

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 73

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N° 73

1st Session
43rd Parliament

Monday
8 May 2023

1^{re} session
43^e législature

Lundi
8 mai 2023

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott
Greffier : Todd Decker

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

House Publications and Language Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 8 May 2023 / Lundi 8 mai 2023

Report, Ombudsman of Ontario

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)4053

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Andrew Dowie4053

Health care

Mme France Gélinas4053

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Trevor Jones4053

Horse racing industry

Mr. Wayne Gates4054

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy4054

Clerk of the Assembly

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong4054

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff4054

Wyndham House

Mr. Mike Schreiner4055

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Matthew Rae4055

Coronation of King Charles III

Mr. Brian Riddell4055

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Hon. Steve Clark4056

Mr. Joel Harden4056

Mr. Mike Schreiner4056

Hon. Caroline Mulroney4056

Ms. Marit Stiles4056

Mr. Stephen Blais4056

Ms. Natalie Pierre4056

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche4056

Hon. Stephen Lecce4056

Mme France Gélinas4056

Mr. Adil Shamji4056

Ms. Goldie Ghamari4056

Mr. Jeff Burch4056

Mme Lucille Collard4056

Ms. Laura Smith4057

Hon. Monte McNaughton4057

Ms. Jennifer K. French4057

Hon. Neil Lumsden4057

Mr. Nolan Quinn4057

Hon. Parm Gill4057

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo4057

Mr. Brian Riddell4057

Ms. Goldie Ghamari4057

Ms. Catherine Fife4057

QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS

Health care

Ms. Marit Stiles4057

Mrs. Robin Martin4057

Government contract

Ms. Marit Stiles4058

Hon. Kinga Surma4058

Hon. Doug Ford4059

Health care

Ms. Chandra Pasma4059

Mrs. Robin Martin4059

Mr. Joel Harden4059

Hon. Doug Ford4059

Life sciences sector

Mr. Brian Riddell4059

Hon. Victor Fedeli4060

Health care

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam4060

Mrs. Robin Martin4060

Hon. Doug Ford4060

Children's mental health services

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy4060

Hon. Stephen Lecce4061

Landlord and Tenant Board

Ms. Doly Begum4061

Hon. Doug Downey4061

Health care

Mr. Adil Shamji4062

Mrs. Robin Martin4062

Hon. Doug Ford4062

Housing

Ms. Goldie Ghamari4062

Hon. Steve Clark4063

Hon. Nina Tangri4063

Tenant protection

Mr. Terence Kernaghan4063

Hon. Steve Clark4063

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong4063

Broadband infrastructure

Mr. Ric Bresee	4064
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	4064

Health care

Ms. Bhutila Karpoche	4064
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	4064

Special-needs children

Mr. David Smith	4065
Hon. Michael Parsa.....	4065

Health care

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	4065
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	4065

Immigrants

Mr. Logan Kanapathi	4066
Hon. Michael D. Ford	4066

Nurses

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	4066
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	4067

Coronation celebration

Hon. Doug Ford	4067
----------------------	------

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	4067
-------------------------------------	------

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS**Your Health Act, 2023, Bill 60, Ms. Jones / Loi de 2023 concernant votre santé, projet de loi 60, Mme Jones**

Third reading agreed to	4068
-------------------------------	------

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS****Standing Committee on Finance and Economic
Affairs**

Mr. Ernie Hardeman	4068
Report adopted	4068

Standing Committee on the Interior

Mr. Aris Babikian	4068
Report presented	4069

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI****Assessing Fitness to Drive Act, 2023, Bill 105,
Mr. Mantha / Loi de 2023 sur l'évaluation de
l'aptitude à la conduite, projet de loi 105,
M. Mantha**

First reading agreed to.....	4069
Mr. Michael Mantha	4069

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES****Sexual Assault Prevention Month**

Hon. Michael Parsa	4069
Hon. Charmaine A. Williams	4070
Ms. Peggy Sattler	4070

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**Social assistance**

Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	4071
----------------------------	------

Addiction services

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	4071
-------------------------	------

Land use planning

Ms. Catherine Fife.....	4072
-------------------------	------

Land use planning

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	4072
-----------------------------	------

Injured workers

Ms. Doly Begum	4072
----------------------	------

Education funding

Mr. Chris Glover	4072
------------------------	------

Health care

Ms. Peggy Sattler	4073
-------------------------	------

Social assistance

Mr. Michael Mantha.....	4073
-------------------------	------

Land use planning

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	4073
-----------------------------	------

Land use planning

Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	4074
----------------------------	------

Autism treatment

Ms. Doly Begum	4074
----------------------	------

Land use planning

Ms. Doly Begum	4074
----------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR**Building More Mines Act, 2023, Bill 71, Mr. Pirie /
Loi de 2023 visant l'aménagement de davantage de
mines, projet de loi 71, M. Pirie**

