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Mercredi
17 mai 2017

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 17 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 mai 2017

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**STRONGER, HEALTHIER ONTARIO
ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2017**

**LOI DE 2017 POUR
UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT
ET EN MEILLEURE SANTÉ
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)**

Mr. Duguid, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / *Projet de loi 127, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister Duguid.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not supposed to get up, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I can always find time to speak about this government's catastrophes. I look forward to the opportunity to speak for 10 minutes. If the government has nothing to say, I will.

I can begin by telling you that the 2017 budget, Speaker, is more proof that Ontario families will continue to pay more and get less. While the government has made this pronouncement of a balanced budget, as we've now learned from all of the authorities, it is anything but balanced. It is artificially balanced through, and only through, the one-time sale of assets and unusual one-time injection of capital.

So we can imagine that when we look back through the gas plant scandal documents, one of the documents that we read quite surprised us because it said, "We are not on the path to balance." It was a very startling pronouncement from the Ministry of Finance to their own cabinet in what was once a confidential cabinet document that we received through the gas plant scandal hearings, and that's what it said: "We are not on the path to balance."

They showed, in fact, that since the current Premier became Premier, the deficit was getting worse each year, which meant, obviously, the debt in Ontario was turning into a calamity and they needed to do something. They

couldn't stop their spending spree. Revenue was still going up. Revenue has gone up every year since this government took office, except for one year, in 2008, when it was flat, but it picked up again the next year, so it's a straight line. Revenue is up in Ontario. Of course, they helped themselves with \$2.47 billion worth of service fees last year alone.

When I think just about vehicle registration and licensing fees, in the last four years alone they went up \$503 million. That's just the increase. That's not the total collection; that's just the increase. We now get \$2.47 billion in service fees. So if you drive a car, go hunting, fishing, camping or need a special event permit for a charitable organization, all of those pay more: \$2.47 billion.

We know revenues are going up, but they just can't help themselves on the spending side of it. So they find themselves—in their own words, "We're not on the path to balance." What are they going to do? They scratch their heads. They look down the street, and they say: "Oh, gosh. Well, we can sell the OPG building here, the headquarters right across the street from Queen's Park—a few hundred million. Down the street a little further, you've got the LCBO headquarters—a few hundred million. Man, this looks like a good plan. What else have we got?" Of course, they sold their GM shares. That brought in about \$1.1 billion. Then they really ended up still in the pickle, still billions of dollars shy every year, so they look to our crown jewel, Hydro One, and have a fire sale of the crown jewel of Ontario.

They put that money, the sale of Hydro One, right into revenue. That's how the minister has artificially balanced the budget in Ontario. All of the experts acknowledge that. We now know that they have used what they call "asset optimization." That's just a very, very nice way of saying, "We're having a desperate sale of buildings that we own." Next year they're going to find a couple of more buildings and a couple of more properties. There are a couple of more properties, the Seaton lands. They're going to sell off those. As you've seen, they've sold off the last of their tranche of Hydro One assets.

That gets us through to the election. They should pretty much cover themselves in terms of artificially balancing, by the sale of assets, but they have run out of things to sell. That's why we call it an "artificial balance," because what's going to happen in the subsequent years is that they have nothing to sell and no way to balance the budget. That's why the Financial Accountability Officer told us they're going to plunge back into deficit and have growing deficits.

Basically, if you look at the downward scale that Premier Wynne was on in terms of deficits, they're back to that except we have this little blip of this artificial budget balance, this fake balance because of the one-time sale of assets. Actually, they've turned it into a couple-of-years' sale of assets.

I know the minister continues to tell us that they over-achieved. It's only from these one-time sources of revenue that this overachievement has occurred. For instance, we're going to get a billion-and-a-half bump this year in revenue from the feds. It's normally about \$100 million in the last few years. This year, it's going to be \$1.5 billion, so, obviously, we're going to see this huge bump. We know that's only temporary.

The land transfer tax was up \$600 million last year. It's going to be up another \$400 million this year. Obviously, that's another \$1-billion bump that's coming in. We've got \$1.8 billion—\$1.7 billion, actually; it looks like it's falling—in cap-and-trade tax that's going straight to revenue. We've got \$500 million out of the teachers' pension plan that they're booking, that the Auditor General said she would not allow.

All of those sources, these one-time sources, are going to be necessary to artificially balance. This is why we're very concerned about it. When we look at the deeper concern, when we look here, we know that they could use the revenue from the sale of Hydro One—there was that one little line in the actual bill, Bill 144, last year, schedule 22, section 7, paragraph 2, which states they can use that money to “reimburse the crown” for infrastructure money already spent. We know that the same thing—it worked so well for hydro that they're going to do it with the cap-and-trade money. That's Bill 172, schedule 68, section 2, item 3. It also says they can use the money to “reimburse” themselves for money already spent.

0910

This is nothing but a charade, Speaker. It's disturbing to see that they're attempting to fool the people of Ontario with these one-time sales and unusual sources of revenue that they're putting right into revenue to pay back the money they've already spent. It's alarming to the people of Ontario. It's disturbing that they continue to do that. Even though they've been outed on it, they still do it. They tell one thing to the people of Ontario when the complete opposite is the truth, and that I also find very alarming and very disturbing.

Speaker, we know that total program spending this year is up \$6 billion. Our debt is growing by \$10 billion. I don't know why they brag about this, but we continue to be the largest subnational debtor on the planet. Instead of addressing our debt, our crippling and crushing debt, they're adding \$10 billion to our debt this year. Yet they went on a spending spree, and spending is up \$6 billion this year. Interest is going to rise to \$11.6 billion this year. That means almost a billion dollars a month will be spent just on interest to pay for the debt that this government has incurred.

When they took office, our debt in Ontario was \$139 billion. It took this province 137 years to get that debt. It

took these guys a decade to double it. Not only that, they've overachieved on their debt increase: They are now at \$312 billion. That's what they're at. The Financial Accountability Officer tells us we're on our way to a debt of \$370 billion. That's what they've overachieved with, Speaker. They have overachieved on making us the most indebted subnational on the planet.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It is always an honour to stand up and talk about anything in this House. It's an important thing. But the budget, the way this budget went down—I'm going to start with that, Speaker.

The vote for second reading is at 12 p.m., and because of time allocation, the deputations start at 1 p.m. That gives people from across the province a whole hour—a whole hour, Speaker—to first find out that the budget was actually voted on, and then to try and get down here to make a deputation. Really, you're excluding the vast majority of the province. You're kind of making the whole deputation process a sham.

The part about deputations—and this is how the system is supposed to work—is that you pass second reading, and any bill goes to a committee, where you ask for people to come and make suggestions, whether they have problems with the budget or they want to make it better. I don't know if you can make this one better. Then the committee should have enough time, and the parties should have enough time, to look at those deputations and to see if they can make some amendments to improve that piece of legislation before it goes to clause-by-clause and then for the third reading.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The public has valuable contributions.

Mr. John Vanthof: That's right. In a democracy, public opinion and public input is probably the most valuable.

The vote is held at 12 p.m., and deputations start at 1 p.m. Then, amendments have to be in by 7 o'clock that night. Realistically, that people came to make their deputations really didn't matter at all, because there was no physical way it was possible to include them in amendments unless you knew what they were going to say before they came and said it. Now here we are, time-allocated debate again—really, this whole budget process has been like a bad movie. It really has. It's easy for us to complain, but really, if you go back, 12 o'clock is the vote, 1 o'clock is the time for the public, and by 7 o'clock the same evening you have to have your amendments in based on what the public said.

When I brought this issue up—and the member from the PCs also brought this issue up at committee—the response from the government was “No, no, no, you are all wrong, because we did all kinds of consultation.” Pre-budget, they did do some consultation, but the people who were making the presentations then didn't have a chance to see the budget. There's also a big value in having consultation. That's why you have committee hearings. The last time I checked, committee hearings are pretty important in this House. To make committee hear-

ings valuable, you give the public time to make their deputations, but they've ignored that.

What really bothered me—if there's something in the budget that you're very interested in and you've got a lot of expertise, either because of your business or just because you have lived it, and you see it, 12 o'clock—first, it's only an hour; how many normal people can give an hour's notice to take off work? You can't, so even people here are excluded. The only people who actually had the time are the official—and I have nothing against the official lobbyist class, but that's the people.

Anyone who has a regular job or a regular life or kids or anything, cannot, with an hour's notice, just hustle on down to Queen's Park. That is a travesty in our democracy because, really, we should pride ourselves on the ability of people to actually participate in our process.

I have to give a shout-out to one person at the finance committee, Steve Mantis, who actually was there and he sat through the committee hearings, and he asked—because we had a couple of cancellations—if he could be included. Since there was an open slot, he was included. Steve Mantis is an injured worker. He lost his arm. He's a carpenter. He's a one-armed carpenter. He lost it, I believe, if I remember, 40 years ago. He talked about WSIB from the point of view of someone who has actually been through it, and it was one of the best presentations that I have ever had the honour to listen to, because he lived it.

He wasn't totally critical of WSIB, but he had a very good viewpoint. He had the kind of viewpoint that actually could make legislation better. As I sat there listening to him, I'm thinking, "What about all the other people who actually have a viewpoint because they have lived through issues?" But because this government is so intent on passing this good-news budget without actually having any light of day on it, those people, those regular people who have actually had real-life experiences, who actually could make this province better with their experiences, people like Steve Mantis, never got the chance to make any deputations on this budget.

It was physically impossible for the vast majority of Ontarians. For the vast majority of Ontarians who actually wanted to make a deputation, this government made it physically impossible. This open and transparent government is busy making open and transparent walls, Plexiglas walls, so no one can make any comments except the people they want to make comments.

Despite all their efforts to stop comments, we did hear a few that were very interesting. The nurses—the RNO, I believe—made a presentation, and they expressed some concern that, if you recall in the budget motion, there was the booster shot to health care: 3% supposedly, but 2% minimum to hospitals.

It was brought up—and this is a good question for the government—in the deputations that some hospital CEOs are concerned that their 2% actually might not be 2% because some of the top-ups they've had for their base funding in past years—when a hospital actually can't make their budget, sometimes they get a top-up for their

base funding. It was brought up that that could be part of the 2%. That's not a booster shot, Speaker; that's life support.

0920

That's not me saying that; that is a deputant. And that is a valid question. I see some of the members across, from the government, are vigorously shaking their heads that that's absolutely not the truth. Great. Prove it. I'm just saying what we heard at the hearings. That is valuable information. That's stuff that we don't hear from the other side, and that's one of the reasons why this government doesn't want to hold actual hearings with enough time for people to actually prepare, because they don't want to hear any bad news. They don't want people to hear bad news. I've been here five years. I've never seen a budget brought down like this.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Barrie.

Mr. John Vanthof: I've never seen a budget brought down like this. There is just physically no time to talk about it, and the people who do come to talk are heckled by the members across the way. We are trying to bring issues to this House, and I am bringing the issues—if the government had actually had legitimate time for deputants to come, I would have brought up a lot more issues of deputants. That's my job. That's my job, and unfortunately the governing party doesn't believe it's their job to make sure that the voices of people get heard, because the way this time allocation motion was set up for this budget, it was physically impossible for the vast majority of Ontarians, including those right next to Queen's Park, because no one with a regular life can, on an hour's notice, stop their job or find a place to drop off their kids. It's just not possible for normal people, and that's why this government is completely and totally out of touch with the vast majority of Ontarians who just want to live regular lives.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It is a privilege to stand today in the House for the third reading of Bill 127, the Stronger, Healthier Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2017. The 2017 Ontario budget is the province's first balanced budget since the global recession. Mr. Speaker, Ontario's balanced budget represents our strong fiscal plan. Whether it's giving young people free prescription medicines, transforming OSAP to provide free tuition for more than 210,000 post-secondary students or helping businesses grow and create new jobs, a balanced budget means more funding for the vital programs and services people depend upon.

Our goal of balancing the budget has always been about more than just hitting the bottom-line number. It's about finding new ways to help families across our great province. It's about creating opportunities, providing the supports people need to succeed, and this budget is dedicated to them, to the people all across our province.

A balanced budget gives us the flexibility to invest even more in our health care system. It's why we're com-

mitting to making new major hospital projects across the province, with a new \$9-billion investment, bringing Ontario's total planned investments in hospitals to more than \$20 billion over the next decade, including re-developing Hamilton Health Sciences, for example, or expanding Queensway Health Centre or the Mississauga Hospital and building a new hospital to serve the people living on the James Bay coast. These are just some of the additional 34 projects that are already under way. This extra funding will provide better access to care, help reduce wait times and help to meet the health care needs of our growing and aging population.

But we know that building a stronger, healthier Ontario takes more than just building hospitals, as crucial as they are. It also means making sure hospitals have what they need to deliver excellent care to patients, so that the people of Ontario get the care they need when and where they need it.

Mr. Speaker, our balanced budget is also allowing us to make new investments to meet the needs of our patients today and for the future. That's why, in this budget, our government is increasing health care investments by \$11.5 billion over the next three years. That includes a new \$7-billion booster shot to our health care system that builds on the commitment we already made in the 2016 budget. This year's investment will improve access to care, expand mental health and addiction services, and enhance the experience and recovery for patients. It also includes, I may say, \$1.3 billion over three years to further reduce wait times so that people can see a specialist faster, get surgery faster and receive home care and community care faster. We'll make investments in MRIs and diagnostic equipment, in cataract and cardiovascular surgeries and in hip and knee replacements, all of which are included in this budget, which I hope the members opposite will support for the benefit of their communities.

Many of us have cared for someone who needed our help—maybe a child or a parent or, in some cases, both. Being sandwiched between caring for a young child and an aging parent is difficult. And being a caregiver to a loved one who is ill is not an easy job, but it is a job that many of us are taking on. We recognize the financial strain that caregivers can feel. With this budget, our government intends to introduce a new Ontario Caregiver Tax Credit, replacing the current caregiver and infirm dependent tax credits with this non-refundable tax credit which would streamline and extend support for individuals caring for family members. It will be in addition to the new Canada caregiver tax credit starting in 2017.

That's not all, Mr. Speaker. Last month, our government announced that we're expanding universal health care to provide free prescription drug coverage for everyone aged 24 and under, starting January 1, 2018—not sometime in the near future or the late future; happening now. OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program will completely cover the cost of all medications funded through the Ontario Drug Benefit Program, with no deductible and no copay. It is a universal system. OHIP+ will improve access to prescription medications for more

than four million children and young people. It's something that communities require. Again, I hope the members opposite will see the value and the necessity to support our people and help many families afford the medicine their children need to stay healthy, including access to life-saving drugs to treat cancer and rare diseases at no cost—because no family should have to choose between medicine for their kids or other essentials.

OHIP+ is an important step to strengthen our health care system in Ontario. Our provincial drug funding program is already one of the country's most generous, providing prescription medications for seniors. And, I may say, for all those most vulnerable Ontarians who cannot afford to pay the high price of drugs, we are providing that support as well. We're the first province in Canada introducing universal pharmacare for children and youth, which we hope will stimulate greater national discussion as well. Once again, Ontario is leading by making this historic investment in health care for our children, to enable us to have a strong and balanced Ontario. That's what happens when you have a balanced fiscal plan and a strong Ontario.

We know that people across our province are working hard every day to build a better future for themselves and for their families. With this balanced budget, we're also making life more affordable.

I've heard from many young families that finding affordable, quality child care has been a challenging task because there aren't enough affordable options near their home or work. That's why, with this balanced budget, we're helping 100,000 more children across Ontario access affordable, licensed child care, to give them a great start in life and support families across our province. Our investments in 2017-18 will support access to licensed child care for 24,000 more children four and under, through new fee subsidy spaces and new licensed child care spaces in schools, and, again, meet the demands of a growing Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, with this balanced budget, we're also helping our young people acquire the skills they need to find good jobs. We've heard from students throughout the province about the challenges they face in landing a good job without relevant work experience. Employers, schools and students agree that hands-on learning opportunities are key to successfully starting a career. That's why our government is investing \$190 million over three years in Ontario's new Career Kick-Start Strategy, creating 40,000 new work-related learning opportunities for students and recent graduates, to give them the experience they need to land good jobs. These opportunities will not only help close the job experience gap, but will give more students exposure to different career options.

0930

Our government is investing. We're investing in guidance and career counselling. We're investing to better prepare students as they plan their future, to help guide the important life decisions that they will make, whether it's choosing the right classes in high school or meeting

the prerequisites for college or universities, or choosing an apprenticeship to get a certified trade.

Opening these doors for new careers is essential. It's part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy, and help people be more successful. I again implore the opposition to think about the people of Ontario in that support.

We're also committed to supporting students and recent grads with a new OSAP that will provide free tuition for more than 210,000 students starting their post-secondary education this fall, helping more students make their choice to pursue a higher education and making it easier for them. It's also about reducing their financial pressures when they graduate by delaying the payments of the provincial portion of OSAP loans until they start making \$35,000 a year.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not all about young people. We all know that learning is a lifelong journey. For adults looking to find their next learning opportunity, land a better job or move into a new career, with this budget we're launching Ontario's Lifelong Learning Skills Plan, a plan that will help adults get literacy, numeracy and digital skills, helping them succeed in our changing economy.

With this balanced budget, we're investing. We're investing in the people of Ontario. We're investing in their skills. We're investing in their talents. We're investing in their creativity and in their health, Mr. Speaker. We are building stronger, healthier communities across our great province, from north to south, from east to west, making Ontario an even better place to live, to work, to raise a family and to run a business.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of you in this chamber to join me in supporting the Stronger, Healthier Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2017, in building a more vibrant Ontario. We often hear that balancing the budget is a measure that we all attend to make it more prosperous for all of us, but we have to be as competitive as we are prosperous. We have to be as compassionate as we are fair. This budget speaks to the people of Ontario. I encourage all members of this House to think about them and their constituents, not about themselves.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Are you all done? We're all done, are we?

Interjection: Thanks, Speaker. We're all done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thanks.

Mr. Duguid has moved third reading of Bill 127, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

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

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day. Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I know the good folks in Peterborough are tuning in at Cogeco 95, and I would like to be recognized.

Government order G65.

SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 16, 2017, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: For those tuning in this morning, Bill 65 is all about the Safer School Zones Act. Really and truly, it should have been an important step toward increasing road safety for our children and our loved ones. Unfortunately, when you peel away the layers of the onion, it's been reduced to just another disguise for another Liberal government revenue-generating scheme.

The Liberals claimed at third reading of this bill that road safety is one of the Ministry of Transportation's top priorities. But to the people at home, I have to say, if that is the case, why did they refuse to amend this act to include measures that actually increase road safety? Again, the Liberals insist this bill is not a cash grab, but I am not convinced.

As I get into my debate this morning, I want to take a moment to thank Gillian Kiessling. Gillian has joined my team at Queen's Park as an intern for the next couple of months, and she's doing an awesome job. She actually dug down into this issue further and helped prepare the notes and my speaking points for today. Gillian, thank you, and welcome to team Thompson.

To go on, I'd like to say that the Liberals suggest that because we said no to the bill at second reading, we don't care about the safety of Ontarians. This is not true. It's just more Liberal spin from a desperate, old, tired government on life support that is looking for any cash that they can get to keep their sputtering engine going. It is absolutely dismal how this government is introducing scheme after scheme. They don't even have their own house in order.

The reality of all of this is that they claim that we introduced 300 amendments, just to attempt to filibuster. That is not true either. They were serious issues, and our critic of transportation brought forward 40—40—thoughtful, researched amendments that could have made this bill so much better. These amendments were our opportunity to put forward some real initiatives to protect the safety of Ontario road users, especially with regard to

school zones. They were our opportunity to clarify parts of this bill, such as the meaning of “community zone,” but instead, what did they do? They consistently voted down our amendments.

