 buildings over 200 metres, 62 buildings over 150 metres, and a total of 2,438 high-rises city-wide. Also, there are currently 358 active permits for high-rise buildings in Toronto of six storeys or higher. Given these numbers, reliable elevator service is absolutely essential. As legislators, we have this opportunity in front of us to make it right, not just for the residents of today, but for the future.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all members to support this—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Lorne Coe: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 109. Elevators have become an important component of our everyday quality of life. What's clear is that the growth in commercial and residential high-rise buildings makes elevators a necessary service for more and more Ontarians.

1530

For some, when an elevator requires maintenance, they're able to take the stairs, but there are many others who are physically challenged or have reduced mobility who depend on elevators to go to work, attend medical appointments, buy groceries and perform other daily functions. For them, elevator maintenance can often mean being confined in a residence.

This is particularly problematic when we look at long-term-care homes. Many of the residents in these homes would risk a serious injury if they took the stairs due to elevator maintenance, but some are unable to take the stairs at all. This creates a very serious problem, as the staff in these long-term-care homes provide the vital care residents require, and these services are delayed when an elevator is undergoing maintenance. This is why Bill 109, as it should, requires that elevators in long-term-care homes and retirement homes be repaired within seven days.

I'd like to turn to one of the other reasons, and that's that elevator maintenance is a challenge. This has been brought to my attention through discussion with some of the organizations like Colleges Ontario, that there simply aren't enough apprentices or journeypersons in the elevator maintenance trade. But Durham College, which is in my riding, is trying to alleviate the shortage of trained elevator technicians, and the college offers a unique elevator trades apprenticeship for journeypersons. The first wave of graduates is expected to be ready for full-time employment in May 2019.

What's really important here is that Durham College is the only facility in Ontario to offer an elevating devices mechanic apprenticeship program, which utilizes an operating elevator and an escalator in the delivery of in-school training. Added to that, in 2016, Durham College ran a pre-apprenticeship program specifically for women, to increase their representation in the field.

Unfortunately, though, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development controls how many apprentices are allowed to sign up for the industry. Regrettably, this has caused a shortage to develop of this particular type of maintenance worker. It's causing a longer lag-time for repair and maintenance as a result.

Without addressing the causes of the government's induced shortage of tradespeople in this sector, landlords will have a challenge meeting the time requirements set out in this bill. To address this significant challenge, the government needs to implement measures to raise the supply of full-time elevator mechanics and technicians. What's clear here is that Durham College is doing its part to train new tradespeople, but the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development also needs to step up.

Delayed elevator maintenance affects all Ontarians, some of which I've laid out earlier. However, seniors,

those with disabilities and those with reduced mobility are most at risk. It's incumbent, very incumbent, upon this government to ensure that all available solutions are being considered, some of which I cited, to make sure that there are enough elevator tradespeople to meet today's demands and those of the future.

At the end of the day, we, as members of provincial Parliament, are responsible for the safety and well-being of all Ontarians, but we especially must consider those who are physically challenged or have reduced mobility, so they are not faced with any additional hardship. They deserve no less.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate on private member's Bill 109, the Reliable Elevators Act. It's really interesting for me because I started off my working career working at Otis Elevators right down here on McCaul Street, so in many respects I've come full circle.

The safety and security of elevator services in that work experience was a very stressful situation, because what happens in those high-rises around access to elevators, or in some instances being trapped in elevators, has sometimes very traumatic effects for people who are caught.

I would like to acknowledge that this piece of legislation looks to change the Consumer Protection Act, as the member from Trinity-Spadina has mentioned. The second part changes the provincial building code to mandate elevator traffic studies for new high-rise buildings. It is interesting that that has been part of the focus, because a huge issue—in Toronto, in particular, which has grown up—is maintenance and security of older buildings and the elevators contained within them. This is a serious issue.

I would like to remind the member—this happened before both of us were here—that in 2011, the United Way called for the province to establish a special working group to examine the problem of chronic elevator breakdowns. Long repair delays are a particular issue for residents living in older high-rises in Toronto's inner suburbs, many of whom are low-income. I think it's important to acknowledge that in this city, where even having access to rental units is becoming a very competitive issue for residents who are seeking shelter, accessing those apartments is an ongoing issue. Some people, of course, don't have the choice as to whether or not they can. There's no real choice in the rental market right now. But for someone who has accessibility issues, obviously they have no choice if they don't have access to an elevator.