Hon. George Pirie.....	4074
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4078
Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	4082
Mr. Lorne Coe.....	4082
Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	4082
Ms. Christine Hogarth	4082
Mr. Sol Mamakwa.....	4082
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	4083
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	4083
MPP Jamie West	4083
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	4092

Ms. Jennifer K. French	4092
Mr. Todd J. McCarthy	4093
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.....	4093
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4093
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff.....	4094
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	4097
Mr. Andrew Dowie.....	4097
Mr. Joel Harden	4097
Mr. Trevor Jones.....	4098
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.....	4098
Mr. Todd J. McCarthy	4098
Ms. Sandy Shaw	4098
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4101
MPP Jamie West.....	4102
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4102
Mr. Joel Harden	4102
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4102
Mr. Dave Smith	4103
Mr. Lorne Coe	4105
Mr. Joel Harden	4105
Mr. Todd J. McCarthy	4106
MPP Jamie West.....	4106
Mr. Andrew Dowie.....	4106
Ms. Sandy Shaw	4107
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam.....	4107
Mr. Todd J. McCarthy	4110
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	4110
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4110
Mr. Joel Harden	4111
Mr. Andrew Dowie.....	4111
MPP Jamie West.....	4111
Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	4111
Third reading debate deemed adjourned.....	4111

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Monday 8 May 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 8 mai 2023

The House met at 1015.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Good morning. Let us pray.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I want to acknowledge that we are meeting on lands traditionally inhabited by Indigenous peoples. We pay our respects to the many Indigenous nations who have gathered here and continue to gather here, including the Mississaugas of the Credit. Meegwetch.

This being the first Monday of the month that the House is sitting, I want to ask everyone to join in the singing of the Canadian national anthem, followed by the royal anthem. This morning, we have with us, in the Speaker's gallery, the Fairbank Public School choir, from the riding of Toronto–St. Paul's, to perform O Canada and God Save the King. Please remain standing and join them in the singing of our national and royal anthems.

Singing of the national anthem / Chant de l'hymne national.

Singing of the royal anthem / Chant de l'hymne royal.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very, very much. Members may take their seats.

1020

REPORT, OMBUDSMAN OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment, the following document was tabled: a report on the investigation into whether the Ministry of the Attorney General, Tribunals Ontario and the Landlord and Tenant Board are taking adequate steps to address delays and case backlogs at the Landlord and Tenant Board, from the Office of the Ombudsman of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Andrew Dowie: It is truly my pleasure to rise and pay tribute to the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty the Queen. People from across Canada, the Commonwealth and the world took time to watch the ancient ceremony and liturgy of the coronation. It was a remarkable moment for us to reflect on our bond to the crown and the stability and continuity it represents for Ontario's parliamentary democracy. Indeed, it was the first coronation of a Canadian head of state in seven decades.

Constitutional monarchy takes root in the foundation of our political system, and Ontario is a founding province of Canada and the Confederation. To quote the motto included on Ontario's coat of arms, "Loyal she began, loyal she remains."

On Saturday, families descended on Queen's Park for the royal fun fair, which included carnival rides, live entertainment and complementary food and beverages. Across my riding of Windsor–Tecumseh and the province, on a beautiful Saturday, people enjoyed the outdoors and took part in celebrations to mark this historic occasion.

On behalf of the people of Windsor–Tecumseh, I want to take this opportunity to wish King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla every success and good health in their reign. Long live the King.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Today is a sad day—a day that will go down in the history of our province as the day the Ford government delivered a fatal blow to our treasured medicare. Today, this Conservative government will say "goodbye" to care based on needs and "come on in" to investors who want to make money off the backs of sick people—because, make no mistake, Speaker, there is a lot of money to be made off of people who are sick, who are desperate for care in the hope of getting better. Investors know that. They know that sick people are at a vulnerable time in their lives, and it is easy to abuse that vulnerability to increase profits.

The minister says that we need the changes in Bill 60 to decrease wait times. But look at our hospital job boards: There are over 36,000 health care job vacancies in our hospitals right now. How are they supposed to recruit when for-profit clinics will offer a Monday-to-Friday job, 9 to 5? It will make the wait for hospital care increase tremendously. But the rich and powerful friends of our Premier will have faster access, using their credit cards to get to the front of the line, while the rest of us hold our hats.

To my MPP colleagues: Do the right thing. Vote down Bill 60.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Trevor Jones: On Saturday, May 6, we were privileged to witness a rare moment in history: the coronation of our new monarch, His Majesty King Charles III. This special occasion was described beautifully by Her Honour the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, who said, "We come together to

celebrate the beginning of a new reign, to celebrate the unifying power of the crown, and to acknowledge a moment of both continuity and change.”