It’s interesting. Just a couple of weeks ago, Hazel McCallion was in my riding. She was praising the leader of the PC Party of Ontario, Patrick Brown, for his premise and his foundation pillar that there’s no monopoly on a good idea. I wish the Liberal government would accept that as well. Instead, they resort to their partisan ways and vote down amendments just because they’re coming from someone else.

Most importantly, this was an opportunity for the government to prove that this bill really is about improving the safety of Ontarians and not about finding a way to impose photo radar in order to increase the government’s revenue streams. Unfortunately, as we now know, the Liberals did not take this opportunity.

For example, in the original bill, the fine for exceeding the speed limit in a community safety zone would be double a normal speeding fine, but a fine in a school zone would not be. So get this: The fine for exceeding the speed limit in a community safety zone would double a normal speeding fine, but in a school zone it would not. If Bill 65 truly was about ensuring safe school zones for children, they would have done some synergy and realized the error of their way, because this makes no sense.

So guess what we did? We put forward an amendment that would have made the fine in a school zone equal to the fine in a community safety zone. Speaker, you would have to agree, that makes sense. But you know what this old, tired government did? They voted it down.

We then went on to ask the Liberals to clarify the ambiguous term “community safety zone.” This was a reasonable request, as I’m sure we all know what a school zone is—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I can’t even hear the speaker. There are nine, 10 conversations going on here.

Go ahead.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: We asked the Liberals to clarify the ambiguous term “community safety zone.” This, anyone would think, was a reasonable request. I’m sure we all know what a school safety zone is, but we needed to define a community safety zone. Again, guess what they did? The Liberals voted it down.

We then went on to ask the Liberals to implement radar speed signs, which provide immediate feedback to drivers about their speed. Whereas photo radar tickets are mailed to the car owner, and so might not appear for another four weeks, radar speed signs are instantaneous and they have proven to have great success in municipalities across this province, including Toronto. But you know what happened, Speaker. They yet again voted down this thoughtful, good idea.

0940

But we didn’t give up. We asked the government at least to reallocate the revenues generated by photo radar

back to road safety initiatives. I think we would all agree that’s a great idea. But, of course, this old, tired government stuck to their speaking points and the directions that they got from their back room. They thumbed their nose at this great idea as well, and of course, it was voted down.

Speaker, this pattern continued for many of the amendments that we put forward, amendments that were designed to focus the bill on safety—not just speed limits—in school zones and community safety zones.

Perhaps what I find was the most disappointing, an amendment that was voted down by this Liberal government was an initiative to marry, or embed, an initiative that was created by the MPP from Chatham–Kent–Essex. He had a private member’s bill designed to reduce the number of cars blowing by stopped school buses. As I mentioned last night in debate, this is something that really touches home for me because, growing up, my sister had a friend, a neighbour of ours. She was one year older. Kathy was getting off the school bus and she was struck by a car blowing by the school bus. It hit everybody in the neighbourhood—how dare a car not respect a school bus taking children home? We experienced it right in our own back yard.

Thankfully, Kathy, while she had trauma to her head and it impaired her vision for a short term, thankfully, she’s okay. But it drove home the point: We need to do more to ensure the safety of our children, not only in a school zone, but getting off school buses in rural Ontario as well.

Going back to that PMB that the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex introduced, the bill was straightforward. It asked that footage from school buses be admissible without a witness’s evidence in court, the same way that footage from red-light cameras is. When the bill was first introduced in 2014, it received support from all three parties and passed second reading. However, it never went any further until it was reintroduced this past February. Again, it passed second reading, but this government has held it up. It has yet to proceed any further.

And here we have members of the Liberal Party claiming to support this great initiative. The Liberal MPP from Ottawa South, John Fraser, said, “I have to say ... that I’m glad to support this bill. I congratulate the member for bringing it forward and look forward to it getting through debate.”

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Peter Milczyn, said: “I want to congratulate the member ... on a well-thought-out bill on a very important issue.... I do hope that it gets implemented.”

And yet, Speaker, they have had four opportunities to support it, and all four times they voted it down, the last two during committee for Bill 65. Clearly, somewhere along the line, the Liberal MPPs are being told not to vote for a bill that they say they supported.

Reckless drivers illegally blowing past school buses that are stopped with their red lights flashing and stop signs out are a big problem. It’s a real problem. As I shared with the House, I’ve experienced it. My neighbour

was struck. This happens at an alarming rate. There are studies to support this.

In a study done in 2014 by the Independent School Bus Operators Association—which included participation of several Ontario school bus consortia, including from Bruce Grey, Huron Perth, Thunder Bay, London, Toronto, eastern Ontario, Waterloo, Renfrew county and York—they found that over a five-day period, an average of 151 incidents occurred per day. That's over 151 children endangered every day. As I speak to you right now, cars have probably recklessly sped by school buses, and our children are at risk.

Of course, it's fair to say that there probably is a lack of education and awareness around this issue. Drivers often don't realize that all cars travelling in all lanes in either direction must stop. The only exception is that oncoming traffic that is separated from the bus by a median does not have to stop. Currently, the only way that violators of this law can be prosecuted is if a witness can be found to back up the footage. Witnesses can be very difficult to come by, since school bus drivers understandably have a hard time memorizing licence plates while taking care of the children getting on and off their buses, but every day they have to watch as drivers speed by, knowing the danger the kids are in and that these drivers will not be prosecuted.

As I wind down my debate on this particular bill, I have to ask: Why is the government of the day choosing to be partisan as opposed to accepting good, thoughtful amendments? We have seen in committee the government introducing 200 amendments, 300 amendments to correct their own mistakes. For goodness' sake, why doesn't this government do the right thing and work with all of us to make sure that Ontario is a safer place for our students?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to join the debate and comment on the speech just made by our colleague from Huron–Bruce. She opened up her speech by referencing her leader Patrick Brown's comments on good ideas, that there should not be a monopoly on good ideas. Well, we're waiting for any idea to come out of the PC Party at this moment. Whether it be on health care or hydro or otherwise, they seem to be a vacuum of any idea.

Speaker, I'm passionate about this. I introduced a bill, very similar, that called for safety cameras in designated zones. It had the same or similar mechanics to this bill, because I know what it means to be on the highway as a construction worker and to literally play Frogger every day on the 401 trying to dance and manoeuvre around vehicles. It's incredibly dangerous, not only in construction zones but also in school zones.

I can only surmise that throughout this debate, as I have heard the Conservatives take an impulsive approach to this, a reactionary approach, spreading negativity by calling this immediately, as soon as it was tabled, a cash grab, a money grab, and excessively punitive, they were never going to vote for this. They didn't support it at all.

They are spreading negativity around our communities without any regard for the safety of our communities; and at the same time introducing their own legislation to use similar technologies on school buses. I just don't get it, because it's our responsibility to look at all technologies to make our roads safer.

On one hand, their school bus safety camera idea is something that we should all support, and I do support it. I think it's a good idea, a valid idea. But they will immediately spread negativity and dissent on safety cameras for political gain. That's simply what it is. I can't let it go in this House—that's exactly what it is. Speaker, they should be called out for it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to rise and speak to the speech given by the member from Huron–Bruce.

We hear all kinds of things about partisan politics in this House and how it is negative, and the negativity spreads through this House. But Speaker, this is a good idea, to put the cameras on the buses. It just is. I get calls from bus companies in my riding of Perth–Wellington complaining about cars driving by the signals and not stopping. This is about children's safety. That's what it's about. It's about children's safety and I wish the members of this House could get over that. That's exactly what it is. If we're going to introduce this photo radar in school safety zones, why not put this on too? Why not do it all at once? It just makes a lot of sense. Unfortunately, as we've seen in committee meetings, it's not being embraced by the Liberal government.

Speaker, we have all kinds of technology in this world to use for a good purpose. That's what we've got here. We have the technology. It would serve a good purpose to our children and certainly stop dangerous things happening around school buses as they stop to pick up our kids. Yet, we get into this partisan politics business. It's too bad that kids' safety is not paramount in this government's mind because this is an easy thing to do. It wouldn't take a lot to do this. School bus operators are asking for it, so why don't we do it? Speaker, I ask, why don't we do it?

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always enjoy rising on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin. I'm very supportive of this initiative as far as anything that means our kids are going to have the ability to walk to—our teachers and anybody who is going towards the school areas needs to have the utmost protection in making sure that they can get to and from and enjoy the environment of the school.

I'm very supportive, also, of what the Conservatives, as far as their amendments, have asked for. Once again, anything that makes that environment that much safer is ultimately the goal that we want to do.

I do disagree with some of the points that were made initially by the Conservative Party in regard to this being

a cash grab. Let's be clear as far as who we're targeting here with these cameras. We're targeting individuals who are putting our children's lives and our loved ones' lives at stake.

It's a habit that people have of either racing through or rushing. How you change that is by putting in conditions and putting in safety mechanisms so that individuals are aware that these are in place. It changes a habit. To say that this is going to be a cash grab is actually false. It's something that is going to curb a habit. Individuals are going to become aware, after getting multiple tickets, paying multiple charges, losing multiple points and seeing an increase in insurance—listen, that's going to change a habit.

The member from Essex had presented a similar bill in regard to, as well as our children, some of our most valuable individuals who are working on construction sites. His amendment could have been part of this bill. Unfortunately, it's not.

We all need to work towards positive changes as far as making these changes so that our kids are actually safer while they're entering their school zone areas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to rise and speak to Bill 65. I was in committee. The government is accusing the PCs of, in one way, trying to filibuster at committee with hundreds of amendments when, in fact, only 40 were brought forward.

But the one that I would like to refer to is an amendment inserted by our party which was actually from a bill that I had introduced back in February of this year, Bill 94, which pertained to putting cameras on school buses to capture vehicles that blow by school buses when the lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended. It would, in fact, capture the licence plate.

Now, the bill itself: The current legislation states that it can only be—it involves a police officer. And we gave them a gift. We gave them a gift at—

Interjection.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Well, we did. We gave them a gift at committee, saying, "Listen, this bill needs to be a part of a Bill 65." But unfortunately—you know, we listened to the experts who said, "No, the current legislation doesn't allow for proper identification. How do we know the lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended?" So we went back in and we actually revised that. We offered to, again, ask the committee to accept this revised amendment. They flatly refused it.

This is all about safety with our students, and unfortunately, Bill 94 now sits in the abyss somewhere.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Huron–Bruce has two minutes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm glad to have a couple of minutes to wrap up. I'm glad to have heard from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, because he deserved the opportunity to talk about the essence and the heart behind his good initiative.

I appreciate the comments from the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Thank you for understanding and recognizing the value of having cameras on our school buses in rural Ontario. Because the member from Perth–Wellington got it right: No matter how you shape this, this has to be about the safety of our students, no matter where in Ontario. We can't forget it's about children first. That's why I was so disappointed by the member for Essex. I shared a personal story. When I was going to my high school bus, I saw my neighbour Kathy wrapped up in bandages as a result of getting hit by a car while getting off a school bus.

Shame on you for making this political.

Speaker, I would suggest that maybe the NDP are a little sensitive because they introduced photo radar and it was an absolute mess. Their NDP government absolutely made a mess with photo radar, and it was the PC government that had to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All right, stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay, if you want to have a fight, take it outside.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Shame on you—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Huron–Bruce is warned. You are warned. Enough. Finish your two minutes.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Again, this is not a laughing matter. You need to be listening to other people. I have seen the outcome of children getting hit by a car, and this has to be about the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Okay. Further debate.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Things get a little heated in here on occasion, which is, I suppose, not surprising to many people. We've had a hot issue discussed here this morning with regard to the school bus. There isn't one person in this Legislature represented by all three parties who does not have the interest and the love of safety for our children. There are teachers from the other side—regardless, we understand that and we get that.

The purpose of Bill 65—and we've had some issues with regard to that, simply because of the photo radar aspect of it. Someone speeding through school zones—I don't have a problem with that; capture them. Community safety zones—well, it hasn't been clearly defined what a community safety zone would be or could be. Apparently, there was a councillor who wanted to make parts of the Lincoln Alexander freeway in Hamilton a community safety zone. That could be a little bit much. And of course, with regard to community safety zones, where does it start and where does it stop? It's not clear in this legislation, and I have a serious concern about that, because many people, perhaps, on Saturdays, rushing around, trying to get things accomplished, doing their errands, whatever—next thing you know, without realizing it, they may be in a community safety zone. Suddenly, with photo radar, they'll get a ticket or several tickets

in the mail a few days later without even being warned. I've got a bit of an issue with that.

I would like to go back and address a component of Bill 65 which we had attempted to implement. We asked the committee—I want to give the committee credit, first of all, because they did allow us to bring forth the amendment, so kudos to the committee on that—that amendment being Bill 94, which I introduced back in February of this year. But it was sitting in the abyss. It was just sitting in PMB purgatory, you might want to call it. The government wasn't going to call this bill into committee. We tried to negotiate, tried to talk to the House leaders to get them to allow this bill, but unfortunately—and here we are now, we only have today, tomorrow and then one more week, four more days of sitting.

The government is forcing a lot of their bills to be discussed, and they're putting time allocation on a lot of their bills, which, in my opinion, doesn't allow for proper debate and discussion on the bills. People from all three parties have good ideas. They present good ideas, so I don't want to make this a partisan discussion. We're legislators. We look at bills that are in the best interests of Ontarians, not playing party politics.

1000

I want to go back to Bill 94 for just a moment. Initially, I had introduced that bill several years ago, and that was introduced as Bill 50. Unfortunately, in September of last year, our Premier had prorogued the Legislature. What that meant was that any bill that was currently on the order table was then immediately wiped out, which then meant that—and I disagree with that. I truly do.

I'll simply tell you why: because a lot of time, effort and energy from members of all three parties who introduce a private member's bill—all that work is suddenly for naught. And then, that particular member has to wait for their turn, if they choose, to reintroduce a private member's bill or to introduce something new. Why can't those bills be introduced initially and leave them on the table, so it's not a complete waste of time, effort, and energy? Because we look at things from a standpoint of dollars and cents in this Legislature as well as safety, which is what Bill 65 is about.

I introduced Bill 50. It was wiped out in September on prorogation. I had to wait to reintroduce that bill, because I believe strongly, because I was a former critic for community safety and, of course, correctional services—but community safety will always be, whether I'm the critic for it or not, first and foremost for myself, for the residents in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, but also for all of Ontario. We have students, we have school boards, we have school buses throughout the entire province, and these young people need to be protected.

Having said that, I look at it, and I go, "We need to do something to further protect, in this case, our students." We worked with an organization that conducted pilots throughout the province, pilots that were held in Ottawa and I believe it was North Bay or Thunder Bay—I always get the two mixed—Kitchener and Mississauga. It was astounding. It was actually horrifying, in some ways,

as they captured video evidence of cars blowing by school buses, endangering the lives of our children.

Little children getting off of a school bus usually aren't thinking about, "Oh, there might be a vehicle coming." The school bus is stopped, the lights are flashing and everyone will stop—it's not always the case. We saw horrifying video evidence, captured from these pilots, that had near misses of our children. One life lost is one too many, and every one of us in this Legislature can agree with that. Although my children are grown, I have grandchildren living in London. Little Calvin and little Nathan take the school bus. They're thinking about everything else other than, perhaps, cars that are stopping and allowing them to safely cross the street.

I was a little disappointed when, in fact, in committee, on Bill 65 we had introduced an amendment—the amendment was really Bill 94—to be inserted, because, as far as we were concerned—and again, I mentioned earlier, I give the committee credit, because they could see value in that. Yes, we are talking about safe school zones, but safety of our children is paramount as well, so at least they allowed us to bring forth that amendment, and I'm grateful. I'm grateful.

So they had expert witnesses in at committee, and they listened to us and then we listened to them. They pointed out perhaps areas where Bill 94, or, in this case, the amendment to Bill 65—one of the amendments—could be strengthened and improved. We listened to that and we didn't disagree. As a matter of fact, we thought, "You know what? We're grateful for the input." We listened. We listened to what had to be said or what was said. We went back to the drawing board and corrected the situation.

Let's fast-forward to the closing moments of Bill 65 in committee. My colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga asked permission to reintroduce Bill 94 as an amendment because we had, we believed, got it right, due to the input we heard from all parties. Unfortunately, it was shot down. In other words, we didn't even have an opportunity to explain to them where we had made the improvements to the bill. That was somewhat disheartening.

Here we sit now discussing Bill 65. I'm a believer in "A good idea doesn't care who owns it." I've been like that my entire career, not just here, but when I used to run my own training and development company. That's what I used to teach management. The people doing the job on the front line are usually the people who best know how to do the job, so if there's opportunity for improvements, listen to what they have to say, because they are the ones actually doing the job. Having said that, I looked at it and I said, "This should not be a partisan attempt to stymie or to stall a good idea."

So now here we sit. Bill 94 is now, as I mentioned earlier, in PMB purgatory. It's waiting to be called into committee.

One of the reasons we wanted to insert Bill 94 into Bill 65 and to get it passed—and I would hope that the government House leader is listening intently to this—is that if it would pass legislation, then we could have all summer to educate Ontarians, communities: "Listen,

they're starting in September when our children are going back to school. You need to be aware that legislation has been passed and that we will penalize drivers"—or, in this case, with the way the bill would read, we would penalize the owners of vehicles, because Mom or Dad could in fact allow their son or daughter, perhaps, to take the car to school. It would be the owner of the vehicle that would be, in fact, fined.

The good news is that we wouldn't be taking police away from their job of policing our communities to keep our communities safe, because the video evidence captured from a camera mounted on the side of a school bus, that video evidence showing the lights flashing and a vehicle passing, would be acceptable and allowed in a court of law, therefore saving the taxpayers a lot of money and allowing our policing people and/or bus drivers to not have to go to court and testify. It saves a lot of time, a lot of effort, and a lot of money as well.

We were hoping that we could, in fact, get this passed, and if they weren't going to call Bill 94 into committee prior to the end of this session, that's why we chose to introduce it as an amendment to Bill 65.

I haven't given up hope on it, whether Bill 94 will be called. I know that for many of us in here, if we don't already have children—I know the government House leader has lovely children who might be close to taking the school bus; I'm not sure. But the point is that every one of us here wants to ensure that the safety of our children is kept intact and that when we kiss our children or our grandkids goodbye in the morning, they will return home to us safely as well.

1010

I'm really hoping that the government will reconsider. We believe now, through Bill 94 and what we have done—having listened to the experts—that Bill 94 is a lot stronger. And I'll give them credit. We listened to everyone. What can we do to make Bill 94 better? A good idea doesn't care who owns it. I mentioned that's been my philosophy for years. We need to work together in this Legislature for the betterment of Ontarians, not just for the betterment of a political party.

Having said that, I also want to point out that—I mentioned earlier we heard from experts—we had members from the Ministry of Transportation. They came to committee and they simply told us their perspective, that the technology isn't there.

Speaker, I've got good news: The technology is there, now. There is that ability to mount a camera on the side of a school bus that will capture not only a stop arm extended and the lights flashing, but also capture—that technology is there, so why not take advantage of that technology? It needs to be taken advantage of.

As I mentioned before, if we could have gotten Bill 94 into committee or had that amendment included into Bill 65, then it would be legislation. Municipalities could do their own, and the government could even do advertisements as well promoting what this legislation is all about.

You know, it's funny, as a young boy, people would say, "Rick, you must have watched a lot of TV." It was

probably black-and-white TV back then too, but I want to suggest something. There was a commercial on TV that, for some reason, has just stuck in my mind all these years. I believe the actor was a gentleman by the name of José Jiménez; some of us maybe remember him. He did a commercial back when they were first introducing seat belts. This was sponsored by the National Safety Council; it was an American one. José is sitting on this bar stool, and he's talking about the use of seat belts, how important they are, and how seat belts save lives. We all know they do, and I'm sure that for some of us even in this Legislature today, seat belts have saved our own lives or the lives of our loved ones as well.