It is worth noting that some of the most problematic elevators in the country are found in Toronto's public housing buildings. Many of them are high-rises. Lisa Murray, who is a spokeswoman for the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, said keeping the 591 elevators in the 270 buildings operational—many are more than 50 years old—is a huge challenge. She said,

“We just keep triaging everything.” So I would have to say that this piece of legislation is needed. It is long overdue, and I would like us to do something tangible to address this issue.

I think the issue of reliability with elevators in Toronto and in the province—because it's not just an urban issue; I would like to say that—was really brought to light by Colin Perkel from the Canadian Press. This was a story that came out on July 21, 2016, and it highlighted a crisis, really. One of the quotes here says, “Last year, for example, firefighters in Ontario alone responded to 4,461 calls to extricate people from elevators—more than a dozen a day—and double the number from 2001.” It goes to reason that because we have more elevators and more high-rises that there would be more instances, but you can definitely tell that this issue has been accelerating.

This other quote is by Rob Isabelle, who is a mechanical engineer and elevator consultant to property managers and owners. Perhaps some of the elevator company leaders who are here today would know Rob Isabelle, because he's been very critical of their sector actually. He goes on to say, “I don't think we're heading toward a crisis, I believe we're already there.... If we look at the reliability of a large number of pieces of equipment, it's really the worst it's ever been.”

This is really the role that the media sometimes plays here at this place, at Queen's Park. This story highlighted the fact that because growth has changed, because of the way we plan cities, the good places to grow, and the intensification of the growth has really led, especially in a riding like Trinity-Spadina, which my sister just moved out of—I've had many of those experiences of actually waiting for—

Mr. John Yakubski: You weren't getting the vote anyway.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You weren't getting my vote anyway, or her vote, for that matter.

Waiting in those condo units, with sometimes 150 people in the lobby, the temperature—the emotional temperature—is very real. But I would like to counter that. For those who don't have accessibility challenges, it's an inconvenience, it's an irritant. But for those people who require an elevator to actually be fully engaged in our society in a very inclusive way, in a socio-economic way, elevators are not optional. So having a vehicle, if you will, a legislative vehicle to address the issue of the unreliability in the sector, is very important.

1540

Insiders will say that the steep rise in problems is partly the result of more elevators. Then others, like my colleague previously mentioned, raised the issue that property owners and managers, particularly those looking after older buildings, are increasingly dealing with an expensive dilemma as parts and technicians familiar with the aging equipment become hard to find or disappear altogether.

To have the skilled labour to do this kind of work is necessary, so this is a gap that requires the post-secondary minister, who just walked in, to actually

address it as well, because we have to have the right people—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Research and innovation; of course it is.

We have to have the right people doing the right work, so I commend the member. We, of course, are going to be supporting it. There are some gaps in it, but we hope to make it better when it gets to committee, so thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very pleased to speak in support of this bill, the Reliable Elevators Act, Bill 109. It's a pleasure to support him, and I want to acknowledge the guests who are here today, especially the front-line maintenance professionals. Thank you for being here today.

I think I'm sensing a lot of consensus. We know there are frustrations, of course, for high-rise tenants and condo owners when elevators are out of service. People have talked about the concerns of the elderly and persons with disabilities, who have no alternatives. But also, elevators are very helpful for other people, too, especially, say, parents who are moving young children around in strollers. As a mom of twins, I certainly appreciated having elevators working when my kids were younger.

We know that the province is increasingly dependent on elevators, and it's necessary to make adjustments to reflect those changes. It will be good for consumers, renters and owners.

As I talked about this morning in question period, it's important to me not only as the minister that oversees the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, the TSSA, but as the minister responsible for accessibility, that I recognize that elevator disruptions can disproportionately impact persons with disabilities. As I've spoken about in the House before, my family is a family of multiple disabilities, so when an elevator is out of service, we are out of service at school, work or whatever we're trying to do.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires all organizations, including multi-storey residential buildings, to post a notice of disruption for out-of-service elevators, and prepare a document outlining steps to accommodate persons with disabilities. This is important in its current state, and even as this bill goes forward, because disruptions are no doubt inevitable.