Although we came from many places, we are united by common values in duty, determination, compassion, respect for diversity and respect for human rights.

Our system of parliamentary democracy, supported by the crown, is fundamental to our freedoms and our prosperity. As we embrace reconciliation, we’re aspiring to do better, especially by one another. These very values were seen in action as the closing of this historic ceremony drew near. Thousands of people and their families from our communities came together to celebrate on the south lawn of Queen’s Park to enjoy fellowship, free amusement rides and a delicious taste of fresh food produced right here in Ontario, thanks to the generosity of local community leaders and our local businesses.

I wish to sincerely thank everyone who volunteered their time on a sunny afternoon in the service of fellow Ontarians. These are a few of the values of our crown and our King. Long live the King.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: The Fort Erie Race Track is the jewel of my community, but it’s under attack. Woodbine Entertainment Group is directly targeting the Fort Erie track, hoping to ultimately put it out of business. This behaviour has gone so far that the Fort Erie track has filed a complaint with the Canadian trade commission on targeted anti-competition behaviour from Woodbine.

Ontario tracks should be working together for the betterment of horse racing. Woodbine is actively restricting the ability of a horse stabled at Woodbine to be eligible to run at Fort Erie. Woodbine refuses to work proactively with Fort Erie in the scheduling of their Triple Crown races, directly ignoring the requests of Fort Erie to create a structure that would allow both Triple Crown races to be highlighted in the province of Ontario, and they continue to run B-track-level races even though they receive funding as an A-level track.

Woodbine has been granted tens of millions of dollars in purse money from the provincial government. Woodbine uses those government funds and their government-granted monopoly on wagering to do whatever they like, ignoring the impact it has on other tracks, making it very difficult for other tracks to achieve their goals or even operate. There’s no word other than “bullying” to describe this behaviour. Woodbine is bullying smaller tracks and using their power within this government and their regulatory body to get away with it.

It’s time this government steps up, puts an end to Woodbine’s behaviour and truly supports horse racing across Ontario.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I, too, wish to rise in the House today to acknowledge the coronation of our new sovereign, the King of Canada and the Commonwealth, Charles III, and his wife, Queen Camilla. Saturday, May

6, was coronation day, and I was proud to begin the day in my riding of Durham at a coronation breakfast with veterans at the Bowmanville Legion. That was followed by a wonderful street fest, Maplefest, right on King Street West in front of my constituency office, where thousands of children and adults were celebrating the coronation day and the annual Maplefest festival.

I was also proud to note that many, many hundreds gathered here at Queen’s Park on the south lawn to join Premier Ford and the Lieutenant Governor in celebration of the coronation. While at the Bowmanville coronation breakfast at the Legion hall on King Street West, we viewed not only scenes of the coronation from London, England, but we also watched with pride as the Lieutenant Governor gave her remarks to Ontarians. And I was proud to note that Indigenous leaders were welcomed with an audience with King Charles III on Saturday, along with Governor General Mary Simon.

As the member for Windsor–Tecumseh noted, Ontario is a founding province of Confederation: Loyal she began, loyal she remains.

Long live the King.

CLERK OF THE ASSEMBLY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to take this opportunity to say a thank you to a very special person who has contributed so much to making the Legislative Assembly run smoothly and successfully—under Todd Decker’s watch.

In November 2016, Todd Decker was appointed Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. As the Clerk of the House, Mr. Decker is the principal adviser at the table in the legislative chamber. He is responsible for ensuring the provision of consistent, expert, confidential and non-partisan procedural advice and assistance to the Speaker, members of provincial Parliament and colleagues in other jurisdictions.

Mr. Decker conducts daily procedural briefings with the Speaker, as well as weekly presiding officer meetings. In addition to his House duties, Mr. Decker is the chief administrative officer of the Office of the Assembly. In that capacity, he is responsible for strategic planning, development and implementation of programs and policy. He is responsible for a staff of 445 employees who provide procedural and administrative support to this House and its committees, including security, building management, library and information services, and educational outreach.

1030

Thank you, Todd Decker, for being loyal, hard-working and bringing your expertise to this place. Congratulations on your retirement and enjoy your new-found freedom.

Applause.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Speaker, this past Saturday, Canada joined nations across the Commonwealth in celebrating the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty the Queen Camilla. Whether in festivities here at Queen’s Park to events in Niagara, people across

the province celebrated the first coronation of a head of state in the Commonwealth in some 70 years. The prayer of King Charles III, an important element of the liturgy of the coronation service on Saturday, especially spoke to me as a person of faith here at Queen's Park:

God of compassion and mercy
whose Son was sent not to be served but to serve,
give grace that I may find in thy service perfect freedom
and in that freedom knowledge of thy truth.