So here's José Jiménez sitting on this bar stool, and he's talking about the importance of always buckling up your seat belt. Back then it was just across the lap; they didn't have the shoulder one. When he was finished with his commercial, he went to stand up, and as he stood up, the bar stool moved with him. His comments were—I never forgot this. He looked down and there he had a seat belt around his lap on that bar stool and he said, "This National Safety Council, they think of everything."

Speaker, we need to think of everything too. That's why when it comes to safety, it's so important that we—

Interjection.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Oh, my time is almost up. Thank you for that.

We need to keep our children's safety first and foremost.

Am I disappointed that our amendment 94 didn't get included into Bill 65? Yes, I am. But I have not given up hope, and I'm hoping that the government House leader will discuss it with the other House leaders and perhaps we can still get Bill 94 amended—having listened to the experts—and included soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park today representatives from Prompt Payment Ontario. They'll be visiting with MPPs today, and I'd like to invite all MPPs to the Prompt Payment Ontario reception between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. in the legislative dining room. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to also welcome these people, but also to say that if the government didn't pay their bills, don't worry, the reception is still open.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I'm going to add onto that and welcome all the members from Prompt Payment Ontario. I want to assure them that the bill is coming; we've been working hard along with their co-operation. I hope everyone comes to the reception tonight.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to welcome back to the House Eric Zinn. He should be no stranger as he's an alumnus of OLIP. He's a proud homer from Huron county, Ashfield township.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure today to make two introductions. On behalf of Cheri DiNovo, my colleague from Parkdale–High Park, guests of page captain Emma Yu: mother Siu Hing Yu; brother Jason Yu; and grandmother Wong Lai Chun. Welcome to Queen's Park.

From the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects, Aina Budrevics, executive director; and Sarah Manteuffel, communications coordinator.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I'd like to welcome Margaret Taylor, who is from my riding of Durham. She's here today with Prompt Payment Ontario. Welcome.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, I don't know if you've heard yet that the Prompt Payment people are in the House today. I'd like to remind the House leader that he has promised the bill.

I have four introductions: Ron Johnson, Jo-Ann Gauthier, Steve Creces and Hugh Laird. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'd like to introduce my two summer students who are working this summer in my constituency office in St. Paul's: Joseph Worndl, who is a graduate of Oxford university, and Alexa Coleman, who is at McGill.

Mr. Todd Smith: I believe the members of the Prompt Payment group are here, and I would like to welcome one especially: Ian Cunningham from the Council of Ontario Construction Associations. Welcome, Ian.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: It is my pleasure to welcome to Queen's Park today grade 10 students from St. Marcellinus Secondary School in my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South. I wish them an enjoyable trip, and I look forward to meeting them after question period.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to introduce Pearl Quan, mother of page captain Peter Schneider. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: On behalf of Monte Kwinter, MPP for York Centre, I'd like to introduce the guests of page captain Sofija Bulatovic: mother, Marija Bulatovic; sister Olga Bulatovic; brother Luka Bulatovic; and grandmother Verica Randelovic.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm proud to introduce a friend and a constituent, Chris May, who's here in the east members' gallery from CPA. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

As is the tradition of the Speaker, I'd like to introduce the former member from Brantford in the 36th Parliament, Mr. Ron Johnson.

Also in the Speaker's gallery we have today Dr. Winston Isaac, the new honorary consul general of St. Kitts and Nevis in Toronto. Welcome. We're glad you're with us, Consul General.

Would the members also please join me—the family and friends of the late Michael George Bolan, MPP for Nipissing during the 31st Parliament, are seated in the Speaker's gallery: wife, Susan; daughter Cathy and her

husband, Peter Laurie; son Michael Jr.; Gordon Bolan and his wife, Jenny Young; son Bryan Bolan and partner, Sherry Persaud; daughter Christine Wood and her husband, Charlie Wood; son John Bolan and his partner, Laura; grandchildren Brianna, Justin, Emily, Stephanie, Peyton, Abigail, Henry, Jillian, David and David's partner, Celeste.

Also joining the family are friends Charles McMulkin, Nestor Prisco and Patrick LeSage. We welcome them to the House.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, from the former parliamentarians, is David Warner, Speaker during the 35th Parliament, and Mr. Steve Gilchrist, MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments, and president and chair of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. Welcome, gentlemen. Thank you for being here.

I call upon the government House leader for a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to recognize the former member of provincial Parliament from Nipissing, Mr. Michael George Bolan, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

MICHAEL GEORGE BOLAN

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's an honour to rise to speak about our friend Michael Bolan. Speaker, as a young boy, Mike lost his father in World War II. This event shaped a lot about who Mike became. He developed an abiding passion for the memory of his father. Mike walked the battlefield where his father died. He researched the Algonquin Regiment and traced their footsteps through Europe. He was privileged to become their honorary colonel.

This was a boy without a father, but he had a persevering mother who nurtured him with bottomless love and ensured he got an education. Mike was the first in his family to attend university, thanks to a scholarship from the Knights of Columbus.

He was a self-described “p'tit colon” from Cobalt where he was proud to work in the mines as a young man.

He was called to the bar in 1960, and set out to create his future and his family. Many of the Bolan clan are here today, as you introduced, Speaker, and we welcome them to this Legislature, including daughter Christine, who some will recognize was a page here in her grade 8 year.

Daughter Cathy told such a wonderful story when we celebrated Mike's remarkable life. Many personal anecdotes you'll hear came from that day. Thank you, Cathy.

And beside Mike, through each of these stories, is his wife, Susan, sometimes passenger, sometimes driver, but full-time love of his life.

Speaker, Michael George Bolan had a deep desire to serve: a trustee on two school boards, a city councillor, member of the 31st Parliament, and appointed to the

bench on the District Court of Ontario and the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. To Mike, there was a big difference between those who broke the law because they were disadvantaged and those who broke the law because they were greedy. He was particularly sensitive to First Nations, and strived so very hard to recruit more indigenous people into law school.

Mike disliked the designation of “Honourable” or “Your Honour,” the title he earned as a judge. When you saw him on the street, he called you “pal” and everyone called him “Mike.” His dear friend Nestor Prisco tells the story of one trial where a man sheepishly looked up from the witness box and whispered, “Allo, Mike.” Mike smiled as he acknowledged one of his former Liberal poll captains from the west end of the riding.

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As a judge, Mike earned a sterling reputation. He was sensitive to people’s feelings and possessed a keen understanding of the human condition. It was for this reason he was everything that a judge should be.

But the passion was that Mike was a true artist. He loved music, always singing and whistling. He loved to perform, whether in this Legislature or in a courtroom and, as it turned out, in the kitchen. Who knew? He loved to dance. He loved theatre. He loved visual arts, painting, mixed media, sculptures, and he loved the earthy part of his beloved northern Ontario, which is why the family all know how to paddle a canoe, chop wood, fire a rifle, drive a boat and bait a fishing hook.

And you wonder if Mike’s artistry flowed into the veins of his family: Gord, an actor, writer and musician; Bryan, a videographer; John, who learned the craft of canoe-making; Michael, who learned the art of trapping; our page Christine is a gifted writer; and, Cathy, what a wonderful storyteller you are.

Susan, this is a family filled with love and joy. We can all imagine you collected around the family table, extra guests, multiple conversations, a lot of carousing, a lineup of James Bond movies, a few card games, all washed down with a selection of wine and cheeses. This is the family of Mike Bolan. These are the grandkids of Mike Bolan. They are the life of Michael Bolan.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: On behalf of my NDP colleagues, it is an honour for me to rise and pay tribute to Michael George Bolan. I never had the opportunity to meet Mr. Bolan. As I was doing the research on his life, it was obvious that I missed a great opportunity, because of all the things he’s done in his life. But there was one thing, one line, that stood out to me in one of the articles I read, which said he was a self-described “p’tit colon” from Cobalt and was proud of having worked in the mines as a young man. A defining characteristic of his political and legal career was his belief in the common good and treating everyone fairly and with respect.

I never had the opportunity to meet Mr. Bolan, but I’ve met many “petits colons” from Cobalt. One thing you have to understand about Cobalt—Cobalt went from being nothing in the bush to a mining—it was a boom-

town. But it was not just boom and bust. It was boom and tragedy.

Cobalt had a stock exchange, it had a professional hockey team, but it didn’t have water and sewers. As a result, the people got typhoid fever. Then, when other mining camps opened, Cobalt busted. In the 1940s and 1950s, it rose again, and I’m sure that’s when Mr. Bolan was working there. And then it busted again.

The people in Cobalt are very proud of where they live, but they don’t suffer people with airs very much, because they realize that your life could change in a minute without you having any part of it. As a result, people from Cobalt, “les petits colons,” don’t look down on people who are having a rough go because they realize it could be them tomorrow. I think that was one of the things that helped shape Mr. Bolan’s legacy.

I’m sure that Mr. Bolan, having grown up in Cobalt, would have heard the verses of The Cobalt Song, and I think on his behalf, I’m going to read a few of them into the record. The Cobalt Song—I can’t sing, but I can read.

You can talk about your cities and all the towns you know

With trolley cars and pavement hard and theatres where you go

You can have your little autos and carriages so fine

But it’s hobnail boots and a flannel shirt in Cobalt town for mine.

Old Porcupine’s a muskeg, Elk Lake’s just a fire trap,
New Liskeard’s just a country town and Haileybury’s
just come back.

You can buy the whole of Latchford for a nickel or a dime,

But it’s hobnail boots and a flannel shirt in Cobalt town for mine....

We’ve got the only Lang Street; there’s blind pigs everywhere,

Old Cobalt Lake’s a dirty old place, there’s mud all over the square,

We’ve got the darnedest railroad, that never runs on time.

But it’s hobnail boots and a flannel shirt in Cobalt town for mine.

We’ve bet all our dough on hockey and swore till the air was blue,

The Cobalt stocks have emptied our socks with the dividends cut in two,

They don’t get any of our money in darn old Porcupine,

But it’s hobnail boots and a flannel shirt in Cobalt town for mine.

For we’ll sing a little song of Cobalt,

If you don’t live there it’s your fault

Oh you Cobalt, where the big gin rickeys flow

Where all the silver comes from,

You'll live a life and then some
Oh you Cobalt, you're the best old town I know.

Michael Bolan, miner, lawyer, member of provincial Parliament, Ontario Supreme Court Justice, "p'tit colon de Cobalt," you lived a life and then some, and for that we are all eternally grateful.

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

Mr. James J. Bradley: I have the disadvantage of being after the member for Nipissing and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, but I think each one of us can bring a different perspective about Mike Bolan and his contribution to the Legislature and, if we want to be parochial—and we all should be—to his own constituency of Nipissing.

Mike and I were both elected in 1977, at the same time—and one of us survived a little longer.

Mike was a great guy, I'll tell you. We in the Liberal caucus always knew when he was there, because he never hesitated to make his views known. Very often, when you're new to the Legislature, you are reticent to speak out, and in a caucus meeting you bow to those who have much more experience and perhaps some gravitas that they have accumulated over the years. That never bothered Mike very much.

Whenever there were issues that arose, particularly those which affected northern Ontario as a whole and his riding of Nipissing, he was not hesitant to suggest that those in the south, for instance, might not quite understand the special challenges that exist in the north. The two previous speakers are both representing northern constituencies, and they know exactly what I'm talking about when I say that there is a different perspective on the challenges facing our province when you happen to live in northern Ontario and face special circumstances. Mike Bolan certainly knew that.

As has been mentioned, he could walk with kings and keep the common touch. Both members have certainly suggested that. That's very important, because he achieved, first of all—he had been on local council. His local involvement in politics is something that frequently happens for all of us who are here in the House today. You learn from that experience what is happening at the grassroots. There's no level of government that's closer to the people than the municipal level—but we'd like to think that we in this Legislature and the federal members are in touch with our communities. I can tell you that the local representative on a municipal council knows that.

He was involved in a number of organizations.

The member for Nipissing mentioned that he was very proud of his father and his father's military service and he ended up growing up with his mother and other members of the family being his support. He was extremely proud of that. The fact that he would continue to be involved indirectly but very much in an important way with the military in his community spoke well of his respect for those who are in the service, and he recognized that through his father.

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As well, working in the mines: Here's a person who came to the Legislature and ended up on the bench, serving as a judge, but always had in the back of his mind what people had to confront in their daily lives. It's sometimes difficult for those of us in elected office to remember those early experiences, but when we do have them, it resonates well, I think, with our constituents. Mike Bolan's experience in the mines as a very young person left him with a respect for those who worked in those kinds of very challenging jobs, which are physically challenging and certainly had a good deal of danger surrounding them as well.

I like the fact that he always had respect for the law. In our society, we are a society that respects laws. Individuals don't run our country, our province or our individual municipalities. We run them by the laws that exist. He always respected that.

The anecdote told about seeing people on the street, and calling him by his first name: That is something that speaks well of him. Sometimes, when people achieve a high position, the people they associate with are people who are of the same position. When you remember your roots, as he did, and his constituents—he recognized that each one of us in our lives has a certain station in that life, and all should be respected. His respect for fairness, no matter what walk of life a person came from, came through as a member of the Legislature, but also, of course, when he was on the bench.

The fact that he was involved in the outdoors in the north—of course, one anticipates that is going to be the case—paddling, doing some painting. I didn't realize he was as culturally advanced as the members have mentioned, although, from time to time, he did break into song at Liberal caucus meetings. Those days, with Stuart Smith as the leader—Stuart used to leave the caucus meeting with a migraine at the end of listening to the members. Mike may have induced that from time to time as he expressed, perhaps, a dissident view.

We are very fortunate in this Legislature to have had him serving, but also on the bench. We're always, as all members are—we do this, I think, with great sincerity to the family and friends who are here. We thank you for allowing us to have had Mike Bolan with us, to make that contribution to his constituency of Nipissing, to our province of Ontario and to our country as a whole. We thank you very much for that. We respect the role that he played. Once again, Ontario is a better place because of Mike Bolan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their very heartfelt and kind words about former MPP Mike Bolan. I would like to tell the family and friends that, in honour of him, a DVD of the speeches and a copy of Hansard will be provided to the family as a tribute to Mike Bolan. We thank you for the gift—not only here in the House, but in the province of Ontario—of Mike Bolan. Thank you very much.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice that would extend the spring sitting until June 8 so that the assembly has the time needed to seek public input on the government's hydro plan, which will impact the lives of Ontarians for the next 30 years.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is a point of order. I remind all members: You're just seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion. The motion itself is read afterwards.

The leader of the third party is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to present a motion without notice to add two extra days over the constituency week for public hearings on Bill 132.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, and Thursday, May 25, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 132; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to these public hearings:

That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, for public hearings on Thursday, May 25, 2017.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dispense?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Process-wise, I need to finish this and then come back to you.

I heard a "Dispense." Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

The member for Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I think there was one omission. There should be that a list be made of the people that apply and that they be divided equally amongst the parties in order to select the witnesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): What I'm going to do is re-read it to ensure that we understand what that is, and then I'll allow that to take place in a quick agreement if we need to change.

Mr. Naqvi moves that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, and Thursday, May 25, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 132; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to these public hearings:

That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017, for public hearings on Thursday, May 25, 2017; and—I believe there's a—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Can I just add?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will recognize the member for that clarification.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Unfortunately, we didn't get a chance to see this UC before, so we're having to, as they say, make sausage on the floor of the Legislature. But the point is that the witnesses for all hearings on this bill should apply to the committee, the names should be given, and then the caucuses be given a list and everybody picks their fair share for all the hearings on this bill.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: If the House leaders are comfortable, I'm more than happy to withdraw this motion now and to work with them to finalize those minor details and bring that back for your attention.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall we withdraw? Agreed? Agreed. The motion is withdrawn.

ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Last night, Global's Tom Hayes asked an important question for parents and teachers. He asked about violence in our schools and specifically what this government is going to do about it.

Just look at some of the stories we've heard: A Halton region mother who recently moved from Durham said, "My kids are now out in Halton region, and guess what? The same problems exist here, too." A teacher from Niagara said this: "This seems like an epidemic in the Ontario school system," all across the province.

Clearly the system is broken, Mr. Speaker. How long will parents have to worry about their children and how long will teachers have to fear for their safety before this government finally acts?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Education will want to speak to the specifics, but I know, having met with representatives of our education partners, that we are working with them and that there is a particular request to work together to set up a process whereby we can ensure there are the resources that are needed in our schools, particularly on issues of workplace safety. So that speaks to our commitment to not just

workplace safety for teachers and support workers, but also safety for everyone who goes to our schools, parents who come into the school, and everyone who works in the school. We are working with our partners, and we will ensure that we put new supports in place if those are required.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: When there's violence in the classroom, the government has a duty and an obligation to act to protect the safety of our teachers. But, of course, the Minister of Education passes the buck again and again. She leaves this epidemic up to the local school boards, saying it has nothing to do with the government. She tells everyone not to worry because local school boards have policies, but this is not a local issue. This is across the province. As the Niagara teacher told us, this is an Ontario-wide epidemic.

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What has to happen? What tragic event has to happen before the government realizes it's their responsibility and they can't pass the buck any longer? Mr. Speaker, how bad does this epidemic have to get until we can get a commitment from the province and from the Premier directly that they're going to take this issue seriously?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, you have that commitment. The people of Ontario have that commitment. Our education partners have that commitment. The parents in our schools and, most importantly, the students in our schools have that commitment. That's exactly why we continue—and we take responsibility. We continue to increase the resources in our schools, including the Special Education Grant, which is projected to be approximately \$2.8 billion in 2017-18. That grant is important because that is the grant that allows school boards to hire the support staff, to hire the resources that they need in the classroom.

We understand that there needs to be vigilant and ongoing discussion about what resources need to be in schools as education evolves, Mr. Speaker, but we have inclusive schools in this province. We continue to increase funding and we are working with our partners to make sure that the supports are in place.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: The Premier's position seems to be that everything is fine, the government is doing their job, and they'll continue to leave this to the local school boards. But the reality is, everything isn't fine. It isn't rosy. The exposé—I'd encourage the Premier to watch Tom Hayes's interviews highlighting the real challenges that students and teachers are facing. The reality is, this is not the teachers' fault. We know teachers don't have adequate support and training to deal with this violence in the classrooms. We know this is an epidemic that has gotten atrociously bad. This is not an appropriate work environment for anyone. It's not acceptable. I want the Premier, I want the government to understand that they can't pass this off.

My question to the Premier is this: Does the liability and responsibility for the safety of our teachers not

belong to the Minister of Education, or are they again going to pass it off to the school boards?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear once again. We understand that we are absolutely responsible for the supports that are in our schools. We take this very seriously. Of course, if there are incidents of violence, then those are unacceptable for all of the people in the classroom or in a school, which is exactly why, in my previous answer, I talked about the increased resources that we are putting in our schools.

We will continue to work with our education partners. As I said, I have met with representatives of teachers' federations who have said to us that they think that as the classroom and the population evolves, as the classroom changes, we need to make sure that we have the resources and the training in place for everyone who works in our schools. We will work with our partners. The Minister of Education is doing that as we continue to increase funding in our schools. Both of those things go together, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Surprise, surprise: Recent hydro bills across the province were stuffed with what appears to be partisan advertising. It appears that there's no line this Liberal government will not cross.

Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to know specifically from the Premier is, how much did this partisan Liberal advertising that you've stuffed in hydro bills cost?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Energy is going to want to speak to the supplementary, but let me just say that what is happening across the province is that people are seeing their electricity bills go down, Mr. Speaker. They're seeing reductions of their electricity bills. That's what our fair hydro plan is about.

