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1 May 2018

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41^e législature

Mardi
1^{er} mai 2018

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Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 May 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} mai 2018

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Michael Chan: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 53, An Act respecting the establishment of minimum government contract wages, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

At such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, 30 minutes of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That during this time, there shall be no motion for either adjournment of the debate or adjournment of the House permitted. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the bill may be called more than once in the same sessional day; and

The vote on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Chan has moved government motion number 8.

Mr. Chan?

Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, I'm a little dry in the throat. May I get some water, please? I, in no way, expected to be speaking this early.

Wow. Even for this government, they never fail to shock and surprise me. They brought forth a time allocation motion, of which we found out late in the day yesterday—that's not entirely unusual because it is not their practice to give us any more notice than is absolute-

ly legally necessary under the standing orders. But this is unprecedented, where they would table a time allocation motion, have the minister read it in the House to fulfill the obligations of the orders of the day, and then not utter a word. Are they reserving the right to speak later? I don't know. Have they not relinquished their right once the minister sits down? I don't know. I'd honestly have to check that. They probably have some time.

This, in itself, stoops to a new level because I do not recall—and I'd ask my colleagues from the third party; maybe they are checking their own records right now, because I haven't had time. Without even being able to prepare notes, I'm up here speaking because they, just like that, passed it on to the opposition to speak. I do not recall, at any time—I'm speaking to you, Speaker, but, you see, if I don't move around a little bit, I could take root. I don't want my feet to get stuck on the floor in one spot. I do not believe that even this government, who respects democracy not, has ever, ever in my memory brought forth a time allocation that does not even involve committee.

Ms. Cindy Forster: How many years have you been here again?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I've been here almost 15 years. I long for the opportunity to see what that side of the House looks like from that side.

They're not even sending this bill to committee. It is such a sign of a desperate group of people who, in their dying gasp, are trying everything to somehow turn this thing around. What I say to them is this: You've been in government for 15 years. Did you not figure out that so many of the things that you did for the last 15 years have shown a total lack of respect for democracy and the people who send us all here?

This time allocation motion: How do you say that it is the worst of the worst? That's what it is.

I just want to point out that they will be calling this back to the House for second reading as soon as we're done this debate:

"... dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

"At such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading."

This is the shortest time allocation motion I've ever seen as a member of the Legislature. What's missing here is that "the bill shall be referred to the XYZ committee" so that deputants from all across the province can voice their views on the bill.

Without any warning—and we have testimony from people in the business. I quoted David Frame last week

that they were never consulted on this bill. If you weren't consulted on the bill before the bill was tabled, then you would think that the opportunity to voice your opinion on the bill, areas where the bill could be improved, areas where there could be some maybe even minor changes and areas where something was drastically in need of revision—where you would get that opportunity is at committee. Committee is the place where we make things better. Committee is the vehicle to drive the legislation down a better path. We are being denied that.

0910

It is like Star Trek, you know, and Captain Kirk orders Scotty to beam it directly to third reading; no committee, just beam it directly to third reading. Well, that's how the Romulans would behave. But we want the people to have something to say about the legislation.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That's why we're for the people.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We are for the people.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The richest people.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I've got to tell you—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: My leader, Doug Ford, is going to be in my riding next Wednesday—for the people. And I can tell you, Renfrew county is not filled with rich people; it's full of hard-working people who abide by the law, go to work every day, try to do the right things for their family and expect that the government will listen to what they have to say, because they are the people. I'm looking forward to that.

I hope that the Premier will come to my riding, because she is going to be a great help to me as well if she does.

Mr. John Fraser: All of those long-term-care beds.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, that we fought so hard for, I can tell you, for three years—for three years.

I'm looking forward to that. I hope she does come to my riding, I say to my friend from Ottawa South, because next to the boost that we're going to get from my leader, Doug Ford, coming next week, that would be the second biggest boost: to have Kathleen Wynne come to my riding. She could—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Nothing would be better for me in my riding than to have the Premier coming through, absolutely.

This government, in its panic before June 7—you know, this issue has been before the public for decades. This issue is not new, Bill 53. This issue is not new, but—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Bring him to my riding.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, I'm sure he will be there, Potts; he will be there, Mr. Potts.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Again, just to remind everyone in the Legislature that when, in fact, we are in debate, we refer to members by their riding, not by their first name or their last name but by riding, please, and thank you very much.

Back to the member, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, and that is the custom here, Speaker, but it is also—you know, you would think it would be the in spirit of the Legislature that members on the opposite side would also respect the duly elected leader of a major political party in this province. But, no, because of their desperate situation, they malign Doug Ford in this House on a daily basis—on a daily basis. But they forget that Doug Ford is for the people. The Liberals have been for their friends for 15 years. For 15 years they've been for their friends. Now, Speaker, after intense pressure from Doug Ford; from our parliamentary leader, Vic Fedeli; from Steve Clark, Leeds–Grenville; from Todd Smith, Prince Edward–Hastings—and we have been putting pressure on these people over there about the obscene work and the obscene shenanigans going on at Hydro One with regard to the salary of the CEO, with regard to the poison pill severance that he has been given.

And now what? We had the Premier out there yesterday: “Oh, well, we're going to have a look. We're going to have a little meeting, and we're going to try to do something about that.” Now, when their backs are against the wall, when they signed off—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister of Municipal Affairs, when I'm standing, I expect respect, as I do my best to give respect back.

However, I just want to point out again that I believe we are talking about Bill 53, and I just want to—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Time allocation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Motion number 8, government Bill 53. Again, I'm just going to refer back to the member and just bring him in line. Thank you very much.

Mr. John Fraser: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, if I may—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. Point of order, the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: I believe the member from Nepean–Carleton used unparliamentary language.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I don't believe I heard that but—

Mr. John Fraser: You can assume it.

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

Back to the member, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, you know it would never be my place nor my actions to challenge the Speaker, but we're not actually talking about Bill 53; we're talking about a time allocation motion. And the government side has opened the doors to all kinds of topics. The time allocation motion, in so many ways, Speaker, talks about the actions of a democratic

institution and an undemocratic government that has turned it into a dictatorship. I believe it is my right to talk about their actions in this House.

Hon. Bill Mauro: A “dictatorship”? Did you just say that?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I did. I say to the minister, this government no longer acts like we’re living in a democracy. It is a dictatorship. They’re not giving us the opportunity to have proper discourse about a bill. They’re shutting off debate. The guillotine has been sharpened to a new edge.

I see the Speaker is deliberating. We’re good?

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker.

What we are talking about here are the actions of the government, the actions of a government that when—now not all of those members were ever in opposition, but many of the members of that government were, and they absolutely railed and they went apoplectic when the government of the day would time-allocate a piece of legislation. They derided the government saying that this was the most undemocratic, dictatorial action they had ever seen—dictatorial action—they had ever seen, and yet, they got their hands on the levers of power and they’ve taken this action. Using this legislative tool, they have taken it to a new level. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that never in the history of this institution have we seen this tool used to such excess.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Even Speaker Levac said that today.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Even the Speaker. I read an article on the Speaker—and congratulations. I may not have the opportunity, because I know this government is not going to offer me the opportunity; in fact, they hate it when I get up and speak. But I want to stand here in my place today and thank and congratulate the Speaker, Dave Levac, for his service not only to this Legislature and to his riding of Brant since 1999, but to the people of Ontario.

0920

You know, he did a great service to this Legislature in a very special way yesterday. When he was interviewed, he talked about how he is saddened by the direction things have gone in. One of the things he talked about most, one of the things he highlighted, was the unacceptable use—I’m not quoting him because I don’t have the article in front of me—but what he felt is the unacceptable use of time allocation—the freedom of us as members, duly elected by the people in our constituencies to come here and debate the legislation. Technically, I’m not even debating Bill 53 because we’re on a time allocation motion.

Time allocation is like—Speaker, you might as well have been sentenced and all you’re waiting for is the executioner. Your time is up. The Legislature has been told they’ve been sentenced. Your time is up and all we’re waiting for—I know the Sergeant-at-Arms doesn’t behave in that fashion, but the executioner is coming. We know exactly when and where. It’s in the schedule. So

we know when the guillotine will fall. We’re basically told, “You’ve got nothing more to say about it.”

Liberals will run your lives: That’s what Kathleen has been trying to tell the people of Ontario for 15 years. She wants to tell the people of Ontario how they would live their lives. She wants to tell them that she knows better. She wants to tell them that only she is right. Have you ever noticed that when you disagree with a piece of legislation that Kathleen Wynne has brought forth to this chamber, she doesn’t argue about the merits, pro or con, about the piece of legislation. She will attack your character. If you disagree with what Kathleen Wynne says about a piece of legislation, she’s no longer interested in talking about the merits of the respective piece of legislation. She would rather go out and attack your character, that somehow you are less of a person because you don’t see the world the way she sees it.

And, you know, Speaker, people in Ontario take offence to that, because we all have the right to our views. That’s what freedom is all about. I don’t expect everybody in my riding to agree with what I say, and I will gladly have the discussion with them on those issues. But I can tell you this: I will not call someone in my riding names or castigate their character because they don’t see the world the way I see it, because we are not all made the same. We all have an intellect and we all have a heart and we all have our feelings on various subjects.

Because somebody doesn’t see the world as Kathleen Wynne sees it, she loves to attack their character. She attacked my character in this House last week.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That was shameful, too, by the way.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That was shameful. When we didn’t vote for Bill 3, she challenged me. She as much called me a misogynist. That’s the way she rolls. We voted against Bill 3 for very good reasons. The experts told us it was unnecessary and the changes could have been adopted by amending current legislation. If the Liberals hadn’t starved the Pay Equity Commission, they would have had the resources to implement the changes necessary. But she calls Doug Ford names. She calls the rest of us names. That’s what she does when you don’t agree with her.

As I said, Speaker, not everybody agrees with me. My wife doesn’t always agree with me. As it turns out, most of the times that my wife doesn’t agree with me, she’s right.

That’s why I think we have a responsibility. I think we have a responsibility to the people that sent us here to stand up for what we believe. We can’t do a poll every time there is an issue, but we do live among our people and we do get a sense of how they feel about things. That’s our responsibility: to try to articulate that feeling to this Legislature.

I don’t know what’s going to happen on June 7. I have a good feeling, but who knows? Just as they say in hockey, before the Stanley Cup playoffs begin, everybody has got their betting favourites. But you know

what? You still have to play the game. How many people in August of last year would have said that the Vegas Golden Knights were going to be running deep into the playoffs? Here we are: An expansion team is now leading the San Jose Sharks two games to one in the second round of the playoffs. They are down to eight teams. You might have been wise to go to Vegas and make a bet on Vegas last August. But you have to play the game.

We recognize that. We are more than prepared to take our message for the people to the people. We will take our message for the people to the people. How many members of the party opposite have chosen not to even seek re-election? They have probably heard from the people. They have heard from the people about what their government has meant to them over the past 15 years: less and less in their own pockets, more and more of their hard-earned money being taken for the pretty programs that the Liberals want to promote to satisfy their friends.

Well, we heard from the FAO, the Financial Accountability Officer, yesterday about \$23 billion in the last five years being handed out to programs with no accountability for it whatsoever, no measurements as to whether the recipients of that money received the kind of results that were expected or created the jobs or maintained the jobs that were part of the application process. That's the big ones like the Jobs and Prosperity Fund, where we've seen grants of hundreds of millions of dollars to one company—hundreds of millions to one company at one time of your hard-earned money. You have to ask yourself, Speaker: If you're giving that kind of money to one recipient, then there should be no contract more ironclad in the world than the one that requires them to meet benchmarks and achieve goals—not stretch goals like the Premier likes to talk about, but real, hard goals, hard numbers that have to be met.

We're going to come back here in a few days, or maybe it could even be by—based on this, we could pass this bill, Bill 53, by the end of the week without any significant further debate. Thirty minutes of total debate on third reading: this, after no committee. If there's no committee, then this bill will come back unamended. This bill will come back just the way it is.

0930

In their arrogance, not only do the Liberals no longer believe in democracy, but they believe that they are perfect, that they are infallible, that they can't even make mistakes.

I'm sure there are people out there who live in the world that will be governed by this bill who would like to have the opportunity to come in here, even to the Liberal majority that can choose to listen or choose not to listen—and we know that if future behaviour is best determined by past behaviour, they probably won't listen; but at least they have the opportunity to make that decision. At least they have to categorically say, “No, we're not listening,” because they would have to face the reality of proposed amendments and then make the

choice that they're not adopting them. But in this case they are telling the people, “We don't need your input.”

Well, I'll tell you, in Ford nation, we want their input. Doug Ford is for the people. Everything that we do will be determined by how the people respond. There is nobody out there—

Mr. James J. Bradley: For the rich people.

Laughter.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I hear the chortles from the opposite side: “Doug Ford is for the rich people.” Yes, who has been enriched in this province more than the rich people in the last 15 years? How much does David Herle—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Three million dollars.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's \$3.4 million, is it?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The wizard, Gandalf.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The wizard. Gandalf. Over \$3 million.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Mississauga–Streetsville on a point of order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is distinctly unparliamentary and against the standing orders, standing orders 23(g) and (h), to make allegations against members or to utter comments that are disturbing in nature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for that point of order. I would remind the member and other members in this Legislature to refrain.

I would now turn it back to the member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, I would point out that standing order 23 speaks about how you address and refer to members of this assembly. The last time I checked, nobody ever voted David Herle into this assembly.

I recall distinctly when a member of this Legislature who is no longer here used to take great glee in railing about Conrad Black over and over again, and was never admonished in this Legislature. If we want to take a shot, just as they take gratuitous shots at Doug Ford, the duly elected leader of the PC Party of Ontario, then we will avail ourselves of the privilege to point out to the people of Ontario the obscene way that David Herle has been enriched by contracts handed out directly by that party over there.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Seniors can't heat and eat, but David Herle—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. We've got people in this province who are crying about what this government has done to their ability to get by. Hydro prices that went from 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour when they took power to—exploded.

Hon. Bill Mauro: They never were 4.3 cents.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan says he doesn't agree with me. I guess he must not have been paying a hydro bill.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The Minister of Municipal Affairs will come to order. The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order.

I believe we have one speaker debating at a time. I don't want to have it confused with other members trying to interject on your time of debate, so I'll turn it back to you, member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the advice from the other side, but I'm not sure where they're getting their information. I paid a hydro bill in 2003, just like most people here would have paid a hydro bill, and I know what the per-kilowatt-hour charge was.

Through that subsequent time, when this government, again, decided that they would tell the people of Ontario how they should think and they would dictate how they would live, hydro rates, electricity rates, skyrocketed because they signed the most exorbitant deals for power in the history of mankind. They were willing to pay more than any other jurisdiction—far above the market price. Who benefited? Well, we know that those—and I say to the member from Northumberland, we know that he claims to be against the developers.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I didn't say that.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He claims to be against the developers. But what about those gigantic wind turbine developers that you voted for in the Green Energy Act—to fill their pockets at the expense of grandmothers who couldn't pay their hydro bills, widows who couldn't pay their hydro bills and had to resort to food banks to get food, but—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West will come to order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —yet voted in favour of those developers who—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would certainly hope that the member from Northumberland–Quinte West is not challenging the Speaker when I asked him to come to order. I would just expect that the respect be shown.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I wasn't, Mr. Speaker. I apologize.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. It's accepted.

Back to the member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, I could understand the people getting upset on the other side if we were making this up, but it's all there in the record. The Green Energy Act, which the NDP voted for—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, they voted for the Green Energy Act. Before they get too worked up here, they voted for the Green Energy Act.

The Auditor General, the impartial, non-partisan officer of the Legislature, has told us repeatedly how much the people of Ontario have overpaid for electricity be-

cause of the Green Energy Act and the contracts that this government signed.

I'll give credit where credit is due. They all voted for it. They all wanted it—

Mr. Arthur Potts: I wasn't even here.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —those who were here in 2009—and now they won't walk it back. They've insulted municipalities over and over again—municipalities that have asked to have some control over whether they get a wind development built in their municipality. The Liberals have paid lip service to it.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry.

On a point of order, I recognize the member from St. Catharines.

Mr. James J. Bradley: I always enjoy hearing the speaker, but what he is saying has nothing to do with the time allocation motion or Bill 53. We'd love to hear about Bill 53 and the time allocation motion, because I do like hearing the member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I'll return it back to the member, please.

0940

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. The point I'm trying to make is about the democratic process and what Speaker Levac has referred to. I'm really touching around that by how we behave and conduct ourselves in this chamber, and about how the whole package—15 years are up for decision. The Liberal government must answer for its record. I am simply reminding people about some of the things.

What happened then, Speaker, is that the people of Ontario got saddled with these massive electricity contracts that would hinder them for 20 or 30 years. I know that there are a lot of members here who wish they hadn't done it, but they did it. Instead of backing off, they doubled down. The hurt is so bad that they had to remortgage the house so that the people won't be paying these contracts for 30 years; now they'll be paying them for 60 years. What is interesting, though, is that they have a little bit of buyer's remorse.

Do you remember George Smitherman? Do you remember Furious George? He was the architect of the Green Energy Act, and he brought it in here. I remember him sending me a handwritten note. I was the energy critic at the time. He sent me a handwritten note, and it said, "Yak: the Green Energy Act is going to add no more than 1% a year to your power bills." It was on one of those little sheets out of the little book—a handwritten note. "Yak: 1% a year." How absolutely sad is that?

Oh, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It's okay.

We are in time allocation; I understand that and I know that you understand that. But we need to be debating the time allocation of this. With the other stories, I'm not so certain that they are relevant to time allocation and specifically Bill 53. Although entertaining, I would ask that the member stick to what we've just discussed.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, if that is your desire—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Nepean–Carleton: This is the second time. I'm going to ask that you do your best to contain your comments.

Back to the member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Speaker. In fact, I am time-allocated. I have, at this time, less than two minutes left to speak.

Let's talk about time allocation. I'm so pleased that my friend from St. Catharines rose on a point of order, which is his complete right to do. I don't have time to go through all of the quotes here, but I have copious notes on the member himself when he was a member of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. These are some of the things he said when he was a member of the opposition:

"We are operating in this Legislative Assembly at this time almost exclusively on what are called time allocation motions. That's most unfortunate, because it's what you would call"—listen, now—"anti-democratic...."

"The best way to deal with legislation is to have the government sitting most of the year so that it can receive careful analysis and debate in this House and in committees and, in fact, in committees that travel across the province to get meaningful input. We do not have that."

Speaker, if I could have one of the pages pass this on to the member from St. Catharines, perhaps he'd like to read his own quotes into the record after I finish. I think it would be wonderful.

On that, Speaker: "anti-democratic"? That picture is in the dictionary beside the words "anti-democratic": the Liberal Legislative Assembly members.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents of Windsor West and add some comments to the time allocation motion before us, which is related to government contract wages. I find it interesting. I'm not sure that in those 40 minutes the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke really talked much about what was before us; I'm going to try to stay a little more on track than he was. It was entertaining, though, and it did give me some things to talk about.

I think it's important to note that we are here once again with the Liberal government time-allocating an important discussion. This is something they've done time and time again. For those who are out there watching or that might read the Hansard later and don't know what time allocation is, basically time allocation is the government's way of saying that they don't want to talk about the legislation; they just want to push it through and make it law without having fulsome debate, without wanting to hear from the other MPPs in the Legislature, whether that's opposition or some of their own members. And they don't want to hear from the people of this province. That's what time allocation means: They're shutting down conversation about a bill.

I want to point out something that's interesting. There's an article in the Toronto Star today with an interview that was done with the Speaker of the House, the member from Brant, Speaker Levac, who, as we all know, is retiring. He's not going to run again, and I wish him well, wherever life takes him after retirement. Speaker Levac actually said this in the interview: "Levac says Liberal government dominance of legislative debates has also set a poor precedent, citing the 'excessive use of time allocation' measures to rush bills into law through closure tactics that limit the opposition's say."

It's important to point out that Speaker Levac, although when he is here is non-partisan, is a member of the Liberal Party. He is an elected MPP who ran under the Liberal banner, and here he is saying that the Liberal government uses time allocation excessively to shut down the voice of the people in this House and to shut down the voice of Ontarians.

When the Liberal government moves time allocation, what they are saying—not just to opposition MPP constituents, but to the people they represent, those that sent them to this place—is, "We don't want to hear from you." I cannot stress this enough for the people who are watching this or who will read the Hansard later: When the Liberal members that you elected in your ridings support time allocation, what they are saying to you, their constituents, is, "We don't want to hear from you. Your opinion doesn't matter."

So remember that come June 7, when you are standing in the polling station deciding who you are going to support. If you have supported Liberal members in the past who are sitting in this House now with time allocation shutting down debate, they are saying that they don't want to hear from you, and your opinion doesn't matter.

What's even more alarming is that they don't want to hold committee and hear from the people of this province and get their input. They are not interested in that this time either. They have had about 10 years to deal with this legislation, which they have now decided they need to rush through on the eve of an election, and they don't want to consult the people of this province. That's shameful, because every single one of us in this House was elected to represent every constituent in our riding; whether they voted for us or not, whether they can vote or not, we are sent here to bring the voice of our constituents. The Liberals don't want to hear from us and they don't want to hear from their constituents. They are not doing their job, frankly.

I want to talk a little bit about this, because it's about government contract wages—and not wanting to talk about government contract wages, apparently, on the Liberal side. I think it's important to point out some of the stuff that's going on across this province right now as far as people who are working in government jobs, directly or indirectly, and people who work in institutions that are publicly funded. All we have to do is look at what's going on at York University, where for, I believe

nine weeks now, they have been out on the picket line because this Liberal government chooses to underfund the post-secondary education institutions in this province, whether that's universities or colleges.

0950

We just went through a very long college strike, and the Liberals let that go on and on for I believe five weeks or more without doing anything about it, without truly addressing—that's not true. What they did about it was they tabled back-to-work legislation, which was supported by the Conservatives; what they did was they forced the faculty back to work without actually addressing the issues that caused the strike in the first place.

That is exactly what they are doing now at York University. They're not addressing the fact that we have more contract faculty, more part-time faculty, more people who are there to provide an education—a darn good education—so that people can go out and make a decent living to fill the gaps in our job sector.

There are many areas where they need skilled workers, and we have faculty who are trying to educate the next generation and fill those gaps, and they're not respected. More and more of them are contract, part-time and precarious employment. That isn't the way that we should be treating the people who are put in charge of educating our next generation or those who have had to return to post-secondary education and then move on to another career. This is not how we should be treating the faculty. They shouldn't be starving out our post-secondary institutions so that more and more they're having to decide to hire contract faculty.

The students who pay to be there deserve no less than to know that their faculty will be there whenever they need them, that if they're struggling with something they can go back and seek additional help so that they will get the best possible education they can. But that's not the case right now. Many of the faculty, whether that's at York University or whether that's in our colleges, are piecing together a life because this Liberal government is underfunding the post-secondary education system. Many of the faculty in our post-secondary institutions are working multiple jobs just to try and make ends meet because they don't have stable employment, thanks to this government.