Grant that I may be a blessing to all thy children, of every faith and conviction,
that together we may discover the ways of gentleness
and be led into the paths of peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Speaker, this prayer of the King meant a lot to me and, I know, to many in our land. I wish to conclude by reiterating the remarks of the Premier at his official statement on the coronation when he said, "As the King officially takes on his new role, I have no doubt that he will build on his mother's legacy of duty, service and dedication to his people. On behalf of all Ontarians, I wish King Charles III and the Queen every success in their reign."

Long live the King. God save the King. May the King reign forever.

WYNDHAM HOUSE

Mr. Mike Schreiner: Good morning, Speaker. I rise to thank Wyndham House for the vital work they do in Guelph to support vulnerable youth. I had the honour last week to join Wyndham House, the mayor of Guelph, the warden of Wellington county and community members for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to open an eight-bedroom supportive housing project for youth experiencing homelessness.

At the first point-in-time count for homelessness in Guelph in 2014, there were 90 youth experiencing homelessness. That number is now down to five, putting Guelph on track to be the first community in Ontario to end youth homelessness.

I want to thank Wyndham House, the city and the county, the provincial and the federal governments, and generous donors who supported this project.

Studies show that for every \$10 invested in permanent supportive housing, the government saves \$21.75 in other costs. More importantly, housing stabilizes and improves people's lives. I'm proud that our community has come together with a Yes In My Backyard campaign, securing support for this housing project and two other permanent supportive housing projects.

I urge the government to increase funding for supportive housing in communities across Ontario, because the return on investment is priceless.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Matthew Rae: I'm delighted today to speak about a momentous occasion that took place last Saturday: the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty the Queen. Many Ontarians woke up early to witness this historic event that unfolded on our screens. As we witnessed the grandeur and the majesty of this solemn occasion, it was impossible not to feel a sense of awe and wonder. It was a moment when we were reminded of the rich traditions and history that bind us together as a nation and the connections we share.

These connections extend to the city of Stratford and the St. James Anglican Church. As recounted by Reverend Rob Lemon, the church purchased a sizable piece of the magnificent blue carpet that was used during the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, following a successful application by Archdeacon Lightburn, the priest at the time. That piece of carpet remains on display to this day in St. James' sanctuary, a physical reminder of our bond to the crown.

The coronation served not only as an occasion for celebration and reflection, but it is also a reminder of the enduring strength and constancy of our parliamentary democracy and the constitutional monarchy. It's a system of government that has stood the test of time and has ensured that our nation remains stable and prosperous.

On behalf of the people of Perth-Wellington, I wish King Charles and Her Majesty the Queen every success in their reign. May they lead our province, country and the Commonwealth with wisdom, grace and strength. Long live the King.

CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III

Mr. Brian Riddell: Like millions of others around the world, I was honoured to witness the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty the Queen Consort at Westminster Abbey on Saturday morning. The historical event marked the first coronation of a Canadian head of state in seven decades. It was a spectacular event.

It was also a time to reflect and to remember the passing last September of the King's beloved mother, Queen Elizabeth II, at the age of 96. May she rest in eternal peace.

In my riding of Cambridge, the coronation was celebrated in a variety of ways. Those who were at Churchill Park on Sunday afternoon may have heard the singing of God Save the King as the South Waterloo Naval Veterans Association gathered for their annual Battle of the Atlantic ceremony. Like many landmarks around the world, the Cambridge—at the city hall there, it was lit in green to celebrate the pomp and pageantry taking place across the pond.

I know of several royal watchers in Cambridge who gathered around their televisions early Saturday morning to witness the crowning of the King and the Queen Consort, as I did also, and to take in the splendour of a once-in-a-lifetime event. Mr. Speaker, Saturday's coronation was a spectacular event in our history as King Charles III completed his—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. The time for members' statements has now expired.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Steve Clark: May is Building Safety Month, and in the gallery today, we have Colin Brook, the executive chair of the Ontario Large Municipalities Chief Building Officials. We've got three representatives from OBOA: Joyanne Beckett, the president; Shawn Merriman, the treasurer; and Lawrence Wagner, the CEO. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Joel Harden: You know me as a proud supporter of Carleton Ravens anything, and I'm proud to tell this House that Jennifer Brenning, the director of recreation and athletics for Carleton University, is here with us today. It's good to see you. Corey Grant, the head football coach for the Carleton University Ravens, is also here. It's great to see you. And my good friend Mohammad Ali Aumeer, one of Canada's best hip-hop artists, is here with our health care advocates. It's nice to see all of you.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I'd like to welcome everybody from Ontario University Athletics who are here at Queen's Park today, with a special shout-out to Scott McRoberts, the athletic director at the University of Guelph. Go, Gryphons.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I want to recognize York-Simcoe residents Rosemary and Angelo Boutsis, who are the parents of page Nicholas Boutsis, who is here also with his grandmother Yota and siblings Alexander, Gianfranco and Alessia. Premier Ford and I had the opportunity to meet Nicholas and he has a bright future.