I understand that the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about anything but the fact that he doesn't have a plan and did not ever have a plan to reduce people's electricity bills. We are doing that. People are seeing those reductions on their bills and that's exactly as it should be as people struggle to manage their finances on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's amazing that the Premier can defend this propaganda with a straight face. It's wrong. She knows it's wrong. The member for Prince Edward-Hastings wrote to the Auditor General about these Liberal ads stuffed in hydro bills. In her response, she essentially said that this is not the first time the Liberals have used hydro bills for partisan purposes. They jammed election-style ads in hydro bills just before the 2011 election. Now, we know the government has no shame. They will continue to cross lines to try to pitch this alternate reality of their farce of a hydro plan. As usual, the Liberals will do anything to look out for the Liberal Party, not for ratepayers in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Ancaster.

Mr. Patrick Brown: I ask this: When and where does a Liberal cross an ethical line? When do they realize that they have to stop using Ontario taxpayer resources to push their own partisan agenda? It's getting worse and worse. If you're not going to listen to us, will you listen to the Auditor General and do the right thing?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: One of the things that we continue to do as a government is bring forward a plan that will reduce rates by 25% by July 1, of course if this legislation passes. That's a 25% reduction for small businesses. That's a 25% reduction for farms and a 25% reduction—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault:—for all families right across the province. When it comes to making sure people in this province know that there is a plan out there, it's this government that brought forward that plan. It's this government that is making sure that those 800,000 families in this province that live in the rural or northern—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault:—actually will see a 40% to 50% reduction. What they also know is that the opposition have no plan, and when they have no plan for electricity, that just means they have no plan for Ontario.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Partisan, false propaganda, that's what this is. The Auditor General had this to say. She said that the government's most recent advertising on its fair hydro plan would not have passed review. That's the Auditor General. Further, the Auditor General said they found that advertising to be "misleading" and "self-congratulatory." It's not just opposition, it's not just the media saying this hydro plan is a farce, it is the independent legislative oversight saying that it's misleading and self-congratulatory in terms of these ads. Clearly, the Liberals are abusing taxpayer money for their own partisan gain. That's not acceptable.

Will the Liberals pull their hydro election ads and stop campaigning on the taxpayers' dime? It's a pretty simple request. Will you simply do the right thing and stop abusing taxpayers for your own partisan gain?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Minister.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I know the PCs don't want the people of Ontario to know there's going to be a 25% reduction coming by summer. I know that the PCs don't

want people to be able to plan and look at their budgets, especially with the utilities. We have about 68 utilities in this province that need to plan to ensure that they can inform their customers so they understand that. I know they don't like telling the people of Ontario what's actually happening, because they have no plan when it comes to electricity. When it comes to their approach, their approach doesn't lower bills for families, it doesn't lower bills for small businesses—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault:—it doesn't lower bills for farms, it doesn't lower bills for long-term-care homes—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault:—it doesn't cut bills for greenhouses and it doesn't do anything to address Ontario's indigenous communities. Why is that? Because they have no plan. When they don't have a plan for electricity, they have no plan on what to do in Ontario. We have brought forward a plan that is going to reduce bills by 25% and that will help everyone in this province.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In less than an hour, the Liberal government is going to force through a time allocation motion that severely limits debate on their hydro financing scheme—a borrowing scheme, really, is what it is. When that happens, this Legislature will have had about seven hours of debate on this bill—seven hours, Speaker—seven hours for legislation that will impact people's lives for the next 30 years. It's ludicrous. Why does this Premier insist upon ramming this legislation through the House?

1110

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader is going to want to speak to the procedural mechanisms. But I want to just make it clear that what we are doing is working to help people in their lives. Whether it is the fair hydro plan or whether it's OHIP+ pharmacare, which will give all children across the province from zero to their 25th birthday free medication, those are initiatives that we believe are critical.

It is outrageous to me, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Paul Miller: How about 26-year-olds? From 25 to 65—nothing.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is actually very surprising that the NDP has indicated that they will vote against both those measures. They would rather focus on procedural mechanisms and games than actually deal with the substance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What is outrageous is the plan that the Liberals are trying to ram through this Legisla-

ture that will cost people more money in a couple of years' time when it comes to their electricity bills.

In addition to the limited debate that they're allowing here, they're also going to limit where the people of Ontario will have an opportunity to have their say. All of the public hearings that they've just had a change of heart on this morning are going to be happening here in Toronto.

Why won't the people in London be able to have their say? Or the people in Windsor, in Ottawa, in Thunder Bay or anywhere else outside of Toronto? Why will those Ontarians not have a chance to have their say on this legislation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I can tell you, on this side of the House, we are extremely proud to bring forward Bill 132. That is going to provide for immediate relief for all Ontarians by cutting their hydro bills by 25%. In fact, the bill does not just stop there. For Ontarians who live in rural and northern communities, they will see a cut of 40% to 50% on their hydro rates. It is—

Interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: How dumb do you think we are?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It is beyond comprehension why the NDP is against giving Ontarians significant relief on their hydro bills. The NDP say that they haven't had enough time to debate this bill. Yet, they announced their opposition to this bill within the first hour of introduction of this bill. Clearly, their minds are made up. They don't want to help Ontarians.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What the NDP is against is giving the people of Ontario the shaft on their hydro bills. That's what this government is about to do.

This morning we did call on this government to have a change of heart and to provide an opportunity for more public hearings. Of course, the Liberals said no, and then they had a sudden change of heart.

But, not surprisingly, the government has decided to have all of the public hearings here in Toronto. That is not giving the people of Ontario a say; that's giving some people an opportunity to have a say.

So here we have an extremely important piece of legislation that's going to impact people's hydro bills in a very negative way in short order, and this government is not prepared to seek input from people across the province. Why?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: All of the bluster we're seeing from the NDP is because they really don't have a plan. What they have is an aspirational document, which: "Someday, perhaps, maybe, if we're elected"—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Their plan is an aspirational plan. Our plan is a real plan that is going to result in real cuts in hydro rates for the people of Ontario. The bill clearly

says that the cut will come into place after 15 days from receiving royal assent. We don't want to delay the people of Ontario getting a cut. Our government wants to have that 25% cut in place right away, while the NDP just wants to debate the issue.

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. In 2013, the Premier said this about her party's cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants: "I have never said this wasn't a political decision. It was a political decision."

Will the Premier admit right now, so that her successor won't have to, that her hydro borrowing scheme is just a political decision designed to try to help her party hold onto power in the next election?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. I'm getting a sense that somebody is requesting warnings.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, our decision to reduce people's electricity bills by 25% has everything to do with people's ability to pay their electricity bills and to manage their budgets. That's what our plan is about.

We recognize that the \$50 billion of investment that has been made in the electricity system to make it clean, renewable and reliable—investment that was necessary because previous governments had not made those investments and we were dealing with a degraded electricity system in 2003: We recognize that the cost associated with that needs to be spread over a longer period of time. That's what we're doing, and in doing that, we are able to give people immediate relief—a 25% reduction this summer. In rural and northern communities, some people will see a 40% to 50% reduction. That is in response to people's need in this province. That's what the fair hydro plan is about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Last fall, the Premier also admitted that soaring hydro bills were her mistake in the first place. She said, "I take responsibility as leader for not paying close enough attention to some of the daily stresses in Ontarians' lives. Electricity prices are the prime example."

Why is the Premier pushing forward with a hydro borrowing scheme when documents show and she knows that it will cause hydro bills to go up even further and cause even more stress for the families and businesses that she just apologized to six months ago?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've been very clear that we were working on a number of initiatives. We removed 8% from people's bills. We renegotiated the Samsung contract. We've been working, not for months but for years, to remove costs from the system because we recognized that those investments to upgrade the system were costly and had a cost associated with them.

In removing 25% from people's bills, we have said that that means that the cost will be shared over a longer

period of time. In the short term, that 25% reduction will help people immediately. In the mid-term, we will hold those bills down to the rate of inflation. In the long term, the long-term energy plan is being developed, and we will continue to take costs out of the system.

This is immediate relief, but we recognize that there is a longer-term plan that is needed. That plan is being developed.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This Premier and this government are plagued by scandal: the Sudbury by-election bribery charges, the broken promise not to sell Hydro One, the gas plant decision and now ramming an ill-thought-out hydro borrowing scheme through the House with no FAO assessment, with just six sitting days left and very, very little time for the people of Ontario to review it, and, most importantly, when she knows that it will end up costing people in this province more on their hydro bills.

When will the Premier put an end to Liberal scandals and just admit that she has no real plan to lower people's hydro bills, only another political decision?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: People across this province are going to see a 25% reduction, on average—between a 23% and 28% reduction on average on their electricity bills by summer. In northern and rural communities, many will see up to a 40% to 50% reduction.

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On January 1, 2018, children across this province will have access to free medication. This September students will be going to college without having to pay tuition. Kids from low-income families will go—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll wait until you're finished.

Finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Kids will be going to university and college and taking training programs without having to pay tuition.

My job as Premier is to put in place plans that are real, that give people real relief and that work and have real timelines. That's what we're doing.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Children and Youth Services.

New question.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Later this morning we'll be voting on the government's budget measures bill. This includes giving the availability to municipalities to implement a new hotel tax. On this new tax, the Liberal MPP from

Mississauga–Streetsville stated, "This is a bad idea, and I do not support it." He went on to say, "To attempt to tax out-of-town residents is taxation without representation." Even the Premier's own members have serious objections to this bill.

I ask the Premier: Is that why debate was cut off? Did the Premier not want the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and others to share these objections with the Legislature?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite was correct on one point: We are passing a bill this afternoon to pass the first balanced budget since the depths of the recession—a balanced budget that's going to meet the needs of the people of Ontario, a budget that's going to support all our children under the age of 25 with free medication, a budget that's going to provide supports for education and health care with record investments, a budget that's going to provide for more roads and bridges and public transit. And yes, we are going to provide the city of Toronto and other municipalities with more powers, at their request.

But what's important here is that we're providing for the people of Ontario, and that member opposite should be supporting that as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Oxford.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is back to the Premier. Premier, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville isn't the only one of your members who disagrees with your policies. The Liberal member from Beaches–East York said, "The rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto and other communities in Ontario because it didn't allow the private sector to continue to build." He went on to say, "I would resist, tremendously, any amendment to this legislation which would bring back rent control."

Premier, did you cut off debate on Bill 124 so that your members couldn't raise these objections in the Legislature?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite has just made reference—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Beaches–East York, come to order. Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite just made reference to 16 comprehensive measures to try to cool the market, to address demand and supply in our housing sector, and to support the people of Ontario and homeowners who are trying to get into the market. The member opposite is suggesting otherwise. Again, they're voting against the people of Ontario. They're not supporting the very families that are trying to get into the

marketplace, as we've addressed in those measures going forward.

I ask the member opposite from the first question: What will they cut as we proceed forward with these measures? Will they cut pharmacare for the children of our communities? Will they cut hospitals and education and schools in their respective communities? That's what they're voting for. They're voting against the people of Ontario.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Premier. Families in Brampton know that their hospital is dangerously overcrowded. The emergency room sees about 160% more people each and every day than they were designed to care for. People like Jamie-Lee Ball have suffered for days on end on stretchers in hallways, and 87-year-old Roelfina Dillerop passed away after spending five long days in the hallways of the ER.

The Premier could do something to fix the overcrowding at Brampton Civic, but she refuses to act. How much longer do the good people of Brampton have to wait before this Premier actually does something to fix the overcrowding at Brampton Civic Hospital?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The people of Ontario don't have to wait much longer at all. In fact, just a few short minutes from now, we'll be voting on a budget, which I hope the member opposite will support, that contains more than \$500 million of new investment added to the base of hospitals across this province. Every single hospital will get a minimum of a 2% increase to their budget.

In addition to that, we have reserved significant funds specifically for hospitals like Brampton Civic. We're adding an additional \$10 million to Brampton Civic this year, subject to the approval of the budget, which I hope the member opposite and her party will support for that very reason.

I have to remind Ontarians as well of how proud I was to be standing beside the Premier just a few short weeks ago when we opened the brand new Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness, which is providing extraordinary service to the people of Brampton.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Premier was at Osler health this morning, and she could have announced that her government will stop the overcrowding at Brampton hospital, but she failed to do that. Brampton Civic needs at least 200 more beds in the short term and more like 600 more beds in the long term.

The Premier's failure to step up and fix the overcrowding crisis means that patients like Jamie-Lee and Roelfina will continue to suffer from hallway medicine. People will continue to wait for days in hallways without a proper hospital bed and hospital care. Why does the Premier think that hallway medicine is good enough for the people of Brampton?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, of course, that's an unfair characterization of the position of this party, Mr. Speaker. But that's precisely why we invested approximately half a billion new dollars last year, an additional more than \$500 million this year in this budget, and, in just a few minutes, the member opposite has the opportunity to support those investments. Those investments include a multi-billion-dollar investment in a brand new hospital that will benefit Mississauga and Etobicoke, the new hospital in Mississauga, the Trillium network. It's part of capital investments of \$20 billion over the next 10 years for new hospitals, for redevelopments, for expansions—I would hope precisely to address the kind of issue the member opposite has raised today.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is to the Attorney General. Last fall, our government undertook to fix the Ontario Municipal Board and land use planning system. The government held a series of town halls and stakeholder meetings across the province to hear from Ontarians directly. I held two town halls in my own riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Speaker, I can tell you, from listening to my own constituents' concerns and from my 17 years' experience on city council, that the status quo is not working. Substantial changes to the land use planning system need to put people and communities first.

I was extremely pleased today to hear the news that our government is taking action to overhaul the province's land use planning appeals system, more importantly, giving communities a stronger voice and ensuring people have access to faster, fairer and more affordable hearings.

Can the Attorney General tell us how community consultations helped inform the government's proposed actions?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I want to truly, really thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore first for his guidance both to myself and the Minister of Municipal Affairs on this very important issue. Being a planner himself, having served on Toronto city council, of course he brought forward a lot of practical experience that was very helpful to us. So thanks to the member for his hard work on behalf of his community and for his advice to us.

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Speaker, we did some extensive consultation on this issue, as you know. We held town halls with over 700 attendees from Windsor to Ottawa. Virtually every sector we heard from had ideas for improving the Ontario Municipal Board, or OMB, and the hearing process. At the end of the day, people want more community involvement and more local control over planning decisions.

In the coming weeks, we will introduce legislation to transform Ontario's land use planning appeals system, including creating the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal,

which would, if passed, replace the Ontario Municipal Board and eliminate—

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the Attorney General for his answer. I'm very proud today that our government is committed to giving communities a stronger voice and creating a more level playing field. I know my constituents are extremely pleased by this commitment to overhaul the planning system.

Mr. Speaker, the chief planner of the city of Toronto, Jennifer Keesmaat, has called our government's reforms a "generational change." Toronto city councillor Josh Matlow has said, "Government should be commended for finally tipping the balance of power away from developers ... and towards residents and municipal governments. This is how we plan communities."

Speaker, the government has committed, as part of its proposed legislation, to establish a support centre to help citizens participate in the tribunal process. Could the Attorney General tell us more about the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, as I was saying, we will be creating a Local Planning Appeal Tribunal that will replace the OMB. We also will be eliminating lengthy and costly de novo hearings, and we'll be establishing an independent support centre called the Local Planning Appeal Support Centre to provide free legal support for citizens participating in the tribunal processes. This will support more clear and timely decision-making.

At the end of the day, the result is going to be fewer, shorter, less costly hearings and a more efficient decision-making process, giving communities a stronger voice and fostering a more level playing field. That is why mayors across this province and residents across this province are supporting our proposal. It has been described as a bold step that the province is taking. Speaker, I'm hoping that we'll bring in this legislation and that it will be approved by this Legislature.

SERVICE CLUBS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Speaker, in February 2015, my private member's resolution concerning service clubs received all-party support in this House. It called on the government to strike a committee to investigate the legislative and regulatory barriers and burdens facing service clubs, such as the costs of audits, red tape when applying for lottery and liquor licences, increased regulations, taxes and fees, to name just a few.

The government sent my request to the Standing Committee on Social Policy for a mere one half day of hearings. The committee issued a summary of recommendations, and since then we have heard nothing, despite my repeated requests for action on the issues raised by service clubs.

Mr. Speaker, my question is simple: What has the government done to remove the regulatory barriers facing service clubs in all our communities?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for the question. I think we all agree that service clubs play a very important role in our communities, and I congratulate the member for bringing the bill forward.

Our government is very committed to looking at reducing regulatory burdens and red tape that affect the role that groups like this play in our communities. I haven't heard from the member on this recently. I would be pleased to discuss with him the next steps.

As I say, I am a strong advocate for making things easier, especially for our not-for-profit sector. The member will know that the not-for-profit corporation has received royal assent, and these kinds of files are very important to me and to our communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Again to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services: The Rotary Club of Bracebridge has told me this government's ridiculous rules are creating unnecessary obstacles to fundraising. The Rotary Club of Bracebridge raises money for local events and causes, and to support local families in need. Every year they raffle off a car. This year, they added a duck race. But they are unable to get a licence to start selling raffle tickets for the car until the duck race is over. That means they will lose two months of time for selling the raffle tickets for the car.

Speaker, the committee heard about these issues more than six months ago. As life gets harder in Ontario under this government, communities and families rely more and more on service clubs for help. Why has the minister not made the recommended changes to help these volunteers who are trying to raise money for such worthy causes?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The members opposite are highlighting a very important point. All of us are concerned about our service clubs to do the job they need in raising money and providing for gaming and bingo as well. It's something I'm working on with the OLG and the AGCO to determine how to best provide those services and enable them to have more accommodations.

I know working with some of the cities is also part of the issue, where they have the wherewithal to advance some of those causes. But, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the concerns. We share them with you. We want to make it easier for our service clubs to provide the service that they do so essentially in our communities.

HOUSING POLICY

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday we learned that a brokerage in Hong Kong is advertising condo units with the promise to pay the non-resident speculation tax on the investors' behalf. This completely defeats the purpose of the tax, but the Minis-

ter of Finance says it's fine because the government is still getting paid.

Is the Premier interested in cracking down on speculation and keeping homes affordable or, like her minister said, is she only interested in filling government coffers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm sure he didn't say that. Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let's make no mistake. There's no loophole here. Should this legislation pass, by the way, then there will be a 15% speculation tax that will be applied to all non-resident Canadian buyers who provide and purchase residential homes in the greater Golden Horseshoe. No matter how it's being advertised as some independent, all-in price by some other agency in another part of the world outside of Canada, the buyers will be paying the tax if they're a non-resident Canadian, and that's just the point that we're making.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Vanthof: Again to the Premier: A media report over the weekend revealed that the Premier avoided taking action against housing speculation even as Toronto home prices skyrocketed by over 33% in just one year.

The article said, "Premier Kathleen Wynne and Mr. Sousa told government officials that they needed the approval of the major banks to pursue the speculation tax...." Is the Premier unwilling to stop speculation and make homes affordable because she cares more about her banker friends than Ontario families who need affordable homes?

Hon. Charles Sousa: There's a 16-point measure in our Fair Housing Plan. We hope the members opposite will support them. They include rent controls, Mr. Speaker. They include protections for tenants. They also include protection to provide for more supply into the mix and they apply a non-resident Canadian speculation tax on those that do not live in Canada and are crowding out families that are trying to buy homes. We're providing for this and I hope the members opposite will support the very thing for the very same practices and measures that we're putting out. It's important to cool the market and enable our families and young people to get into the market if they wish. The members opposite—I believe they support that, but I'm not really certain at this point, Mr. Speaker, what they're getting at.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Han Dong: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Like the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I too had a consultation town hall and OMB review with the member from Davenport. The Ontario Municipal Board is an independent adjudicative tribunal. When people disagree over how the community should grow, often OMB hears the case and makes a decision. These are important decisions and the Ontario we build today will determine how we live, work and play tomorrow. We want a healthy and sustainable, livable community. Many of my constituents have expressed concern that the OMB doesn't always give enough

weight to the local perspective when it makes a decision. Yesterday the minister, along with the Attorney General, announced that our government is taking action to improve our land use planning appeal system.