Another issue I'd like to bring up, because these people are indirectly employed by the government as well because the institution where they work receives funding from the government and the government receives revenue in return, are the people on strike at Caesars Windsor casino. It's shameful that, as the employer, the government and the OLG—which is a body of the government—are making sure that the management team at the casino are still getting their revenues. They're still getting paid; they're not losing any money. The management company is getting exactly what they're supposed to. Meanwhile, we have workers who have been out on the picket line for weeks now, and this government will not say to the management company to actually get back to the table.

The government will say they respect collective bargaining, and that's fantastic, but they know as well as I do that you can only have collective bargaining when both sides are at the table. Management is refusing to negotiate; they won't even come to the table. They will not talk to the union about even setting dates to bargain. This is an institution that receives funding from the government.

While they want to talk about government contract wages ensuring that people are compensated fairly and that nobody is getting left behind and we're going to be transparent and all that kind of thing, that is not what they are doing. That is not the behaviour that they are exhibiting. They are allowing more and more people in this province who work in the public sector to struggle to find full-time jobs with fair wages.

In Community Living—another example. In developmental services, you have organizations like Community Living, OASIS and Christian Horizons that provide supports to people with developmental disabilities; yet they can't meet their pay equity obligations because this government hasn't given them base funding increases in 10 years—10 years.

What happens is, these workers are getting left behind. They are not receiving fair wages for the work that they do. They are not receiving full-time hours that they can count on, because these organizations that serve some of the most vulnerable people in this province aren't receiving the funding from the government in order to be able to take care of their staff. While you have staff that are taking care of other people, they are not being taken care of by their employer, which essentially is this Liberal government.

So it's all good and well to talk about supporting government workers, supporting any worker in this province, but the record on the other side of the House, on the Liberal side, indicates that they really don't support workers in this province; because if they did, they would be making sure that all of these organizations and institutions that are publicly funded are receiving adequate funding to do what it is that they need to do and that, ultimately, the employees there are making a decent living, where they can put a roof over their head, where they can feed their kids, where they might actually be able to afford their hydro bill.

Speaking of hydro bills, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had talked about hydro. I think it's really important to point out that it was actually the Conservatives that started us down the path of privatization when it comes to the hydro system. It was actually the Conservatives that started that process. That doesn't excuse the fact that the Liberals then went off and charged ahead with selling off, when 80% of the people in this province did not support that—nor did they campaign on it last election, which they say they did.

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: They say that they campaigned on selling off hydro, but that's not what they said. They want to talk about broadening ownership of hydro, but

there is no broader ownership of hydro than every person in this province owning it. A select few shareholders is not broadened ownership. It's not. It's certainly not helping the people of this province.

The member from Huron–Bruce was heckling me while I was talking—talking about green energy. I don't know what it is that the Conservatives have against making sure that we have a healthy environment, that we have a sustainable environment. Where they get a little confused is in the role when it comes to supporting the Green Energy Act.

Just to be clear, the NDP aren't government—not yet. That will change June 7. We are not government. For 15 years, the Liberals have been government. They are the ones that sign contracts and make those decisions, not the NDP. We know that the Conservatives don't support green energy and they don't support the environment. That was made very clear yesterday when a video was released of their leader, Doug Ford, saying that he would bulldoze over the greenbelt in order to make affordable housing. It's very clear they don't support our environment.

But the fact of the matter is, Speaker, they were the ones that started the privatization of our hydro in the first place.

Ms. Cindy Forster: There are developers chomping at the bit for that—

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Yes, yes, there are developers chomping at the bit for the greenbelt. And we know that those developers aren't interested in building affordable housing. They're in it to make money. That's what they're in it for. We also know the Conservatives aren't in it for affordable housing because, in fact, when they were in government they downloaded housing onto the municipalities. along with community and social services programs, child care, land ambulance and public transit. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talked about the Liberals downloading and things like that, but the Conservatives actually downloaded a great deal and left it on the municipalities to pick up the pieces.

1000

Ms. Cindy Forster: Three billion dollars.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Three billion dollars in repairs to social housing that the Conservatives downloaded onto municipalities. It's all fine and well that they want to go after the Liberals. The Liberals' record is the Liberals' record. They've had 15 years to fix things since the Harris government. What they have often done, more often than not, is continued down the same path that the Conservatives did. But if they want to talk about and sound like they are all for supportive housing, affordable housing and that kind of thing, investing in our public services, then they really need to be talking about what their record is and what they have actually done in the past.

The other thing I want to point out is specifically related to government contract wages and talking about wages. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke also talked about the Pay Equity Commission. It's im-

portant to point out, while he's going after the Liberals about the Pay Equity Commission, that it was actually the Conservatives that cut the Pay Equity Commission by 50%. But again, the Conservatives don't want to talk about their record. They don't want to talk about their history. They just want to re-create history, I suppose.

And then perhaps we could talk about Eleanor Clitheroe. Eleanor Clitheroe was the president of Hydro One under the Conservatives and was making \$2.2 million in 2001. In 2001, \$2.2 million. But wait; there's more. She had benefits and \$172,000 for a car. And then, Speaker, they want to stand up now and talk about CEO salaries and that kind of thing. Clearly, under the Liberals and their privatization of Hydro One, we now have Mayo Schmidt making over \$6 million a year and saying he feels our pain when it comes to paying our hydro bills. I just want to point out that New Democrats have tabled legislation several times to cap CEO salaries, and neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives supported it. Not once. I believe this afternoon the PCs have a motion about the Hydro One board and their salaries. It's interesting that they've had several opportunities to actually support legislation to cap CEO salaries, executive salaries, and they didn't.

Speaker, again, I'm not really sure the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talked much about the actual bill, but he certainly gave me a lot of things to talk about.

Another really important one, I think, to point out when we're talking about the PC record and downloading and privatization is Walkerton, the privatization of the water testing in Walkerton. Everybody in this House, I think, knows what happened there. No oversight whatsoever, and people were sick and dying. What we see is—

Interjection: Boy, oh, boy. That's really desperate. I'm disappointed in you.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's desperate? Talking about the fact that you privatized the oversight of water and people were dying and gravely ill: That's desperate? That's not desperate; that's fact.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Interjection: No stone unturned.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: No stone unturned. The PC leader, Doug Ford, has said he will leave no stone unturned when it comes to privatization, and I think we all know what that means. That means, likely—

Interjections.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: And \$6 billion in cuts. What that means is, once again, they will cut social assistance—by 21%, I believe, is what they did last time—and tell people to eat dented cans of tuna and eat baloney sandwiches. They sit here and talk about investing in people, that they are for the people, while what we have seen in the past was telling people, low-income people who are struggling to make ends meet, to just shop better: “Buy dented cans of tuna and eat baloney sandwiches and you'll be just fine. Don't worry about your water; you'll

be just fine. Don't worry about affordable housing or social housing; we'll cut those, but you'll be fine."

Ms. Cindy Forster: And no new housing built under the Liberals.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: No new housing built under the Liberals.

So, Speaker, I think that the Conservative record and the Liberal record speak for themselves. The Conservatives did a lot of damage in this province. There were mass rallies in opposition to what the Conservatives did the last time that they were in government in this province. The Liberals have had 15 years to undo that damage, and they haven't done it. And we are supposed to believe that, on the eve of an election, suddenly they've seen the light and they're going to do things differently. They are actually going to invest in the people of this province. Really, what they're doing is, they're playing catch-up for 15 years of pretty much doing nothing. It's a desperate attempt to try to hold on to power.

I can tell you, in my riding, it's not working. There hasn't been a single door that I have knocked on where anybody has said they will be voting Liberal. I bet it's like that across the province because nobody believes that, after 15 years, this Liberal government is finally going to deliver on any of the promises they have made time and time again.

Then we get to where we are today, where we have legislation that they've had 10-plus years to deal with, an issue they've had 10-plus years to deal with. We are on the eve of an election and so they are rushing it through and they're time-allocating it. They're shutting off debate because they don't want to hear from the constituents from the opposition side of the House. They don't want to hear from their own constituents. They don't want to have committee meetings and have stakeholders and others that are affected come in and talk about what may or may not work for them in the bill. They don't want to do that. They want to shut down discussion and they want to rush through a bill.

What that says to the people of this province is that the Liberals haven't learned anything in 15 years about actually taking the people of this province seriously and listening to, and addressing, their concerns. It's all about the Liberals; it's all about the Liberal agenda: "What can we do to try and make us look good?" That's rather unfortunate because there are 107 people, this session, who were elected to be here; 107 out of millions. It is an incredible honour and a huge responsibility to be here.

People put their trust in us to do the right thing, and the Liberals are saying to them, "I don't need you. I'm government. Now that you got me here, I don't need you. I can do whatever I want and it doesn't matter what you say. It doesn't matter what your opinion is."

I'm certain, Speaker, that on June 7, the people of this province are going to send the Liberals a very strong message. It's going to be a very strong reminder to the folks on the government side that you do need the people of this province in order to be able to do the job that

you're doing, that you are only in those seats because the people of this province, the people in their ridings, put them there. When you take that for granted and you stop listening to your constituents and you stop listening to the people of this province, they will send you a very strong reminder come election time.

With that, Speaker, I'm going to wrap up because I know my colleagues have something that they probably would like to add to the discussion as well, once it comes back around to our side.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I've got five minutes, so I think I'm going to first talk about the time allocation and what a short time allocation it is, and how that really is not democracy in the making.

1010

We've heard from stakeholders who actually took the time to put together very detailed reports. They wanted to come to committee and they wanted to share their concerns about that bill, because there's a lot missing in Bill 53, I think it is; there's a lot missing. But because I only have four minutes, I'm going to turn to Mr. Ford's comments with respect to the greenbelt as it pertains to my ongoing saga of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

I am very concerned when I hear that the Conservative leader is actually going to be having a look at greenbelt areas across this province. It is exactly what has been happening and what I have been talking about in this Legislature for the last couple of years, particularly as it relates to Niagara Falls—the member from Niagara Falls is here—and the Thundering Waters project in the Falls. I'm concerned that this, under Doug Ford, will lead to a wonderful wetland in the Niagara Peninsula being developed by some large Chinese developer, and that legislation will change to allow that to happen. I'm concerned because the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority has moved to a development mode, instead of a protection and a conservation mode, in some of their thinking.

At the moment, the Auditor General is in doing a financial audit. They have been there for months. I'm hoping to see some reports in a short period of time. There are ongoing issues there at the NPCA with respect to harassment of workers. We're trying to get the NPCA to release a report that was done by an outside firm. They're not very forthcoming with that issue. We have Ed Smith, who you all know; you probably all know now he was in the Supreme Court for a SLAPP suit by the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. Judge Ramsay in the case ruled that the NPCA was wrong and that in fact as private citizens, we have the right to have a voice, to have an opinion, and there was no slander intended by Mr. Smith. Shortly after that suit, they then went to take on one of their former employees, who had her employment severed after I think 20-plus years.

At the moment, there is actually a move on to try to get them to withdraw that SLAPP suit against that per-

son. I'm not going to mention her name again here in the Legislature, because that was how she ended up being sued, unfortunately.

When we have leaders running for parties making broad statements about what they're going to do with respect to greenbelts, I think it's very concerning for many of us in the province. For Mr. Ford to say that he's going to free up a lot of these greenbelt areas for affordable housing—we just don't believe that. We don't believe that anybody is going to want to build affordable housing on greenbelts. We're going to open this up in areas of the province, in Hamilton and Toronto, where property is very expensive to start with, and at the end of the day, people still are not going to be able to afford to buy houses in downtown Toronto or in downtown Hamilton. That issue is quite concerning.

The member from Windsor spoke about the York strike. Speaker, I can tell you that at the moment—I think April 2017—college support staff, 20,000 of them, came out and voted in colleges across this province to join a union, to join OPSEU specifically. That legal battle is still in the middle of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, with the employer counsel for the colleges and the college counsels actually causing the vote not to be counted—still today, a year later.

Interjection.

Ms. Cindy Forster: You're telling me to wrap up, Speaker, so thank you very much for the opportunity.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): This House now stands recessed until 10:30, since it is now 10:15.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to introduce a few Hardemans who are visiting Queen's Park today for the Dutch Heritage Month flag-raising. I'm joined by my son Ernie; his wife, Susan; and two of my grandchildren, Freya and Willem. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome my good colleague John's cousin.

L'hon. Marie-France Lalonde: À titre de membre d'Ottawa-Orléans, il me fait plaisir de savoir que la mère de notre page Maxime Dufault, Sylvie Rodier, est ici avec nous aujourd'hui. Donc, j'aimerais la saluer et lui dire un bon bonjour.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I would like to welcome a Huron-Bruce grade 10 class visiting today from Saugeen District Secondary School in Port Elgin.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Speaker, I know they're joining us because I just met them on the staircase. Today, we're going to be joined by 75 students from grade 5 at James W. Hill school in Oakville. Please welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr. Arthur Potts: We do have the pleasure of having page captain Joseph Berman here today, who is from St.

Paul's, an unrepresented seat. So on behalf of that unrepresented riding, I'd like to welcome grandparents Ruth and Lony Gropper; aunt Elise Stern Gropper; uncle Bernard Gropper; and cousins Adam and Evan Gropper. They are in the public gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park. Your son and grandson is doing a great job.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I wish to welcome guests here today from the Canadian Celiac Association: Melissa Secord, who is the executive director and actually lives in our riding, and David Congram, who is on the board. Welcome to Queen's Park today. Thank you for coming.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Scarborough-Guildwood and page captain Abinaya Chandrasegaran, I'm pleased to introduce her mother, Umahsekari Chandrasegaran; her father, Chandrasegaran Sabapathy; and her brother, Nisanth Chandrasegaran. They will be in the public gallery this morning.

Hon. David Zimmer: It is my pleasure to introduce the family of my legislative assistant, Sasha Boutilier. His mother, Joanna, and his brother, Misha, are here.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm pleased to welcome this morning Alan Carson and Giancarlo Drennan of the Ontario home inspectors. Thank you. Welcome to Queen's Park.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: In association with the member for Nickel Belt, I want to seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow the members to wear green ribbons today in honour of the Canadian Celiac Association.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have the ribbons for both sides?

Mr. James J. Bradley: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes? The chief government whip indicates yes.

The member from Wellington-Halton Hills is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbons. Do we agree? A agreed.

Final last call for introductions? Seeing no further introductions, it is therefore time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, we learned disturbing new details about this government's deleted document scandal in the Trillium Power lawsuit. We've learned that documents appear to have been destroyed or deleted by this Liberal government. That's why, on behalf of our leader, Doug Ford, the PC Party has written to the Information and Privacy Commissioner seeking an investigation into what exactly happened to these lawsuit documents.

This government has had six years to find the documents we know exist. The lawyers against the government provided evidence that these files were deliberately destroyed or deleted. This is the gas plants scandal, all over. Speaker, I ask the Premier, are we really going to do this all over again?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As the member well knows, we can't—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I heard a member say something; I'm not sure exactly which member it was. They'll know what I'm talking about. I don't want those kinds of references used in the heckling. If it is, I'll ask you to withdraw; and then the second time it's used, I'll start naming people.

Carry on.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As said before, and as the opposition well knows, we can't comment specifically on the lawsuit from Trillium Power, as the matter is before the courts, Mr. Speaker.

But with respect to record-keeping, we are committed to being an open, accountable and transparent government. We have taken action, Mr. Speaker, to strengthen the laws related to record-keeping. We have ensured that there are good policies in place for document retention and staff training. As well, we have worked closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the Chief Privacy Officer and Archivist of Ontario, to ensure that our policies are appropriate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: I can tell you that there's nothing appropriate about this. The former Liberal chief of staff to the Premier has been sentenced to jail for orchestrating the deletion of gas plant scandal documents, and this sounds absolutely identical to that.

Let me read the court filings: "In-house counsel for the (government) have refused to acknowledge or admit the destruction of the incriminating energy documents ... even though this has now been proven beyond a reasonable doubt in criminal proceedings."

Who is this government trying to kid? The Liberals thought they were clever last time, and it ended up with jail doors slamming. Speaker, where are the documents that Trillium Power has demanded?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will withdraw. If it's said again, I'm naming people.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdrawn.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: As said before, and I'll say it again, Mr. Speaker, to the opposition: They know that we can't comment specifically on the lawsuit from Trillium Power, as that matter is before the courts.

But in 2016, it is important to note that Trillium requested that the OPP investigate their allegations related to the moratorium on wind energy. Those allegations were thoroughly investigated and found to be unsub-

stantiated. The investigation was promptly closed after the OPP found no evidence to support Trillium's allegations.

As I said before, when it comes to respect to record-keeping, we're committed to being an open, accountable and transparent government. We have worked closely with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and the Chief Privacy Officer and Archivist of Ontario, to ensure that our policies are appropriate, and they have said so.

Interjection.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: The reason there was no evidence is because it was destroyed by the Liberals.

We all know that Liberal insiders have lined their pockets from the energy file for years. That could explain this section of the Trillium Power court filing referring to their competitor: "Unknown publicly at the time, Windstream"—

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Talk about the greenbelt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Infrastructure will come to order. I might not have to wait until the first round. We'll go to warnings, if necessary, and we'll do it quick.

Finish, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli:—"Windstream Energy had hired Chris Benedetti, a senior government relations person, who had close and direct relationships into the Office of the Premier, the Minister of Energy, and others. At the time, he was a campaign co-chair for the Ontario Liberal Party, in 2011." The Premier was also a campaign co-chair.

1040

Records of Benedetti's communications to and from the Office of the Premier on behalf of Windstream have been wiped out. Will the Premier tell us: Are the Liberals destroying evidence in this case too?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Again, we've taken action to strengthen the laws related to record-keeping, and we, this government, have ensured that there are good policies in place for document retention and staff training. We worked with the Information and Privacy Commissioner on that. We worked with the Chief Privacy Officer and the Archivist of Ontario to ensure that our policies are appropriate.

That decision, that policy to place a moratorium on offshore wind is one that our government still believes is correct. Ontario continues to take a cautious approach to offshore wind, which includes finalizing research to make sure that we are protective of both human health and of the environment, because protecting the environment is something that we take very seriously. We're not going to pave over the greenbelt, Mr. Speaker.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. It turns out the Premier's six-million-dollar man has a price after all; it just happens to be a political price. After weeks of PC leader Doug Ford sounding the siren call against outrageous executive compensation at Hydro One, isn't it wonderful to see the Premier and this government now following Doug Ford's lead? Thank you.

This Premier and this government, which is only interested in its own survival, finally read the political tea leaves and told the Hydro One board what Doug Ford has been calling for all along: that we need a lid on fat-cat executive salaries.

To the Premier: Why did it take Doug Ford and the Ontario PC Party shedding a light on this scandalous deal for this government to finally act?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: Coming from that party, where there was a video released of a meeting with "fat-cat" developers, Mr. Speaker? Coming from them? Unbelievable.

Over the weekend, our government urged Hydro One's board to revisit its executive compensation model. As Hydro One's largest shareholder, we welcome the board's decision to re-examine the compensation model, which will include independent advice. The board's decision to increase executive compensation was done without our involvement. Changes to compensation and severance were adopted by the board late last year, but were not raised with us before the release of the 2018 management information circular on March 29. The board now acknowledges that its largest shareholder should be engaged on such material issues and that changes are needed.

I know that while Doug Ford and the PC s would take an erratic and reckless approach and fire Hydro One's board, which would do absolutely nothing to reduce customer rates, we believe in a stable solution that exercises our authority as the largest shareholder. Our government continues to focus on fairness.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Well, that weak response is only coming now because the Premier and her millionaires' club have been exposed, just before the election. If this Liberal government truly had any respect for the taxpayers, the Premier would fire the six-million-dollar man and the entire board at Hydro One. The Premier told this Legislature earlier that she has the authority to do that, then they said they don't, and now it appears they do. Instead, the Premier and her minister have stood here defending their insider friends, justifying this outrageous salary and continuing to line their pockets.

Will the Premier just admit that this deathbed conversion is only because she admits that Doug Ford is right?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: The approach that the official opposition is taking is like letting a bull run through a

china shop. They want to fire the board of a publicly traded company, not a government entity. This is incredibly, incredibly irresponsible, and it's up to Doug Ford to explain how this would actually work. Their gimmick will drag us down into the same mess that we've seen in the US and won't do anything to take a cent off of anyone's bills.

I know, as the member from Prince Edward-Hastings would say, that Ford's scheme is chaotic and out of control. Instead, our government has taken a responsible approach. After hearing of the compensation changes, our government engaged in careful and necessary analysis and determined that these changes were unjustifiably generous.

This weekend, our government urged Hydro One to revisit its executive compensation model. That's a responsible approach, Mr. Speaker. On the other side of the chamber, the official opposition—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Let's remember what the Hydro One board did. They doubled the severance packages for Hydro One executives while this government stood idly by doing nothing, even though they could have taken action to prevent this. Instead, they let Liberal friends line the pockets of other Liberal friends. They come first while Ontario families struggle with skyrocketing hydro bills, deciding whether to heat or eat as the winter disconnection ban comes to an end today. In 38 days the party with the taxpayers' money is over.

Will the Premier stand with the people and not the millionaires and vote for our opposition day motion today?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: What we have on the other side is chaotic and out of control. They're talking about firing people left and right, which would do absolutely nothing to reduce rates for people in this province. We believe, Mr. Speaker, in a stable solution that exercises our authority as the largest shareholder. That's what we did this weekend; that's what we'll continue to do.

We will not be voting in favour of that opposition day motion, because when it comes to doing something, they actually stood up and voted against the fair hydro plan. They voted against giving families a 25% reduction.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? We did hear over the last few years that people were telling us that electricity prices were too high, so we acted. We made sure that the fair hydro plan reduced rates by 25% for all families across the province. Those in the rural parts of our province and the northern part saw reductions anywhere between 35% and 50%. We acted. The only thing they do is vote against.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Premier. Earlier this morning, York University professor Dr. Fred Lazar published a report that confirmed what the NDP has been saying for years. Auto insurance companies are making huge, excessive profits on the backs of Ontario families. In 2016, in just one year, auto insurance companies in Ontario made \$1.5 billion in pre-tax profits. That's an increase of nearly 60% since 2012.

Why did the Premier deliver a 60% increase in profits to the insurance companies instead of delivering 15% in savings for Ontario families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the member's citing of the report by the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association in which they came forward talking about some of the alarming costs that do in fact exist in our system. It is why we've taken a comprehensive plan to increase consumer protection, combat fraud and ensure that those injured in an accident get the care they need when they need it. It's about care, Mr. Speaker, and not cash, which is what we're trying to avoid in the abuse of the system.

Through Ontario's Fair Auto Insurance Plan, we are creating independent medical examination centres; we're improving care for victims by creating a standard treatment plan for those minor injuries—that way we avoid whiplash and strains; and, of course, legal costs, which are also adding to the costs in the system.

The Serious Fraud Office—it currently costs the system \$1.6 billion. We've got to curb that cost as well. We're going to work with the law society on their contingency fee reforms. We're going to look at postal code review. I'll have more to say in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Again, back to the Premier: The Premier said it was a stretch goal to keep her promise to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. The Premier believed that auto insurance companies just couldn't afford to charge less. But now we know that auto insurance companies extracted an extra \$5 billion in overpayments from Ontario families. That's \$143 every year that could have stayed in the pockets of each Ontario driver.