Ms. Marit Stiles: I'm very pleased to welcome to this House some of our greatest leaders in the Ontario health care system right now: Michael Hurley from the CUPE Ontario council of health care unions, Erin Ariss from Ontario Nurses' Association, and Natalie Mehra from the Ontario Health Coalition. Thank you so much for being here with us all today.

Mr. Stephen Blais: I would like to recognize councillor Colleen James from the region of Waterloo. Councillor James will be debating an important motion tomorrow at regional council to support Bill 5, the Stopping Harassment and Abuse by Local Leaders Act.

Ms. Natalie Pierre: I'd like to recognize today's page captain Senna Chan Carusone from Burlington. She's here today with her parents, Soo Chan Carusone and Tony Chan Carusone, and grandparents Ricky Chan and Penny Chan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

1040

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: It's my pleasure to welcome students, part of the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet summer program. We have Tenzin Dolker, placed with MPP Patrice Barnes; Tseyang Palmo, with MPP Trevor Jones; Tenzin Kelsang Tawo, with MPP Christine Hogarth; and Tenzin Wangmo, with me.

I'd also like to welcome from Parkdale-High Park my constituent Andrew Goldberg, who is here for question period.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to give two quick shout-outs today. The first is to the amazing and impressive students, principal and staff from Thistletown Collegiate Institute. Thank you for being here from the centre of Black excellence. Thank you all for joining us in the people's House.

And a special shout-out to Zach Barnes, the son of Patrice Barnes, the parliamentary assistant, who starts today at the Ministry of the Solicitor General. Good luck.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to welcome a few of the people who are here in opposition of Bill 60, starting with Angela Boakye, Mary Jo Nabuurs, Michelle Barraclough, Helen Hegedus, Nadine MacKinnon, Thea Dorsey, Virginia McGill Odette, Ann Peel, Michelle Robidoux, Seena Mozaffari, Alanna Kong, Amrit Koonar, Alexandra Radkewycz, Elizabeth Burrows, Aleksander Ivovic, John McVay, Maria Chinelli, Pegah Edalati, Mary Brown, Mike Lawler, Lisa Kilpatrick, Nancy Olivieri, Patricia Johnston, Genevieve Farago, Julia Lucas, Nina Nolan, Zenaida Rialubin, Gaye-Frances Alexander, Cheryl Waithe, Sue Hotte, Salah Shadir, Maureen Aslin, Brit Hancock, Lubaba Gemma, Maddy Fast, Mohammad Ali Aumeer, Lance Livingstone, Ron Vanderwalker, Nathan Zhu, Cathy Miller and many more.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Unless there are any objections, I'll continue with introduction of visitors.

Mr. Adil Shamji: On behalf of patients across Ontario, I wish to welcome Natalie Mehra from the Ontario Health Coalition, Michael Hurley from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Erin Ariss from the Ontario Nurses' Association—and a special welcome to every single person in this chamber here today who is showing their opposition to Bill 60.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There can be no political statements associated with introductions of visitors. The next time it happens, I'll cut you off in mid-sentence.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to introduce a number of very special guests to the Legislature today from the great riding of Carleton: my constituency staff. We have my executive assistant, Candice Coates; my caseworker, John Morris; Anne Beach; Sonia Henry; Gabriella Campagna; Paul Giles; and, of course, my legislative assistant, Corey Scott. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jeff Burch: I'd like to welcome my son, Jackson, to the Legislature this morning. He served as a page last year, and today is his 15th birthday. Happy birthday, Jackson.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: From Ottawa, I would like to welcome Sue Hylland. She's the director of sport services at the University of Ottawa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Laura Smith: I would like to introduce Mr. Gerald Ding, the VP of information technology at Stanford International College and a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces. I would like to very much welcome him to Queen's Park: Mr. Gerald Ding.

Hon. Monte McNaughton: I'm really honoured today to have the interns from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development at Queen's Park to watch question period. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm very pleased to say that, today, the page captain is from Oshawa. Sanskrati Goyal is our page captain, and she's joined by her family today: her father, Mohit Kumar Goyal; her mother, Sonika Agrawal; brother, Samarth Goyal; and uncle, Ankit Agrawal. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Neil Lumsden: I'd also like to welcome the staff of the OUA led by Gord Grace, his leadership group and all the members that make up the OUA with respect to athletic directors and all the people who do all the great work in the universities across our province.

Mr. Nolan Quinn: I'd like to welcome from my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry my oldest daughter, Norah, who is skipping school this week to watch dad work.