Would the minister elaborate on some of the changes our government is proposing?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. In the coming weeks, Speaker, legislation will be introduced that, if passed, would create the local planning appeal tribunal to replace the Ontario Municipal Board. The new tribunal would be mandated to give greater deference to the decisions of local communities. The member for Trinity–Spadina was one of many of our members, I would say, who held their own town halls and listened to what their constituents had to say, in addition to the consultations—at least a dozen or so—held by our ministry.

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The feedback came back to us and was considered as a part of the review. We heard that people wanted more community involvement, a more meaningful voice in the process, more local control over planning decisions, fewer hearings and a more transparent process. That's what we're proposing. This process, if passed, would provide more certainty for all, including those in the development industry.

Speaker, in the supplementary, I'm going to give some details on how we're providing more deference to local decision-making in this legislative package.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Han Dong: I want to thank the minister for the answer. I understand that, as part of providing more deference to local decision-making, our government is proposing that fewer cases go to the appeal body, and some local decisions are exempt from appeal.

In my riding, the Ossington Community Association had questions about how communities would grow near transit areas. All Ontarians should be able to count on a land use planning and appeal system that is efficient, transparent and predictable, and one that gives residents a say in what's built in their neighbourhoods.

Speaker, through you to the minister, would the minister explain how seeing fewer municipal and provincial decisions go to the tribunal will benefit communities in Ontario?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I thank the member. He is spot on, Speaker. We're proposing to bring fewer municipal decisions before the tribunal. New official plans, major OP updates and detailed plans to support growth in major transit station areas would be sheltered from appeal. On the transit piece, we're proposing a tool that would put greater power in the hands of municipalities. When municipalities plan for transit support of densities around a major transit station in a way that reflects community concerns and circumstances, we believe that that planning should be protected at the discretion of the municipality. That's what we're proposing.

All these changes would support the development of more livable, accessible and complete neighbourhoods.

We've heard that too often, OMB decisions don't consider local perspectives. These changes will reset the balance. That's why local governments are supporting this announcement. We've heard from a number of mayors right across the GTHA and beyond who are very supportive of this. It's a great piece, we're proud of it and we think it's—

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Premier. Throughout April and May, I received hundreds and hundreds of letters from my constituents expressing outrage over their hydro bills and the excessive costs of electricity on their families, homes and businesses. Every single one of these letters is addressed to the Premier and has the hydro bill attached to it. My constituents blame the Premier for her interference, her meddling and ideological pursuits which have resulted in this hydro scandal. I'm going to send these letters over to the Premier with a page.

These people deserve an honest answer and response from the architect of this anarchy. Will the Premier be straight with my constituents in her response, or will they have to continue to rely on leaked cabinet documents instead?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the correspondence that the member has sent. We certainly will look at it and respond, Mr. Speaker. I assume that these letters have come into my office. I'll have to look at them.

What I will say to each one of them is that we recognize that electricity costs needed to be dealt with. We recognized that making sure that we had a reliable, clean electricity grid had a cost associated with it, and we recognize that it is very important that we take 25% off their bills by summer so that they will have an easier time managing their household budgets.

I will be absolutely straight with them, and I will further say that the way we are doing that is that we are asking the people of Ontario over a longer period of time to pay for those upgrades of the electricity system and even the playing field. I will absolutely be happy to say that to his constituents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Again to the Premier: I asked for a straightforward and honest response because I've read that confidential cabinet document on the global adjustment smoothing, as so many others have, and it states that after this year we can expect rates to continue to rise—and in 10 years' time, 50% higher. Everybody sees this as a sleight of hand and a crass electioneering tactic to try to refloat their foundering political ship.

The Premier needs to explain and be truthful to the people of Ontario. What this government says in this House and to the media appears to be very different than what is being said behind those very secretive cabinet

doors. I believe all those suffering in energy poverty deserve the truth. Does the Premier believe they deserve the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Talking about being truthful—let's be truthful about those bills. Those are Hydro One bills—Hydro One R1 and R2 customers. They will see 40% to 50% off on those bills. I hope that that member will be honest with them and let them know that he and his party are voting against that—40% to 50%, and you're voting against that. Seniors in your riding, you're voting—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I apologize for that.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: I hope that the member is telling the constituents in his riding that they are getting a 40% to 50% reduction that he's voting against. I hope that he's telling the constituents in his riding that they have no plan, that they have no idea what to do. The only thing that they can do is send us—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

New question.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, it's pretty clear from watching our federal government in the negotiations on the softwood lumber situation that they're almost ready to throw in the towel for Ontario. The federal minister of the crown has actually stated at this point that they're going to focus on the job losses; that they know there are going to be job losses in the Ontario industry and that they're prepared to do something in order to offset those job losses.

Madam Premier, there doesn't have to be one job lost in Ontario. Our industry is not subsidized. It has been found like that under chapter 19 of NAFTA not once, but numerous times—by chapter 19, to say that, in fact, we don't subsidize our industry.

So my question to you is this: Will you stand up for Ontario and make sure that if the federal government comes up short when it comes to the Ontario industry—that we are there in order to deal with the immediacy of making sure that they've got the money to survive the next three years, until we get another positive ruling?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I thank the member for the question.

On this side of the House, we are also very concerned about the softwood lumber dispute, and we've taken very strong action. Ontario is working with the sector to protect this important part of Ontario's economy and to minimize the impact of these unreasonable duties. We've called on the federal government to create a loan guaran-

tee program to protect forest companies here in Ontario. We're also providing \$74 million in funding to the forest industry to reimburse costs for their forest and public access roads, which will help to connect not only remote communities but also keep those workers going.

We've been continuing to work at the federal government task force, with my provincial colleagues as well, to call on other measures, too. I can address more of those in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, those are not roads for forest companies. Those are roads for the public. Of course we subsidize them, because they're for cottagers; they're for anybody going into the bush to do whatever. So don't go down that line.

The issue is, we have an industry that we don't subsidize. We have an industry that has been found in—

Interjection.

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

Minister of Municipal Affairs, second time.

Address the Chair, please.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Speaker, to the Premier: We have an industry that is not subsidized, that has been found so. What I'm asking this government to do is, if the federal government comes up short, which it appears that they will, that Ontario will do what Quebec did and make sure that we have a fund in place in order to protect our industry for the three years that it's going to take to come to yet win another decision under chapter 19.

Hon. Kathryn McGarry: I thank the member for the supplementary.

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We, on this side of the border, are taking action. We are looking at all options for Ontario. We continue to bring the Ontario voice to the federal government, which is responsible for going out and negotiating. We have named Jim Peterson, who is a former federal trade minister, as our emissary, and he's working on behalf of our workers.

I wanted to point out to the member opposite that they downloaded those forest roads to the municipalities. Not only are we supportive of those; we topped that up with another \$20 million, which keeps those contractors working in those forest companies in order to maintain and build those roads.

Kevin Edgson, CEO of EACOM, which runs a sawmill, added that the announcement of that extra money demonstrates the Ontario government's support for strong, safe, reliable infrastructure in northern Ontario.

We continue to look at all options as this rolls out.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Growth. Minister, we always hear about how well our economy is doing. We've been leading the G7 in growth for three years, and now we have the lowest unemployment rate Ontario has seen in the last 16 years.

But the economy is changing. Many people are anxious about their futures and the futures of their children. Minister, are the future generations of this province prepared for these changes, and what are we doing to support them?

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's so nice to get a question. I'm really happy to be able to get up on my feet. I'm almost out of practice.

At a time when economies all over the world are struggling to achieve strong economic growth, Ontario's economy is consistently outperforming its peers.

This week, I and the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science had the pleasure of visiting Discovery 2017 down the street, and we were absolutely astounded at what we saw there. Discovery is one way this province is building a culture of entrepreneurialism among our young people.

At the Young Entrepreneurs, Make Your Pitch competition, I have to tell you, I met so many impressive high school students who were providing innovative, practical solutions to everyday problems. Their ideas ranged from financial literacy apps for students to innovative ways to grow blueberries to a communications device to keep seniors connected to their doctors.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you, when we see those young people at Discovery, when we see those young entrepreneurs, it gives us every confidence in our—

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. Technology is advancing at an unprecedented rate in Ontario. I'm happy to see that this government puts the hard work and advocacy forward to make sure Ontario's scientists and researchers are supported in every capacity.

Every morning I wake up and read more and more articles about new, exciting companies opening up offices in Ontario to attract workers from our highly skilled talent pool.

I understand that over the past two days, several ministers have been attending the Ontario Centres of Excellence Discovery 2017 conference and have spoken on the direction of innovation in Ontario. Could the minister please tell the members of this Legislature what was presented at Discovery and the work our government has been doing to support innovation in Ontario?

Hon. Brad Duguid: To the Minister of Research, Innovation and Science.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Barrie for that question. I had the pleasure of addressing over 3,000 of Ontario's innovators and finest entrepreneurs alongside people like Gina McCarthy, former head of the US EPA under President Obama.

I was able to see our recent \$50-million investment in artificial intelligence through the Vector Institute in Toronto coming to life before my eyes.

A large feature of Discovery this year was a new and exciting suite of transformative technologies consisting of 5G networks, quantum technologies, cyber-security and autonomous vehicles.

I look forward to seeing these technologies flourishing and laying the foundation for a transformative economy in the province of Ontario.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. I'm sure the Minister of Transportation was as surprised as I was when the 2017-18 budget was tabled and there was not a single mention of the continued expansion of Highway 417 in Renfrew county. Municipal officials and my constituents were equally disappointed. This is a vital transportation corridor which is not only of great importance to the economic success of Renfrew county, it is also part of the Trans-Canada Highway system.

Will the minister explain why this most important link did not receive any priority in the government's recent budget, and can we expect him to ensure that that mistake will be rectified in the next five-year infrastructure plan?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I do want to begin by thanking the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his question. I have said before in this House, in response to a very similar question from that member on this exact same topic, that I certainly do respect the advocacy that he brings to the discussion around this important infrastructure project for his community. In fact, I will say, as I said a number of weeks or months ago to that member, that I do appreciate the work that he's done locally, including inviting me out to speak with municipal representatives from his community and others, including from our military base in that part of Ontario.

What I said that day when I went to that community was that I recognized, as the Minister of Transportation, that we have a critical need to make sure that we continue to invest in all of the highway projects that are deserving of the investment in every corner of the province of Ontario. In fact, it's what our government is doing. In this year's budget there is nearly \$3 billion set aside to invest in capital highway expansions and improvements. I would be quite happy to provide additional information on the follow-up question that I know that member is going to ask.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the minister's kind words; what I'd really like to hear is the roar of diesel engines and bulldozers and tandem trucks.

The minister will recall his visit to Renfrew county last year. I know the visit was helpful to the minister, and was most appreciated by the municipal officials and others in attendance. The minister conceded that a compelling case for continued expansion of Highway 417 has certainly been made. The requirement to show that the project is vital and worthy of the minister's support has been made. Not having it in the recent budget was again, I say, a disappointment.

Will the minister please correct this glaring omission in the 2017-18 budget and commit to putting the expansion of Highway 417 into his ministry's next five-year infrastructure plan?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I'll thank the member for the follow-up question. It's very clear, I think, to everyone here in this chamber that he brings a lot of passion to the advocacy for this particular issue, and it's certainly something that I appreciate.

This member has said that what he hopes to hear is that we're going to be investing in highways in every corner of Ontario, including in his community, because he wants to hear the sound—the roar I think he put it—of the machines that are building roads and highways and bridges in every corner of Ontario. That's why year after year, for the nearly five years that I have served here as an MPP, we have consistently invested unprecedented amounts of money in highway infrastructure in every corner of Ontario, including in eastern Ontario.

This year alone in the budget we are investing not only billions of dollars specifically for highways, but, overall, \$190 billion over the next I believe it's 12 or 13 years; an additional amount that we're putting into this because we understand, for a couple of reasons, we need to have the infrastructure for the future of our economy and for the quality of life for the people that we're proud to represent, and we also want to—

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Premier, your government has consistently bragged in this House over what you claim to have done for people when it comes to auto insurance rates. Yet a report produced by David Marshall said that our auto insurance rates are "almost 55% higher than the Canadian average."

David Marshall's report also highlighted that despite our province having the lowest level of auto accidents and despite residents losing coverage under this Liberal government, we are paying by far the highest auto insurance rates in Canada.

Before the last election this government campaigned on reducing auto insurance rates by 15%, and then said it was a stretch goal. Is the Premier proud of this record, and will she admit her auto insurance policies have made life harder for people trying to get by?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I thank the member for the question and I thank David Marshall for the work that he's done that we've commissioned in enabling us to provide even further measures to reduce auto insurance rates.

Mr. Marshall was correct, and we've been saying it from the beginning: We are having tremendously high costs of insurance in this province, and that creates higher premiums. So we have taken steps to reduce those costs over that period of time and rates have come down on average by almost 8%. We also want to further reduce them to more than 15%. In fact, there are many companies that have already reduced their rates by 15% and more.

Mr. Marshall's work is critical. It's out there for public content and for public discussion in further supporting

victims directly as opposed to those that are providing greater costs within the system.

You're right. In Alberta and other jurisdictions the costs of these claims are much lower, and we have to get ours lower too. I hope you will support those initiatives as well.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Today, we have in the Speaker's gallery a student delegation that we believe will be the future political leaders of the United States. They are from the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School for Government and International Studies in Richmond, Virginia. Welcome.

I will be meeting with them immediately after question period, and I'm sure they're going to ask me about what they just saw.

REPORTS, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the following report was tabled: The report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning the review of allowable expenses under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, section 14(b) received in the January 2017 submission completed as of May 15, 2017.

I also beg to inform the House that the following report was tabled: The report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning the review of allowable expenses under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, section 14(b) received in the February 2017 submission completed as of May 15, 2017.

DEFERRED VOTES

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion 30 relating to allocation of time of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.

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

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 16, 2017, Mr. Ballard moved government notice of motion number 30 related to allocation of time on Bill 132. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo

Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric

McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira

Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Des Rosiers, Nathalie
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han

Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon
Clark, Steve
Coe, Lorne
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras

Nicholls, Rick
Oosterhoff, Sam
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanhof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 44.

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

Motion agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on government notice of motion number 29 relating to the allocation—

Interjections: Same vote.

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 44.

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

Motion agreed to.

STRONGER, HEALTHIER ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR UN ONTARIO PLUS FORT ET EN MEILLEURE SANTÉ (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

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

Bill 127, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Projet de loi

127, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? No. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell. *The division bells rang from 1211 to 1212.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Earlier today, Mr. Duguid moved third reading of Bill 127, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Oosterhoff, Sam
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Brown, Patrick	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
Forster, Cindy	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 53; the nays are 44.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Justice Policy's consideration of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House just passed, that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy also be authorized to meet on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, and Thursday, May 25, 2017, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on Bill 132; and

That the Clerk of the Committee shall provide to the subcommittee a list of the requests to appear received by 10 a.m. on Friday, May 19, 2017; and

The members of the subcommittee, or their designates, shall prioritize and return the list to the Clerk of the Committee by 11 a.m. on Friday, May 19, 2017; and

That the Clerk of the Committee shall schedule witnesses based on these prioritized lists; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to repeat this process as necessary to facilitate scheduling witnesses; and

That the deadline for requests to appear be 4 p.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017; and

That the deadline for written submissions be 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2017; and

That the deadline for amendments be 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 25, 2017.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that, notwithstanding the order—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1216 to 1500.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator was pleased to assent to a certain bill in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Trevor Day): The following is the title of the bill to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact, amend and repeal various statutes / Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter, à modifier ou à abroger diverses lois.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CANADORE COLLEGE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I rise today to offer congratulations for the accomplishments made by four talented

students from Canadore College in Nipissing. Canadore College aircraft maintenance students David Gellately and Jason Lawton have received the highest awards from the Skills Ontario Competition. Lawton was awarded the gold and Gellately silver in the post-secondary aircraft maintenance category of the competition.

In other news, recent Canadore College graduates Dale Carrigan and Martin Smith have both been nominated for the prestigious 2017 Northern Ontario Music and Film Awards. Both of the Canadore graduates are up for the award of best director. Both Carrigan and Smith have taken home awards from national and international festivals in the past. We wish both of these talented artists the best of success at the awards show on May 27.

Canadore College continues to provide the people of Nipissing and indeed all of northern Ontario with the highest levels of quality programming and student services. It's truly wonderful to see success after success coming out of this top-tier educational facility in North Bay.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Ontario's health care system is at a tipping point. Hospitals are at capacity, patients are being treated in hallways and wait times are out of control. This is the reality in our province and it's the reality in my community of Oshawa.

As members of provincial Parliament, we've all heard the stories—perhaps so often that the members on the government side have started to forget what these stories mean for real people and real families in our communities. Last week, I spoke with Steve Borders, who has waited six months, unable to physically pick up his granddaughter while he waits to even receive a date for his shoulder surgery—six months and still waiting.

I also recently met with a man named Barry who is fighting to navigate our tangled and underfunded long-term-care system, acting as caregiver to his wife with Alzheimer's.

And I heard from Donna and Sara. Both are young women who are struggling to pay their bills and fill prescriptions each month. Donna noted in her email, "When a puffer can cost \$50 to refill, I'm paying \$50 to breathe."

In Ontario, you shouldn't have to empty your wallet to get the medicine you need, and no one should ever go without the treatment they need because of cost. It's deplorable that this is the reality in our health care system, and it's time for solutions.

That's why New Democrats have committed to Ontario's first universal pharmacare program, it's why we will undo the Wynne government's damage to hospital budgets and why we want to build a health care system that is available to every Ontarian when they need it—because, Speaker, we can't afford not to.

CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

Mr. Bob Delaney: While visiting my neighbours in Lisgar, Meadowvale in Streetsville during the 2007

election, one of the community commitments I made to our western Mississauga residents was a second extension to our local hospital.

First called an ambulatory surgery centre, the project was approved in 2011 and its scope later expanded to become a full-fledged new phase 3 at the hospital. Phase 3 at Credit Valley Hospital is now nearing completion.

Constructing phase 3 has been a bit like expanding a highway while the traffic moves on it. The emergency department has more than doubled to again be a state-of-the-art facility and now has a senior-friendly layout. Phase 3 configures the surgical care area and creates a new 24-bed recovery room with increased privacy. The current diagnostic imaging equipment is expanded. Some existing equipment, including the CT scanner, X-ray, nuclear camera and ultrasound, have been replaced.

Phase 3 co-locates the CT and angiography areas for easier access. Three existing units are combined into one spacious, state-of-the-art area for improved patient care.

There are 10 new private rooms, for a total of 29, allowing for better privacy and infection control.

Phase 3 at Credit Valley Hospital is a local commitment made and a local commitment kept in full.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Todd Smith: A record number of school closures—as many as 600—are about to become reality in communities across Ontario, including 11 in my riding. The people of rural Ontario are outraged.

Last week, this Liberal government ordered one of its MPPs to host a meeting with concerned community members in a public relations stunt to try to quell concerns. They hired a consultant to conduct the unadvertised meeting at a resort outside Sandbanks Provincial Park. That's about as far away from the affected schools as you could get—and on a Friday night. In spite of the government's efforts to make it as difficult as possible, about 100 people showed up, many from Madoc township, which is more than 100 kilometres away. Organizers said the data from the meeting would be collected and a report completed for July. Speaker, many of these schools are slated to close next month. Group after group stressed the need for a pause on the closures, which have been fast-tracked by the Liberals, and the necessity for trustees to ensure they're getting accurate stats from the school board.