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Why does this Premier care more about delivering profits to auto insurance companies instead of delivering savings to Ontario families who are being gouged?

Hon. Charles Sousa: In continuation, we have provided some regulatory reform with FSRA, the Financial Services Regulatory Authority. It's a new authority to provide oversight of auto insurance and regulatory power, increasing innovation and consumer protection and greater supports to fight the very issues of fraud, and curb those costs—costs which now have reduced, on average, at one point, as high as 11%.

We know we've got to do better and it is an issue. But we've also taken steps to put in constraints around the profits that insurance companies make, taking the benchmark for profits down to 5% from 6%. We've also

created an expert panel that's reviewing all of these matters together, so that we can work as one to ensure that we put consumers first and we address the issue of fraud and reduce the costs, thereby reducing the premiums.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Again, back to the Premier: Even after gouging Ontario families and collecting an extra 60% in excess profits, auto insurance companies are still applying for higher auto insurance rates as they make \$1.5 billion in profit and they reduce benefits for those injured in auto accidents.

And this Liberal government is approving them. A few weeks ago, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario approved an auto insurance rate increase of 2.23%. This was the sixth increase in the last two years.

After everything, how is it possible that the Premier is still allowing auto insurance companies to gouge Ontario families even more?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We are instituting David Marshall's review of the auto insurance system. It's very comprehensive; it's very detailed. We know that by taking these steps, we are making long-term benefit changes to the reforms in the system.

These are not just stopgap measures like the opposition has just proposed. Instead, we're making structural changes to put consumers first and address fraud, and implementing measures that will provide timely care for victims of accidents that lead to savings for consumers.

We recognize there are 120 auto insurance company providers out there. They compete against one another. We know that we can do better, and within the system, costs can go down. Premiums should go down. We're going to continue to fight to do just that.

WOMEN'S CENTRES

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of the Status of Women. Why is the Liberal government denying funding to the Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre and the Welland Heritage Council and Multi-cultural Centre in my riding?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: Thank you for your question. I know that we have been funding a number of organizations across the province. There is a system that we use to fund the organizations, and it's done on the bureaucratic side, where everything is graded according to the criteria.

A number of those organizations you've referred to—there were some programs approved. Others were not approved. I can look into it for you if that's the case, but we do understand that a couple of the ones you're referencing—the ministry and my staff have reached out to them to talk about why their application wasn't funded at this time. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Chair, please. Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Both of these organizations have been in contact with me and they have been declined funding for delivering programs for newcomers, women who experience domestic violence and those who are looking for employment.

This government talks about their gender-based violence strategy, but here they are doing exactly the opposite. They're cutting funding for two important organizations that have been delivering programs in my riding for 12 years. Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre services 100 to 120 women per year. They have provided services to 60 women per year through Investing in Women's Futures—a total of 1,200 women through that program and 370 women through the violence against women program over the last 12 years.

Speaker, I ask again: If the Liberals are committed to supporting women escaping domestic violence and new immigrants coming to our country, why are they cutting funding to these two important agencies in my riding?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, again, we have made an up to \$242-million investment in our gender-based violence policy. Also, through our women's economic empowerment strategy, we've made an investment in our women's centres. We have increased that investment that we're making in our women's centres. Up until now, some of them were not getting funding. We have introduced a program where all women's centres will have access to this funding.

These are the organizations that are supporting our most vulnerable women—immigrant women, women from racialized groups, women from the LGBTQ+ community.

We are working hard to ensure that women who are in vulnerable places, who need our help—and we are providing those supports and that help through the programs that we are offering, whether it be our gender-based violence policy or our women's economic empowerment strategy.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, these were programs that were working. In fact, when these two agencies put their RFP in, they had 16 endorsements from community partners. They were working with colleges, with employment centres. They have been doing a fantastic job over the last 12 years. And now here they are, with no additional resources.

Who is going to support the women in my riding and in my community? Why is the Liberal government cutting funding to these programs that were actually working—programs that supported women escaping domestic violence, supported women who experienced violence in their homelands and are new immigrants to our communities? These are the women who need it most. I just can't understand why these two agencies were not approved for the funding that they've had for many years.

Hon. Harinder Malhi: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to say that there is a process when applications are taken in.

We have increased funding, as we've said. We've increased our funding to up to \$242 million. We are increasing funding for sexual assault centres across Ontario by 35%. We're improving access to services, including emergency shelters, crisis helplines and indigenous shelters, with an investment of up to \$84.2 million. We are ensuring that we're reaching out to our rural communities, our indigenous communities and our most vulnerable communities.

Mr. Speaker, we have done our best to ensure that we are reaching out to as many communities as possible through the funding that we have available, but we do have to follow a process.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Premier. Freedom-of-information requests to both the Premier's office and Cabinet Office on the Trillium Power lawsuit turned up no relevant documents. We know that the ability to go back and retrieve some documents exists. We learned that from the gas plant scandal hearings, and we learned it from the OPP. But after more than six years, we're still missing documents from this Liberal government in this court case. The Premier can't claim that it was before her time.

From the court filings, "Offshore wind and Trillium Power Wind generated more than weekly updates after Premier Wynne had taken power. Once again, this is completely consistent with the timeline for the prior deletion of the gas plant energy documents."

To the Premier: What are you doing today to find these documents that are required for the court proceeding?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I remind the member opposite, who I know knows the rule quite well, that when there is ongoing litigation, question period is not the appropriate place to debate what may be happening in that court proceeding. I know there are political cheap shots to be made and that's why they continue to disregard a very fundamental rule that is in place. Again, I urge the member to respect the process.

In terms of the OPP, I do want to mention that in 2016, Trillium requested that the OPP investigate the allegations related to the moratorium on wind energy. Those allegations were thoroughly investigated and found to be unsubstantiated. The investigation was promptly closed after the OPP found no evidence to support Trillium's allegations.

Speaker, let's talk about policy that's extremely important. This government has taken important steps to protect information in the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: Speaker, that answer was eerily similar to the Premier's former chief of staff—who was just sentenced to time behind bars. This is the arrogance of this Liberal government when it comes to this issue.

Enough is enough. Ontarians have heard enough excuses about this government's email and document deletions to last a generation.

In sentencing David Livingston last month for his role in orchestrating the gas plant cover-up, Justice Lipson wrote that he was a "politically sophisticated government actor who committed this offence because of political expediency...." In other words, it was a Liberal covering up for his Liberal friends, doing what's best for the Liberal Party instead of the people of Ontario.

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Speaker, to the Premier: How many more Liberals are we going to discover destroyed documents?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, it's so interesting, because as we're leading into an election, instead of speaking about their policies, they are already running away from what their leader, Doug Ford, stands for. Instead of talking about and embracing the fact that they are going to cut the minimum wage for hard-working Ontarians or talking about how they're going to cut taxes for wealthy, large businesses, or talking about how they're going to cut 45,000 hard-working Ontarians who work as our teachers and personal support workers and nurses—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The President of the Treasury Board will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, let's talk about the policies that they stand for, versus policies that we stand for. We want to invest in people. We want to ensure that there is more care, like health care and mental health care for people.

We know what Doug Ford and the Conservative Party stand for, and that is to bulldoze the greenbelt, the precious greenbelt that is ensuring that we have our land protected for generations to come.

HOME CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier this morning. Bain Peever has been diagnosed with dementia, and his wife, Lynda, has been taking care of him ever since. In March 2017, she took a six-month leave from her career to care for him. In September 2017, she chose to quit her job, as Bain needed 24/7 care.

There are programs in this rural area, which she has accessed. They had 14 hours a week with a personal support worker provided by the LHINs. However, Bain was classified to be in crisis; they could have had 21 hours a week. The problem is that there were no staff available to fulfill this. They could have had 180 hours a month from VON, but there were only 10 spaces open,

which were already filled, and they had no funding for extra spaces.

Can the Premier tell me why this government is not investing in home care in northern Ontario?

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

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we are trying to do everything we can to provide the care that individuals need, where they need it. In this particular case, the question is providing home care in a rural setting.

We are aware that there has been difficulty in ensuring that we have sufficient PSW staff, as an example, so in our budget we have made a concerted effort, and in the 2018 budget have proposed an additional 5,000 PSWs across the province.

There is an issue in terms of attracting people to this very valuable service that our residents need. We are also working with the association for PSWs to ensure they have the appropriate training as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again to the Premier: Bain is now in a very good facility, the Centennial Manor in Little Current, one that I regularly visit; I enjoy seeing the smiling faces of those who are there. This is a 115-kilometre round trip from their home in Mindemoya. Lynda makes this trip four to five times a week.

Lynda chose to leave Bain in long-term care because she was in crisis. She was burnt out and could not access VON or the LHINs because there were no PSWs to assist in giving her the little breathing space that she needed.

When is this government going to invest to end the shortage of nurses and PSWs, as well as to properly help people who want to care for their loved ones at their homes?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: This is exactly why in our budget we have put so much emphasis on health care: not just the issue of PSWs that I recently referenced in the first question, but also all the interconnecting pieces. This is precisely why we announced that we are opening 5,000 new long-term-care beds over the next couple of years.

All the pieces in the health care system are very interconnected, and we are addressing each one of these pieces in a methodical and careful way, in consideration of the demographics of each particular area in each LHIN. We're looking at what the needs are, and we are addressing them through the various budgetary commitments that we have made. We will continue to invest in our health care system. It is a world-class health care system. There's always more to do, and we intend to do it.

GREENBELT

Mr. Ted McMeekin: My question is for the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Back in 2003, our urban communities were sprawling at a dangerous rate. Every year, tens of thousands of acres of farmland, wild lands and wetlands, including ravines and rivers, were being encroached by new development. Ontarians

were rightly concerned for both economic and environmental reasons.

The great majority of people agree that to keep our communities livable, we cannot pave over every square inch of farmland and wetlands in Ontario. That's why we promised them that we would take action, and we did. We created the largest permanent greenbelt anywhere in the world, which protects nearly two million acres of valuable land and water.

Can the minister please explain again to this House and to those who need to understand why our government is so committed to protecting the greenbelt?

Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the member for Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale for a very, very important question.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Hard-working, hard-working.

Hon. Chris Ballard: And a hard-working member he is.

Our government knows how critically important it is to protect green spaces in this province. That's why we created, and are committed to protecting, the greenbelt. This is an area that is larger than Prince Edward Island. This is an area of some 595,000 acres of water, lakes, rivers and streams. This is an area that protects 78 species at risk. This is an area that provides some \$9.1 billion in economic activity. This is an area that grows food for Ontarians to eat. It needs to be protected.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: The only species at risk is the Liberal Party.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Guess what? We're in warnings.

Supplementary question, the member from Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Yesterday, a video emerged of Doug Ford discussing his promise to open up a big chunk of Ontario's greenbelt for development. On the tape, you can clearly hear Doug Ford promise that he will open up the greenbelt. Asked how much, Ford emphasized that he told developers he's going to open up a big chunk of it. Just like the lyrics to that famous song, Doug Ford wants to pave paradise and put up a parking lot right over Ontario's greenbelt. Paving over the greenbelt is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton is warned.

I'm in this to the end. I'm not changing a thing.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You should.

I'm listening carefully, and I'm wanting to make sure there's a policy question in here.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Paving over the greenbelt is recklessly short-sighted. Opening up the greenbelt will only make rich developers richer and remove pristine farm and greenfield lands forever. The result will be endless

sprawl with no green spaces in between. We'll only get one chance at this.

Speaker, can the minister please explain our government's efforts to protect the greenbelt and natural green space for future—

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

Minister?

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Hon. Chris Ballard: Thank you to the member from Guelph for another very important question, one that deals with protecting important, critical green space in Ontario—land that feeds us.

After that video emerged yesterday where Doug Ford said that anything they look at within the greenbelt will be replaced—it clearly shows that the PC leader doesn't understand. He doesn't understand the greenbelt. He doesn't understand the importance of farmland within the greenbelt. He just doesn't understand.

The greenbelt, Speaker, is a natural ecosystem that is connected. It's intertwined. You cannot simply remove pieces of it and replace them with a piece of land from some other part of Ontario. It is all connected. Mr. Ford doesn't understand that.

Worse, the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party has apparently already made deals with big developers to pave over the greenbelt.

Interjections.

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

New question.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mrs. Gila Martow: My question is for the Minister of Education. A new report has found that grade 8 math scores improved in all areas in Canada except for Ontario.

Comparing levels between 2010 and 2016, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, released the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program this week and confirmed what we already knew: Math education in Ontario is deficient. Parents try to remedy the situation with tutors, but it clearly is not how taxpayers expect our education system to be run.

Mr. Speaker, there have been nothing but promises and disappointments from this Liberal government when it comes to our kids. Does the minister think that it's fair that she's shortchanging our students out of a quality mathematics education?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the member opposite for this question because, really, it gives me a chance to make sure that I'm explaining to people what is actually happening with this Pan-Canadian Assessment Program.

It's of course important to have a review. It's also important to know that our educators and our education system are working well, and our partners are working tirelessly every day to give our kids the best start in life.

I want you to know that our government has invested more in Ontario's publicly funded education system. No

one has actually funded more than us. Forty thousand more educators have been added to this system since 2003.

Let me just tell you this: This is a snapshot of what happened in 2016. It is not actually telling us where we are today. And I want to point out that that snapshot was before we moved funding into the math strategy. The \$60 million in our Renewed Mathematics Strategy; the 60 minutes of math instruction that happens in a day: This is measuring what happened before those investments were made.

I'm happy to speak to what we're doing today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll just say that Mathnasiums—tutoring for math—are popping up all across the province, including next door to my constituency office in Thornhill.

We see a pattern here. In 2008-09, 63% of grade 6 students met the minimum proficiency level for math. In 2009-10, 61%; 2010-12, 58%; 2012-13, 57%; 2013-14, 54%; and in 2017, we're at 50%. Half of Ontario's students are not at the level that the province says they should be at.

Despite the alarm bells over the years, the Canadian math society, the EQAO and now the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, are telling us that grade 8 students are also at a 50% level. Is the Minister of Education going to stand up and take responsibility for this crisis in math education?

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: You know what, Mr. Speaker? I want to say that I have full confidence in our publicly funded education system in Ontario. We are absolutely a leader when it comes to education, not just in this province or country but around the world, and we are recognized as being a leader. When you were in power, 68% of the students were graduating and one third were not finishing school; today, 86.5% are graduating, on average.

Let me just tell you a little bit about what we've been doing. It sounds to me that the member opposite is actually suggesting we should be looking at privately funded schools. It sounds to me that she has no faith in the publicly funded school system. Well, I have faith in it and I know we're on track. Ontario is one of only three provinces that scored at or above the Canadian average in all three domains: reading, math and science. In fact, those results show once again that Ontario students are among the top performers in Canada.

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

Hon. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Our publicly-funded education system was—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Everyone should end at "Thank you."

New question.

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. A public corporation called Ontera used to provide cell phone and Internet services to small

isolated communities in northern Ontario like Nickel Belt. In 2014, this Liberal government sold those assets to Bell Canada. Now Bell is saying to the people of Foleyet and Ivanhoe Lake, "We are seriously considering dismantling our equipment."

We are in 2018, Premier. Does the Premier believe that northern Ontario's students, families, businesses, outfitters and schools can go on with business as usual without access to the Internet or cell phone networks?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I spoke to the member yesterday when she raised this issue with me privately and, as I indicated to her yesterday, we are looking into this particular issue to get the facts around it.

The property that we own through Infrastructure Ontario or the Ministry of Infrastructure, we charge rent for on the open market. We sell surplus properties—

Miss Monique Taylor: You shouldn't have privatized it.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We sell surplus properties. That's part of the business of government.

But it goes without saying that the loss of an entire community's Internet and cellular access would not be an acceptable outcome. As I understand it, Bell is disputing the market rate, but has not provided comparables to justify their current lease. Infrastructure Ontario and its service provider, CBRE, are working closely with Bell to land on a number that is mutually agreeable. I'm confident that this issue will be resolved.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is no surprise to anyone from the NDP that the sell-off of Ontario will bring trouble to communities in the northeast like Foleyet and Ivanhoe. We warned the government that would happen, and guess what? It did.

Bell is not able to make money in Foleyet and Ivanhoe. They are facing a 700% increase for the infrastructure used. Bell is planning to dismantle the whole thing.

We in northern Ontario need Internet and cell service like everybody else. What is this Premier going to do to protect the people, businesses, schools, outfitters and residents of Foleyet and Ivanhoe Lake so that they maintain their access to the Internet and cell service now and into the future?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member should know that we've already spent \$500 million on broadband and digital connection in the province of Ontario. The recent budget has added another \$500 million. We have a plan in place where before the end of this year, we're going to be implementing for rural—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Then fix it. Can we put Helena in charge? She knows how to get things done.

Sorry, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've got to do what I've got to do.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's okay. I get it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have the most aggressive broadband digital connection investments of any of the provinces in Canada. As I said, we have invested half a billion dollars, we have another half a billion dollars in place, and I am sure that before the end of this calendar year the member will see that we are delivering on this issue more than any other party has promised or that any other party has been able to deliver to date.

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Arthur Potts: My question is to the Minister of Housing and minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. In my riding of Beaches–East York and in places across Ontario, we know there is just not enough purpose-built rental housing. Whether that be high-rise, mid-rise, low-rise or townhouses built for rental, there just isn't enough. To help solve the housing affordability and supply crisis, Speaker, we'll have to build more purpose-built rental. That is key.

Now we know that the members opposite, under their leader, will simply pave over the greenbelt in order to provide more affordable housing. Incredibly, their leader dismissed the greenbelt with the comment, "It's just farmers' fields," an insult to agricultural workers across the province.

Speaker, the pressures on buying and renting affordable homes can be one of the biggest challenges and weights on the shoulders of young families. In my riding, we are building purpose-built housing, with Options for Homes building 360 units; and building with the Carpenters units made completely out of wood.

Speaker, will the minister please share with the House the measures this government is taking to build affordable housing?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the member for Beaches–East York for this very important question. My focus as minister is to ensure that every Ontarian has access to a safe and affordable home. As the member said, there's a huge demand out there for purpose-built rental housing. Last week, Mr. Speaker, I announced the allocation of \$125 million in development charge rebates for Ontario municipalities to incent purpose-built rental housing in those 13 communities with low vacancy rates.

This incentivizing of developers to build affordable rental homes is good policy. Paving over the greenbelt will not create affordable homes. It will just increase our infrastructure costs, so the precious infrastructure dollars will not solve our affordable housing situation. We need to spend wisely and efficiently so we actually deliver the homes where people need them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thanks to the minister for that response and for his intelligent approach to improving affordable housing in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, over the past two decades, only 6% of all housing has been built with purpose-built housing in mind. The availability of rental housing is an acute issue,

especially here in Toronto. The minister knows well that at last count there was a vacancy rate of about 1%. While this is a signal of a booming, successful and vibrant economy, it also means we have a lot of work to do to build more housing for people that's affordable.

That's why initiatives like the minister just announced on development charges are so important. I'd like to congratulate the minister—I'd like to congratulate our government—for advancing this investment, on top of the \$5 billion we're already investing in the creation of affordable housing since 2003.

I know the minister was with Mayor Tory and Deputy Mayor Ana Bailão for this announcement on Friday. Would the minister expand on the other things and details of this announcement?

Hon. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thanks for the supplementary question. Yes, indeed, last week I announced the allocation of funds for Ontario municipalities to rebate development charges to incent more rental housing. But, Mr. Speaker, I also announced the results of the competition to develop provincial surplus lands. The West Don Lands and Grenville/Grosvenor lands, which are in the city of Toronto, will be home to 2,150 new homes, 30% of which will be affordable. There's another site in north Etobicoke which we will be releasing with this, and I hope tomorrow perhaps to have another announcement about another site in another municipality.

But, Mr. Speaker, while we're releasing surplus provincial lands in urban communities, Mr. Ford wants to pave over our greenbelt.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. The 400-series highways are intended to be people-movers, and in the budget the Liberals say that they will widen the 401 at the base of the 416—the 416, which, by the way, runs through Nepean–Carleton. But there is no mention of the one ask from the city of Ottawa at AMO, notably an additional exit to the 416 from Barrhaven at Barnsdale. It's estimated that this will be a \$24-million project. I'm asking the Premier, will there be an announcement on this before the writ?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the member may know that I've already had some discussions with the city of Ottawa, that there are studies that are under way with respect to that particular site. I agree with the member that there's a need in that particular location in Nepean, but, really, we are doing a lot of infrastructure. We've put a lot in place now. We're planning a lot more. But the other side has nothing planned for any kind of roads or transit that makes any kind of sense.

I'm waiting for the supplementary, for the punchline.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Maybe the minister shouldn't embarrass himself and he should just answer the question. He knows as well as I do that 29% of the growth in the last four years has happened in Barrhaven. It's

accounted for the highest growth in Ottawa. We are now 90,000 people strong, with only one exit onto the 416. Think of Kemptville on the same highway or cities of smaller or similar size like Brockville or Kingston or Belleville on the 401. They all have multiple exits. The 416 could be maximized as a people-mover if only we had this additional exit.

Inside of Barrhaven, we have six rail crossings that we would love to divert traffic from by encouraging an accessible and convenient entry westward onto the 416. So the minister can spare me his antics and he can answer the question. I have a clear ask from the city of Ottawa. Can we expect an announcement this week or will you just sit—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member not to hold her breath for Doug Ford to do any of that work. When asked about support for local transit and highway projects in London, Doug Ford said, “We never leave any commitment. We’re going to review everything and nothing is going untouched, including the plans we have in place for Nepean.” Similarly, when he was in Cornwall last week—and this is reported from the Cornwall Standard Freeholder: “Doug Ford said he would be willing to help the city of Cornwall with its infrastructure deficit if he is elected Premier in June, but only if municipalities across the province start cutting what a PC government would deem as wasteful spending.”

Not only does he want to cut, he wants the municipalities to cut. It’s a disease, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do remind members we’re in warnings and that there are people already being warned, who have been warned.

New question?

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. When the TTC is properly funded, it actually works. I don’t know if you have been on a streetcar or subway lately, but they are very overcrowded. When the provincial government funded 50% of the TTC’s net operating cost, it was the envy of the world. But the Conservative government cut this funding in 1998 and in fact today the TTC is the least-funded major transit agency in North America. As a result, transit service keeps getting worse while fares keep getting higher.

The Liberal government has had 15 years to reverse these Conservative cuts. Why have you not done so?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think I first went on the subway in 1958. So I’ve been on the subway for many, many years. I have ridden the subway and I know what a terrific and important service it is. Unfortunately, in this province, if we had built transit every year since 1947 or 1949 when the subway was first opened, we’d be in a very different position. It took until now for our government to actually make investments in transit

and to actually have a long-term infrastructure plan that includes transit.