Hon. Parm Gill: I just want to take a moment and welcome all of the ministry interns, who are going to be working in different ministers' offices over the summer, and a special welcome to Khalil and Matthew, who are going to be interns with the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction. I want to wish all of the 40 interns all the best over the next few months as they learn and continue to make contributions.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: I'd like to welcome this morning the guests here from PeerWorks: Allyson Theodorou, Andrea Schaefer, Tyrone Gamble, Calvin Prowse, Colene Allen, Elizabeth Tremblay, Rachel Bromberg. Welcome to your House.

Mr. Brian Riddell: This morning, I would like to introduce Lisa, Brian and Brayden Vermet, family members of legislative page Olivia Vermet from St. Brigid Catholic school in Cambridge. Welcome to this House.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I just want to recognize and introduce a very special guest here from the riding of Carleton. Mr. Jeffrey Morris was named the Ontario Community Newspapers Association columnist of the year for his column "From the Other Side," which was published in the Manotick Messenger. It's a story about an immigrant's journey from Iran to Canada—who happens to be my father. Welcome, and congratulations on your award.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to welcome my friend Colleen James to Queen's Park. Welcome to your House, Colleen.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I believe that concludes our introduction of visitors for this morning.

I understand the member for Ottawa–Vanier has a point of order.

M^{me} Lucille Collard: I do, Mr. Speaker, and thank you. I seek unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent

members as a group to respond during statements by the ministry and responses today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Madame Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond during statements by the ministry and responses today. Agreed? I heard a no.

It is now time for oral questions.

QUESTION PERIOD

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Marit Stiles: Good morning, Speaker. This question is for the Premier.

I want to welcome health care workers, advocates and ordinary Ontarians who are here in the galleries today to witness one of the greatest threats to the right to public health care that we've seen in our province for generations. Under Bill 60, we're going to see even more emergency room closures because there won't be enough staff to keep them open. People will pay more for care as investor profits are put first, and we're going to see a two-tier system where a select few will jump to the front of the line and everyone else is going to have to wait even longer.

Knowing this, will the Premier drop his plan for two-tier investor-driven health care?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the parliamentary assistant, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Over the past 30 years in Ontario, over 800 community clinics have provided health care services to Ontarians, paid for with their OHIP cards, in a timely and convenient way. Many Ontarians have already had positive experiences in receiving care with these clinics, which are often closer to their homes. Care in community clinics will be expanded if Bill 60 passes, to ensure more access to timely care for Ontarians.

1050

The NDP seems to be more concerned with fighting for the status quo. This Premier and this government are fighting to ensure that Ontarians get timely access to care.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I want to remind the government members opposite that it's not just the people in this room who are watching carefully; it's people all over Ontario. From Thunder Bay to Minden, from Chesley to Kingston, they are all rallying against Bill 60. They know that this bill is going to make their health care worse and not better, and they're either going to have their voices heard today or at the next election.

Will the Premier listen to the voices of Ontarians or will he continue to put their health care ahead of companies trying to make a profit on the backs of sick people?

Mrs. Robin Martin: When it comes to your health, the status quo is no longer acceptable. Our government is taking bold action to eliminate surgical backlogs and reduce wait times for publicly funded surgeries and procedures. Ontario has a three-step plan that better integrates and uses community surgical diagnostic centres and their state-of-the-art facilities to speed up how quickly people are able to get surgeries and procedures using their health care card, never their credit card.

This plan will add more than 14,000 OHIP-insured cataract surgeries each year, expand community-based clinics, perform more surgeries such as cataract surgeries, MRI and CT scan imaging, and expand surgeries closer to home—more convenient for people.

If the NDP want more transparency and accountability, they should be supporting the changes brought forward in Bill 60.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Bold action, Speaker? Bold action to sell off our public health care system; bold action to put sick people at the back of the line.

Speaker, he doesn't have to take our word for it. We've already seen private delivery of surgical services fail Canadians. Quebec handed billions to private health care providers, only to see their workforce depleted and exhausted, with higher costs and worse outcomes for patients. BC changed course because of rampant illegal overbilling by private for-profit providers.

Speaker, the Premier has a chance to stop this scheme before it's too late. And so, back to the Premier: Will he pull Bill 60 and instead invest in our health care workers, our public hospitals and patient care?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite. I would also like to quote the president of the OMA, Rose Zacharias, who said, "Experience elsewhere has shown that providing outpatient surgeries and procedures in the community actually greatly improves patient experience. Patients get their surgeries sooner, have lower rates of infection and get to go home the same day."

These kinds of things are also supported and have been said by our Auditor General here in Ontario. Ontario needs to make changes to support patient care better, to make sure patients get access to care quickly, and that is what this government is going to do. We're putting patients at the centre of care.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACT

Ms. Marit Stiles: Ontarians know a bad deal when they see one, and this government's secret 95-year lease of public parkland to an international corporate conglomerate so they can put up a private luxury spa has all the markings of a bad deal for taxpayers, not to mention the estimated \$650 million of public money that's going to be spent subsidizing the spa and a massive parking lot. I mean, that has got to be one of the most expensive parking lots in Ontario's history.