Prince Edward resident Jennifer Byford said the meeting "should have been held months ago."

Brad Beale of Bayside said the administration is dismissing parents' concerns and forcing the ministry's agenda.

Belleville mayor Taso Christopher recently said, "I fully support we endorse sending a message to the province that they slow down...."

We need a moratorium to make sure that we get this right.

I think resident Ryan Aldred, a member of the Sophiasburgh community hub project, said it best: "Speed kills!"

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I've got to say, I'm a little bit disappointed with the response that I got today in question period regarding the softwood lumber industry debacle that's going on these days.

Chapter 19 under NAFTA—we've been there how many times with our softwood lumber exports? Each and every time, we have been found not to have been subsidizing that industry. Each and every time, the tribunal has ruled in favour of Canada—because, quite frankly, we do not subsidize the forest industry.

We have a federal government that has decided that the opening position is that we're going to start putting in place programs in order to offset job losses, and that they're prepared to renegotiate NAFTA. Renegotiate what? Under chapter 19, we have a process that works for Canada and works for the United States. Why do we need to renegotiate that just because we have Donald Trump, who has decided that he wants to do something different? We negotiated these things in good faith.

What the government has to do federally is to understand that we cannot diminish chapter 19 whatsoever. We can't allow the Americans to change the chapter 19 process so that it becomes judges who make decisions. Currently, the people who make the decisions are the people who are trade negotiators who understand the issue of trade. What we need to do is make sure that chapter 19 works and that we properly staff our 25-people allotment that we're allowed.

Secondly, if Canada is not prepared to backstop the Ontario industry, Ontario must do it, and make sure that our industry is able to survive up until the point of the next hearing, where we will yet again win against the United States when it comes to the softwood lumber dispute.

PRO BONO ONTARIO

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Monsieur le Président, la question de l'accès à la justice est très préoccupante.

The entire justice sector, the courts, the legal profession and members of the public are concerned about pressures within the legal system, and particularly the inability of the middle class to access law or to access the courts. However, some people are acting to help. Since 2001, in Ottawa and across our province, Pro Bono Ontario has been addressing everyday legal needs.

Pro Bono Ontario is a charitable organization that coordinates the work of thousands of lawyers who donate their services to people in need. It leverages the resources of the private bar, and in doing so saves millions of dollars in avoided trials and shortened ones. Their work is behind the scenes and is worth celebrating.

En fait, l'année dernière, lors du 15^e anniversaire de Pro Bono Ontario, le juge en chef de l'Ontario a reconnu l'importance du travail pro bono pour la province.

1510

Pro Bono Ontario does great work. It helped pensioners who were lured into fraudulent consumer con-

tracts. It has defended people from predatory lenders. It is at every level of court, from Small Claims Court to the Supreme Court. It operates drop-in centres in courthouses to help people navigate the justice system. It is in every children's hospital in Ontario, helping families resolve the legal and work problems that come when you have a child who stays long in hospitals. Finally, it works for the education and rights of disabled and disadvantaged schoolchildren, and for non-profit organizations.

Monsieur le Président, je suis fière du travail de Pro Bono, and I want to encourage my fellow members to familiarize themselves with the good work of Pro Bono.

BOATING SAFETY

Mr. Norm Miller: As the boating season begins and cottagers fire up their motors, it's important to remind boaters to be respectful, courteous and safe this summer.

Safe Quiet Lakes is an organization that has been advocating for a culture of respect on our lakes for the past six years. Last month, I attended Safe Quiet Lakes' annual stakeholders' meeting at the Port Carling community centre in Muskoka. Their main focus is on education, and they do great work in spreading awareness about the issues and their voluntary code of conduct.

The code is simple: "Boaters always care." Boaters operate with caution and courtesy. They always keep a 360-degree watch and minimize wake and noise, and they care for passengers, respect regulations, and offer life jackets and safety instruction. This message is extra-important this year as boaters and property owners contend with high water levels. This year, even a small wake could do damage to the shoreline or someone's property.

I'd like to thank Frances Carmichael and Greg Wilkinson for their continued effort in promoting safer and quieter lakes so that we can all enjoy our beautiful environment. Please take a moment to visit their website at safequiet.ca, and make all the necessary preparations for a great boating season in Parry Sound–Muskoka and across Ontario.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA, TRANSPHOBIA AND BIPHOBIA

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to inform the House that it is the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. Today we are commemorating a day, not that long ago, in 1991, when the United Nations removed homosexuality from the International Classification of Diseases.

I am proud of the inclusive society that we have built right here in Ontario. I am proud of the work that our government has done by banning gay conversion therapy, providing crisis counselling to LGBT youth and ensuring that the rights of LGBTQ parents are the same as those of all other parents.

But it is important that we do not forget that it was not that long ago that members who sit in this House today would be mocked, ridiculed, criminally charged and jailed for who they are and who they love. So today I would ask all members and everyone commemorating this day to not only celebrate the progress that we have made on this issue, but also to remember that there is much more work to be done.

Our party, our government and I are willing to fight for equality for LGBTQ people, and I hope that members on all sides of this House will continue to do so as well, because after all, Mr. Speaker, love is love.

LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Mr. Bill Walker: As a strong advocate of community-based initiatives and the Ontario PC critic for accessibility, I'm pleased to rise today in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Ontario Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. With over 75,000 law enforcement personnel involved internationally, the law enforcement torch run is considered the largest grassroots fundraising event for Special Olympians worldwide.

In Ontario, local police officers, border guards and corrections officers have helped raise \$35 million since 1987 by taking up the torch and running, jogging and biking over 8,000 kilometres, and even taking polar plunges, all in support of enriching the lives of people with an intellectual disability through sport.

Special Olympics are a powerful way of helping our 23,000 registered athletes feel and experience hope, power and joy by giving them an opportunity to demonstrate their skill and courage. In support of this amazing partnership, I encourage all members to join our law enforcement agencies in amplifying engagement and awareness of the Special Olympics by tweeting with the hashtags #BeAFan and #GuardiansOfTheFlame.

Speaker, I'd like to take a second to mention some Special Olympians from my riding: Pip Lacasse from Wiarton, who was a Special Olympics speed skater; Dylan Dawson from Wiarton—his dad, Craig, is a good friend of mine; and all of the athletes, coaches and Olympians who have recently competed from Hanover, Owen Sound and the area.

Thank you to all supporters of the torch run, including Acting Staff Sergeant Mike Daze of Owen Sound Police Service, for their diligence and commitment to children, youth and adults with intellectual disabilities. Because of your efforts, the athletes are able to enjoy, compete and represent us at the games.

I also want to mention that this year our country sent 148 Special Olympics athletes to compete at the Winter Games in Austria.

I invite all members to join me in extending our heartfelt thanks to our law enforcement for their unwavering support of the Special Olympics and also in wishing our athletes and coaches the best at the next Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Winter Games.

Finally, Sault Ste. Marie: For those who missed the news, the Soo will welcome 1,000 athletes, coaches and visitors when it hosts the 2019 Special Olympics Ontario Provincial Winter Games.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure the member did a word count, but I'm on the board of the Special Olympics so I let you go.

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 the public accounts of the province, chapter 2, 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: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled Public Accounts of the Province (Chapter 2, 2015 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario).

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent membership of the committee at the time this report was written: Lisa McLeod, Vice-Chair; Bob Delaney; Vic Dhillon; Han Dong; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Randy Hillier; and Monte Kwinter.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance, the Ontario Financing Authority and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board 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 Service.

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? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1517 to 1531.

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

All those in favour of Mr. Hardeman's adjournment of the debate, please rise and remain standing to be counted by the table.

Pray be seated.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing until the table counts.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 31; the nays are 0.

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

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Ted McMeekin: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move its adoption.

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

Bill Pr64, An Act to revive Sierra Cleaning Solutions Inc.

Bill Pr65, An Act to revive St. Pola Drugs Inc.

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

Report adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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

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

Bill 124, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 124, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? I heard a no.

Those in favour, say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 3, 2017, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MILLAR WAJER HOLDINGS INC. ACT, 2017

Mr. Yakabuski moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr67, An Act to revive Millar Wajer Holdings Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

BUDGET MEASURES ACT (HOUSING PRICE STABILITY AND ONTARIO SENIORS' PUBLIC TRANSIT TAX CREDIT), 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (STABILITÉ DES PRIX DU LOGEMENT ET CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT DE L'ONTARIO AUX PERSONNES ÂGÉES POUR LE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN)

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act to implement 2017 Budget measures / Projet de loi 134, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2017.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: The proposed Budget Measures Act (Housing Price Stability and Ontario Seniors' Public Transit Tax Credit), 2017, would implement changes to the Land Transfer Tax Act and the Taxation Act, 2007, that were contained in the 2017 Ontario budget.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PERSONS IN SUPPORTIVE LIVING ACCOMMODATION ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PERSONNES VULNÉRABLES DANS LES LOGEMENTS SUPERVISÉS

Ms. Forster moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to establish a framework for the licensing of supportive living accommodation / Projet de loi 135, Loi établissant un cadre pour la délivrance de permis d'exploitation de logements supervisés.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: The bill requires persons who operate a supportive living accommodation in specified circumstances to hold a licence issued by the minister. It provides a framework to be supplemented by regulations governing applications for an issuance of licences, the obligations of persons who operate a supportive living accommodation under the authority of a licence, and inspections and complaints.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries. Statements by ministries. Last call for statements by ministries.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Speaker, I am proud today to lead off third reading debate of Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2017, that would, if passed, protect Ontarians from the terrible crime of human trafficking. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is this debate or is this a statement by a minister?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Minister's statement.
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling that you're being told that it is a debate. It is a debate.

No statements by ministers. Therefore, it is time for petitions. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Speaker. You're doing an excellent job.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this, will sign and sent it to the Clerk with page Rishi.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. John Vanthof: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas many families are forced to deal with mental health and addiction issues in rural areas of northeastern Ontario without access to trained mental health care workers; and

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"Whereas both medical and psychological treatment is difficult to access in smaller communities and many patients fall through the cracks in the system; and

"Whereas rehab centres and support networks for families and individuals are limited to larger centres such as Sudbury or North Bay;

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

"To provide immediate and appropriate mental health care and addiction treatment to individuals and their families in the rural and remote areas of northeastern Ontario."

I wholeheartedly agree, affix my signature and send it with page Gracin.

NANJING MASSACRE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition from Thunder Bay, Markham, Ancaster, Vaughan, Waterloo and Ottawa with 3,658 signatures.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the events in Asian countries during World War II are not well-known;

"Whereas Ontarians have not had an opportunity for a thorough discussion and examination of the World War II atrocities in Asia;

"Whereas Ontarians are unfamiliar with the World War II atrocities in Asia;

"Whereas Ontario is recognized as an inclusive society...;

"Whereas some Ontarians have direct relationships with victims and survivors of the Nanjing Massacre, whose stories are untold;

"Whereas the Nanjing Massacre was an atrocity with over 200,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers alike indiscriminately killed, and tens of thousands of women were sexually assaulted, in the Japanese capture of the city;

"Whereas December 13, 2017, marks the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre...;

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

"That the Legislature pass the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act, 2016 by December 8, 2017, to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, which will enable Ontarians, especially those with Asian heritage, to plan commemorative activities to honour the victims and families affected by the Nanjing Massacre."

I fully support the petition. I give my petition to page Jeremi.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "Whereas the government is spending millions of taxpayers' dollars on advertising that seems to be solely for the purpose of 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.”

I agree with this, sign it and give it to page Hayden.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): For what?

Ms. Catherine Fife: For acknowledging me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Oh. I haven’t acknowledged you yet, but I will now.

Laughter.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Speaker was very busy.

MISSING PERSONS

Ms. Catherine Fife: Ontario needs missing persons legislation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” and the Attorney General’s office to “work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

I fully support this petition, affix my signature to it and give it to page Iman.

GOVERNMENT ANTI-RACISM PROGRAMS

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontarians are concerned that individual, systemic and cultural racism continues to create unfair outcomes for racial minorities in Ontario;

“Whereas the time has come to remove the social and economic barriers that prevent our province from achieving true equality;

“Whereas in order to accomplish that objective and to tackle racism in all of its forms, our government has created the new Anti-Racism Directorate;

“We, the undersigned, acknowledge both our support for the concept behind the Anti-Racism Directorate, and recognize that there is still work to be done to build an inclusive Ontario where everyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity or cultural background, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

“Therefore, we petition the government to work with key partners, such as businesses, community organizations, educational institutions and the Ontario Human Rights Commission in an effort to create a scope for the Anti-Racism Directorate.

“This petition encourages the directorate to consider initiatives that would increase public education and awareness of racism, and to consider various methods by which a wide anti-racism lens can be applied during the development, implementation and evaluation of government policies, programs and services.”

I agree with this petition, and I’m going to sign it and hand it to page Katie.

DEMENTIA

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I have a petition here: “Action for Dementia Petition.

“The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is developing a dementia strategy for Ontario, but a strong strategy requires adequate funding.

“We, the undersigned, ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the government of Ontario to provide sufficient funds to implement the Ontario dementia strategy.

I agree with this and I will send it down with page Gracin.

PHARMACARE

Ms. Catherine Fife: “Universal Pharmacare for All Ontarians.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas prescription medications are a part of health care and people shouldn’t have to empty their wallets or rack up credit card bills to get the medications they need;

“Whereas over 2.2 million Ontarians don’t have any prescription drug coverage and one in four Ontarians don’t take their medications as prescribed because they cannot afford the cost;

“Whereas taking medication as prescribed can save lives and help people live better; and

“Whereas Canada urgently needs universal and comprehensive national pharmacare;

“We, the undersigned, express our support for a universal provincial pharmacare plan for all Ontarians.”

It's my pleasure to deliver this petition for the first time in the House and give it to page Hayden.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas community water fluoridation is a safe, effective and scientifically proven means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas recent experience in such Canadian cities as Dorval, Calgary and Windsor that have removed fluoride from drinking water has shown a dramatic increase in dental decay; and

"Whereas the continued use of fluoride in community drinking water is at risk in Ontario cities representing more than 10% of Ontario's population, including the region of Peel; and

"Whereas the Ontario Legislature has twice voted unanimously in favour of the benefits of community water fluoridation, and the Ontario Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing urge support for amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and other applicable legislation to ensure community water fluoridation is mandatory and to remove provisions allowing Ontario municipalities to cease drinking water fluoridation, or fail to start drinking water fluoridation, from the Ontario Municipal Act;

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

"That the Premier of Ontario direct the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Health and Long-Term Care to introduce legislation amending the Health Protection and Promotion Act and make changes to other applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I support this petition, affix my signature to it and hand it to page Rada.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas individuals from northern Ontario have limited access to public transportation, especially in comparison to individuals from southern Ontario; and

"Whereas Greyhound bus lines has limited the frequency with which their buses operate and does not have convenient departure times or safe pickup/drop-off locations at many of their intercity stopovers for those who are either west- or eastbound; and

"Whereas intercity bus travel is a vital service that should be safely accessible for all Ontarians, including northern Ontarians;

"Whereas when passenger rail was ended it was stated that ONTC bus lines would make up for the lack of train transportation options;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to create new east/west routes across northern Ontario, increase the frequency of departure times, institute more convenient departure times and ensure safe pickup/drop-off locations along the routes."

I agree with this petition, sign my name and give it to page Noah.

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a timely petition in light of the Changing Workplaces Review that is imminently expected. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Support Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence.

"Whereas half of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, and approximately every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner; and

"Whereas a 2014 national survey showed that Canadian workers who experience domestic violence often disclose the violence to a co-worker, and that the violence frequently follows the worker to work; and

"Whereas the experience of domestic violence and sexual violence can cause significant physical, mental, emotional and financial hardship for survivors, their families, and society as a whole; and

"Whereas Canadian employers lose \$78 million annually due to domestic violence, and \$18 million due to sexual violence, because of direct and indirect impacts that include distraction, decreased productivity, and absenteeism; and

"Whereas workers who experience domestic violence or sexual violence should not have to jeopardize their employment in order to seek medical attention, access counselling, relocate, or deal with police, lawyers or the courts...;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly pass Bill 26 to provide employees who have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence ... with up to 10 days of paid leave, reasonable unpaid leave, and options for flexible work arrangements, and to require employers to provide mandatory workplace training about domestic violence and sexual violence."

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

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Todd Smith: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas current funding of long-term-care (LTC) homes is not enough to cover the cost of adequate resident care; and

“Whereas staffing levels in our LTC homes cannot currently meet the basic daily needs of residents; and

“Whereas the demand for staff-assisted services has increased as LTC residents have more complicated needs, resulting in unattainable workloads; and

“Whereas LTC home staff are feeling the pressure of these increased demands leading to a deterioration in the delivery of care; and

“Whereas the absence of a comprehensive regulatory framework allows unacceptable deviations from a standard level of minimum care and services;

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

—Immediately increase funding to LTC homes for the purpose of increasing staff levels; and

—Begin a comprehensive review of the LTC home regulatory standards ensuring current and future demographic needs will be met; and

—Develop a minimum level of individual resident care, recognizing the increasing complex care needs of the aging demographic.”

I’ve signed this and will send it to the table with page Katie.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Victor Fedeli: “Whereas electricity rates have risen by more than 300% since the ... Liberal government took office;

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

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

“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;

“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;

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

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

I agree with this petition, sign my name, and give it to page Matt.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FAIR HYDRO ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 POUR DES FRAIS D’ÉLECTRICITÉ ÉQUITABLES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2017, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / *Projet de loi 132, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur le Plan ontarien pour des frais d’électricité équitables et modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l’électricité et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l’énergie de l’Ontario.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to the order of the House dated May 17, 2017, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 132—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry. Mr. Thibeault has moved second reading of Bill 132, An Act to enact the Ontario Fair Hydro Plan Act, 2017 and to make amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute—we have a deferral. Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 28, the vote will be carried out tomorrow after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING ACT, 2017

LOI DE 2017 CONTRE LA TRAITE DE PERSONNES

Ms. Naidoo-Harris moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017 / *Projet de loi 96, Loi édictant la Loi de 2017 sur la Journée de sensibilisation à la traite de personnes et la Loi de 2017*

sur la prévention de la traite de personnes et les recours en la matière.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Ms. Naidoo-Harris.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am proud today to lead off third reading debate of Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2017, that would, if passed, protect Ontarians from the terrible crime of human trafficking.

Speaker, this is an important bill. It's important because it would assist survivors, hold traffickers accountable for their crimes, and mobilize public opinion to drive human trafficking out of Ontario. It's important because human trafficking is a brutal violation of the fundamental human right to be free and in control of one's body.

This is a crime that is often hidden, but it is happening all across Ontario. Young women, girls and vulnerable workers are being recruited and moved away from their homes and communities. They are being threatened, isolated and controlled, and often form a desperate trauma bond with their traffickers. Think about it: They see no way out and feel the impact of their ordeal for the rest of their lives.

Sadly, our province is a major centre for human trafficking. That's shocking, and it's unacceptable. We know that human traffickers prey on the most vulnerable in our society, and we know they use various inhumane tactics to control, abuse and exploit victims for their own financial gain. We know the young women and girls being exploited often are brutalized and experience serious pain, suffering and trauma for years to come.

Human trafficking will not—will not—be tolerated in Ontario. That's why, last June, our government announced an investment of up to \$72 million for Ontario's Strategy to End Human Trafficking to help survivors recover and rebuild their lives. I want to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of my cabinet colleagues—the Attorney General for his very hard and tireless efforts on this, and the Minister of Community and Social Services—and their ministries for their important work in delivering this comprehensive strategy.

Speaker, since the introduction of our strategy to end human trafficking last June, we have made significant progress in several areas. Let me tell you about some of these things.