The Ministry of Transportation used to be called the department of highways in 1916. That’s the only place there was long-term planning. That’s the world that Doug Ford wants to go back to: where we just pave over the province. What we have done is, we have changed the trajectory of infrastructure in this province. Transit is a part of our long-term plan. We’re in the process of building transit more than any government in the history of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Mr. Speaker, provincial funding for TTC operations was cut by the Conservatives in 1998 and it has stayed cut under the Liberal Party. Now the Liberals are borrowing another bad Conservative idea: They have proposed to break up the TTC and take over the subways. Riders don’t want fragmented transit service with different fares and operators for buses, streetcars and subways. The TTC needs proper funding, not a change in ownership.

1130

Will the government listen to transit riders who want the provincial government to properly fund the TTC, not break it up? And will the government restore the province’s 50% funding for municipal transit operations, like the NDP has committed to? It’s not 1958 anymore, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: For a party that is looking to govern this province, they have on so many significant issues no plan whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. Item after item after item in terms of transit, transportation, has come before this House for votes. They have voted against virtually every one of them. And still today they have no plan. After years of voting against the largest infrastructure investment in Ontario’s history, the NDP has finally realized that government needs to invest in schools, hospitals and public transit that people rely on.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have another four or five weeks to go before election day, and hopefully the people of Ontario will see something realistic and practical from that party.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You’ve got to love this place, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do.

New question.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of the Status of Women. This month is Sexual Assault Prevention Month. It’s an important time to raise awareness about the devastating impact of sexual assault and to focus on what we can all do to stop violence and support survivors. We must also recognize that sexual assault is far too widespread in our society and our communities, and we must pledge to do better.

I know that this government has done extraordinary work to prevent and address sexual assault by introducing *It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment*, in 2015. Most recently, as we promised in the first strategy, we launched part 2: *It's Never Okay*, Ontario's strategy to end gender-based violence, with an investment of up to \$242 million, as the minister stated earlier this morning.

Can the minister please update the House on the ongoing work being done to shift societal norms around consent and sexual violence and harassment?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: I'd like to thank my colleague for this important question. Sexual violence is far more common than most people think. One in three women will experience some form of sexual violence in her lifetime.

We know that gender-based violence is a result of normalized misogyny, rape culture and toxic masculinity. As long as women and girls face the threat of violence in this province, our work will continue. We must do better, and we will.

This year, women stood up with great courage and resilience to say, "Me too" and, "Time's up," and we have responded to this call for action with our newest strategy, *It's Never Okay: Ontario's Gender-Based Violence Strategy*. We are improving services and supports for survivors. In fact, our government is expanding access to counselling, crisis telephone lines, emergency shelters, transitional housing, sexual assault centres and legal supports. We are investing in victims' services programs that provide trauma-informed supports to survivors of sexual or domestic violence and human trafficking.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for that response. It is certainly very clear that gender-based violence is a result of normalized misogyny, and I ask that each member of this House consider that term carefully. We need to move beyond, and I am so glad that we are wearing purple to bring awareness to violence against women.

I'm pleased to hear that our new gender-based-violence strategy invests in so many critical supports for survivors. But, Speaker, we know that more needs to be done to promote the conversation and shift attitudes and biases around sexual violence and harassment.

We all have an important role to play, and we need to bring partners to work with us, to raise awareness and bring about change. Many survivors have told us that they have faced barriers in accessing the help that they need, and this is unacceptable. Can the minister please tell us what the government is doing to address these needs?

Hon. Harinder Malhi: I want to thank my colleague again for her question and advocacy on this important issue. Our gender-based violence strategy is based on the advice of front-line workers and experts. In particular, I'd like to thank the violence against women round table for their tireless efforts and their leadership. Our strategy is

going to get programs and funding out into communities that need it.

As part of our up-to-\$242-million strategy to end gender-based violence, we are expanding our Creative Engagement Fund to support artistic projects that raise awareness, we're investing in professional development and innovation expansion through new bystander and community training, and we're extending and expanding our free, independent legal advice for survivors of sexual assault province-wide, so that survivors can get advice on their options at any point.

We recognize that certain groups are at greater risk of violence. That's why we are piloting Canada's first-ever dedicated LGBTQ+ community legal clinic and facilitating training for more than 70 community legal clinics across the province.

When it comes to the well-being of women and girls in the province, this government has always been there, and we will be there to continue to do the work necessary.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Jim Wilson: To the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: My colleagues and I have been raising concerns with this government about the Ontario Wildlife Damage Compensation Program since it was created over one year ago. The minister has said that he would review and fix the program, but farmers in my riding and right across the province continue to tell us that they face huge livestock losses and that they're receiving no compensation. Some 20%, or one in five, claims for predation kills are rejected by the program. The inaction by this government is inexcusable.

I ask the minister: When will he fix this program and give farmers the compensation they're entitled to? And will that compensation be retroactive, as the program has not been working for the last year and a half?

Hon. Jeff Leal: My reply to my colleague from Simcoe-Grey: Indeed, it was brought to my attention that there were some challenges with the wildlife compensation program. I actually went into the fields of many farmers across the province of Ontario. I've been right there and seen sheep and cattle that have been attacked by predators.

It was based on that information that we decided to review the program. We engaged the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian farmers' union and other people, and we have now come up with a plan that we're going to be implementing shortly. We're going to have consistent training standards right across the province of Ontario, so there's no deviation. When an evaluator goes out from, say, a community in the county of Peterborough, it will be exactly the same as someone from the county of Simcoe.

But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that now we know the true aim of the asphalt farmer from Etobicoke: paving over the greenbelt.

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

The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CELIAC DISEASE

Mr. Bill Walker: May is Celiac Awareness Month in Canada. I'm pleased to rise and to wear my ribbon here, along with my colleagues, to help increase awareness of the daily challenges facing Ontarians with celiac disease and gluten sensitivity, which is estimated to affect 1% to 2% of our population.

Celiac disease is a serious autoimmune disorder whose symptoms are triggered by gluten, which is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and other grains. People living with celiac disease cannot absorb protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamins or minerals, all of which are necessary for good health.

At present, there is no cure, other than a lifelong gluten-free diet; and yet, the prevalence is increasing and only 10% to 20% of cases are currently diagnosed. That is why it's important for us all, including our medical providers and health advocates, to continue to increase public awareness about the importance of early diagnosis of celiac disease. People need to be alert to some of the atypical signs of the disease, which can develop at any age, such as anemia, poor bone health, reproductive problems, elevated liver disease and neurological symptoms.

The average delay in diagnosis is 11 years due to the similar signs and symptoms of other disorders and conditions. The impact of delayed diagnosis can result in bone loss, iron deficiency, neurological disorders, liver problems, reproductive difficulties, and cancers of the stomach and esophagus.

The executive director of the Canadian Celiac Association, Melissa Secord, a constituent of my colleague Ted Arnott from Halton Hills, encourages all individuals who suspect they have celiac disease or gluten sensitivity to speak with their doctors as soon as possible and be tested before any long-term health implications take effect.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Miss Monique Taylor: Today is International Workers' Day, or, as some may know it, May Day. It is a day that is celebrated around the world in recognition of workers' rights.

Workers will march through the streets and protest for better working conditions and fair wages. In my city of Hamilton, workers will gather and rally behind those who are on strike or those who are faced with CCAA.

It is a day to recommit to the work that needs to be done to ensure that workers are treated fairly in the workplace.

On Saturday, I joined the Hamilton and District Labour Council and workers from across the city at the

Day of Mourning ceremony. It was a rainy Saturday morning, but it did not stop the hundreds who attended and packed our city hall.

The Day of Mourning is a solemn ceremony where we grieve for the dead and fight for the living. We heard directly from injured workers who fight daily to receive benefits that are needed through WSIB claims. Measures used, such as deeming and medical overturns, strip injured workers of owed benefits. We heard from health care workers who face injury and assault as part of their daily routine.

Speaker, I'm very proud to be part of a city with such a strong labour community that has made a huge contribution to our city and continues to fight for workers' rights.

DOCTORS' DAY

Mr. John Fraser: Today is Doctors' Day. It's an important day to highlight the important role that doctors play in our communities. Whether it's in a doctor's office, in our local hospitals and clinics, in our research labs or in our homes, doctors play an important role in our lives.

For almost 20 years I have worked with doctors to strengthen health care in the community I live in and across Ontario. Whether it was saving CHEO's cardiac unit, building a new regional cancer centre or improving access to palliative and end-of-life care in Ontario, doctors have been a key part of the success in those collaborations.

In my mandate for palliative and end-of-life care, I've work with doctors like Naheed Dosani, Darren Cargill, Andrew Mai and José Pereira. Their dedication to their patients and their families at a very vulnerable time is incredible, and there are many more like them.

My family has had great doctors. Dr. Barry Adams, who was my pediatrician as well as our children's—and there was a bit of overlap there with one, but that's a story for another day. There's Dr. Tad Pierscianowski, my dad's dermatologist, who listened to him and took a genuine interest in him and his overall health, and that made a big difference to my dad in the last five years of his life. We can't thank him enough.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Nadia Alam last week at #Spots4Docs. I'd like to congratulate her on assuming her role as president of the OMA. I look forward to working with her and doctors to continuously improve our health care system.

DUTCH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Earlier today, we raised the Dutch flag to celebrate Dutch Heritage Month. Coming from Holland, this month holds a special meaning for me. It's an opportunity to recognize the many contributions of Dutch Canadians. It's also a time to remember the powerful bonds of friendship that developed between the Dutch and Canadians during World War II. On May 5,

the Netherlands celebrates Liberation Day and remembers those soldiers who put the freedom of a nation above their own lives. I still remember my mother's stories about liberation.

The Canadian soldiers who freed Holland are the reason why my father brought his family to Canada and why there are ties of friendship between Holland and Canada to this day. In 1945, the Netherlands' Crown Princess Juliana presented Ottawa with 100,000 tulips to recognize the Canadian soldiers who liberated the Netherlands and as a thank-you for providing sanctuary for her and her family during the war. The tulip festival, which is still held each year in commemoration of liberation, is a great symbol of that lasting friendship.

Thank you to the consul general, Anne Le Guellec, for joining us today and sharing in this recognition of Dutch heritage. I would also like to thank all those who came out to celebrate the rich history of the Netherlands and work to keep the tradition alive. To the veterans who allowed me to be born in a liberated Holland, dank je, which of course means thank you. We will continue to honour your legacy.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for being out there and bringing greetings on behalf of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Dank je.

LONG-TERM CARE

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further members' statements? The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Dank je wel, Speaker.

Last week, it was announced in my riding, through a press release out of Sudbury, that the Temiskaming Lodge in Haileybury is getting 46 new long-term-care beds. First of all, I'd like to congratulate the Temiskaming Lodge for all the work they've done to get those 46 long-term-care beds. It's a big deal in our community.

It would have been nice if it actually had been announced in our community. I would have been happy to do that on behalf of the government. I'd like to thank the government. It's public dollars. I would have liked to thank the government, but they didn't really have the courtesy to actually let anyone know in our riding that this was happening. That's part of the issue with this government.

But while we're talking about long-term-care beds, I'd like to mention the Northland Lodge in Englehart. It's a D-grade long-term-care home, one of the few left in Ontario. The community is working hard and working together to try and get these long-term-care beds revitalized to make it the home it should be. The staff there are great but the home itself is in tough shape. The community is working together. They're really happy for the Temiskaming Lodge, but this home needs to be looked at because these people are worried.

I'd like to thank Andy Poupore. He's the president of the Northland Pioneer Club. He sent us a letter last week talking about how, in a place like Englehart, as people get older, in their golden years, they don't want to have

to travel miles and miles and miles to see their friends and their relatives in long-term-care homes. We're going to continue to work with the Northland Lodge to get them revitalized as well.

GREENBELT

Mr. Mike Colle: Today, I'd like to speak on behalf of farmers and residents and decent people, from the Niagara Escarpment to Niagara wine country to the King City area north of Toronto to the Northumberland hills, who are outraged by the announcement yesterday by the Conservative Party that they are going to sell off chunks of the greenbelt to the biggest developers in Canada. People are outraged because people know this is grade 1 and grade 2 farmland. That's the only grade 1 and 2 farmland left in the GTA. They're going to give it away.

It's also where our fresh water comes from—the headwaters of Duffins Creek, the Credit River, the Humber. They are going to give this away, pave it over and reward their big development friends.

1510

This is wrong. The people in Niagara, the people in Northumberland, the people in North York, the people all over southern Ontario say, "This is wrong. This is a secret, backroom deal. We won't stand for it."

Save, don't pave, the greenbelt.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move on to the next statement, just a reminder: We're still in warnings. It never stops. Once it starts, it stops the next day. Thank you.

41ST PARLIAMENT

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to stand today and reflect upon the 41st Parliament. It is always an honour to be able to stand on behalf of the amazing people in my riding of Huron–Bruce and talk about things that are near and dear.

Over the last number of years, we stood up and defended the tools that farmers need in terms of being best at what they do. We defend science-based decisions. The whole issue that evolved around neonics was absolutely unacceptable.

Another thing that was unacceptable over the last number of years was the manner in which the horse racing industry was decimated under this Liberal government.

Another thing that I can't help but reflect upon is the Green Energy Act—jerking municipalities around, with promises of money, only to take it away.

Bill 148, actually, is a huge worry that we hear. It doesn't matter whether you're a dentist, a manufacturer or a small business; it's a worry for everyone.

The cap-and-trade carbon tax: That's just making life more unaffordable in Ontario. The out-of-control executive compensation, the cooking of the books while the

debt is out of control, and making life unaffordable, generally speaking—those are just some of the things.

There have been really good things as well: We've encouraged young people to be engaged with Queen's Park with the OLIP program—I've had eight interns over the last 10 years; the pages who have come from Huron-Bruce; those who have also participated in model Parliament; and the CWP has been a tremendous experience.

Speaker, thank you so much for all you've done—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. That's a good way to get yourself an extra 10 seconds, so I appreciate that.

GREENBELT

Mr. James J. Bradley: One of the main reasons I decided to run for public office at the provincial level was to protect our valuable farmland, green fields, wetlands, ravines, rivers, streams and environmentally sensitive areas from unwise and reckless development.

When our—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is unorthodox, that the Speaker has to stand during statements.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I don't like that, either.

Mr. James J. Bradley: Can I start again?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yup. The clock, please—let's try it again.

Mr. James J. Bradley: One of the main reasons I decided to run for public office at the provincial level was to protect our valuable farmland, green fields, wetlands, ravines, rivers, streams and environmentally sensitive areas from unwise and reckless development.

When our government was elected to office in 2003, urban communities were sprawling at a dangerous rate and tens of thousands of acres of precious land were being gobbled up for development. To counter this worrisome trend, our government created the largest permanent greenbelt anywhere in the world, which protects almost two million acres of pristine land and fresh water.

Unfortunately, in the Niagara region, because of land use decisions made in the 1970s, prime agricultural land with special soils and the unique microclimate conducive to the growing of tender fruit were paved over and lost to the greater good forever.

People of all political persuasions have lauded this initiative and expressed support for the greenbelt. They would be appalled and extremely concerned when viewing a video of PC Party leader Doug Ford promising developers to open up a "big chunk" of Ontario's greenbelt for development, admitting that he had already talked to some of the biggest developers in the country.

Most people would agree with Joni Mitchell, who implored us not to "pave paradise and put up a parking lot."

THE SPEAKER

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's a pleasure to be able to rise today and make a few comments about Speaker Levac. He is Ontario's longest-serving Speaker and has served in the role since 2011, having been elected twice. This illustrates the regard his fellow colleagues have for him. As members of the Legislature, we place our trust in voting for the Speaker as the one whose decisions will be final and respected.

Being the Speaker is not always easy; it requires a constant balance and firm approach to all decision-making. Speaker Levac provided that style of leadership. It has been a pleasure to serve as a deputy Speaker with him.

His excellence and his reputation have gone beyond the precinct here. A short while ago, I attended an event, hosted by Robert Land Academy, in celebration of Speaker Levac winning the inaugural John Brant Award. This is an award designed to recognize community leadership and the values of the Robert Land Academy: loyalty, labour, commitment, courage and honour.

I wish Speaker Levac the very best in his retirement and thank him for his many contributions to Ontario.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to give her another minute and a half.

Laughter.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I had to say that to make sure I didn't get verklempt.

Coming from the longest-serving female in Ontario's history—

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —I'm honoured to have heard your words. I consider you not only a friend, but a very classy lady. Thank you very much.

I'd like to thank all members for their statements, especially Julia—I'm sorry; I shouldn't say that.

It is now time for reports by committees.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on Review of Government Advertising, chapter 5 of the 2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today entitled Review of Government Advertising, chapter 5 of the 2016 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent members of the committee: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; Bob Delaney; Vic Dhillon; Han Dong; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Randy Hillier; and Liz Sandals.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Treasury Board Secretariat 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 thank you for the time to present the report.

Report presented.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I just would just like to say thank you, too, as we end this session next week, to our Chair of public accounts, Ernie Hardeman, as well as happy retirement and thank you to our committee Clerk, who is just in the antechamber here today, Katch Koch. He has been a tremendous asset to our committee. It is a very heavy committee with a lot of work, on Wednesdays. So thank you to Ernie and to Katch for the amazing amount of work that you've put in this year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Kind words are always accepted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on the Independent Electricity System Operator, Market Oversight and Cybersecurity, section 3.06 of the 2017 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 brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I am pleased to table the committee's report today entitled Independent Electricity System Operator—Market Oversight and Cybersecurity, section 3.06 of the 2017 Annual Report of the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the permanent members of the committee: Lisa MacLeod, Vice-Chair; Bob Delaney; Vic Dhillon; Han Dong; John Fraser; Percy Hatfield; Randy Hillier; and Liz Sandals.

The committee extends its appreciation to the officials from the Ministry of Energy, the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Energy Board for their attendance at the hearing.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and the report-writing delibera-

tions by the Office of the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee, and staff in the legislative research services.

Before I adjourn the debate, I want to thank the Clerk of the Committee for all his hard work in preparing these reports, and all the people who worked on it.

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

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

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Valerie Quioc Lim): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Consumer Reporting Act and the Technical Standards and Safety Act, 2000 /
Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements concernant le consommateur et la Loi de 2000 sur les normes techniques et la sécurité.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 19, 2018, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Michael Coteau: May is Jewish Heritage Month here in the province of Ontario. It is a time for us to recognize the achievements, celebrate the culture, and raise awareness of the important role that Jewish Canadians have played, and continue to play, in our great province. Jewish Heritage Month highlights the long history of Jewish people dating back over 4,000 years. With a foundation of family, faith and tradition, the Jewish people have persevered with unbreakable spirit through diaspora, oppression and persecution, through the tragedy of the Holocaust, and through continued contemporary anti-Semitism.

Speaker, the first Jewish immigrants arrived here in Ontario in the 1800s. The end of the Second World War brought tens of thousands of European Jews to the New World, including here in Ontario, who were seeking freedom and a chance to start anew. Today, there are approximately 200,000 members of the Jewish community here in Ontario. These people have put down roots, raised

families and built strong communities. They have contributed to our society and our economy and distinguished themselves in almost every field I can think of, from medicine to the arts, from business to academia to law.

Jewish Canadians are active in Ontario's democratic life and generously support vital charitable causes throughout Ontario. Jewish Canadians are an essential part of the mosaic that makes up Ontario's diversity, which, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is our greatest strength.

But we can't pay proper respect to Ontario's Jewish community without condemning the troubling resurgence of anti-Semitism in the world. Sadly, this is deeply rooted in every aspect of our civilization and is not dead.

I'd like to borrow a quote from former US President Barack Obama when he spoke on the occasion of the Jewish American Heritage Month a few years ago. He said, "Anti-Semitism is, and always will be, a threat to broader human values to which we all must aspire. And when we allow anti-Semitism to take root, then our souls are destroyed, and it will spread."

Speaker, we cannot allow hatred like this to flourish in Ontario. With this objective in mind, our government established the Anti-Racism Directorate in 2016 in order to eliminate systemic racism across government and provincial institutions.

The long-term plan includes a public education campaign to deepen the public's understanding of the many forms that racism can take, including anti-Semitism. I'm happy to report that we have made incredible progress, thanks largely to the meaningful community partnership that has been fundamental to our work. By working with partners in the Jewish community, our government is taking aim at anti-Semitism in all of its forms, wherever it exists. I cannot overstate the value of the support that we've received from the Jewish community.

We look forward to continuing to work on the Anti-Racism Directorate, thus reaffirming our commitment to reject hatred and bigotry wherever it's found, and to building an Ontario that is equal, tolerant and respectful to all.

During Jewish Heritage Month, let's celebrate the achievements of Ontario's Jewish community, honour its past and look forward to its continued contribution in a strong and diverse Ontario that values all faiths, cultures and ethnicities.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Harinder Malhi: I am pleased to rise today as the Minister of the Status of Women in recognition of Asian Heritage Month. Just last week, I stood in the House and marked Sikh Heritage Month. I am proud to stand here again, because in Ontario, diversity is our strength.

Like my parents, so many other immigrants from around the world have chosen this great province as their home. We owe a great debt to those who have chosen Ontario as the place they wish to live, work and raise their families.

I want to recognize the extraordinary contributions of Asian Canadians today, as we begin Asian Heritage Month. Asian Heritage Month has been celebrated in Ontario and across Canada since 2002. It is estimated that more than three million people in our province are of Asian background. That is almost one in five Ontarians.

Ontario is indebted to the countless important contributions that the members of Ontario's Asian communities have made. For more than 150 years, Asian immigrants have excelled in the arts, business, science, health care and education. They are entrepreneurs and innovators.

Asian Canadians are also our neighbours, friends and colleagues, who contribute to our communities and our cultural diversity.

Ontario is also a much more significant global trade and business force as a result of our diverse and internationally connected Asian Canadian population.

Asia is the largest continent in the world, both in size and population. It includes people from many regions, such as East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and South-eastern Asia. People from these regions have immigrated here for centuries and have helped to build this great province. They have contributed to Ontario culturally, economically and politically. We are here to acknowledge and celebrate these important contributions as well as to recognize that Asian Canadians continue to contribute to the development of Ontario.

The path to living in Canada has not always been easy. Many Asian immigrants have faced extraordinary challenges to get here. Once here, some have had to face other hardships, like prejudice and colonial attitudes. That is why we also must recognize the dark history of Asian immigration, like Canada's internment of Japanese Canadians and the denial of the Komagata Maru at the port of Vancouver.

We know that more than 150 years ago, Chinese workers arrived on Canada's west coast, many to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. The work was hard and often dangerous. Many men died working to connect this country.

Despite hardships, prejudice and biases, Asian men and women persisted. Many moved east, making Ontario their home. Our province is now home to rich and diverse groups from South, Central and Eastern Asia. Our province has been strengthened by their presence.

Like so many children of immigrants, my parents came to this country from India. They worked many long, hard hours to build a comfortable life for me and my brother. Their dedication to their community and family is an inspiration. Like many children of immigrants, I love this country and province. It is my home.

Asian Canadians are a part of this great mosaic. We helped build this great nation. In fact, the "150" logo unveiled for Canada's birthday was designed by a Filipino Canadian. Ariana Mari Cuvin is a 19-year-old from Toronto attending the University of Waterloo.

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Mr. Speaker, the list of extraordinary Asian Canadians is too long to list. We are part of every field. We are film-

makers, choreographers, writers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, bankers, politicians and hockey players. Let's not forget hockey players. In 1948, Larry Kwong became the first Asian to play in the National Hockey League.