But I agree that more can be done and more should be done, and I really want to congratulate the member from Trinity–Spadina for his work.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join the debate today on Bill 109, from the member for Trinity–Spadina. We actually have a bill to debate this afternoon. I want to commend him for bringing attention to what is really a troubling issue in many, many—well, in all—high-rise buildings. It's certainly obviously troubling when an elevator is not working.

I live in not really that high of a high-rise building—13 storeys—when I'm here in Toronto, and there's nothing more frustrating than when an elevator is out of service. They replaced the elevators a few years ago, so while they were being replaced, there was always at least one that was down, and it's amazing the difference it makes in a building when even one of three elevators is down. I'm on the 11th floor and I've often run up, but that's part of a workout; I'm doing that on purpose. But if I'm not doing that and I'm being delayed because of it, I'm not happy at all.

But if you're a senior citizen and you're living on whatever floor in some of these high-rise buildings, literally and particularly for one who has disabilities, it's an impossibility. So functioning elevators are imperative.

The challenge with the bill, I say to the member, is that all of the onus in the bill is on contractors, not building owners. I think that there has to be some balance there. All of the onus is on the contractors. My concern is, elevator contractors and service personnel could choose not to accept contracts in some of these older buildings and will simply say, "Bring us in on an emergency basis. We'll see what we can do." They're not going to take contracts in these buildings if they feel that all of the onus is on them. So we can't put all of the responsibility to ensure that elevators are working on the contractors. There may not be a contract on some of these buildings if they feel that the law is going to be particularly directed at them, and them alone. We always have to be concerned about unintended consequences.

The issue that you're dealing with is absolutely important. Functioning elevators are not an option; they're an absolute necessity in high-rise buildings today. If there are situations where there is no genuine effort to repair those elevators, there need to be checks and balances there.

Your timelines—well, I can't speak to them; I'm not in the business. We'd have to see whether that's doable. I know there's some concern that if elevators were flooded out or something like that, or in the case of really old buildings where there is obsolescence in the parts or availability of parts, where the timelines could be a challenge—but I think all of those are workable.

When the bill gets to committee, anything that needs to be rectified in it can certainly be done; there can be amendments brought forward.

I'd like to see some of that responsibility for non-functioning or non-working elevators placed on the ownership of the buildings, not just the elevator contractors.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm proud to rise in support of my colleague the MPP for Trinity–Spadina and his private member's bill that deals with such an important issue. I know that this is an important issue because you can see it in the data. Between 2006 and 2011, there was a 13% increase in Toronto's population living in high-rises, and that rate is going up as our urban centres

continue to grow and densify. I can see this in my own riding of Davenport as more mid-rise and high-rise buildings are being proposed and built.

While I welcome densification and new buildings in Toronto, I think we all acknowledge the importance of elevators in these buildings.

Madam Speaker, I must confess that sometimes my staff laughs when I've got the wrong shoes on and I'm going up the stairs in the Legislature. I know you, as a shoe person, can relate.

The thought of coming home after a long day of work, only to find the elevators out of order and having to climb 20, 30, 40 or more flights of stairs, is one that I know many in my community dread. But the fact is, Madam Speaker, that it's more than just a major inconvenience to most people. In 2015, firefighters in Ontario alone responded to 4,461 calls to extricate people from elevators—more than a dozen a day, and double the number from 2001.

Additionally, more than 45% of seniors live in buildings with elevators in the city of Toronto—this includes long-term-care facilities of three or four storeys with a single elevator—and are often the worst hit when an elevator goes out of service for a long time. People are sometimes confined to their quarters for months. That is why this bill is so important. It is wrong on so many levels for people who have no other means to enter or leave their homes to be confined for weeks or even months at a time.

Ensuring that in most cases an elevator must be repaired 14 days after the contractor first learns of the problem, and seven days for long-term-care facilities and retirement homes, would limit the undue hardship caused to residents and businesses.

I'm pleased to see that the bill also seeks to amend the building code to require that all new developments of seven storeys or higher conduct an elevator traffic analysis before receiving their building permit, ensuring that an appropriate number of elevators are installed to meet the capacity of a high-rise residential or commercial building.

I'm also happy to see that by implementing these measures, more data will become available for public record, which can shed light on the industry ups and downs when it comes to primary causes for malfunction and repair delays, and may give rise to better future practices.