For example, crown attorneys, victim witnesses and assistance workers, and workplace health and safety inspectors have now received additional training in dealing with human trafficking—very important training.

In addition, our government has followed through on our commitment to establish the first-ever Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office in Ontario. It's a first. The coordination office is focused on building and strengthening connections across the law enforcement, justice, social, health, education and child welfare sectors, because ending human trafficking must be a collaborative effort in order to be successful.

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The Ontario Native Women's Association has been selected to deliver Ontario's anti-human-trafficking

indigenous liaisons program, and we have launched two calls for proposals, inviting community and indigenous-led organizations throughout the province to expand and improve programs and supports for survivors. And the Ministry of Children and Youth Services has hired new specialized youth and transitional workers. These workers are focused on preventing youth leaving care from becoming trafficked, because we know they are especially at risk. These are just some of the many important steps we are taking to give survivors the supports they desperately need to start healing, and to prevent human trafficking from happening in the first place.

In addition to this comprehensive approach, two important regulatory changes have also come into effect since February. First, we have expanded the list of recipients who may be eligible to receive grants in the Civil Remedies Act, 2001, regulations to include community organizations. Second, we have expanded the list of Criminal Code offences in the Victims' Bill of Rights, 1995, regulations to include human trafficking offences, so survivors can sue their traffickers for damages. Just think about that: Today, Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, 2017, if passed, would build on the strategies and commitments in the justice sector.

The bill has three very important features. First, it would create civil restraining orders to protect survivors and those at risk of being trafficked. A restraining order is an important tool that human trafficking victims can use to keep themselves safe. Secondly, we all know that human trafficking causes enormous damage to people's lives. This bill would, if passed, allow survivors of human trafficking to more easily and more effectively sue their traffickers to get compensation for the harm done to them.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good idea.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Yes, it is a good idea, and this is so important, because it gives survivors a way to fight back, and it gives them a chance to heal.

Lastly, this bill would, if passed, proclaim February 22 as an annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day. With this initiative, we can raise the profile and awareness of this troubling issue and mobilize public opinion to banish human trafficking from our society forever.

As I said at the outset, Speaker, human trafficking is a part of a broader issue of violence against women, youth and children, for which our government has zero tolerance. I want you to know that we have made progress, but there is still more work to be done. Today's legislative proposals, if passed, would take us one very important step closer to reaching our goal of a province where everyone lives free of the fear, threat or experience of exploitation and violence.

Human trafficking is intolerable. It is unacceptable. It is nothing less than an assault on basic human rights, and it must be stopped. We all deserve to feel safe, and this proposed legislation puts our young women and girls on the path to freedom, dignity and healing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm pleased to rise for a couple of moments to be able to speak on this. I want to congratulate the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on the dogged work that she has done on this file in bringing this to the attention of the Legislature and for working so hard on the promotion of this very, very serious issue.

On a personal note, she came to North Bay and met with our police officers and our victim services. Her knowledge on this human trafficking file was so extensive that when we did have an issue of human trafficking in North Bay, it was Laurie Scott who we reached out to and who our police reached out to to talk about what to do in this particular case.

I have to tell you that I was never even aware that such a thing as human trafficking was happening in my own city of North Bay until Laurie brought this to our attention. When the police contacted my office—and the airport actually contacted my office as somebody was trying to get out of human trafficking and had no identification to catch a flight somewhere—we all collectively reached out to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who guided us through the very sensitive issue and brought it to a conclusion in North Bay.

Again, in the few seconds I have left, I just have to say what an honour it is to serve with this member and I'm just so proud of the work that she has done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on the anti-human trafficking bill, Bill 96.

While we will disagree on the history of this government in taking action and allocating resources which would have made a fundamental difference on the ground to the growing problem of human trafficking, particularly the trafficking of children in the province of Ontario, one of the things that we definitely agree with in regard to the legislation that's on the floor of the Legislature is the focus on youth and specialized workers.

The reason that this is so important is that there is a direct correlation between children who are in care and children who are trafficked. It's not a well-understood connection but it is definitely an area where the government needs to be more focused. So having specialized workers in that area is actually very good.

That said, the reason that we are in this state today is that, for some reason, there were blinders on for so long. Perhaps it's because this government didn't want to acknowledge that along the 401 corridor the trafficking of children—the average age is 13, Mr. Speaker. The highest predominance that has recently been found is of 16-year-old girls being trafficked for sex in the province of Ontario—not by some foreign conglomerate but by their next-door neighbours, their boyfriends. This stems definitely back to an educational component of young women understanding their rights around consent and having clear pathways to advocate for themselves and to protect themselves, and to have their parents educated as well.

So while the criticism is real of why we are here right now, I do commend the government on having the youth and specialized workers as part of Bill 96. It's much needed in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ça me fait plaisir de me lever pour participer au débat sur le projet de loi 96 contre le trafic de personnes.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that confronts this issue squarely and is prepared to bring forward this legislation that indeed, I think, represents the best of knowledge that we have on this terrible issue. I think we were able to move forward on the issue and ensure that the bill that is in front of this House actually represents all the knowledge that we have currently.

It does offer the possibility of a restraining order on an ex parte basis, which means that the person who is being trafficked doesn't have to be there and can be represented, and then the respondent will have the possibility of changing the order if indeed it is necessary. So in my view it represents a very balanced approach that does reflect a good understanding of the rights on both sides.

It also, I think, importantly allows the victim—it's not only about sexual trafficking. It's also about trafficking and working conditions, people who are trafficked to be slaves of other people and are unable to get paid for the work that they do. So this legislation represents the best knowledge that we have on this complex issue and I think I am very proud that we are indeed today able to bring it forward.

It will also insist on the fact that we need to continue to work on this issue. We will have a Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and every February 22 we will have to continue to reaffirm our commitment to the women and men who are being trafficked in Ontario and elsewhere.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Prince Edwards–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: I, too, want to echo the comments made by my colleague from Nipissing when it comes to how this bill even came to the floor of the Legislature.

When I leave here after the next couple of weeks and go home for the summer break—the media always ask me, “What are the bills that you're proud of that passed in the Legislature?” This one is definitely at the top of the list.

Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, was started by my colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock over a year ago. It was called the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. She was in my riding in the fall talking about it. She was in my riding in the spring talking about it. She was on the radio stations in my riding talking about it for well over a year.

There are a lot of Liberals who claim they're the architect of something when they're not. The architect of this bill was Laurie Scott from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and she is the champion for this cause. She

has gone to every corner of the province to expose this heinous crime in our communities.

Like the member from Nipissing, I had no idea that this was occurring in my backyard until the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock brought it to light. I know that she has educated hundreds of thousands of people. She has worked alongside our law enforcement officers and the government members to bring this to light and to make sure that we now have legislation in the province that deals with this awful, awful crime.

I think we all hope that someday, when we leave this place, we can say that we're the architect of something like the Anti-Human Trafficking Act or the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. I congratulate the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for bringing forward and championing such an important piece of legislation that actually is saving the girl next door and hundreds and thousands of other young girls across the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of the Status of Women and responsible for early years and child care has two minutes.

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Today I'm so pleased to rise in response to Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, and to be here in this House to listen to the various parties who are here.

This particular bill is a great example of the great work that can happen in the House when all parties work together. That's what this is all about: It's about collaboration; it's about partnership; but ultimately, in the end, it's about giving voice to those young women and girls out there who are survivors, who have spent some of their lives being exploited by this brutal, brutal issue of human trafficking.

Today, this is what we can do. We are here because we have been able to work together—all of us—to give those vulnerable in our society the supports and ability that they need to heal in a real way.

First, of course, we had to do a number of real, tangible things to move this forward: expanding the list of recipients for the Civil Remedies Act and expanding the list of Criminal Code offences to include human trafficking. Parties had to work together to create civil restraining orders. That was important because we were talking about young people, and they didn't have that ability before. We also had to move forward to allow survivors of human trafficking to sue their traffickers—such an important thing, to be able to give them some power—and finally, Human Trafficking Awareness Day, a very important step and a reminder.

Today I'm proud to be able to stand in this House with all of the other parties and to know that we worked together to give voice to those young people who were out there feeling threatened and isolated and controlled—to let them know that we have heard their voices, we have their backs and we're working together, all of us in government, to do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I want to begin by apologizing for having such a raspy voice today.

I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

I think that you've all heard the many, many times that I have spoken in the Legislature to bring up action that is needed to save the girl next door.

I'm very pleased to stand for this important debate, and on behalf of the PC caucus I want to say, "Finally." We're finally at third reading debate, debating the Saving the Girl Next Door Act, now Bill 96, the Anti-Human Trafficking Act.

Over a year we've been waiting for legislative action. My colleagues, whom I want to thank for speaking so eloquently, know that I introduced this bill and received unanimous support from the Legislature on two separate occasions. Unfortunately, the bill was never brought to committee, with the government saying at that time that legislative change was not needed and suggesting that their human trafficking action plan was enough. Then, earlier this year, the government introduced the bill that we are debating today, which—surprise, surprise—turned out to be based largely on the Saving the Girl Next Door Act.

I want to thank the Attorney General for negotiating, talking and assuring me that they will address the legislation that is needed, because you've heard how horrendous a crime this is, how it's growing so rapidly in every corner of the province of Ontario. The province had no legislation about anti-human sex trafficking, and it needed to come forward. So I praise the government for finally acting in response to combat this horrible crime.

During the clause-by-clause, which we did this week on, I think, Monday, we brought forward some amendments. The government brought forward some amendments. We feel that we've strengthened the bill. I certainly appreciate the fact that, in my original bill, we have been talking about restraining orders or protection orders. The length of time of the restraining order outlined in the bill—something that I called for in the Saving the Girl Next Door Act to be three years and not the one year that was originally proposed. The government did actually put that amendment in. I'm pleased for that. That's a very important amendment, and I will go into that a little bit in the short time that I do have.

Unfortunately, the government and the NDP voted against one of my amendments, which I want to talk about and which I've spoken about on a different private member's bill I've introduced, requiring judges to award damages rather than leaving it to the judge's discretion. I've spoken about judges and mandatory training for sexual assault victims. Certainly, human sex trafficking is composed in that, but that training is very much needed for our judicial system, as they're seeing more and more of this coming before them.

It was unfortunate that that was not brought in, requiring judges to award damages—and I'll speak to

both the one-year and the three-year. If we can rescue a victim, who becomes a survivor, the trauma they have endured is beyond something we can actually comprehend in our lives here. They need time. They need separation from the traffickers. That's why the time for protection orders needed to be three years and not one year. Also, besides that time to heal, it's financially expensive. They are stripped, a lot of times, of their identities. If they have had a credit card or they had any type of financing, they actually can't get credit for a long time. That's why it was important for judges not only to have training, but for a clause in the law that would mandate that judges shall award damages to the plaintiff, because there is a monetary value to healing.

I leave that for another day, but I just wanted to remind the House that that still needs to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of statistics that have been put out. I think the most shocking statistic I hear that people don't understand is that over 93% of these victims are Canadian-born. It's easy to think it's human smuggling. It's easier to think that it's not our girls, when it is our girls; and I say predominantly "our girls" because over 95% are female. I'm not excluding boys or men at all. But that is a statistic that is the most shocking still to every group that I had the opportunity to speak to.

Girls are first trafficked between the ages of 12 and 13. For the over two and a half, almost three years, I've been fighting to get anti-human trafficking laws before the provincial Legislature—that average age used to be 14 years of age, and now we hear that the average age of a trafficked victim is 13 years of age. That's from many people who work in the industry, many qualified people. It is one of the largest-growing crimes in Ontario, and as one speaker said, it is low-risk and high-return. A trafficker, a pimp, can make a lot of money for just the ability to manipulate and coerce young girls into sexual exploitation. That is modern-day slavery, that is child abuse and it's no doubt one of the most horrific human rights violations that we have that occurs.

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Persons are often targeted because of their vulnerability and marginalized socio-economic conditions. They're lured from every one of our cities and small towns. As it has been said, I travelled the province. I had sessions in my own hometown of Lindsay, and I had hundreds of people come out to hear about it because they are starting to understand that it's happening in their small towns. Even before committee on Monday, we had a girl that was lured in from Simcoe county and had been in the trade for over four years before she was able to escape from this horrific crime.

The victims quite often are trafficked along the Highway 401 corridor. My colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings mentioned Belleville. We went there. I went there last year and I went there this year. The government has made programs available—the requests for proposals are out there as we speak. I want to make sure the communities where this is new to them and they are just getting up and getting organized; that even if they've

missed that deadline of May 18, I want the government—and I appreciate Jennifer Richardson and all the work her team has done; I truly do. She comes with a great deal of knowledge, and they are doing their best.

I'm going to follow these dollars, but I hope that they look at communities that might not have been able to make the deadlines, especially in offering housing for these survivors afterwards, that they look and see what areas they've missed because more areas need time to look at the RFPs. I think there has to be some leniency in the government on the request for proposals that were out there so that they can get the help for victims' services.

Victims have this wraparound service that gets them to that very delayed court date, unfortunately. Sometimes it's up to three years before they can get to court, and if the victim has been so traumatized, it takes a lot of support to get them to face their offender, their trafficker, their pimp in court.

Those are the things that I'm going to be watching for. I appreciate that the government has taken from the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. We are in third reading, but there is much more to follow through on anti-human trafficking measures. I just put the government on warning: I certainly will continue to watch, but appreciate the fact that we are finally at third reading on the anti-human trafficking legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Dufferin-Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I just want to reinforce how hard and how long this issue has been going on and, frankly, the advocacy and when it all began.

Many of you will remember the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. We tabled our report in June 2015. The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—it's very challenging for me not to say "Laurie"—was part of that all-party committee. We came forward with 58 recommendations, I believe it was. Some of them dealt with human trafficking. Why did some of them deal with human trafficking? Frankly, because of the advocacy and the convincing argument that the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock made.

I am going to quote from the select committee report because I believe our very capable researchers, Erin Fowler and Carrie Hull, were able to encapsulate what all of our committee members were trying to share with the chamber. It's titled under "Additional Topics of Significance for the Select Committee: Human Trafficking.

"Although often hidden, the select committee recognizes that human trafficking is a significant problem in Ontario. Victims, mostly women and children, are deprived of their normal lives and forced to provide labour or sexual services, through a variety of coercive practices, all for the direct profit of their traffickers. Globally, it is estimated that human trafficking is amongst the most lucrative of criminal activities, generating billions of dollars annually for criminal organizations."

That comes from a report from the International Labour Office, A Global Alliance Against Forced

Labour, 2005—so we're a little late to this game. The report goes on to say:

“While human trafficking is commonly associated with foreign victims crossing international borders, recent charges and convictions indicate that the vast majority of victims in Canada (over 90%) are trafficked domestically (i.e., all stages of the trafficking occur within Canadian borders). Human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation has been found to be the most common form of trafficking in Canada, with Ontario functioning as a major ‘hub.’” This is one time when we don't want to be a leading Canadian jurisdiction. “In these cases, traffickers force victims to provide sexual services to customers, usually in exchange for money.

“Presenters appearing before the committee explained that traffickers use a variety of strategies to recruit individuals, often through the Internet and by individuals posing as their peers. The ‘boyfriend effect,’ the committee heard, makes it less likely that the victim will report. Some may not even view themselves as victims, or see little value or nothing to gain in going to the police. Foreign victims who have been trafficked may be obstructed from seeking help due to language or cultural barriers.

“Unfortunately, human trafficking continues to be poorly understood in Canada. Front-line workers may not recognize the signs of human trafficking, or respond appropriately. Detailed federal and provincial statistics on this crime are scarce and often vary due to the lack of clarity around the issue. The committee acknowledges the hard work being done by law enforcement to eliminate human trafficking, and recognizes that more work is still needed. Greater awareness of human trafficking, as well as a more coordinated response from law enforcement and support services, may help to combat this form of modern-day slavery.”

The select committee then went on to bring forward two very specific recommendations. Of course, we have a private member's bill, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. I actually suggested in committee on Monday that in a gesture of co-operation, Bill 96 should be renamed “Saving the Girl Next Door,” because I don't think there's any doubt across Ontario that this issue was pushed forward, advocated for and continues to be on the radar for the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

I think that there are some excellent examples that we can point to. Boost, in the city of Toronto, is doing some great work on compiling statistics and helping people. The Sheldon Kennedy centre in Calgary is another fabulous example. In Manitoba, we have some great examples. We don't have to act in a vacuum here in the province of Ontario.

I am very confident that the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock will continue to raise issues and find opportunities. I know that on the docket right now there is a private member's bill, again, related to some of the very important information that we discovered in our

hearings during the select committee's review. I know that she will continue to fight this battle. I know that we are getting better. I know that things will hopefully improve under Bill 96, but I also hope that this is not the end of the story. This is the beginning of a journey that will continue to make sure that we are protecting our children in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to follow the two speakers from the PC Party. I do also want to acknowledge the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for coming to Kitchener–Waterloo. We are on the 401 corridor. There are children, women, boys and men being trafficked along that corridor. We met with the chief of police and the two special officers in Waterloo region, with the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, and it was an eye-opening experience, quite honestly.

What really struck me, though, and I think this is one of the missing pieces from Bill 96, is looking at the needed upstream investment and resources so that we prevent the damage of trafficking and sex trafficking. I'm thinking particularly of indigenous youth in Ontario, quite honestly. When you look at the stats of this very vulnerable population, who find themselves in provincial care, foster care, it is shocking to know that there are more First Nations children in care today, taken from their families, than there ever were in residential schools.

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We understand the damage that the residential schools have done. But if you look at the most recent cases, children are leaving their communities, their safe place, their families because there are no resources around mental health, around health care. Parents have to give up their children to access basic mental health resources. Once they are away from their family and away from that safety net, they are more vulnerable. The correlation between children who are in care and being exposed to human trafficking is very real, and that needs to be the lens that we look at this legislation through.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ça me fait plaisir de me lever encore simplement pour souligner—je voulais aussi remercier toutes les personnes qui se sont présentées devant le comité.

I wanted to just make sure that we thanked, on behalf of everyone, the people who came in front of the committee to share their experience and support, and acknowledged the great work we need to continue to do together.

I also want to thank the people who provided advice from Manitoba in order that we improve the bill.

Also, I want to recognize the necessity, as was mentioned by the other speaker, to situate this piece of legislation, this bill—and if passed, it will become law—in the larger approach toward violence against women, particularly violence against indigenous women, and the exploitation of trafficked workers. It represents, certainly,

the beginning of a conversation, the beginning of an ongoing commitment from all of society to recognize what human trafficking is, to recognize what leads to it, and to ensure that we continue to commit resources and also the knowledge, the training for police officers to detect and to bring an end to the tragedy of trafficking, both on the sex side but also on the working side.

I want to acknowledge that it's a good day for Ontario that we have taken this step, and that we want to continue to do more for the benefit of women, young men and also our workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: First, I'd like to acknowledge the speeches from the members from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock and Dufferin-Caledon. They have put a lot of work into this. The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has been working on this tirelessly for a year or so. She has been an inspiration to our caucus, and I'm sure she has been an inspiration to this House in how hard she has worked on this. She just wouldn't let it go. We needed somebody like that to address this situation.

I met an officer who was involved in this type of thing a bit, but more in another part of the sex trade. The last time I spoke to him, I said, "Are you busy?" And his answer was, "Unfortunately, yes," which is really the way it is going on right now. The introduction of the Internet has increased the amount of sex trade that is going on in the world and certainly here in Ontario.

One of the comments he also made was, "We just get on top of things once in a while, and something else comes along and sets us back"—like, technology or whatever it is. He said, "It's too bad. You think you can get a hold of this problem, and then it gets away on you."