Other trailblazers for our community include Inspector Baltej Singh Dhillon, the first turbaned Sikh officer of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, the 26th Governor General of Canada; Norman Kwong, who became the first Chinese Canadian to play in the Canadian Football League and later became the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta; and community activist Jean Lumb, whose tireless advocacy for immigrants led to an Order of Canada. Lumb was the first Chinese Canadian to receive the Order of Canada. The list goes on and on.

Speaker, 13 years ago this House passed Bill 113, An Act to proclaim the month of May as Asian Heritage Month. Who would have known that in 2018, the first Sikh woman would be sitting in cabinet?

We know that our province is made even stronger through the diversity that immigration creates. I believe that many Asians were and continue to be attracted to this province because we value diversity, independence, freedom and equality. We are extremely fortunate to enjoy the benefits of the different cultures and people that make up our province. I can step out in my community and be greeted by a chorus of voices speaking Mandarin, Urdu, Punjabi or Hindi. I can visit homes and be welcomed in to celebrations and occasions as though I were family. This is what diversity looks like and feels like, and we are so fortunate.

In closing, I want to thank the Asian community for their immeasurable contributions to our province. Asian Canadians are leaders in our communities and volunteers who support important causes, and they are also our friends, co-workers and fellow Ontarians. Festivities to celebrate these important communities are taking place all across Ontario this month. I urge my colleagues and all Ontarians to join in. I welcome everyone across the province to celebrate Asian Heritage Month by talking to your neighbours, hosting an event, looking at the history and celebrating the present, for everyone in Ontario is a little richer because of their many contributions.

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

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Gila Martow: I don't think anybody is too surprised to see me join my colleagues from all sides of the House in celebrating Jewish Heritage Month. Each May has been designated since 2012. MPPs from three parties co-sponsored a bill, it was fully supported and it was brought forward by the former member from Thornhill, Peter Shurman, who is in Thornhill this evening.

I just wanted to highlight a little bit—I like themes, so I'm going to highlight a little bit on themes. I want to first mention film. Thornhill resident Matthew Shoychet's first

feature-length film is being aired this week at Hot Docs. It's a documentary called *The Accountant of Auschwitz*. It's about prosecuting Oskar Groening, the accountant at Auschwitz. It's receiving very, very good reviews, so I'm looking forward to seeing that.

Also on film, we have the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, taking place in May, of course, with the consul general of Israel and with the United Jewish Appeal. They are showing three movies: *In Between*, *On the Map* and *An Israeli Love Story*. I'm looking forward to that. For more information, go to tjff.com.

Also in Toronto, we have Jewish Music Week. That's going to be taking place in the month of May.

We've heard a lot in the news about a world-famous artist, Marc Chagall, because one of his art pieces at the National Gallery of Canada—*The Eiffel Tower*, it's called—was going to get sold. Now they have decided to keep it here in Canada, and we're all happy to hear that. There are actually stained glass windows of Chagall art—re-created—hanging at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem. That is really one of the must-see things when you visit Jerusalem. There are painters, sculptures, art collectors and art dealers. We all know that in the Jewish community, we're all very excited about celebrating art.

Art can pass over into things like holy books, like the Passover Haggadah, which we read during Passover Seders; the Torah scrolls are still hand-done—my mother—I have some of her art hanging in my office. When she retired, she took up art.

Jerusalem is known as the city of gold because they used Jerusalem stone, which, when the sun is setting, is so beautiful and lights it all up. It's actually art in the form of a city—the way they preserve and they demand that all the buildings within a certain square mile have to be gold.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to wish everybody a happy Jewish Heritage Month.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I feel honoured and privileged to rise in this Legislature on behalf of our leader, Doug Ford, and PC families in Ontario to speak about Asian Heritage Month.

Canada is a country of immigrants. Throughout our 150 years, we have had waves of immigrants arriving on our shores. In the past 20 years, the largest wave of immigrants has been the Asians. A very large number of these recent immigrants have been choosing Ontario as their home, in particular the greater Toronto area.

Mr. Speaker, if you take the top six ethnic communities in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River, four out of the six are of Asian background. The four communities—South Asian, Chinese, Filipino and Southeast Asian—constitute about 75% of the entire population of Scarborough—Rouge River. The number jumps to about 80% once the riding converts to Scarborough North. So when we celebrate Asian Heritage Month here in the

Legislature, we are actually celebrating Scarborough–Rouge River’s heritage month.

The Asian community in Ontario is thriving. If you take a short drive eastbound on Sheppard Avenue East, you will encounter hundreds of small businesses: Vietnamese, Chinese, Malaysian, Filipino, Gujarati, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and Tamil. These businesses are contributing to the economic vibrancy of our province.

Time will not allow me to speak about the immense cultural and higher educational contributions. I will say that the Asian community’s contributions have been immeasurable. As an Asian Canadian, I’m very happy and proud to stand in this House and start the Asian Heritage Month celebration in Ontario.

JEWISH HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Jennifer K. French: May is Jewish Heritage Month. In Toronto, we don’t have to look far to see some of our favourite institutions and landmarks that have endured and shaped this city’s cultural story. We think of the Mirvish family’s legacy, the ROM and the Art Gallery of Ontario, which were funded by some of our great Jewish philanthropists in this country.

But whether we are thinking of recent Jewish immigrants or those who arrived 200 years ago, we have to recognize that the Jewish community arrived escaping persecution and looking for a better life. They are a small community who preserve who they are—their faith, languages, traditions and identity—while balancing being a part of the broader Canadian community. I imagine with the many pressures out there that it takes a lot of love and dedication to preserve the uniqueness of the Jewish society.

I’ve met with many leaders from the Jewish community and partner organizations here at Queen’s Park, and I remember meeting a young female rabbi who works with Jewish university students. I was moved by her commitment to the future of her faith. She decided to devote herself to teaching her heritage and to encourage others to embrace their identity, see the beauty in their Jewish heritage and pass it along.

One of the most influential spaces I have ever visited was the Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. I learned about the Holocaust from a very young age and have always understood this atrocity and that we must always guard against hate and anti-Semitism. It is shocking and dangerous to know that, according to recent reports, a massive percentage of millennials have never heard of the Holocaust. I encourage all Ontarians to go online and visit Facing History and Ourselves, a site for Holocaust education and hope.

Heritage months help us to focus on education and understanding, on history and our shared future. Among the Jewish community, there seems to be a real sense of “Never again to us, but never to anyone else.” The Jewish community shares their message of hope from tragedy. Those who have survived have rebuilt their com-

munity, and strengthened and built ours to be better at the same time.

On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the NDP, we are proud to recognize and share this Jewish Heritage Month.

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ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Jennifer K. French: May is Asian Heritage Month, and it is also South Asian Heritage Month. Our heritage months are a wonderful and important opportunity to share and to learn, to focus on contributions and history, and to make connections to strengthen our communities as we grow forward.

Asian and South Asian Heritage Month encourage us to celebrate contributions of Canadians and Ontarians from over 30 countries that make up the Asian and South Asian diaspora. The definition of “Asian” is broad and includes East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and South-east Asia.

I’m sure we all have friends, family and neighbours who connect us to different Asian traditions. I personally have been very fortunate to travel to a number of Asian countries and I lived in Japan for three years. While I experienced traditions and community, and enjoyed the differences of those experiences, what I gained the most was an appreciation for all the ways that we are connected.

During Asian Heritage Month, we focus on traditions and achievements, but also the history, sacrifices, struggles and triumphs. We have the chance to take a hard look at our society and address ongoing economic disadvantage and societal and systemic discrimination.

Asian communities in Canada have a long history in the labour movement. They have faced danger, exploitation and discrimination, and I think it is fitting that today is International Workers’ Day, or May Day. We should always appreciate the fights that workers of Asian communities have had to wage for basic wages, safety and opportunity.

Heritage months focus attention and foster understanding and acceptance. Speaker, I want to tell you that when I was preparing my thoughts last week, there was a young man who was in my office. His name is Klinsvin. He is in his twenties and he is studying at Durham College.

I spoke to him about the importance of heritage months, and he had never heard of it before. He is here from India for this program. He said this is the first time outside of his country, and he has always wanted to come to Canada; he has always wanted to explore what was out there for him with his music. He said that when you look at Canada, it’s not just one thing; it’s a combination of different things.

His classmates are open to different cultures and he said it’s kind of cool to find out that we have these heritage months where we can recognize South Asian heritage. He said it’s good for awareness so people know how other people contribute: “We can become aware of what other people come from. And what they are. I am from

the south of India, and culturally I might differ from others.... I'm interested in other cultures. It needs to be a mutual thing. Cultural diversity is a mutual thing. People have to understand each other. It needs to be about open-mindedness ... that's what this should be about. So we can learn from each other and grow as a community."

We welcome him. We welcome everyone to Ontario.

On behalf of Andrea Horwath and Ontario's New Democrats, we're pleased to recognize and share in Asian Heritage Month.

PETITIONS

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

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

"Whereas 25 residency spots were cut in Ontario in 2015;

"Whereas 68 medical graduates went unmatched in 2017, 35 of them from Ontario;

"Whereas the AFMC predicts that 141 graduates will go unmatched in 2021, adding to the backlog;

"Whereas an estimated \$200,000 of provincial taxpayer dollars are spent to train each graduate;

"Whereas the ratio of medical students to residency positions had declined to 1 to 1.026 in 2017 from 1 to 1.1 in 2012;

"Whereas wait times for specialists in Ontario continue to grow while many Ontario citizens are still without access to primary care providers;

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

"(1) Stop any further cuts to residency positions until a long-term solution is well under way;

"(2) Reinstate the 25 residency positions cut in 2015 to bring Ontario back to its previous steady state;

"(3) Create extra Ontario-only residency spots that can be used when there is an unexpected excess of unmatched Ontario grads to guarantee a spot for every graduate every year;

"(4) Pass Bill 18 as part of the solution to develop actionable long-term recommendations; and

"(5) Improve communications between the MAESD and MOHLTC so that medical school admissions correspond with residency spots and Ontario's health needs."

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

LONG-TERM CARE

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

"Whereas quality care for the 78,000 residents of (LTC) homes is a priority for many Ontario families; and

"Whereas the provincial government does not provide adequate funding to ensure care and staffing levels in

LTC homes to keep pace with residents' increasing acuity and the growing number of residents with complex behaviours; and

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

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

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

I agree. I will send this to the desk with Harsajaan.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Norm Miller: I have 1,563 petitions, including 106 collected by Nancy Samuel of Huntsville. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare has been considering the future of the Huntsville District Memorial and South Muskoka Memorial hospitals since 2012; and

"Whereas accessible health care services are of critical importance to all Ontarians, including those living in rural areas; and

"Whereas patients currently travel significant distances to access acute in-patient care, emergency, diagnostic and surgical services available at these hospitals; and

"Whereas the funding for small and medium-sized hospitals has not kept up with increasing costs including hydro rates and collective bargaining agreements made by the province; and

"Whereas the residents of Muskoka and surrounding areas feel that MAHC has not been listening to them; and

"Whereas the board of MAHC has yet to take the single-site proposal from 2015 off its books;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario requests that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care ensures core hospital services are maintained at both Huntsville District Memorial Hospital and South Muskoka Memorial Hospital and ensures all small and medium-sized hospitals receive enough funding to maintain core services."

I've signed this petition and support it and give it to Ekroop.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition to resolve the crisis in Ontario corrections.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has faced serious criticism by OPSEU, offender advocacy groups, media, the general public, the Ombudsman, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the MCSCS independent auditor

(Mr. Howard Sapers) and the Auditor General as a result of significant deficiencies in the correctional system; and

“Whereas the rates of assaults on correctional workers continues to increase exponentially; and

“Whereas Ontario probation and parole officers have the highest workloads in the nation; and

“Whereas Ontario has one of the highest recidivism rates in Canada; and

“Whereas the current working conditions of correctional staff, coupled with the comparatively low rates of investment across Canada has resulted in difficulties with staff retention and recruitment;

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

“That the Ontario government significantly increase expenditures to resolve the crisis in corrections by hiring full-time correctional workers, increasing funding for adequate offender services and increasing investments to recruit and retain skilled professionals and reduce recidivism.”

Of course, I wholeheartedly support this, affix my name to it and send it with page Abinaya.

ANTI-SMOKING INITIATIVES FOR YOUTH

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas:

“—In the past 10 years in Ontario, 86% of all movies with on-screen smoking were rated for youth;

“—The tobacco industry has a long, well-documented history of promoting tobacco use on-screen;

“—A scientific report released by the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit estimated that 185,000 children in Ontario today will be recruited to smoking by exposure to on-screen smoking;

“—More than 59,000 will eventually die from tobacco-related cancers, strokes, heart disease and emphysema, incurring at least \$1.1 billion in health care costs; and whereas an adult rating (18A) for movies that promote on-screen tobacco in Ontario would save at least 30,000 lives and half a billion health care dollars;

“—The Ontario government has a stated goal to achieve the lowest smoking rates in Canada;

“—79% of Ontarians support not allowing smoking in movies rated G, PG, 14A (increased from 73% in 2011);

“—The Minister of Government and Consumer Services has the authority to amend the regulations of the Film Classification Act via cabinet;

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

“—To request the Standing Committee on Government Agencies examine the ways in which the regulations of the Film Classification Act could be amended to reduce smoking in youth-rated films released in Ontario;

“—That the committee report back on its findings to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and that the

Minister of Government and Consumer Services prepare a response.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my name and send it with page Eric.

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

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

“Whereas the Great Lakes are the foundation for billions of dollars in trade, shipping, tourism, recreation, industry and agri-food production; and

“Whereas the Great Lakes supply drinking water for 8.5 million Canadians; and

“Whereas the Great Lakes face ecological challenges such as 61 endangered fish species, 18 extinct species, as well as the introduction of 150 invasive species;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the Great Lakes Day Act, 2018.”

I agree. I'll affix my signature and send it to the table with Mia.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: “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 medicines 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 medications 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.”

I agree. I'm going to send it up to the desk with Abinaya.

VOTING AGE

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pursuant to S. 15(1)(a) of the Election Act, every person is entitled to vote who, on the general polling day, has attained 18 years of age; and

“Whereas youth in Ontario want to be politically engaged; and

“Whereas younger person(s) have a vested interest in the selection of their political representatives; and

“Whereas young person(s) should not have to pay taxes without representation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions including (and not limited to) Austria and Brazil have extended the eligible voter age (1); and

“Whereas electoral polls indicate a higher rate of electoral turnout in these jurisdictions (2); and

“Whereas young person(s) have the knowledge and maturity to participate in the electoral process;

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

“That the province of Ontario lower the eligible voter age to 16 years old, pursuant to amendments made to S. 15(1)(a) Election Act.”

I will sign this petition and send it to the Clerk.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, as you can see, I have a very large petition for the Legislative Assembly today. It’s signed by hundreds, if not thousands, of people from my riding and beyond.

“Whereas municipal governments in Ontario do not have the right to approve landfill projects in their communities, but have authority for making decisions on all other types of development including nuclear power and nuclear waste facilities as well as casinos; and

“Whereas this outdated policy allows private landfill operators to consult with local residents and municipal councils, but essentially to ignore them; and

“Whereas the government has proposed through legislation (Bill 139) to grant municipalities additional authority and autonomy to make decisions for their communities; and

“Whereas the recent report from Ontario’s Environmental Commissioner has found that Ontario has a garbage problem, particularly from industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste generated within the city of Toronto, where diversion rates are as low as 15%; and unless significant efforts are made in Toronto and area to increase recycling and diversion rates, a new home for this Toronto garbage will need to be found, as their landfill space is filling up quickly; and

“Whereas rural municipalities across Ontario are quietly being identified and targeted as potential landfill sites for future Toronto garbage by private landfill operators; and

“Whereas other communities should not be forced to take Toronto waste, as landfills can contaminate local watersheds, diminish air quality, dramatically increase heavy truck traffic on community roads, and reduce the quality of life for local residents;

“Therefore, we call upon the government of Ontario, and all political parties, to formally grant municipalities the authority to approve landfill projects in or adjacent to their communities, prior to June 2018.”

I affix my signature as this will be accomplished by—

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

EATING DISORDERS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition on action for eating disorders.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas at any given time there are an estimated one million people suffering from eating disorders in Canada;

“Whereas the mental health system in Ontario is fragmented and is failing to provide the necessary supports to those suffering;

“Whereas eating disorders have the highest mortality rates of any mental illness;

“Whereas three of four youth suffering from mental illness in Ontario do not receive treatment;

“Whereas the morbidity of eating disorders is extensive and the life expectancy of individuals with anorexia nervosa is 20 to 25 years less than would normally be expected;

“Whereas Ontario’s Auditor General reported that the Ontario government spent \$10 million sending 127 youth to the United States for services not offered in Ontario;

“Whereas that \$10 million could have helped more than 500 people suffering from eating disorders here in Ontario;

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

“Immediately pass Bill 78, Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act, 2016;

“To create a provincial strategy to deal with the devastating effects of eating disorders as a frequently misunderstood mental illness;

“To invest the \$10 million used to send people to other countries for services into Ontario so that all Ontarians suffering from eating disorders are able to access the mental health services and supports they need when they need them.”

I support this petition, affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Sophie.

VOTING AGE

Mr. Han Dong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pursuant to S. 15(1)(a) of the Election Act, every person is entitled to vote who, on the general polling day, has attained 18 years of age; and

“Whereas youth in Ontario want to be politically engaged; and

“Whereas younger person(s) have a vested interest in the selection of their political representatives; and

“Whereas young person(s) should not have to pay taxes without representation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions including (and not limiting) Austria and Brazil have extended the eligible voter age (1); and

“Whereas electoral polls indicate a higher rate of electoral turnout in these jurisdictions (2); and

“Whereas young person(s) have the knowledge and maturity to participate in the electoral process;

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

“That the province of Ontario lower the eligible voter age to 16 years old, pursuant to amendments made to S. 15(1)(a) Election Act.”

I support this petition, I sign it and give it to page Hannah.

OPPOSITION DAY

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I move that, whereas, the Hydro One CEO is the highest paid hydro executive in Canada;

Whereas, the Hydro One CEO is paid more than 10 times the salary of the head of Hydro Quebec;

Whereas, his compensation is over \$6 million a year; and

Whereas, the Hydro One board instituted a \$10-million severance clause to tie the hands of future governments;

Therefore, the Legislative Assembly calls on the government to reverse the changes to the Hydro One CEO's severance and call for the resignation of the entire Hydro One board of directors.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Fedeli has moved opposition day number 4.

Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. It was little over a month ago when we learned that the CEO of Hydro One had received a \$1.7 million raise—that's not the salary; that's the raise—last year, earning a total salary of \$6.2 million. It came as a disgusting shock to most people in Ontario.

1600

Our leader, Doug Ford, has been discovering the same thing that we've been hearing for years at pre-budget hearings as Doug Ford criss-crosses the province. He's been sitting down with young families, small business owners and seniors and asking them, “What's the biggest thing the government could do to make your life easier?” The answer, Speaker, every single time is, “Clean up the Liberal hydro mess.”

There are families being forced to choose between heating and eating, seniors who are afraid to turn their heaters on in the middle of winter, and long-time business owners who have been forced to close their doors and lay off staff who are like family to them—all of this because of skyrocketing hydro rates. Yet for weeks—for weeks, Speaker—the Premier and her ministers stood over there and defended the outrageous salaries at Hydro One. The CEO makes 10 times—10 times—what other CEOs make in other provinces, like Quebec, BC and Manitoba.

Then we read on the front page of the Globe and Mail that in a secret, behind-closed-doors meeting, the board of Hydro One voted to increase the severance packages

for the CEO and executives at Hydro One. This secret vote means that the CEO can now become the 10-million-dollar man. If the CEO and the board at Hydro One have any respect whatsoever for their customers, the families of Ontario, they would resign today.

But wait, Speaker. Sensing that her political survival was at stake, suddenly the Premier does an about-face. Less than 24 hours before bringing this opposition day motion to the floor of the Legislature for a vote, we see a change. On the first day of the end of the winter hydro disconnection ban—that's today, May 1. Let's not forget that this government cut off 59,000 families from their power in the dead middle of a Canadian winter. Today is the day they can start that process all over again and cut families off from their hydro, as they generally do.

But all of a sudden, the Premier, reading the political tea leaves, told the Hydro One board what Doug Ford has been calling for all along: that we need a lid on the fat-cat executive salaries. So, Speaker, this weak response from the Premier is only coming now because she and her millionaires' club have been exposed just before the election.

If this Liberal government truly—truly—had any respect whatsoever for Ontario families, the Premier would fire the six-million-dollar man and the entire board of Hydro One. She has told this Legislature that she has the authority to do that. Now, of course, she changed her opinion. For all of last week, she said they don't; and now, again, they apparently do. We're back to her original story that she has the authority, even though she said, “We don't somehow.”

Instead, she and her ministers have stood on that side of the floor, defending their insider friends, justifying these outrageous salaries and continuing to have them line their pockets. After weeks of PC leader Doug Ford sounding the siren call against the outrageous executive compensation at Hydro One, it is wonderful, Speaker, to see that the Premier and their government are now following Doug Ford's lead.

The government should have no problem supporting this motion. They should have had no problem doing the right thing a long time ago and capping executive compensation at Hydro One.

But I think Ontarians have come to the conclusion that we can do better. After weeks of PC leader Doug Ford sounding the siren call against this outrageous compensation, we now have the government following our leader's lead. That's what real leadership looks like.

The message from Doug Ford and the Ontario caucus is clear: The party with the taxpayers' money is over. I tell the people of Ontario that help is on the way.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Be seated, please.

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, it's a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to this motion. It's quite an extraordinary motion. First of all, I think, just on principle,

firing the board of Hydro One, this privatized utility—I don't have any problem with that.

But I think as a platform for dealing with Ontario's hydro issues, this falls far, far short of anything that is going to be effective or of consequence. I know my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh is going to go into this in greater depth as well.

I have to say, Speaker, one should take a look at what Mr. Ford has said, and what he has actually done when he's been in power. A headline from April 12: "PC Leader Doug Ford Vows to Fire Hydro One CEO, Board If Elected." He said he would fire them if he was elected Premier in June. He referred to Mayo Schmidt as Kathleen Wynne's six-million-dollar man. Well, he's actually right; I can't argue with that. "'This board and this CEO are laughing themselves to the bank,' Ford said." I think that's probably true. "However, it's unclear how Ford would" actually fire them "since the province does not control the company anymore."

I know that these minor issues of fact aren't troubling Mr. Ford at any great length, but when you're actually talking about exercising power in this province, you should be thinking about what's real and what's not real.

In fact, Todd Smith, the PC energy critic, said, "We don't have the ability to go out and say we are firing the CEO at Hydro One." Todd was right; I give him credit for that.

I have to say, I did have an opportunity that day to talk about the lack of a coherent strategy for dealing with hydro that was coming from the Tories. I certainly agreed that the salary is outrageous. I just happened to think that as long as you have a privatized utility, you're going to have another six-million-dollar man, a six-million-dollar woman, and then another six-million-dollar man.