1550

It is clear that this bill needs to be supported by all sides of the House. This isn't just an issue in Davenport or in Trinity–Spadina or just in Toronto. As we and our parents grow older, and as our cities and towns densify across the province, this problem will only become more acute.

On behalf of the member for Trinity–Spadina, I urge members from all sides of this House to support this bill swiftly through this Legislature and through committee, so that people who need to use elevators at work or at home can have their spirits and themselves uplifted.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I am pleased to provide feedback on Bill 109, as the PC critic on accessibility. I commend the member from Trinity–Spadina for bringing it forward.

I actually provided comment and voiced tentative support for this bill when the CBC called me, back in March. Before it was even tabled, I stated my support for safe and reliable elevators, especially as they concern accessibility in seniors' homes and in housing for residents with mobility challenges.

Having now reviewed the details of the bill, I can reaffirm my support, albeit not without some reluctance. I will touch on some of these points during my debate.

As with all bills, I think it's important for us to seek consensus, to go out to the industry and make sure we understand it before drafting legislation, by way of meaningful consultation with all impacted parties. As such, I myself did seek feedback on this issue from David Lepofsky of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, or the AODA, and one independent elevator contractor. I was not surprised to hear Mr. Lepofsky, who is a great champion for those in the accessibility sector, state that this area needs real action.

As I recall, the Liberal government had an opportunity to do some of this back in 2013, when it made amendments to the Ontario building code on accessibility, but it chose not to. It's ironic that they skipped the opportunity to do this back in 2013, considering their promise to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025, and given the hyper-growth in high-rise buildings, especially in the GTA.

Even though millions of residents rely on elevators every day, from long-term-care homes to skyscrapers in Toronto, statistics show faulty elevators becoming even more common. In 2015, there were 2,862 calls from people trapped in elevators, a number that has doubled in the last 15 years, and that's just here in Toronto. This number would be significantly higher, of course, if we were addressing all of Ontario.

Faulty elevators especially impact seniors and residents with mobility issues. Some of you may recall the story about an 83-year-old senior citizen in Kingston who was trapped in her sixth-floor apartment after the elevator in her building went unrepaired for a month. Madam Speaker, this is simply unacceptable.

The rapid increase in faulty elevators has prompted an investigation, which has revealed several problems, namely, aging equipment, with the majority of elevators being between 25 and 50 years old—the one in Kingston was actually over 30 years old—and an industry dominated by four multinationals: Otis, Schindler, Kone and thyssenkrupp.

This is where the consultation piece comes in handy. As I said earlier, I was contacted by a smaller elevator contractor, with 200 employees, who expressed concern: "The opinions expressed and specific examples cited in radio interviews and in print do not reflect the general state of elevator maintenance and repair in the

province.... What is being called a 'cartel' involving the four largest contractors fails to clarify that there are approximately 60 other licensed contractors in Ontario and that those 'big four' only maintain approximately 50% of elevators."

I was surprised to read that, but more from the perspective that we clearly need to raise the supply of full-time elevator mechanics and technicians, to keep up with our construction boom in Ontario, as referenced by my good colleague and friend from Whitby–Oshawa, Lorne Coe.

Secondly, I have also heard an argument made that the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, TSSA, has the authority to revoke contractor licences should it believe that contractors are failing to meet their obligations under the TSSA act. This point brings into question why that authority wasn't or isn't being exercised, especially as statistics show a rapid rise in elevator breakdowns.

I have also received concerns about the lack of consideration that some of these repairs often cannot proceed until authorized by the building owners, condo board or other agents. Repairs are often expensive, and financial arrangements must be negotiated and approved. But we have to be careful to not be punitive to the mechanical operators or maintainers if they're not responsible, and it's the owners of the facility or of the actual equipment.

I know the AODA has said that there should be a clear requirement in the law of having Braille and large print, and voice output of floor announcements, in all new elevators in buildings that serve the public.

All in all, I generally support the intent of this bill to improve safety and the service standards of elevators across the province. But I also look forward to hearing answers to some of the concerns brought forward by the industry. We'll do that in debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the opportunity to address this bill. I have to say that in one of my past lives, I was a property manager. I managed the Oak Street Housing Co-op, in Toronto. Not a very tall building—eight storeys—but as a property manager you get to know very quickly what are the third-rail issues, the ones that will fry you if you don't pay attention to them. Pets are one of them; elevators are the other. Certainly, I understand why. I understand in a very direct and substantial way the impact on people's lives when the elevators aren't working and the impact on the property managers' lives when those elevators aren't working.