The people involved in this business that I'm talking about, the victims here, will spend a lifetime getting over it. So, as legislators, we need to have legislation that's going to be meaningful and hopefully do something to stop this type of thing. It's a terrible thing to go through.

Again, I want to thank the members of the committee, and certainly the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock for continuing on with this fight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Like many in this House, before I got elected, I listened to the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—on the radio, actually. I was driving—I can't remember where I was driving; somewhere in southern Ontario—and I heard her speak. I really wasn't aware of the issue. I commend the member on the PC side. I also commend the government for moving on this. This isn't an issue where we should really take partisan positions. I commend our member from London on what she's doing. We have to work together on this.

There are a lot of issues that we have to continue to look at, because for those of us in northern Ontario, a lot of services don't exist. There are young people who don't

really know what's happening to them, but in some cases it's their only way out, and we have to look at that as well. We need to take an approach to look at the causes of why this is happening and to look for holistic reasons to see if we can solve the problem both for the victims and—it's a very complicated issue that most Ontarians don't have a clue is going on. I'm glad this House is moving on this. This is just the start. We need to continue to work on people who are disadvantaged from all walks of life.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock has two minutes.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I appreciate the speakers this afternoon for their input and their passion. There's a lot of passion in the House.

The member from Dufferin-Caledon has sat on several committees with me, and I appreciate her advice and her strength. These are not happy stories that we hear; it is a very, very tough topic.

I want to make a shout-out, because this is Police Week, to all the police who have wanted to be specially trained in looking for the signs of human trafficking, who have gone and taught other police about what to look for, who are championing this cause and have been asking for resources and for help for a long, long time.

And a special shout-out to the survivors. I cannot tell you how many survivors I have spoken to who have been brave enough to get past this horrific trauma that has happened to them and have stepped out. Simone Bell and Timea Nagy are two who come to mind. They go globally now and speak about what happened to them, what initiatives they'd like to see. They've been on CNN. They go and train police in the States. The US has been dealing with this proactively for a lot longer, but they still go out and train because they have been unbelievable champions for stopping and eradicating human trafficking, for preventing what has happened to them.

We've all heard that this is a much bigger issue than we knew about. Every day I just hear more and more stories. Education was mentioned. We have to get into our schools. We have to educate our kids what's happening on the Internet, because this isn't happening on the street corner; this is happening over the Internet. This is happening to a great degree at group homes—no question—foster care, indigenous people.

We need public service announcements; we need education. We cannot allow human trafficking to be a normal part of our society. It isn't. Collectively, we all have to stamp it out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus to participate in third reading debate on the anti-human trafficking bill, Bill 96. As has been mentioned already this afternoon, New Democrats are pleased to see this bill moving forward. We are even more pleased to know that it will soon become law in this province.

I want to thank representatives of the organizations who took the time to appear during the public input process while this bill was being considered by the committee. I also appreciate the amendments that were made to the bill that we have before us now, which have strengthened, I think, the provisions that are in the legislation and also responded to some of the input that we heard.

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In particular, I want to acknowledge the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres and the Ontario Bar Association for the detailed written briefs that they provided on the bill. Later on, I'm going to talk about some of the specific recommendations they made that perhaps weren't practical or weren't appropriate to be included into the bill but that merit very careful consideration by the government as it moves forward with its strategy to end human trafficking in Ontario.

Before I get too far into my remarks, Speaker, I also want to acknowledge the efforts of the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. As has been noted, it was her initiative that has forced the government to take action on this issue, and this bill is a clear example of a private member's bill that was lifted almost in its entirety and brought forward as government legislation, and, for that, the member deserves full credit.

I did want to, however, share a comment that was made during the committee about that earlier private member's bill which was called, as MPPs will remember, the Saving the Girl Next Door Act. One of the presenters who spoke to the committee mentioned that they were glad the name of the bill had changed. They raised a concern that I have heard by many others who were involved in the issue of trafficking, because while it is absolutely unquestionably true that victims of human trafficking and sex trafficking can indeed be the girl next door—girls we would describe as well brought up and from good, middle-class families—the reality is that victims of sex trafficking are much more likely to be marginalized, much more likely to be isolated, much more likely to be poor, and much more likely to have experienced violence or trauma in their past.

If we frame our responses to sex trafficking only in terms of rescuing the girl next door from enslavement by predatory pimps, we neglect to look at the root causes that make some women and girls more vulnerable to trafficking in the first place. The women and girls who make up the vast majority of victims of sex trafficking are among the most marginalized and disadvantaged in our society. They are often young girls in care. In fact, there was a 2013 study conducted in York region that found that every single identified victim of trafficking who participated in this study had been involved with child welfare as a young person. For that reason, one of the presenters who spoke to the committee recommended an even more explicit and direct focus on the role of children's aid societies in ending human trafficking in this province.

Victims of trafficking are often indigenous women and girls, although there is a serious lack of data on

human trafficking and particularly the incidence of human trafficking among indigenous women and youth. There is still a lot we have to learn about the impact of trafficking on indigenous peoples in Ontario.

However, in their submission the OFIFC really emphasized the urgency of situating the violence that is perpetrated against indigenous women and girls in the form of human trafficking within a context of colonialism and the social, economic, political and physical marginalization of indigenous women. They expressed some concern that the mechanisms proposed in Bill 96 do not address the specific racialized, sexualized violence that indigenous women are vulnerable to; nor does the bill address the marginalization of indigenous women and girls that is maintained by the legal system. They recommended that the act establish a clear connection to existing culturally relevant supports so that indigenous women and girls can access those supports.

Similarly, the sex workers who spoke to the committee about the bill cautioned that conflating sex work with sex trafficking ignores the factors that lead women to enter the sex trade as a way sometimes to feed their children and keep a roof over their heads. These are women who confront, on a daily basis, the reality of poverty, homelessness, mental health and addictions, violence and trauma, and a myriad of other issues.

More than Bill 96, these women emphasized that what is needed are measures to address the social determinants of health, measures to lift these women out of poverty and out of these vulnerable situations that lead to exploitation. They mentioned a \$15 minimum wage. They talked about an increase to social assistance rates, access to affordable housing, access to enhanced services for violence against women and programs to help them deal with mental health and addictions. It's in that context that I'm going to offer some thoughts about the bill and some thoughts about what the government needs to keep in mind as they roll out their strategy to end human trafficking.

As has been mentioned, Bill 96 provides a legislative framework to increase public awareness of trafficking, to make it easier for victims of human trafficking to get restraining orders against their traffickers, and also to give victims the ability to sue their traffickers in court. It is a complement, I understand, to the other initiatives that are included in the government's strategy, and certainly not the be-all and end-all. That is certainly important to keep in mind because, as some pointed out who spoke to the committee, the actual impact of the measures in the bill are likely to be fairly limited.

The first schedule of the bill proclaims February 22 in each year as Human Trafficking Awareness Day. This is a day that provides opportunities to educate the public on what to look for to identify trafficking. It would help those who are employed in sectors where trafficking often occurs, like hotel workers, to recognize the warning signs that trafficking may be taking place. The day can also highlight for victims that legal remedies are now available to them through Bill 96 and that they now have legal rights to pursue action against their traffickers.

When I spoke to this bill during second reading debate, I emphasized the need to ensure that awareness efforts that are undertaken on Human Trafficking Awareness Day do not conflate sex work with sex trafficking. This was a concern that was repeated during the committee hearings. It was also highlighted by the OFIFC that the measures in the bill could serve to exclude sex workers from access to legal protections and health and safety protections and drive them further underground.

Sex workers are already highly vulnerable to sexual assault and are often much less likely to be believed than even other women who experience sexual violence. If sex workers fear that they will automatically be regarded as trafficked rather than as women who are engaged in sex work, they may be even more reluctant to ever approach the police. It was pointed out to us that this is a particular concern for migrant sex workers, who also face the threat of deportation. This will limit these vulnerable women's already reduced access to health and social services, compromising their safety and furthering the stigma they already experience.

We know from police that sex workers are often in the best position to have a sense of where trafficking might be occurring and where women might be already victims of trafficking. For the police, ensuring those open lines of communication with sex workers is critical for effective enforcement activities. Unfortunately, the reality for indigenous women is that their relationships with the police have not been positive. Therefore, it is even more critical for indigenous women that sex work not be conflated with sex trafficking.

The second schedule of the bill includes the provisions around obtaining restraining orders and also enabling victims to sue their traffickers in civil court under the new tort of human trafficking. One of the helpful amendments that was made to the legislation clarifies that the provisions of the bill do not require a charge or a conviction of human trafficking. This speaks directly to the issue that I raised earlier about the involvement of police. This would allow victims to seek the legal remedies under the act without having to first go to the police. This was also brought forward by legal experts to the committee looking at the bill, who spoke about the need to ensure that the legal remedies of Bill 96 are as widely available as possible and don't require that charge or prior conviction of trafficking.

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Another significant change that was made to the bill following committee input was around who can apply for a restraining order. As has been stated, I think, applications can be made by a victim or a potential victim of human trafficking. In the original version of the bill there was also a provision that would allow any person with reasonable grounds to believe that someone is being trafficked to seek a restraining order. Following the input that was given to the committee, the bill was amended to clarify that there has to be consent from the person who is being trafficked or is at risk of being trafficked in order for the application for a restraining order. Again, to some

extent I think this will help reduce the fear that people—in particular, sex workers—may feel that they will be regarded as being trafficked rather than engaged in sex work.

Another substantive amendment that was made to the bill following committee input was with regard to the length of the restraining order. It now has a three-year limit, instead of the one-year limit that was in the original bill, and that restraining order can be extended multiple times for periods of up to three years, instead of the one-year extension that was contemplated initially.

I think this is important because it recognizes that there are many barriers that may prevent people from going through a legal process to obtain a restraining order. Fees are one of those barriers, and the bill addresses that fact. It does not require a fee to obtain a restraining order, but when the order was only one year in length, there would have been the possibility that people would have had to go back multiple times to the court, which certainly would have been a logistical barrier for people who were anxious about navigating that court process.

The last part of schedule 2 of the bill establishes a tort of human trafficking. This allows civil actions to be brought by victims of trafficking against any person who was involved in the trafficking without proof of damage. This is an important legal measure because, when a tort of human trafficking is explicitly named, it is believed that there is a greater likelihood that victims will feel empowered to sue for damages, because they now see that the wrong that was done to them has been acknowledged by the government and the civil court process as meriting civil redress.

Through this new tort process, Bill 96 allows for recovery of damages once a victim takes their trafficker to court. That is important validation for the victim, to acknowledge the harm that they experienced.

I did, however, want to raise a concern here and pass this along to the government about the need to ensure that any damages that are awarded through a civil courts process do not affect the level of social assistance benefits that victims may currently be receiving.

When we participated in the debate on Bill 132, the government's Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, we heard very clearly from a number of witnesses that current rules for Ontario Works and ODSP allow those social assistance benefits to be reduced if a civil damage award is provided by the court. Given what I had said earlier about the extreme vulnerability of the likely victims of trafficking, it is important that the damages that are awarded do not jeopardize their ability to continue receiving Ontario Works benefits, ODSP benefits or even to access rent-geared-to-income housing, so this is something that I do hope the government will address immediately.

The other issue that I wanted to just share with MPPs is the overall concern that was expressed by the Ontario Bar Association about the need to ensure competent counsel for survivors to go through this court process.

Survivors would need to know that there are restraining orders they can now access. There is a tort under which they can seek damages. But they will need some initial independent legal advice, and they will need representation during legal actions in order to ensure that they can access the remedy to which they were entitled.

The Ontario Bar Association, I think, had a very helpful suggestion, that the government consider expanding the Independent Legal Advice for Survivors of Sexual Assault Pilot Program to include survivors of human trafficking, and that there be additional mechanisms and supports put in place to promote access to justice, such as pro bono representation for survivors of trafficking.

Two final points I wanted to make. We have to ensure that the new resources that are provided to agencies that are supporting victims of trafficking do not in any way undermine or jeopardize the ability of rape crisis centres, sexual assault centres, domestic violence women's shelters—the services that these agencies provide, many of which are currently accessed by victims of trafficking. We know that. Those services have to not only remain in place but also have to be enhanced.

I was at a fundraiser earlier this month for the Sexual Assault Centre in London, and I learned that there are 42 women in London who have been survivors of sexual assaults who are currently on a wait-list. They are on a wait-list to access counselling services from the Sexual Assault Centre because of the lack of funding for the centre. The reality is that before we started talking about human trafficking, women who were trafficked were going to sexual assault centres. They were going to domestic violence treatment centres, to rape crisis centres for services, and those services must remain in place.

I want to close with a concern that was brought to our attention by the delegation from Manitoba. Certainly, we have learned a lot from the expertise of Manitoba in dealing with sex trafficking, but one of the surprising things that they shared with us, from my perspective, was that they have entirely separated labour trafficking from sex trafficking. They have two separate statutes to deal with those two forms of human trafficking. This legislation is called the anti-human trafficking bill, and it purports to deal with both sex trafficking and labour trafficking together, but given the differences between sex trafficking and labour trafficking, I think we need to consider the efficacy of the measures that are set out in Bill 96 in relation to labour trafficking.

1700

All of the deputants who spoke to the committee focused only on sex trafficking, not on labour trafficking. I would like us to take a look at what Manitoba is doing on the issue of labour trafficking to ensure that we have the most robust, effective measures in place to deal with the exploitation of humans for the purpose of effectively serving as slave labour. We know that labour trafficking is second to human trafficking as the most common form of trafficking in this province, but about 30% of the cases of human trafficking are specific to labour trafficking, and we need to ensure there are provisions in place to deal with that.

With that, Speaker, I will close my remarks and say once again that New Democrats are very supportive of this legislation and are pleased to see it moving forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I know that many of you around here know the quiet community of Oro-Medonte, just outside of Barrie. Mayor Harry Hughes was probably shocked, as were the people who live there, when last week a gentleman who lived there was charged with trafficking a person, trafficking a person under 16 years of age, seven accounts of sexual assault on a person under 16, and five counts of sexual interference on a person under 16. He has also been charged with seven counts of invitation to sexual touching with a person under 16. I'm sure the people who live in that area were completely shocked that this is happening in their neighbourhood.

I want to say that this bill is very important. Thanks to all who worked hard to make this bill go through. It's very important. But the next step is most important for the rest of us, and that's educating everyone as to what to look for and how to help prevent or end this terrible crime.

One of the ways that we're going to do it, of course, is when we proclaim February 22 of each year as Human Trafficking Awareness Day. This will bring light on this terrible subject.

One of the last times that we talked here in the Legislature about this, I was driving along and there was a convenience store. There was a young woman sitting there, and she had a sign that said "Need money." I thought, "Oh, that poor girl. She needs some money. She doesn't have anywhere to live or anything to eat." And from about here to the post, there was a guy standing right at the corner, and very clearly he was in charge of her. Had I not heard the discussion here about that, I would not even have thought it, but that's probably what was happening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to stand and, first of all, again, to have such a professional as Laurie Scott in our caucus, who back in 2016 actually introduced the "girl next door" bill. Unfortunately, it died on the order table when this Premier prorogued the government back in September of last year. The sad part of that is that this bill could have been passed and become part of legislation. As a result, how many lives, how many young girls could have been saved had this legislation been passed when it was first introduced? That, Speaker, we will never know. But again, I want to give a shout-out to my colleague from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

One of the things that we talked about is human trafficking. We know that human trafficking is in fact a form of modern-day slavery, because it involves recruitment, transportation and control of a person for sexual exploitation.

From the riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, the largest corridor that goes right through my area is, of course, the 401. I've spent time with the local Chatham-Kent Police Service as well as the OPP detachment from Chatham-Kent on ride-alongs and I've talked to them immensely about this particular issue. As a matter of fact, a couple of years ago—because at that time, I was the critic for community safety and I had initiated a meeting at a small, little church in Tilbury. I was pleasantly surprised at the huge turnout of parents who came to that particular meeting, some of whom shared some of their experiences. It was quite an eye-opener, and I was quite pleased.

Let's get this bill passed. Let's not delay it anymore. It's the girl next door act: That's the name this bill should have.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the member from London West for a very detailed, researched, evidence-based commentary on the anti-human trafficking bill.

The one piece that I want to focus on is her connection with overlooking labour trafficking in the province of Ontario. It's true that sex trafficking and human trafficking are a huge issue, but there's also a definite correlation with labour trafficking. When you look at the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program in the province of Ontario, if you have workers coming into this province and their employer takes away their passport, tying them to an employer and not giving them the ability to move around from employer to employer, and then you abandon their rights, that is slavery; that is modern-day slavery. Those workers are vulnerable, and there is a power imbalance in that relationship. That leaves women who are agricultural workers, labour workers in the province of Ontario—labour trafficking is real. It is happening in this province, and we have a lot of data, actually, to show that it is happening.

The other issues I do want to draw on, as a common theme that the member from London West has drawn on, is that it's hard to know exactly how many children are trafficked out of Ontario's child protection system every year because there isn't much hard data to go on. If you had the data, then you'd have to fund it. The missing piece of Bill 96 is actually having a clear picture of why children are entering the child protection system. I know the minister is going through a review right now, but what leaves those children most vulnerable is not having the resources to keep them in the system and support them in that system. Those are two risk factors.

The member from London West has done an amazing job on this file, along with the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. Thank you for your leadership. Let's get this bill passed. Let's protect children in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I want to thank the member from London West for doing such a good review

of the work that's left to be done and that must continue to be done on this file.

We know that good law reform requires advocacy work, like we had from the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock; also, the work of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment and the continued work of everyone to point out what the future and the linkages that must be made are.

What is clear to me and what I appreciate in the bill is the survivor-centred approach that is put forward. I think we acknowledged that this was part of the capacity building and the empowerment of the survivor. I also want to say I agree that access to justice continues to be an important fact. Indeed, just as I said in my member's statement just before this bill, I talked about the necessity of Pro Bono Ontario continuing to be a part of this, reflecting the crucial need for civil justice around Ontario.

Finally, I am particularly concerned, and I think I agree, that in the long-term view of this, we have to connect the dots between a large framework of violence against women and girls and also exploitation of workers. We know that we will not be able to progress unless we have strong measures of detection, strong measures of prevention, and are able to then listen to the voices of survivors, who will help us craft the future of how to better respond to their needs. I want to thank her again for the great work about what's left to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from London West has two minutes.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the member for Barrie, the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo and the member for Ottawa–Vanier for their response to my remarks.

I appreciate, in particular, the member for Kitchener–Waterloo and the member for Ottawa–Vanier acknowledging the importance of addressing labour trafficking and the exploitation of workers in this province. As I mentioned in my remarks, about 30% of human trafficking involves labour trafficking—the enslavement mainly of foreign workers, who have their passports taken away and who are forced to work without pay, often with little to no food, in deplorable conditions. We have to ensure that the measures that are taken as part of an Ontario-wide strategy to end human trafficking address the terrible plight of these exploited workers, as well as women and girls, of course, who are sex-trafficked.

One of the recommendations that was made by the OFIFC is particularly helpful in rounding up what we've been speaking about here today. The OFIFC recommended that there be a mechanism established to report on the usage of the remedies that are outlined in Bill 96 and the efficacy of those remedies, the effectiveness of the restraining order and of the civil tort—to see how they are being utilized, when they are being utilized and how effective they are in actually ending this plight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Second call for further debate? Last call for further debate?

Seeing none, Ms. Naidoo-Harris has moved third reading of Bill 96, An Act to enact the Human Trafficking Awareness Day Act, 2017 and the Prevention of and Remedies for Human Trafficking Act, 2017.

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

Mr. Todd Smith: I see a deferral slip, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the member has

requested that the vote on third reading of Bill 96 be deferred until deferred votes on Thursday, May 18, 2017.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Orders of the day.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Labour has moved adjournment of the House. All in favour? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1713.

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