The reality is, if you don't take on privatization, you're setting the stage for much higher bills in years to come. That's what's going to happen. This party, the Conservatives, and that party, the Liberals, have no interest in returning these assets to public hands. They're happy to have them privatized. The Tories tried to do it and they were blocked when Ernie Eves was their leader. The Liberals have done it under Kathleen Wynne. They're two peas in a pod when it comes to privatizing public assets.

It's interesting that the Wynne government certainly denounced the Conservatives' statement about the firing of Mayo Schmidt. They talked about the very obvious realities, but they also noted that they have their fair hydro plan in place.

As was said to some reporters, the government has committed to keep rate increases to below inflation for the next four years. If you borrow 40 billion bucks, you can do a lot, right? Let's face it: If you've got \$40 billion on the table, you can probably reduce prices. But then they noted that "bills will rise significantly in the decade that follows." So, in fact, what the Liberals have set up is a trap that they've pushed the people of Ontario into, and getting out of that trap is going to cost us \$40 billion—a lot of money that could put a lot of hospitals in place and

a lot of child care centres in place. It could make a real difference in our lives.

I have to finish off with a quote from Mr. Ford in that same Star article that I have been noting: "'The party's over with the taxpayers' money, we're going to start respecting the taxpayers,' Ford said, repeatedly saying the money spent on Hydro One salaries is 'morally indefensible.'"

So, what did Doug Ford do when he was on the executive committee of Toronto city council? Was he the man who stood up for the people? Was he the man who took the fat cats and brought them to heel? Or, in fact, was he an enabler? Was he the man who helped the CEO, Anthony Haines, become the million-dollar-man at Toronto Hydro? Indeed, he was. Oh, yes.

A certain Tom Adams, an energy analyst, someone who has been hired by the Conservatives in the past to do energy policy for them, wrote an article in 2013. The title was "Ontario Electricity Regulation Crisis Report Part 95: Ford Brothers Enabling Toronto Hydro's Gravy Train." Who knew? Doug Ford, the defender of the taxpayer and the ratepayer: just like a Liberal, happy to make a rich man richer every day.

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As Mr. Adams wrote, "With the Fords' enablement, Toronto Hydro's gravy train is picking up speed. Since the Fords gained power in 2010, compensation for Anthony Haines, Toronto Hydro's CEO, has jumped 32%." My goodness. Who would have allowed that? "Haines is on pace to haul in more than \$1 million this year before considering any special pension bonuses or retirement allowances.

"Including his \$330K special retirement allowance gain last year, Haines took home" almost seven times "the average pay of other municipal workers in equivalent positions of responsibility at the five largest municipal water utilities in Ontario—positions at least as challenging as running a power distributor."

So I say this to Mayo Schmidt: I wouldn't worry about Mr. Ford, because he's going to be your best buddy. He's your kind of guy. He knows what it's like to have to work hard to bring in a \$6-million salary, and he's going to make sure that you continue on, that you do well.

In fact, when you look at voting records, Doug Ford as a councillor, a member of the executive committee, was one of the leading members of council ensuring that Anthony Haines stayed on in his million-dollar-a-year position. He was the guy who stood up for the million-dollar man. In fact, when there were allegations about perjury on the part of Anthony Haines, Doug Ford responded to commentary that in fact, "Anthony's a good guy."

Now, I have to say the OEB, which I continue to think of as a glove puppet, wouldn't respond to evidence presented to them about this allegation of perjury. They would not investigate. I think that speaks to the lack of independence, the lack of a regulatory will, on the part of the OEB. I don't know whether those allegations are true or false. What I do know is that something substantial like that should have been investigated. It was not. It's

consistent with what the Liberals have done in this province to make sure that the OEB is tamed.

Did Doug Ford stand up for Canadian jobs or for protecting ratepayers? I know that question hangs in the air. Many are curious as to the answer. Well, in fact, there were votes taken to ask for two reports, one of which was to instruct the city manager to request that Toronto Hydro Corp. report on the recently reported contracting of services, such as mapping and accounts payable, to the US and India. Did he stand against contracting out, off-shoring Canadian jobs?

City council also asked Toronto Hydro Corp. to consider adopting whistle-blower protection policies. Clearly, you need to have protection for whistle-blowers so that if things are going wrong, the word can get out to the public.

I can tell you that those resolutions were carried, but there was a strong vote against, and that was Mr. Doug Ford.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: No way.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: No way. A guy who rails against the six-million-dollar man won't stand up for Canadian jobs, won't stand up for ratepayers—just like the Liberals, happy to make sure that their corporate friends are well taken care of.

Toronto Sun, January 25, 2012: an item by Jonathan Jenkins. Many who are here will remember Jonathan, who was at Queen's Park for a number of years—J.J., a great reporter. A wonderful headline: "Ratepayers Fund Hydro Execs' High-End Wheels."

He writes, "The city-owned electrical utility that wants \$1.6 billion over three years from ratepayers for system repairs has no problem finding cash for its top executives to ride in style.

"Toronto Hydro CEO Anthony Haines glides around town in a ratepayer-funded Mercedes Benz S550V4—which retails for around \$137,000."

Mr. Wayne Gates: Nice car.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a good car.

When people are hard-pressed on their hydro bills, is this something that really should be a priority for the municipal government? I don't think so. But clearly Doug Ford and his party think that that's fine. The Liberals are happy with that as well; they love the idea of wealthy people getting wealthier and having entitlement to their entitlements.

J.J. went on to write, "Information the utility discloses shows Toronto Hydro's top five execs were paid \$95,266 in car leases and repairs in 2010 alone.

"Adams ... found five more execs with luxury leased vehicles—brands such as Lexus, Cadillac, BMW and Lincoln."

I'm glad the guy stands up for the people. What can I say? Here is, clearly, a man whose priorities are set right: luxury cars for quality people, and everyone else? You get to eat the rates.

The sole owner of Toronto Hydro, the city of Toronto, backed a rate hike that would have added \$14 a month to the average bill of Toronto Hydro ratepayers in a three-

year plan. In fact, the city of Toronto, headed by the Ford administration, backed the rate hike and demanded a review of the OEB's decision to say no. It's unusual to me that the OEB would say no. It must have been pretty outrageous.

But to say that Doug Ford, with his real affinity and sympathy for people who are wealthy and his record of not actually protecting ratepayers, would do anything useful with Hydro One is ludicrous. Doug Ford is not the person he says he is. He's not the straight-talking, average-everyday-person-defending kind of guy that he tries to present. Look at his record. He's just like Kathleen Wynne. She posed as a progressive, someone who would actually try to move things forward politically, and yet she followed the Tory agenda of privatization.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I look forward to the Liberals defending privatization, saying, "The Tories are worse than us. They would privatize more, faster." But in fact, you guys have been pretty effective and pretty aggressive on privatization. I noted your interest in looking at the takeover of the Toronto subway system and the—what was the term? It was a really good euphemism: "looking at alternative forms of ownership." I thought, "Wow, they haven't sold everything yet. They've only got a few weeks left in power. They might give it a shot." We have got two parties that like privatization, selling off public utilities. We know what the impact is on ratepayers, on taxpayers, on citizens. Man, these guys—amazing.

I have to say, Speaker, that it's extraordinary to see that Doug Ford has bought into the Liberals' \$40-billion "fair" hydro plan. I was here for the debates on this. I listened to the Tories speaking about how outrageous it was they were going to borrow tens of billions of dollars to make the bills look good before an election. Pretty extraordinary to me. It's totally irresponsible, but Ford and the Tories have bought into it completely. In fact, he's saying that we'll have that \$40-billion liability to reduce bills and we'll spend another \$800 million a year in tax money to reduce bills—not talking about what happens when the \$40 billion runs out and the bills start skyrocketing. No, no plan on that, none whatsoever.

You guys must meet after the Legislature closes at night. You must compare notes and agree that this is the way to go. It's your kind of policy: borrow big and, frankly, leave ordinary people in this province in the dust, to eat an awful lot of bitterness.

Speaker, more than a year ago, the NDP came forward with a plan to deal with hydro rates which does not involve taking on a \$40-billion debt to reduce bills for a few years before they skyrocket again. We talked about bringing Hydro One back into public control, so you don't have a situation where Hydro One is driving the agenda through large-scale application of goodwill towards the OEB or towards whichever party is in power.

We talked about restoring public oversight, putting the Auditor General back on the case, putting the Financial Accountability Officer back on the case, the French-

language commissioner—putting those public officers of the Legislature back in a position where they could oversee and allow the people of this province to know what was really going on so we could control and direct it.

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Speaker, there's no question in my mind that if you don't get the system back in public hands, it will always just be a money-spinner for those at the top and those who are investors. Both of those parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, think that's just a wonderful way to go forward. But we in this province are paying the price. We are paying it in a very big and bitter way.

We put forward the need to deal with unfair delivery costs in rural areas. I don't think anyone is going to argue against that. We talked about ending mandatory time-of-use rates. They have had a negligible effect on actual consumption in Ontario—a 1% reduction. And yet, it meant for most people that their bills are 10% higher than they would have been if they had had a flat rate. I haven't heard anything from the Conservatives about a comprehensive program to deal with that structure. I haven't seen anything from the Conservatives or the Liberals about capping the profit margins for those companies that sell into the system or for those companies like Hydro One that operate in the system. Manitoba has a much lower profit limit. We could do that here in Ontario; we would save money.

We need an Ontario Energy Board, a regulator, that is truly independent and aggressive, looking out for the people of this province. We don't have that now. Neither of these parties are talking about that.

We need to look at the fact that we have overcapacity. We have a whole bunch of gas-fired power plants that we don't need. Those contracts are coming to an end over the next five to 10 years. In every case where we don't need them, we'll just end them. People are now paying for plants that are just sitting there. They get paid whether they produce power or not. That is a huge burden on the people of Ontario.

Speaker, there is a coherent way of dealing with the hydro issue in this province. It requires restructuring. It requires a return to public ownership. It requires capping the ability of any entity to take profit out of the system. If you approach it that way, you can actually have an affordable hydro system.

The route chosen by both the Conservatives and the Liberals of ongoing, deepening privatization will only mean higher rates, no matter what motion they bring forward about the salary of the CEO of Hydro One. That's not going to change a thing.

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

Hon. Glenn Thibeault: I'm happy to be here to speak on this topic and, of course, the official opposition's—as I would quote the member from Prince Edward–Hastings—erratic and out-of-control scheme to fire the board of Hydro One.

Let me start off by acknowledging, Mr. Speaker, that I recognize that executive salaries are high compared to

the vast majority of Ontario salaries. Our government remains committed to Hydro One's regulation, accountability and transparency through our government's involvement as the company's largest shareholder. That's why, this weekend, we took action.

On Sunday, our government, as the largest shareholder, urged Hydro One's board to revisit its executive compensation model. For members of the Legislature's background, on March 29, Hydro One released its annual management information circular. At that time, we learned about the changes in executive pay, the incentives and the severance packages. As the company's largest shareholder, our government engaged in careful and necessary analysis and determined that these changes were unjustifiably generous. It was for this reason that we urged the board to revisit its compensation model.

Yesterday, the board released a statement in which they communicated that they had heard us loud and clear. Their statement read, "Hydro One has decided to conduct supplementary shareholder engagement and obtain additional independent advice" on their compensation model. This will assist the company "in seeking the direct input of shareholders on matters related to executive compensation, inclusive of change of control and severance provisions." Finally, they have undertaken to review their current practices in light of the input that they have received.

While Doug Ford would take an erratic and reckless approach and fire Hydro One's board—which would do absolutely nothing to reduce customers' rates but would almost certainly risk the market value of Hydro One upon which so many people rely—we believe in a stable solution that exercises our authority as the largest shareholder.

With this in mind, our government will be voting against this opposition day motion.

Additionally, the government will abstain from voting on the say-on-pay shareholder resolution at the Hydro One annual general meeting on May 15. That is to give the board the necessary time to re-examine this matter.

Our government continues, though, to focus on fairness. We're urging the board to do the same when designing an executive compensation program that is fair for the people of Ontario, Hydro One's 1.3 million customers and, as well, its shareholders.

Now, the plan coming forward from the official opposition is really like letting a bull run through a china shop, and I said that earlier, Mr. Speaker. They want to fire the board of a publicly traded company, not a government entity. This is incredibly irresponsible. It's up to the Leader of the Opposition, Doug Ford, to explain how this would actually work.

The gimmick that Mr. Ford is talking about will really do a couple of things: It will drag us down into the same mess that we're seeing in the United States and won't actually do anything to reduce hydro bills. As the member from Prince Edward–Hastings would say, the Ford scheme is chaotic and out of control.

Instead, our government has taken a reasonable and responsible approach. This weekend, as I said, our government urged Hydro One to revisit its executive compensation model. The background that I want to provide is talking about how that management information circular became available to us on March 29. It was at that time when we learned of the changes to that package. All of this being said, we really are working towards a stable solution that exercises our authority as the largest shareholder. Instead of firing people left and right, much like what they would do with teachers and nurses with their across-the-board cuts to government services, our government believes in that responsible and stable approach.

I know the honourable member from Toronto–Danforth talked earlier about the Ontario Energy Board, our independent regulator, which I know does a good job within the province. The way rates are set in this province is through the Ontario Energy Board. There has been some discussion on the impact of Hydro One's executive compensation on electricity rates in this province. First of all, it's important to make one thing very clear, and I know Mr. Ford and the opposition know this very well—and they do, Mr. Speaker. Electricity rates in Ontario are always set by the independent Ontario Energy Board. So firing the executive leadership or the board of Hydro One does not change this process. The Ontario Energy Board does not allow distributors to simply increase profit margins.

Let's look at a pertinent example of this. Last fall, the Ontario Energy Board capped the portion of executive compensation Hydro One electricity customers are required to fund at 10% of base salaries, saving ratepayers \$30 million over this year and next. The Ontario Energy Board also ensures that when companies improve their processes, the benefit is passed on to the consumer. So for those not familiar with the board, Mr. Speaker, this quasi-judicial body has demonstrated time and again its commitment to putting consumers first.

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There are many examples here, Mr. Speaker. In 2010, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for distribution and received a 9% reduction of its capital request. In 2012, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for transmission and received a 3% reduction of its capital request. In 2011, Ontario Power Generation applied for a 6.2% increase, and the Ontario Energy Board denied their request and lowered rates by 0.8%. Three years later, OPG asked for a rate increase, and the board approved about half the requested amount. In 2011, Toronto Hydro made a distribution request to the board and received 10.8% less than requested.

The Ontario Energy Board's mandate is to protect the interests of ratepayers and to set just and reasonable rates, and they will continue to do so regardless of the ownership of Hydro One. Unlike what the opposition has said, Hydro One rates haven't skyrocketed, and that's because the independent Ontario Energy Board, our province's energy regulator, sets those rates for Hydro One.

Hydro One does not get to set those rates themselves. This didn't change when Hydro One became a private company.

I'd like to talk a little bit about what has happened since Hydro One has become a private company. Since we broadened the ownership of Hydro One, Mr. Speaker, they have become a more customer-focused company. One of the province's objectives in broadening the ownership was exactly this: to promote improved corporate performance, including customer service.

Under new management, Hydro One is improving on a number of service metrics. First, Hydro One has indicated that it has improved the quality of their call centre interactions through improved training, staffing and performance management. Customer satisfaction with the call centre has improved from 77% to 90% since October 2014.

In 2015, Hydro One became the first electrical utility in Canada to launch a customer service guarantee, offering a \$50 credit to customers who do not receive prompt service. Hydro One has also taken steps to improve billing performance, and reports confirm that 99% of bills issued to time-of-use customers are based on actual meter reads, up from 92% in December 2014, and above the industry standard.

They introduced the winter relief program to reconnect residential customers who were without electrical service in the winter, before our government introduced legislation to ban this practice. Additionally, they eliminated residential security deposits and doubled their funding to the United Way's low-income energy assistance program for vulnerable customers. They are now also administering the \$100-million affordability fund created by our government to help lower-income customers make their homes even more energy-efficient and thereby reduce their bills even further.

Since broadening ownership, they have also been working to cut costs by tens of millions of dollars. All told, the leadership has found \$114 million in savings, and these are savings that ensure that bills do not go up for Hydro One customers. This is being done through rethinking and negotiating contracts with third-party suppliers and improving their paperless billing solution, just to name a few of those options.

Our government remains committed to Hydro One's continued regulation, accountability and transparency. Let me reiterate this, Mr. Speaker: Since we broadened the ownership of the company, they have become a better-run company. They have found that \$114 million in savings. They have moved forward voluntarily to end winter disconnections and have increased their customer service. Do you know what else? Due to this, the calls to their customer service offices have dropped significantly, meaning more money can be saved.

Hydro One now acknowledges that its largest shareholder should be engaged on such issues as executive compensation and severance, and that those changes were and are necessary. We look forward to continuing to engage with the Hydro One board and their leadership

in a responsible and stable manner. This is unlike what we're hearing from the opposition, who have said they would just fire the board. We will continue to believe in this stable solution that exercises our authority as the largest shareholder. That is, again, why we're voting against today's opposition day motion.

Our government has also made significant investments—and it's important for me to talk about this, Mr. Speaker—in our electricity system. We completely eliminated dirty coal-fired generation and the smog days that came with it. This remains the single largest climate change initiative in North America.

We invested \$35 billion in new and refurbished generation, meaning 16,000 megawatts of clean, renewable, reliable power, and we invested more than \$15 billion in upgrading more than 15,000 kilometres of transmission and distribution lines—more than twice the distance from Montreal to Vancouver, for example. We kick-started a renewable energy sector that has brought thousands of jobs and major investments into our great province. In short, we modernized an electricity system that needed to be fixed to ensure Ontarians have the power when they need it, Mr. Speaker, and, of course, reliable and affordable.

We know that these investments have put cost pressures on families. That's why our government is making it clear that affordable access to our clean, reliable electricity system is a top priority, and that's why, last year, our government introduced the fair hydro plan, which lowered electricity bills by an average of 25% for all residential customers and as many as 500,000 small businesses and farms. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, any rate increases will be held to the rate of inflation for four years.

Ontario families and small businesses are now paying less on average here than in many other similar jurisdictions. Families in cities like New York, Boston and San Francisco pay more than double the average Ontario bill. Residents in other US cities like Detroit, Chicago, Nashville, Seattle and Miami pay more than we do as well. The difference isn't limited to US cities, either. Families in Charlottetown, Regina, Halifax and Moncton are paying more than the Ontario average as well. And that doesn't even include savings from the expanded Ontario Electricity Support Program for low-income customers, who will now be receiving more credits on their bills.

The fair hydro plan includes relief for those with the highest distribution rates through the Rural and Remote Rate Protection Program, Mr. Speaker. This means that some customers may see their bills lowered by as much as 40% to 50%. And the new \$100-million Affordability Fund administered by Hydro One also provides low-income consumers with energy-efficient retrofits that will lower their bills even more.

Finally, we moved forward with a First Nations Delivery Credit, which completely eliminated the delivery charge for First Nations who live on-reserve, which averages out to a monthly savings of about \$85.

That's real action for Ontario families, ensuring they have access to a fairer and better electricity system.

Let's take a look at what the opposition parties have done. The PCs voted against the plan when it mattered most, and now have come forward and have seemed to support it. I know, after months of denouncing the fair hydro plan, just last week the leader of the official opposition, the PC Party, Mr. Ford, announced his intention to embrace the plan as the foundation of his own electricity plan. So their party leader endorsed our plan by retaining all aspects of the fair hydro plan, which reduces electricity rates by 25%, on average, for Ontario families and businesses and up to 40% to 50% in remote and rural areas.

Unfortunately, it's everything else that Mr. Ford has proposed that fails to pass the smell test, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Ford's plans don't add up to anything but empty promises that will eventually dig their way into people's pocketbooks.

First, the cornerstone commitment to abandon all new contracted electricity procurement projects fails to mention there are no new contracted electricity procurement projects. As a consequence, there can't be savings to pass on to customers.

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Worse than that, Mr. Speaker, by bragging that he'll tear up committed capacity contracts, he's inviting massive lawsuits that will cost the province hundreds of millions of dollars and, in turn, drive electricity costs back up. This undeniable fact has been acknowledged by Ford's own caucus member and energy critic, who said, on radio, that this would come at a huge cost to taxpayers and we're going to see electricity prices continue to rise—comments from his own energy critic, Mr. Speaker.

Unlike their half-baked scheme, Ontarians know we have a plan to increase fairness and create more opportunity. They know our fair hydro plan actually lowers bills by 25%, on average, and then holds rates to the cost of inflation for the next four years. This is a real plan that makes the cost of electricity more fair for families.

The NDP also voted against the fair hydro plan and have no realistic plan as to how they will replace it. They want to spend at least \$9 billion buying back Hydro One shares, which won't take one cent off of anyone's bills. So what they want to do is raise electricity prices by 25%. They want to get rid of the fair hydro plan, which will then raise rates by 25%, and then try to figure out a way to get it down to 30%. There's no way that they can do this. They are actually trying to say they want to be able to work with the federal government to see if there's a way they can get the federal government to take the HST off of the bills. That's part of their solution. Obviously, they don't have a real plan or a realistic plan to lower bills. We've brought forward a plan that has lowered bills by 25%, Mr. Speaker, and do you know what? We'll continue to keep this plan in place to continue to help people right across the province.

Our plan provides needed assistance to families and businesses and it targets support to those who need it most. We're doing this because we have a plan to support

care, create opportunity and make life more affordable during this period of rapid economic change.

As I was saying earlier, we brought forward the fair hydro plan. We continue to work with Hydro One, their executives, and their board to continue to keep our system clean, to keep our system reliable and to keep our system as affordable as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to further being a part of this debate as we carry on this afternoon.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm pleased to join the debate this afternoon on the opposition motion put forward by our parliamentary leader, Mr. Fedeli.

There are a lot of things that have been said already here this afternoon. The Minister of Energy spoke out of both sides of his mouth there a number of different times, but the one thing that I did hear him say is that, even though he doesn't have a seat in this Legislature yet, Doug Ford is getting results for electricity customers in the province of Ontario, because he's finally got these guys to act on the issue of exorbitant executive compensation at Hydro One. I don't know exactly what happened, Mr. Speaker, but probably a poll moved them to move on this issue.

We do know a lot of things: There is a six-million-dollar man there at Hydro One—a \$6.2-million man, as a matter of fact: 10 times his peers' in other jurisdictions across Canada. His salary is 10 times his peer's at Hydro-Québec, where the price of electricity is a third of what it is here in Ontario. Think about that for a second. The CEO at Hydro-Québec is responsible not just for the transmission; he is responsible for the generation as well. He has a lot more responsibility. He's making one tenth of the salary of the CEO at Hydro One, and their price is a third—a third—of what it is here in Ontario.

It was really interesting to hear the Minister of Energy talk about the fact that Ontario has hydro prices that are less than those in a number of jurisdictions in Canada and the United States, but—

Mr. Steve Clark: He's playing with the numbers.

Mr. Todd Smith: He's playing with the numbers. It's the price per kilowatt hour, not the entire price of your electricity bill.