This bill has some useful elements in it. Doing a traffic analysis on new buildings to establish the number of elevators totally makes sense. It makes sense to set goals for repair of elevators, so that tenants and residents have some confidence as to when service will be restored, and when they can count on using their building.

As some of my colleagues have said, particularly my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo and the member

from Davenport, the scale of this problem continues to grow, and grow very substantially. Literally thousands of people are trapped in elevators on a regular basis, as my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo said. Last year, Ontario firefighters responded to 4,461 calls to extricate people from elevators, double the number from 2001. Part of that, of course—no question—is that there are an awful lot more at tall buildings, an awful lot more elevators. But it's also a question of the age of the stock that we're dealing with. If you look at elevator statistics in Ontario, the biggest cohort of elevators in place are the ones that are between 25 and 50 years old, with another big chunk over 50 years. So you're obviously going to have problems as that capital ages, as parts become more difficult to secure, as things simply wear out.

I appreciate the fact that the member has brought this bill forward, but I have to put in a few comments here. It isn't just owners of buildings and contractors who should be thinking very seriously about this matter. In the ice storm, in December 2013, almost all the apartment buildings in the north side of my riding were knocked out: 20-storey buildings, with people in their eighties trapped on the 15th and 20th floors. They had to be rescued by firefighters and carried down in the dark through stairwells.

Clearly—because Ontario is not preparing for climate change, because, when I ask the Minister of Energy, there is no clear coherent plan to ensure the system will function in extreme conditions—we're going to see a lot more of this. So I would hope that, in addition to making sure that contractors and landlords are heedful of their responsibility to the population, the government of Ontario pays attention to the fact that we have to have that service in those buildings.

It isn't simply a question of making the electricity system function under extreme conditions. I think that's a very good idea—in fact, a critical idea. We should also be looking at ensuring there's backup power in all of these buildings so that at least the elevators can function when power is knocked out for a building.

My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had some very interesting commentary on who should be fully responsible for this. I have to say, Speaker, you have some familiarity with Toronto–Danforth. You're familiar with apartment buildings there. There may well be operators of buildings, landlords and condo corporations who don't pay as much attention to maintenance as they should; who may not, in fact, have put in place the maintenance contracts that are required, or put in place the reserve funds to buy parts to make sure that if repairs are necessary, obsolete parts can be changed out very quickly.

I think if this bill goes to committee—and it would be a good idea that it goes—there are going to have to be some substantial amendments to ensure that residents of these buildings have a range of protections, not just from contractors who don't operate in a speedy way, but from landlords who don't pay attention to making sure the maintenance is done, and a provincial government

ensuring that the power is there so that everything can function.

Speaker, I think it would be a good idea for this bill to go forward. I hope people today support it. But I say to the member from Trinity–Spadina that he’s going to have to rework this bill if it’s going to be comprehensively protective of residents of high-rise buildings.

1600

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Hon. David Zimmer: I am very happy to speak in favour of this bill. I represent a riding in Willowdale where there are many, many, many high-rises, and there are only going to be more and more high-rises and condominiums.

One of the things I hear about in my constituency office on a regular basis is the issue of elevator access to the buildings. There are two groups of people who are particularly stressed by this. There are in Willowdale, interestingly enough, huge numbers of working men and women living in the condominium buildings. The condominium buildings have elevator problems more often than you would think. One of the great problems is that all of these people who are still in the working world are getting up in the morning and they’re trying to get down to the subway station or trying to get down to their cars and trying to get down from the upper floors, and guess what? There is a bottleneck around 8 o’clock in the morning at the elevators if you’re on the higher floors, or even on the mid-floors—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Get up earlier.

Hon. David Zimmer: —and they’re spending inordinate amounts of time waiting for an elevator to carry them down. The practical effect of that is, as the member opposite said, that they have to get up earlier.

They’ve calculated some of the times. Some of the people tell me that just because of slow elevators or not enough elevators in the building, they are spending 20 minutes or sometimes more, in the morning and at the back, just trying to get to and from their residence.