Speaker, if this is such a good deal for the people of Ontario, why is this Premier keeping the details a total secret?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply for the government, the Minister of Infrastructure.

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you to the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Speaker, the public was very clear. Right now, we have an Ontario Place that is sitting there, that is not enjoyed by the public 365 days of the year. We are seeing a \$500-million private capital investment into Ontario Place. We are seeing a brand new facility, 12 acres of public realm space on the west island itself and ongoing maintenance. Why is ongoing annual maintenance important? So that we don't have an Ontario Place like we have today that is falling apart, that is being flooded. We will make sure that there will be a beautiful Ontario Place for generations and generations and families—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order. The supplementary question.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Speaker, I don't buy it and I don't think many Ontarians out there do, either. They know that this is a good deal for Therme and a bad deal for them.

It's been revealed that the government is now working on a sole-sourced backroom deal with Zlatko Starkovski and his nebulous company Ontario Live.

To the Premier: Does he or does anyone in this government have an existing or a past connection with Mr. Starkovski?

Hon. Kinga Surma: We were very clear with the public two weeks ago when we announced the holistic vision for Ontario Place, which will include a brand new, state-of-the-art stage that can be enjoyed 365 days of the year, a 43-acre public park that the public will be able to enjoy at all times of the year, a wellness centre as well as a brand new Science Centre with additional exhibition space for families to enjoy.

Again, back to the basics: Do we just leave Ontario Place as is so that it can continue to fall into disrepair and continue to be flooded, or do we bring it back to life and make it a wonderful place for families? I think the choice is very clear.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The final supplementary.

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Premier and his minister don't want to answer the question, and I wonder why. It turns out it's been reported that Starkovski does have a connection to the Premier's family. In fact, Starkovski is "a savvy political operator with a complicated business history."

Now, another Conservative insider, Carmine Nigro—who was appointed by this government, by the way, to be chair of Ontario Place, who is a good friend of the Premier and attended his family's wedding reception—is brokering a backroom deal with Starkovski—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Government side, come to order. Stop the clock.

Hon. Doug Ford: God forbid I have a friend at the wedding.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government side will come to order so I can hear the member who is seeking to ask the question.

Start the clock. Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Marit Stiles: The Premier just said, “God forbid I have a friend at the wedding.” Well, not just any friend, Speaker, not just any friend: This is Carmine Nigro, who was appointed by this government to be the chair of Ontario Place—after he was appointed to be the head of the LCBO, by the way. And he’s a good friend of the Premier, and is brokering a backroom deal right now with Starkovski.

My question to the Premier is, does he have any idea how bad it looks to have one family friend brokering a deal with another family friend on behalf of his government?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: I can see the Leader of the Opposition is into gutter politics, doing nothing. The NDP have done nothing for 10 years, along with their buddies the Liberals. That’s the reason they got annihilated in the election, because they do absolutely nothing.

We’re going to build Ontario Place. Mark my words, Mr. Speaker, every single person over there, what they’re going to do when we’ve built a beautiful amphitheatre, when we’ve built a beautiful water park and we add beaches and we add parks—guess what? Every one of them is going to show up there to either a concert or to wander through or bring their friends. We aren’t a government that sits around. We’re a government that gets things done, unlike they did for 15 years that destroyed the province.

1100

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Chandra Pasma: Wait times for breast cancer surgeries in Ottawa have stretched so long that women have been driving to Quebec and paying out of pocket just to get surgery. And now, last week, we learned from the Ottawa Citizen that one of the Ottawa Hospital’s breast cancer surgeons was getting only two hours of operating time a month.

Why is this government pushing ahead with its privatization agenda when publicly funded operating rooms have been sitting unused while surgeons and patients have desperately needed access?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

Member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Our government knows that wait times for surgeries and diagnostic tests have been increasing year over year. We’re not okay with the status quo. We know that more work needs to be done. That is why we are passing—hopefully, today—our innovative plan, which includes the introduction of the Your Health Act, which will help eliminate surgical backlogs and reduce wait times so Ontarians can have easier and faster

access to the care they need when they need it. That’s what it’s about.

Now, the member opposite knows that our government has invested almost a billion dollars in the surgical backlog, trying to clear the backlog of surgeries from COVID, and we managed to get it down to pre-pandemic levels. But that still means too many people are waiting for care too long, and that’s not good enough for this government. We’re going to make sure people get access to care in a timely and convenient way.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for Ottawa Centre.

Mr. Joel Harden: Let’s review what this government’s innovation agenda actually is for public health care in Ottawa: First, they allow a for-profit clinic to operate inside our public health care system. Every weekend, they’ve been bringing in surgical equipment from Toronto. Colleagues, do you call that innovation?