My mom, God bless her, lives in Moncton, New Brunswick. I've never heard her complain once about her electricity bill—not once. But if you travel this province, home to home, door to door—and we've all been doing it—people are complaining about the all-in cost of electricity in Ontario, the highest in North America.

One of the other issues that the minister failed to talk about was the issue of the entire executive compensation package. Now, the removal of the six-million-dollar man should send a message to the board at Hydro One, because the Ontario Energy Board's decision hadn't moved them to take any action. The Ontario Energy Board actually told them that: "Your administrative package is \$30 million higher than it should have been." What did Hydro One do? They went, hat in hand, to the On-

tario Energy Board, looking for a rate increase, and the OEB said, "No. Get out of here. Get out of here until you deal with your executive compensation and your administration." The cost of the administrative package at Hydro One: \$412 million.

And keep in mind, we only know now the salaries of the top five executives at Hydro One. The only reason we know that is because of Ontario securities law that requires publicly traded companies to show us the salaries of the top five executives. But how big is that millionaires' club at Hydro One? We don't know because since the government sold off Hydro One, against the wishes of the people of Ontario, we don't get to see that sunshine list any longer. We don't get to see how big the millionaires' club is at Hydro One.

You know, it was interesting, too, that over the course of the last three years, since the government decided that they were going to make a decision against their promises in the last election campaign—which speaks to the fact we can't trust them again going into this election campaign. They weren't going to sell Hydro One. The first thing they did was, they sold Hydro One; then they fundraised off the sale of Hydro One, off the initial public offering. That's what they did. That's why they got caught, because of the sale of the Hydro One IPO.

But the Premier said, "Don't worry. Don't worry. We're going to maintain control because we're going to be the biggest shareholder. We're going to be the biggest shareholder, so we'll be able to remove the board and remove the CEO." That was Premier Wynne who said that on many, many occasions here in this House. Then, when Doug Ford said, "Hey, we're going to fire the CEO and get rid of the board," she said, "Oh, you can't do that. You can't do that." She had previously said numerous times that you can do exactly that.

Where was the Premier of Ontario, where was the Minister of Energy, where was the Liberal caucus when the raises were exploding for Hydro One executives and people were having to choose between heating and eating? Where were they? They were nowhere to be found until Doug Ford came along and said that he was going to get some action. He's not even in this House and he's getting action, Mr. Speaker.

You know what? The intestinal fortitude of the Liberal government is lacking. This sends a message not just to Hydro One; this should send a message to all of those fat-cat bureaucrats who have been sitting back. Every time the government says they're going to roll out hundreds of millions of dollars but the money never makes it to the front-line workers, it ends up in bureaucracy. This is going to be a message to all of those fat-cat bureaucrats that the party with the taxpayers' money is over. We're not going to stand for it. We're getting action now, and we're not even government. Imagine the action we're going to get for the people of Ontario when we do win the election on June 7.

We're going to lower the cost of hydro for the people of Ontario. We're going to return the dividends from Hydro One on people's hydro bills. We're going to move

conservation off the ratepayers' bills. And we are going to scrap the disastrous Green Energy Act. We're going to look at all of those contracts that continue to drive up the cost of electricity in Ontario, and those that haven't lived up to the obligations of their contracts are going to be terminated.

It's going to happen. We're going to lower the cost of generating electricity in Ontario. We are going to do that, Mr. Speaker. The government hasn't done that. The plan put forward by the third party isn't going to take one cent off your bill. We're going to lower the cost of electricity, and Doug Ford is going to make it happen.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Afternoon, Speaker. Three weeks ago, there was breaking news from the soon-to-be official campaign trail, a news bulletin, an announcer rushing into the studio, out of breath: "This just in." The earth stood still. We waited anxiously. The Tories held their breath: "Oh, God, what has Doug Ford done now? What's he done? What's Doug Ford said now? What? He says he'll fire the head of Hydro One?"

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Speaker, there were a few puzzled looks and more than a few eyebrows raised. Someone said, "Doesn't he know that it's now a private company?" Someone else weighed in: "Wouldn't the six-million-dollar man have a golden parachute worth at least twice that much money, or close to it? What will it cost to get rid of him?"

We waited, puzzled, and then a new voice: "Doug doesn't care about the cost. He's sending a message. He's going to stop the gravy train. It worked for Rob. Doug wants to try it out. He thinks it will work for him."

After all, Speaker, a bull in a china shop doesn't worry about the destruction and the cost of cleaning it up. I'm just guessing about that, of course; I've never met a bull up close and personal until now. I have heard the new leader of the Conservatives say he'll leave no stone unturned when it comes to making cuts and finding savings should he ever take over the reins of power. I believe he said he would have no trouble finding savings amounting to 4% of the total provincial budget.

Each ministry has its own budget. Many of them have fixed costs. Salaries and benefits take up about 75% of these ministries. If you do the math, if you're going to cut 4% of the budget, you're going to have to cut jobs. You're going to lay off teachers, nurses. Yet, on the campaign trail, we hear the Conservatives say there will be no job loss. They're still reeling from the last election when Tim Hudak said, just days after the campaign began, he was going to cut 100,000 jobs. The Conservatives lost that election and it was because of that promise. There's no denying that. "So this time, we'll cut 4% but we'll pretend it won't end up in one job being cut."

Hard to believe? Very hard to believe? Who do we trust? That's what this election will come down to: trust, credibility and a vision for the future. Who do we believe? Who do we trust to do what they say they'll do, and what are the hidden costs of these promises?

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: "On one hand, Bobby, I won't cut any jobs. On the other one, I'll fire the entire board and the man who runs Hydro One, and I will find savings amounting to at least 4% of the total budget without cutting jobs."

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, fat chance. Some of us don't believe the rhetoric. Some of us have heard the Conservatives stand in the House and be very critical of the Liberals' so-called fair hydro plan. Now we hear the new leader of the Conservative Party likes the plan so much he has no plans to change it. He has no vision, no plan to lower hydro rates to end time-of-day pricing, to get the system back into public hands. He's right about just one thing: One of the reasons the rates are so high—really high—is because we pay hydro executives in this private company too much money. But the rates won't go down if you replace Liberal appointees on that board with Conservative appointees on that board. Doug—Mr. Ford—get those shares back into public hands.

Even the Liberals finally—the penny has dropped. The gravy train thing clicked. We saw today that after ignoring the calls about high salaries and severance packages for weeks, the Liberals are now trying to save face with the electorate and are asking Hydro to take a look at their salaries, urging them to take a look at their salaries and their severance packages—urging them. As the former member for Trinity–Spadina, Mr. Marchese, would say, God bless. Maybe we'll even see some of the Liberals support this opposition bill today. Who knows, with the Liberals, Speaker?

But Doug Ford has one change he wants to make. He'll put an end to the way political parties are now funded in Ontario. Right now, we can't take donations from corporations and unions. Instead, we get an allowance based on previous vote totals. The new system came in after the Liberals were caught in a cash-for-access scheme, and the new system was introduced to get away from the shady, sleazy side of political fundraising.

Mr. Ford has spent a lot of time in the shade, it seems, because he wants to go back there, back there to the shady dealings of the political bagmen and fundraisers. He's turning back the clock. And now, video evidence has surfaced of Doug Ford promising developers he'll pave over part of the greenbelt and open it up for development: big chunks of the greenbelt up for grabs in a secret deal with Canada's biggest developers. Domestic and foreign investors are being encouraged to build on environmentally sensitive wetlands.

This is not the party of Bill Davis. This Conservative leader has no shame. He's a bulldozer waiting to happen, developing big chunks of the environmentally sensitive greenbelt.

I hear the Facebook and Twitter crowd are already attacking some of the Conservative candidates over this blunder, and for that I say, God bless. There should be no tolerance for secret deals with developers chomping at the bit to tear up the greenbelt, one big chunk at a time.

This could very well turn into an Achilles heel for the catch-me-if-you-can Conservative campaign. I certainly hope so.

Their leader holding secret talks with the bagmen, the developers, the home builders, the ones who will be making big political donations, again, to any party that does their bidding—we just got away from that, and now it's a slippery slope back down to the shady, sleazy side of political fundraising. I never thought I'd see the day—back to the days of catering to your donors instead of bringing in sound legislation that benefits everyone in the province, paving over paradise to put up a parking lot and a few thousand four-level backsplits. The greenbelt is not the reason why there's a shortage of homes in the GTHA. Developers see it as an easy way to make money as opposed to in-filling on available space already spread throughout the area.

Trust, credibility and a vision for the future are three pillars of any election campaign.

It's one thing, for example, to bring in a budget. You can grab a headline when that budget contains, say, coverage for a dental program. We just saw that with the Liberals.

I found it hilarious, the very next day in question period, when time and time again the leader of my party asked the Minister of Finance very simple questions—did he know the cost of having your teeth cleaned; did he know the cost of having a cavity filled; did he know the cost of having a tooth pulled or the cost of having an impacted tooth removed or the cost of a root canal? Oh, Speaker, what an example of being hoisted on his own petard. The minister could read a budget speech, but he had absolutely no idea what it costs for dental work, even though he had small sums of money included in the budget for dental coverage. What a day.

Yet we have the leader of the Conservative Party making statements—promises—of what he'll do, without any idea of the financial consequences of his promises. It's a scary thing, Speaker.

In this era, supposedly, of open government and transparency, we have the leader of the Conservative Party playing a peekaboo campaign with the media. He'll have no media bus following him around the province—no, not allowed. He doesn't want to be held accountable for what he says to a select audience in one town while perhaps saying the opposite while catering to opposite views in another municipality.

The Liberals are running on their budget. We in the NDP have costed out our platform, and it's out there for public scrutiny. And we have the duck-and-cover, peekaboo, catch-me-if-you-can campaign of Doug Ford and the Conservatives.

Well, he has been caught on camera promising to carve up the greenbelt into big housing chunks for his developer buddies. Then he says he'll replace—

Interjections.

Mr. Todd Smith: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. Order, please.

I recognize the member from Prince Edward–Hastings on a point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: With all due respect to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh, he hasn't addressed the actual motion for about five or six minutes now. He has been talking about pulling teeth, and he has been talking about things that the Leader of the Opposition has never said he would do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will remind the member from Windsor–Tecumseh to not deviate very far from the motion at hand.

Please continue.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As the critic for the energy portfolio knows, “If you can't stand the heat...”

Speaker, what worries me about firing a board—pretending one thing, but in reality, despite the hidden cost of severances, just making way for your Conservative buddies, your supporters, your donors, your contributors, all hop-alongs on the Conservative gravy train. You're not ending the gravy train; you're creating one. Talk about smoke and mirrors. Talk about bait and switch. You're greasing the skids for patronage appointments. You're trolling for donors: “Yeah, yeah, that's the ticket. Let's pretend we're doing this on principle, when in fact we need some more spots to place our buddies.” Let's call it for what it is: secret meetings with developers caught on tape, auctioning off big chunks of the greenbelt, and, “Oh, maybe we'll find you a seat on the board over at Hydro”—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'm going to remind the member from Windsor–Tecumseh that you can't impute motive here. Okay? Stick to the facts, don't impute motive, and I'll allow you to continue. If not, then I'll move on with further debate.

Back to you.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's tough not to impute motive, Speaker, when you see what's happening here, but I will do my best.

I can see, if you're going to hold secret meetings with developers and talk about auctioning off chunks of the greenbelt, that you might also, when you're talking about replacing the board and the man in charge at Hydro One—you know you have to replace him. Who are you going to replace him with? New Democrats? Unlikely, Speaker. You're going to find some Conservative buddies, some good friends of Mr. Ford, some other millionaires like Mr. Ford. You know, you're going to say, “We need somebody over there to run the place. You won't need any kind of experience. All you have to do is vote the way Doug tells you—smile and vote.”

Maybe Patrick needs a job. How about Tim, or Mike? We appointed Mike Jr. Why not the real deal? Is Ernie still around? He'd be good.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I mentioned earlier—now, I know you have this eloquent speech written out, but I'm going to suggest something here. You just referenced a member. He may be an independent member, but we refer to our members in this Legislature

by their riding, not by their first name. I would ask that you stick to the rules within this Legislature.

I will turn it back to you.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I withdraw, Speaker, if that works for you.

We heard the leader of the Conservative Party in the Legislature stand up and kick off the debate on this bill. He talked about the Liberals and the board holding their secret, behind-closed-door meetings to raise their salaries and hydro severances, and yet we have also seen caught on tape the political leader of the Conservative Party talking on tape about getting rid of chunks of the greenbelt at a secret, behind-doors meeting.

There is a coterie of inside friends that will benefit.

Interjections.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, let me go back to the Liberals for a moment. Maybe I will find more friendly ground over there.

The minister said he took action. All he did was urge Hydro One to reconsider the compensation model. We just found out about this lately, it seems, but I'm still a little bit confused, I guess. Urging someone to do something and actually taking the leadership on it—I mean, in this business, you either lead, follow, or get out of the way.

So the PC Party, I think, is being—the minister said the PC Party was being irresponsible with this motion. I say to the Liberals, you are the party that was irresponsible when you talked about selling public shares in hydro when you campaigned against it, and then you went out and did it. That is the most irresponsible thing you guys have ever done.

Thank you, Speaker, for keeping me in line this afternoon.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: I will indeed try to make the Speaker's job a little simpler. I think, as we approach the end of the 41st Parliament, I would just like to recognize that I serve with honourable people who were sent here with a solid mandate from their ridings. My colleagues across the aisle are honourable people who were sent here with a solid mandate. We are going to settle all the personal stuff on the streets in the election. But today, I would like to talk a little bit about Hydro One and I would like to talk a little bit about the opposition day motion and what I think some of it means.

Speaker, when we talk about the entity of Hydro One, many of us have been here long enough to know when it was not considered a crown jewel. Indeed, it was considered the unloved and unwanted problem creature of this province, subject to scorn and micromanagement from the floor of the Legislature, and was the one on which the opposition parties carped at the government most continuously.

I would ask them, then, what exactly is Hydro One? Most of them will just sort of stop and say, "Um." Their first reflex will be that it's an electrical utility. And is it really? What is Hydro One? Hydro One is a transportation company. It doesn't make what it carries. It doesn't

consume what it carries. It carries a commodity product—electricity—on a dedicated roadway—wires—and in its own way is very much like a railway that will carry freight on designated railways between its origin and its destination. Hydro One carries electricity from the producer, from the manufacturer, and hands it off to a distributor. That's all Hydro One is: Hydro One is a common carrier; Hydro One is, if you wish, a trucking company.

The motion before us asks us to put into perspective what the CEO of a common carrier that hauls electricity is in relation to—and they have used other electrical utilities that are all public utilities. Let's have a look at some of the salaries and total compensation paid to CEOs who are in the transportation business. Let's have a look at Calin Rovinescu, the president and CEO of Air Canada. He makes a base salary of \$1.4 million, very comparable to what Mayo Schmidt makes. But his total compensation, should he hit his targets—just as Mayo Schmidt does not get his bonuses unless he hits his targets. Mr. Rovinescu's targets are \$9 million.

Looking in the power business, Paul Desmarais Jr., the chairman and CEO of Power Corp. of Canada—his total compensation is about \$6.77 million; André Desmarais, the deputy chair and co-CEO of Power Corp., \$6.875 million.

In the transportation sector, looking at Luc Jobin, who is the president and CEO of Canadian National Railway—he will bring in \$8.3 million. Hunter Harrison, during the time that he was still the CEO of Canadian Pacific Railway, brought in \$18.8 million. And those are just in Canada.

Just to put that into a little bit of perspective, looking at William Johnson, who in 2017, as the president and CEO of the Tennessee Valley Authority—and TVA is a utility very comparable to Ontario here. TVA paid its president and CEO, with bonuses, in American funds, \$6.68 million. Looking at Ameren Corp., which operates out of Missouri and Illinois, much smaller than Ontario, their chairman, president and CEO was paid \$8 million. Alliant Energy in Wisconsin, Patricia Kampling—her total pay package: \$6.5 million.

Now, Speaker, I can go on because I have dozens of these. But the point of it all is not that it isn't a lot of money; it is. It's a lot of money. But in the context of that industry, they're not paying their CEO anything out of the ordinary.

Here's the difference, however. On the opposition side, what they want to do is to, in essence, go after the board and take out a contract on the career of the president and CEO and rub out his career, which I think reflects a great lack of maturity.

On the government side, we have said, "Wait a minute. We're the controlling shareholder here." Having found out about this particular pay package, we have said to the board of Hydro One, "We want you to review this. We want you to come back and tell us whether you think that this is justified in the circumstances."

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Now, I think one of the best indicators of future behaviour has always been past behaviour; and while on their watch, in their last interminable eight years of government, the old Ontario Hydro was a repository for Conservative hacks. Look at some of the outfall of that. One of the things that Ontarians inherited while the Conservatives, on their last sad, sorry watch in government, ran the electricity sector—or more appropriately, ran it into the ground—was that they were left more than \$20 billion of hydro debt.

Now, what's happened in those intervening years? Liberals, being Liberals, looked at that debt and dealt with it the old-fashioned way. We paid it. You no longer have that albatross of a hydro debt on your electricity bill. It's paid. It was Conservative debt. It was paid by Liberals.

In the case of Hydro One, as its largest shareholder, Ontario does have leverage over that board, and in this case an activist owner does make a difference.

Now, let's go back to talking about the analogy of Hydro One as a common carrier. Do you think, Speaker, that a common carrier such as CN Rail sets or affects the price of a barrel of oil that it may carry, a bushel of wheat, a tonne of cargo? It doesn't. Those prices are set between the producer and the distributor and set at the ability of the consumer.

While the Conservative approach continues to be as reckless as it always has been with anything to do with electricity, if what they plan to do is to eradicate the entire board, get rid of the CEO, they very clearly send a signal that they would go back to appointing Conservative political cronies who, the last time around, ran the organization into the ground.

I'd like to quote, with regard to the impact of the salary of Mayo Schmidt, whom I've met—Mayo Schmidt played for a few years on the Miami Dolphins in the National Football League; he ran the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. He's a good guy.

Now, here's what David Denison, who is the chairman of the board of Hydro One, had to say, and I'm going to use his words exactly. He published them in the *Globe and Mail* just last week. He said:

“Hydro One had previously capped the amount of executive compensation that is funded by our customers through the rate they pay at an amount equivalent to the level of compensation prior to our initial public offering of shares. Consequently, any additional compensation paid to Hydro One executives after it ceased to be a Crown corporation, including increases granted to Mr. Schmidt or other executives in 2017, have absolutely no impact on the rates our customers are charged. Likewise, should circumstances arise where change-of-control payments are triggered, those payments would also have absolutely no impact on customer bills.”

Hence the entire premise of this opposition day motion is nonsense.

But let's talk about some of the things that the current Hydro board—which began life as the unloved creature

of this particular Legislature and was then spun off and is now, by any standards, a well-run private sector corporation with a controlling interest held by the government of Ontario. Since going public, Hydro One has achieved \$114 million in cost savings, all of which flow back to their customers. They have fixed some of the chronic billing issues, which were the subject of discussion right here on this floor in this Legislature just a few years back, that had long plagued Hydro One and among its customers achieved a 99.3% accuracy level in its billing. They've become the first electricity provider in Ontario to not only suspend customer disconnections in winter months but to voluntarily reconnect customers so no one would be without power during bad weather periods.

There was a suggestion that Hydro One's operations would somehow or other leave out their employees, leave out the people in the community. Well, they actually brought 400 call centre employees in-house, back under the roof, in two locations across Ontario and opened the phone lines to serve customers on Saturdays. As a result, Hydro One is finding that it has some of its highest customer satisfaction levels in years.

My colleague in Prince Edward–Hastings commented on something that his leader said, and I'm going to grant him the courtesy of saying that on that occasion perhaps his rhetoric ran ahead of where his mind might have been. We're not going to dwell on that again. I think we have made our point there.

Let us talk again about how rates aren't set. If rates are not set by the carrier of freight, then who are rates set by? Rates are set by the Ontario Energy Board. When one has a monopoly or an oligopoly, the way to substitute for what would otherwise be free market competition would be a board or regulatory agency. This is very common in electricity. In fact, it's more the norm than the exception. In the United States they call them “public utility commissions”; here in Ontario we call it the “Ontario Energy Board.”

Just in the recent past, in 2012, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for transmission. The Ontario Energy Board looked very carefully at it and said, “Actually, I think what we really should do is have a 3% rate reduction” for its capital request.

In 2011, Ontario Power Generation applied for a 6.2% rate increase. The Ontario Energy Board denied the request and lowered rates by 0.8%.

In 2011, Toronto Hydro made a distribution request to the board and received 10.8% less than they requested.

In Ontario, we have an entity called the Ontario Energy Board. Its mandate is to protect the interests of rate-payers. It's an independent board. Elected officials have no influence on it at all. Its task is to set just, fair, reasonable and transparent rates, and it will continue to do so, regardless of how the ownership of Hydro One is structured. So Hydro One does not—does not—get to set electricity rates.

We have also seen that the executive compensation package of its management team does not, in any way, impact the rates that you pay on your bill, which, again,

reduces the essence of this opposition day motion to completely empty rhetoric. That's why the government will vote against it.

What was some of the thinking in broadening the ownership of Hydro One? What it did was to generate \$9 billion of share sales sold into a sellers' market at the high end of the price range—\$9 billion that, in our area in Mississauga, means money to improve transit. Some of that money will go to paying for the light rail link that will go straight north from Lakeshore up to Hurontario. God willing, if CP Rail can come to the table and have a meaningful discussion with Metrolinx, perhaps some of that money will be spent improving the track bed on the Milton line so that in our neighbourhoods of Lisgar, Meadowvale, Streetsville, Erindale and Cooksville, we can have all-day, two-way GO train service.

I would add, very briefly, that we have excellent bus service with plenty of capacity, so if you've got to get back and forth in the middle of the day, you're going to be able to do it from the same stations.

That's the impact of having recovered some value from an entity that the province of Ontario continues to control, and that's Hydro One, the transportation entity that carries electricity from the entities that produce it—Bruce Power, OPG and all of the other power generators across Ontario—to the people who distribute it, some of which is distributed by Hydro One, some by Alectra, and more by Toronto Hydro. Those three distribution companies, by the way, make up more than 80% of Ontario's distribution. There are another 62 smaller distribution companies, if I remember correctly, throughout the province, all of whom receive the power that they distribute to their local communities from Hydro One. But Hydro One merely carries it; it neither produces it, nor consumes it. It carries it from the generators to the distribution companies.

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Hydro One continues to improve. It was the first electrical utility in Canada to launch a customer service guarantee. It offers a \$50 credit to customers who do not receive prompt service. I mentioned earlier that Hydro One has taken steps to improve its billing performance, and reports confirm that 99% of bills issued to time-of-use customers are based on actual meter reads, up from 92% in 2014 and well above the industry standards.

Yes, Mayo Schmidt is paid a lot of money. However, if Mayo Schmidt hadn't made a difference, that would be a different conversation. In this case, the executive whose pay they are calling into question—about which the province has said to Hydro One, "We want you to review this"—is an individual who put together a management team that has made a difference. They've eliminated residential security deposits. They've doubled their funding to the United Way's Low-Income Energy Assistance Program for vulnerable customers. They're administering the \$100-million Affordability Fund created by the province to help lower-income customers make their homes more energy efficient, and they have cut costs by \$114 million.