The problem is particularly acute in another way, in a very special way, with respect to seniors. About 40% of Ontarians over 65 are in high-rises now. They’re retired, and they have to get out of their buildings for medical appointments, often with an appointment they have for a cab or a bus to pick them up, and they’re stuck at the elevator and can’t get down in time. They miss their pickup; they miss their ride. They’re late for their medical appointment, and it all ties back to the unpredictability of elevator service.

I also want to point out that in 2015, firefighters in Ontario did 4,461 calls to rescue people from elevators. That’s twice the number that it was in 2001. We need this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Few things are perceived as being so unnecessary and unforgivable as coming to your building with armloads of groceries, a hungry child or an

important call to make as soon as you get home, and to discover a crowd in the lobby waiting for an elevator because one or more of the other elevators are out of service—again.

In the 21st century, the world’s wealth creation engines are its cities. Anyone who has travelled to those places known as a metropolis of commerce or a “world-class” city knows that its housing hallmark is those soaring towers where its residents live. “Come and visit me; I’m in suite 4207,” one’s host might say. But it means that the status quo will and must change.

Right now, there is a tight little oligopoly, a small number of large and powerful firms that manage elevator installation service and repair. It means that the business model is not speed of response or time to repair once a service technician has arrived, or optimum client service; it’s profit maximization to the supplier.

What has to change is the speed to get essential parts to be able to service an elevator. The attitude toward the client, who is the building manager, must also change. The elevator industry must acknowledge that to building residents, their product is an essential service.

We need metrics by which installers and repair technicians, and those who contract and pay them, will know if service and support are above or below industry norms. We may need to empower the province to make regulations and enforce those standards. We need the building code to ensure that high-rise towers actually not only have enough elevators, but big enough elevators.

Elevators are already inspected. We need to ask ourselves whether those criteria by which an inspection is conducted include enough measurements to enable a building manager to schedule maintenance before a key component fails.

This act should begin a process through which Ontario gains not merely world-class cities, but a world-class ability to ensure that those millions who occupy homes in the condo clouds can depend on safe, secure, reliable elevators to get to and from their homes in the sky. I urge support for Bill 109.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I will return to the member from Trinity–Spadina to wrap up.

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank all members who spoke to this bill and have shown their support. I want to thank the member from Whitby–Oshawa, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and my favourite member across the floor, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Hang on.

Mr. Han Dong: Oh, is Percy here? Okay—the member from Toronto–Danforth, the members from Willowdale and Davenport and the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Your comments have been listened to carefully. I appreciate what the member from Kitchener–Waterloo said about the article from a year ago by Mr. Colin Perkel, who brought up this issue in mainstream media.

I have to say that I’m very pleased that this bill, after its introduction, has received a lot of media attention, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all the reporters

who see through the same lens and understand the importance of having reliable elevators in our high-rise communities.

I also want to address the issue brought forward by my friends from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The issue with independent contractors, the concern they brought forward is, I think, a valued one. Therefore, there's a design in the bill for an exemption clause.

I very much look forward to the public consultation opportunity in committee. As well, I think going forward that, if passed, the ministry should, in the regulation process, put together a panel of experts to allow further discussion to establish these criteria. Thank you very much for all your support on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The time allocated for private members' public business has expired.

ONTARIO BUDGET

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): We will deal first with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Ms. Di Novo.

Ms. Di Novo has moved private member's notice of motion number 50. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "Carried." Congratulations.

Motion agreed to.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Singh has moved private member's notice of motion number 54. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "Carried." Congratulations.

Motion agreed to.

RELIABLE ELEVATORS ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017

SUR LES ASCENSEURS FIABLES

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Dong has moved second reading of Bill 109, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992 and the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 in respect of elevators and elevating device

mechanics. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear "Carried."

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I'm going to return to the member to see to which committee the member would like to refer.

Mr. Han Dong: Regulations and private bills.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Regulations and private bills? Agreed? I hear "agreed." Congratulations.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): 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. Hatfield assumes ballot item number 52 and Ms. Campbell assumes ballot item number 63.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to enact a new Act with respect to home inspections and to amend various Acts with respect to financial services and consumer protection / Loi édictant une nouvelle loi concernant les inspections immobilières et modifiant diverses lois concernant les services financiers et la protection du consommateur.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day?

Hon. Laura Albanese: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Albanese has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

The House will adjourn until Monday, April 24, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1610.

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Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
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Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

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French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

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Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
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Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint de parti reconnu
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Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
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Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
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Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
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