Speaker, this opposition day motion is baseless. It doesn't deserve to pass. Thank you for an opportunity to, I hope, have an adult discussion about it.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I listened patiently while the member for Mississauga–Streetsville went on and on and on. In fact, it was a little bit confusing, because I know the Minister of Energy and the Premier kind of dodge the questions, but in a tacit way they were approving the compensation package that Mayo Schmidt and the board at Hydro One were receiving. Of course, yesterday we find out that they're taking a different position, because Doug Ford has backed them into a corner on this one.

But then today, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville was going on and on almost justifying what Mayo Schmidt makes. To my point, as my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings so ably pointed out, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville is comparing Mayo Schmidt to all kinds of different people who don't work in the energy sector. The best ones to compare are not Air Canada and CP Rail; the best ones to compare would be the other hydro-electric utilities in Canada, like Hydro-Québec and Manitoba Hydro, of which Mayo Schmidt makes more than 10 times their salary.

But the member from Mississauga–Streetsville generally tries to justify any mistakes that the Liberals have made. I know a few weeks ago he was shouting about how proud he was that they had tripled the debt in this province. Then, when he was taken to task on it, he got even more vocal and challenged the media, saying he never said it. And then the media produced a video that showed that he did say it, and then he backed down—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Windsor–Tecumseh on a point of order.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I believe somebody said I impugned somebody's motives at some point today, and I backed down.

I hear my good friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke talking about another member and some of his failings, and I just think it should be the same kind of treatment accorded.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I listened carefully to that. Thank you.

I will ask the member to continue, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Absolutely. I never questioned anybody's motives at all. I'm simply reiterating the events, as were widely reported in the public domain.

But it is clear that today he was justifying the salary of Mayo Schmidt and the board and questioning Doug Ford's stated position that he will fire the board, and fire Mayo Schmidt by firing the board. It's absolutely the right thing to do because it is an insult to the people of this province who cannot afford to pay their hydro bills and have to make a choice between heating and eating. Grandmothers and widows are afraid to get the mail, are afraid to open the mail to see what they are paying for

hydro. Then they're told that the CEO of Hydro One makes \$6.2 million, and not only makes \$6.2 million, but that was a \$1.7-million increase from the year before.

Interjection: Whoa. Shocking.

Mr. John Yakubski: Yes. People are angry when others in this province are enriched on the backs of the people who are struggling to get by.

Now, I'll let the people of Ontario decide what they believe, but when the Minister of Energy says, "These changes were unjustifiably generous," when talking about the compensation package for the CEO of Hydro One, well, the Ontario government, and the Liberal Party by virtue of its majority, still own 41% of Hydro One. There's not a decision made at that board that this government wouldn't have to sign off on, and if they're not involved, then they do not take the responsibility seriously at all.

When Mayo Schmidt is granted a significant increase of \$1.7 million and is given a severance package that would pay him over \$10 million should he be fired, does anybody out there really believe that Premier Wynne and the Minister of Energy did not know about that in advance? Does anybody really believe that that decision was made without the knowledge of the Premier or the Minister of Energy?

As I say, Speaker, I'll allow the people of Ontario to make that determination. To some degree, I believe they've already made it. But they may not get the chance to actually manifest their dissatisfaction with that decision until June 7, because that's the opportunity that people have to give a yay or a nay, a thumbs-up or a thumbs-down, to the government that they've been living with for the past 15 years.

We believe on this side of the House that if you own 47% of a corporation, then you are part of the decision-making process and part of the decisions made by that board. When they stood in the House here and tried to deflect that issue and say, "Well, those are decisions of the board"—you control the board.

How many times did we hear in this Legislature directly from the lips of the Premier that she retains the power to dismiss the board at Hydro One? We heard that every day under questioning, because we were questioning her on why they were selling the shares of Hydro One even though 80% of the people were opposed to the sale of Hydro One.

What separates the Liberals from our leader, Doug Ford, is that when they have their favourites—and there are people who are going to benefit greatly from the sale of Hydro One—they don't care what the people say. But when Doug Ford hears from the people, because Doug Ford is for the people, Doug Ford stands up and says, "I hear you and I'm listening." I want to unequivocally say that the greenbelt in Ontario will remain untouched under a Doug Ford Progressive Conservative government because we believe in the people, we are for the people and we represent the people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to join debate today to discuss this important motion on Hydro One, under our interim leader's, Vic Fedeli's, name.

Mr. Speaker, I hope you'll indulge me. As you know, you called me the member for Nepean–Carleton. In just five short weeks, I will no longer be the member from Carleton. God willing, I will still be the member for Nepean as my riding splits in three. The Carleton part of my riding is on Hydro One; the Nepean part of my riding is on Ottawa Hydro. So, if I may, in the next four or five minutes that I have, speak about the people of Carleton in the context of the challenges they've had as a result of Hydro One.

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But first and foremost, let me say this to the people of Carleton who have, for four elections in 12 years, put their trust in me to stand in this place on behalf of them at the Legislature: My family, Joe, Victoria and I, will always be indebted to them for giving me the opportunity to rise to the occasion in this House so many times. I believe this will be my last speech in this House before the election, so I think it is incumbent upon me, on behalf of my family, to say thank you to the residents of Carleton for that fellowship they have given me and the love and care.

They've watched me grow up. They've watched my daughter grow up. I can tell you, Speaker, from the early days when I sat just back here when I first arrived at 31 years old, always the people of Carleton were on my mind because of the agrarian roots of the city of Ottawa and the challenges they had to face, particularly when the Green Energy Act was brought forward by the Liberals and how their hydro bills would steadily and rapidly increase.

Of course, the people of Kars were very upset in North Gower when a wind turbine was expressed for our community. We stood against it, and we fought against it. It was another area, when you talk about the Green Energy Act, that has skyrocketed hydro bills in this province and has eroded the trust in what was then a public utility and which now is a public-private partnership, which is Hydro One.

But, Speaker, over the years I have also had the opportunity to be the energy critic and speak with my constituents in Carleton about some of the challenges they faced with Hydro One. As you'll recall, when I was the energy critic, not only were we dealing with the issues of wind turbines, but we were also dealing with a billing crisis at Hydro One where many of my constituents were being billed exorbitant numbers and it was very hard for them to keep up with those payments.

There was a real attitude problem at the time at Hydro One. At that time, I would frequently call for the firing of the CEO. I know he would call me—the then CEO—to try and say, "Well, you know, things are great." Well, they were not great. When I would go into a small community in Edwards, a little Lynnwood trailer park, to meet with some of my constituents, who are elderly, and I would go into their trailer in the middle of January—and, Speaker, in the middle of January, if you're in Ottawa, it's minus 26. It might be minus 40 in the city of

Ottawa. I would go into their little trailer—not the best insulated, and it would be dark. We would be talking, and they'd be wearing all of their coats and they wouldn't be able to put their lights on. Then we would be talking about Facebook and they couldn't get on Facebook in the afternoon. I would say, "So what's going on?" They said, "We can't afford our heat. We can't afford our electricity." That's what was happening, and that's what happened under this area.

So when Doug Ford and my colleagues from my caucus get upset with Hydro One, it's just insult after insult after insult after injury after injury after insult with Hydro One, and now that the government has sold most of it off and they're not being perhaps the most open and transparent with this either—because we know from the Financial Accountability Officer and we know from the Auditor General that we're going to see even more shares going towards private companies. The government had promised—they were adamant in the last election that they weren't going to do it, then they turned around and then they sold out.

What happened was, we have great greenhouses—and I know, Speaker, you have some great greenhouses in your community. I've been to your riding with you. I can tell you, I have friends who have invested a lifetime—and I'm not just talking about money, but their blood, their sweat, their tears, their heart and their soul into their greenhouse or their agricultural operation.

I'm talking about SunTech tomatoes, the little miracles from Manotick, where my friend, Bob Mitchell, is having a rough go, wondering if he should stay in Ontario or go to Mexico for his product because of the high hydro rates as a result of the policies of this government but also of Hydro One.

My friend Fernando over at Carleton Mushroom Farms is always working. He's working so hard with his family. He's in his father's footsteps with his brother, Mike, trying to make a mushroom farm succeed, and they're making it succeed. You can go into Ross's Independent and pick up their mushrooms. But the government's got to get out of their way and make it easier for them, and Hydro One, in its current iteration, is not making that happen.

When Fernando and Bob, who are trying to make ends meet and trying ensure that they have a product on the shelves at our local grocery stores in Ottawa, are confronted with these exorbitant hydro rates, I think it's an insult to them to say that Mayo Schmidt is making \$6 million. I think that sends the wrong message to our job creators and our food producers in this province.

I have Schouten farm, the largest dairy farm in eastern Ontario, and I have Foster farms, which runs the largest grain elevator in eastern Ontario.

Speaker, these are people I'm not going to represent on June 8 if I'm returned. I will just be representing the urban part of Nepean, which is inside the city of Ottawa. But they will need a strong advocate, and I have promised them that even though I will not be their MPP, I will continue to stand up for them—their rural and agrarian

way of life—and I will ensure that they get a fair shake from this government.

I don't see what's happening at Hydro One as fair.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Others can heckle me, Speaker, but at the end of the day, I came here because I wanted to make a difference. I stand here because I want to make a difference. God willing, on June 8, I will be able to make a difference.

But today, here we are, speaking about a Hydro One CEO who is the highest paid in North America, making \$6 million, when people across Ontario, in particular—and I say this, again, to the people of Carleton—are having a rough time heating and eating. And then we have these job producers, and it's making it more difficult.

I am standing here today to support my colleague Vic Fedeli, our leader in the House—my leader outside this House, Doug Ford, will be the Premier of this province—and calling for the government to reverse the changes to Hydro One CEO severances, and calling for the resignation of the entire board. I'm doing that because the people of Nepean–Carleton deserve to know that the government is on their side and that we are for the people.

In these final seconds, before I cede the floor to my colleagues, again, I just want to say to the people of Carleton: For everything that you have given me, I am eternally grateful. I will always remember all the wonderful times that we have had, both in the community and here at the Legislature. I just want to say thank you for this opportunity that you have given me and my family over these past 12 years.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to give you a history lesson about Mayo Schmidt. This guy is making \$6 million right now.

Some 80% of Ontarians said no to selling Hydro One—80%. The rates increased by 300%. Now the Liberals are thinking that lowering it by 25% is a good thing, although it went up 275%—and then the 8% of the 25% actually comes off the HST, which, by the way, was put on by the Liberals. That's the Liberals' history.

Now let's talk about the Conservatives' history, because this is important, as they stand here and talk about their party. The Conservatives, under Harris, started the privatization of hydro; make no mistake. But this is the part that's interesting to me—and I wish the Conservatives could all listen to this, because most of these guys were here. In 2014, in their platform under a white paper, they were selling off Hydro One. It was Vic Fedeli and Tim Hudak's picture that was on the front page, and it was signed off by Vic Fedeli. That was in 2014, and a lot of these same MPPs were here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock.

Again, may I remind you to refer to members of this Legislature by their riding, not by their name.

Continue.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I got it out. It's okay.

Do you know what that platform said? They were not only going to sell Hydro One; they were going to sell OPG. Think about that.

Now they're standing up in this House, day after day after day, talking about Mayo Schmidt and how he's making too much money and people are heating—if they cared about the province of Ontario and they cared about the residents of the province of Ontario, they wouldn't have been the ones who privatized hydro in the first place, which drove the rates up.

That's a little bit of history.

Listen to this—as they stand here again and do the same thing: In 2015, the NDP put a bill to cap CEO salaries. Do you know what happened? Seven PCs voted against it. Some of them are here today. Twenty of them didn't even show up. That shows you how much they cared about capping CEO salaries.

This is a good one. The Liberals will remember this. In 2013, Andrea Horwath's bill—on capped salaries. That was our bill. Our bill was to cap salaries. All the PCs, every single elected PC, joined with the Liberals to defeat it in a minority government. If the PCs had joined with the NDP on that bill, it wouldn't have been defeated and we would have the capping of CEO salaries. But they chose, because they didn't want to cap CEO salaries.

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And now you go back and you talk about the PCs. Their platform is the same as the Liberals'. They have no problem borrowing \$40 billion—no problem. But here's the problem with it: You know who is going to have to pay back that \$40 billion? You know who is going to have to pay it all back? I'm asking everybody. The Liberals are here; the PCs are here. My kids and my grandkids. You're sticking them with that bill, and they support that. So as they stand up and say what they're saying about how they care about us, well, they don't care about my kids.

And now, when you take a look at the CEO salaries—because I have to stay on the bill a bit—the CEO for Manitoba got \$409,000 per year. Mayo, he's at \$6 million. I've been raising this issue for two years. I've been doing videos in front of the Falls. I know you're all watching my videos. I know you are; you're all watching. I was doing it.

And you know what? The one video I did on Mayo Schmidt, that \$4-million salary, a million people watched that video—a million people. And then he was saying that at \$4 million, he feels our pain. Are you kidding me? How does somebody making \$4 million and \$6 million a year, probably the same amount of money that Doug Ford makes—seniors, single moms, single dads, small businesses and large business have to choose between heating and eating and trying to run a business.

The last thing I'm going to talk about, and I've only got a few seconds left: Yesterday it was brought up about their leader, Ford, talking about the greenbelt and how he wanted to pave over it. I'm going to tell you, nobody in the province of Ontario wants anybody paving over the greenbelt. We own that. It's ours. We have to support our farmers, and I'll tell you why. If you're a country or a

province and you can't feed yourself, your country or province is going to be in big trouble.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Dufferin–Caledon to speak on the motion on Hydro One executive compensation.

Simply put, the compensation for the executives at Hydro One is outrageous. It's outrageous compared to the compensation at other power utilities across Canada and it's outrageous because for years, businesses, families and seniors have been struggling with their hydro bills. They have been struggling with their hydro bills because of years of mismanagement and waste by the Liberal government.

Instead of standing up for taxpayers and Ontarians, the government has allowed the Hydro One CEO to collect a \$6-million salary. On top of that, the Hydro One board secretly changed the compensation package of the CEO to give him over \$10 million in severance. There is no end to how effective the Liberals can be in making Ontarians pay billions of dollars more than necessary for hydro.

It's never too late to do the right thing, Speaker. A great way to start would be to support this motion and recognize that the compensation for Hydro One executives is outrageous and unacceptable. If the government does not support this motion, the government needs to answer the following questions: Why do you think the \$6-million compensation for the CEO of Hydro One is fair? Did you know that the severance package for the CEO was going to be increased to \$10 million? And do you think the increase in the severance package is acceptable?

I know the people of Dufferin–Caledon know it is unacceptable, and I know they will be watching how the government votes on this motion this afternoon.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to add to this debate.

The Minister of Energy, in his remarks, used the term “incredibly irresponsible.” I want to just remind him that it was incredibly irresponsible: They are not the largest shareholder. The people of Ontario are the largest shareholder in Hydro One. I want to remind him that it was incredibly irresponsible for them to not mention the selling of Hydro One during the election last time. Some 85% of the people of Ontario did not want it to be sold, so it's incredibly irresponsible that he does that.

It's incredibly irresponsible that they borrowed \$25 billion, and that's going to balloon to \$43 billion to \$93 billion of debt. That's going to impact rates for many decades.

Will that minister be honest and tell the people that their hydro bills will actually increase after these two years? Will he be honest and tell them it went up 300% to 400%?

The other egregious thing is, just recently we heard that this Liberal government is not running a \$6.7-billion deficit, but it's actually going to be \$11.2 billion. What

will they sell this time, and how will rates not go up if they don't do something? The Liberals do not care that Ontarians could not afford their hydro rates. They ignored them until they were publicly shamed after mass hydro disconnections and families who were forced to burn wood to keep warm.

I have voiced concerns from constituents over rising hydro rates since the day I was elected, over six and a half years ago. I've put before the government specific cases where people were forced to choose between paying hydro bills or paying their rent. Sadly, people are choosing to heat or to eat.

In 2012, I brought attention to the impact of rising hydro on local businesses like Chapman's Ice Cream. At that time, Ontarians were facing an increase of 58%, and the Auditor General was reporting that we were losing \$1.8 billion that year by exporting surplus power to Quebec and the United States. Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify that myth: We don't actually give our power away; we pay them to take that—\$1.8 billion—making the businesses in the United States and Quebec twice as competitive against our Ontario businesses.

That same year, in 2012, I presented a petition for rate relief—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I am finding it rather difficult to hear what the speaker has to say, because there are too many side conversations going on. Please keep it under control.

Back to you, Bill.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thanks, Speaker. As I was saying, in 2012, I presented a petition for rate relief and against further wind development with 5,300 signatures.

In 2016, we brought attention to 59,000 disconnections. In Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, again, there were people forced to choose between heating and eating, sadly.

We've called on the government to deal with rising hydro bills in local hospitals, long-term-care homes and schools after their electricity bills spiked by as much as 40% in 2016.

Instead of putting money into better food for seniors, personal support workers or new mattresses to reduce bedsores, nursing homes are being forced to redirect \$30 million to cover hydro hikes. For one nursing home, the hikes translated into \$325 extra every month, per bed. That's more than this government spends to both feed and bathe a senior in long-term care, yet this Premier calls that fairness and caring.

Grey Bruce Health Services saw its hydro bill rise by \$350,000 a year in just one year. Sadly, it was forced to consider reducing services, such as closing the operating room in the Meaford hospital, to pay these skyrocketing hydro bills.

Hydro rates also put family campgrounds and small independent grocery stores in jeopardy. In 2011, the cost for electricity was \$8,000 per year for Pat Cottrell's campground. By 2017, it was \$37,000 a year in hydro bills. Similarly, Peter Knipfel's hydro bills for his small-

town grocery store went up by 120% since 2003, to \$119,100 a year.

Jobs are being lost, and shifts are being cut: 20% of manufacturing jobs have been wiped out in the last 20 years. Across Ontario, 300,000 jobs disappeared while companies like Caterpillar, Kellogg's, Heinz, CCL Industries, Novartis and other big players have moved out of our great province.

Recreation facilities, like curling clubs and arenas—those types of facilities that are community hubs—social service agencies and not-for-profits have all been impacted by these hydro rates.

Compare their reality with the Liberal government's reality. While Ontarians were struggling to pay hydro bills, the Liberals were running a millionaires' club at Hydro One.

The highest-paid hydro CEO, highest hydro rates and the highest debt to finance a hydro mess: The salaries are 10 times what the same person makes in Quebec and BC. He just received a \$1.7-million bonus, knowing that, again, he was paid 10 times more.

This government has no accountability and zero transparency in hydro. The legacy in hydro is going the way of many of their scandals: \$8 billion in eHealth but no eHealth; \$1.1 billion for two gas plants that were never built; \$2 billion on smart meters that don't and never did work; and they're paying a \$6.2-million salary for the Hydro One CEO. The government, in fact, rewarded the Hydro CEO with just a \$1.7-million salary raise just four weeks ago, while people out there continue to struggle under the burden of the highest hydro rates in the country.

The Minister of Energy defended the raise: "That's because he's doing such a wonderful job and he has numbers to account"—so if the CEO in BC or Hydro-Québec make \$450,000, how, using the Premier's words, is it fair that in Ontario he deserves 15 times more and yet the people of Ontario can hardly pay their hydro bills?

We have the highest hydro rates. On renewable energy, we've overpaid by \$9.2 billion, and by 2032, we'll have actually overpaid by \$133 billion. After electricity rates jumped by 300%, the Liberals borrowed another \$25 billion, ironically just before this election on June 7, so they can say they reduced the hydro bills. Let's not let them off the hook. They were the people who actually raised them 300% to 400% to give you 25% back, for two years only, of your own money. It is just a shell game, Mr. Speaker.

They don't tell you they're paying billions to dump surplus power, that they've overpaid for green energy, and that the \$25 billion is going to cost \$43 billion at the lowest end and potentially \$93 billion at the high end. Yet this Premier said, "This is good for Ontario"—the highest debt to finance the hydro mess.

Mr. Speaker, \$4 billion more a year is going to be paid in interest just because, again, they played a game, which the Auditor General has figured out and actually challenged them on. They moved money from their books onto the OPG books, and that's going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario \$4 billion. I'm not certain how the

Liberal members across the way can actually stand and say this was a good thing.

At the end of the day, it's a shame that we have a millionaires' club. We need to ensure that the people are the people that we're working for, not the Liberals. We need to bring these rates down. We need affordable hydro rates. If you agree, you will support this motion today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing that the time has expired, Mr. Fedeli has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
French, Jennifer K.
Hardeman, Ernie

Hatfield, Percy
Jones, Sylvia
MacLeod, Lisa
McDonell, Jim
Munro, Julia
Pettapiece, Randy

Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe

Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Martins, Cristina
Mauro, Bill

McGarry, Kathryn
McMeekin, Ted
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sousa, Charles
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 18; the nays are 45.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It being past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1805.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.
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Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day
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Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergente d'armes: Jacquelyn Gordon

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Hon. / L'hon. Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
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Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Ballard, Hon. / L'hon. Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (IND)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of International Trade / Ministre du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism / Ministre délégué à l'Action contre le racisme
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Seniors Affairs / Ministre des Affaires des personnes âgées
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Economic Development and Growth / Ministre du Développement économique et de la Croissance
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Des Rosiers, Hon. / L'hon. Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail

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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (IND)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Hon. / L'hon. Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Minister Responsible for Small Business / Ministre responsable des Petites Entreprises
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Minister Responsible for Accessibility / Ministre responsable de l'Accessibilité
MacLaren, Jack (IND)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of the Status of Women / Ministre de la condition féminine
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Milczyn, Hon. / L'hon. Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Housing / Ministre du Logement Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research, Innovation and Science / Ministre de la Recherche, de l'Innovation et des Sciences
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Naidoo-Harris, Hon. / L'hon. Indira (LIB)	Halton	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Early Years and Child Care / Ministre responsable de la Petite Enfance et de la Garde d'enfants
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Attorney General / Procureur général Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Hon. / L'hon. Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Hon. / L'hon. Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation / Ministre des Relations avec les Autochtones et de la Réconciliation
Vacant	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Vacant	Parkdale–High Park	
Vacant	St. Paul's	
Vacant	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Catherine Fife
Granville Anderson, James J. Bradley
Bob Delaney, Catherine Fife
Michael Harris, Monte Kwinter
Michael Mantha, Mario Sergio
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Han Dong
Yvan Baker, Toby Barrett
Mike Colle, Han Dong
Brad Duguid, Ann Hoggarth
Lisa MacLeod, Cristina Martins
John Vanthof
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Arthur Potts
Yvan Baker, Grant Crack
Lisa Gretzky, Sophie Kiwala
Sam Oosterhoff, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi, Lisa M. Thompson
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Brad Duguid, Wayne Gates
Sophie Kiwala, Cristina Martins
Sam Oosterhoff, Randy Pettapiece
Shafiq Qadri
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
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Michael Mantha, Deborah Matthews
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod
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Deborah Matthews, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Bill Walker
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