Interjection: No.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. The second thing they do in Ottawa: They poach nurses from inside our public ORs for this clinic. They do nothing as this happens. They don’t acknowledge approving it or any responsibility for it. Does that sound like innovation to you, colleagues?

Interjection: No.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. And third, as my colleague just said, they give a surgeon two hours of OR time a month for breast cancer patients, forcing them to go down the highway to Montreal and pay out of pocket for life-saving care. Does that sound like innovation?

Interjection: Absolutely not.

Mr. Joel Harden: Okay. So look, let’s call this agenda and Bill 60 what it is: It is not innovation; it is sabotage. And we see right through it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier to reply.

Hon. Doug Ford: It’s a real shame, hearing the two members from Ottawa criticizing their hospital, because that’s what they’re doing. They’re criticizing one of the best CEOs in the province, in my opinion: Cameron Love. I had a discussion with him, and Mr. Speaker, you see the increase of backlogged surgeries go up by 30%. This is about getting rid of the backlog, making sure we help people get well again. But to sit there and criticize their own hospital—and, by the way, we’re putting \$9 billion into that hospital.

LIFE SCIENCES SECTOR

Mr. Brian Riddell: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Ontario is home to the largest life sciences sector in Canada, which employs thousands of workers in a high-skilled job market. But with competition growing from south of the border and in other parts of the world, we need to remain competitive if we’re going to continue attracting these important life-saving investments.

Speaker, will the minister please provide an update on how the government is continuing to attract these critical

investments in the life sciences sector while also ensuring that services that are made in Ontario benefit all Ontarians?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Last week, with the Premier, we were thrilled to welcome Moderna's multi-million-dollar partnership with Novocol Pharma in Cambridge. They will expand vaccine manufacturing in Cambridge and ensure faster, more reliable access to life-saving vaccines. Not only will this investment create good-paying jobs, it will provide our health care workers and families with more reliable access to life-saving vaccines, helping to ensure we no longer have to rely on other jurisdictions to keep us safe.

Speaker, with the \$4-million investment through our Ontario Together Fund, Novocol will add to their 500-plus highly skilled workers. It's hard to keep up with the billions in life science investments: Sanofi, Roche, Omnia-Bio, AstraZeneca, Novartis; this list goes on and on, Speaker. The momentum of investments by these companies is a vote of confidence in our life-saving sector.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. Brian Riddell: Thank you to the minister for his answer. There's no doubt that Ontario's booming life sciences sector has contributed to the province's economic prosperity, resulting in better health outcomes for all Ontarians. But in order to continue attracting game-changing investments, Ontario needs to demonstrate that it is able to compete with our jurisdictions and to show that we are open for business.

Speaker, will the minister please elaborate on what our government is doing to secure Ontario's standing as a global pinnacle in the innovation of life sciences and health sectors?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, under the previous government, Ontario could not compete for investments in the life sciences sector. We were left at the mercy of other jurisdictions for critical medicines, especially during desperate times like COVID. But now, with over 70,000 skilled employees generating more than \$64 billion in annual revenue and \$11 billion in global exports, we've attracted record investments and jobs, with more than \$3 billion in investments in just the last two years. Our government also released the province's first Life Sciences Strategy in over a decade, which includes a \$15-million Life Sciences Innovation Fund.

Speaker, think of where we were when the pandemic struck. We had almost zero PPE being built in Ontario. Today, we're at 74%, and tomorrow, when the nitrile gloves are built in London, we'll be at 94% of all PPE manufactured.

HEALTH CARE

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: My constituent Lorrie's best friend urgently needs an MRI, but hospital wait-lists are now months long. She called an advertised for-profit clinic and was told that for \$795 she can get an MRI within 48 hours. This entirely contradicts the Premier's promise

to Ontarians, which is that they would never have to pay for health care with their credit card. Why did the Premier break his promise?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you very much for the question. As the member opposite knows, we have the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act here in Ontario, and patients cannot be charged for publicly funded OHIP services. If a patient has a concern, they can certainly raise that by contacting the office—I think protectpublichealthcare.ca is the website.

You're raising an issue. Somebody has offered to charge this person, but this person can receive publicly funded services and will receive publicly funded services more quickly if we pass Bill 60 and put in more clinics.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: That promise has been broken, and clearly we're not getting an answer.

Blythe, a constituent and a health care professional, asks, "Why are we paying taxes for health care when the government consistently underspends by \$1.6 billion? The Premier must stop giving his friends pay raises and fund our public health care system."

Will the Premier listen, then take action, stop Bill 60 and finally stop privatizing the people's public health care?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Mr. Speaker, there's no government in the history of this country that's put more into health care than we have. It's an all-time high of \$81 billion. I know the NDP can't add one plus one, but it's \$81 billion. We've increased it by \$20 billion; it's unheard of. We've had 60,000 new nurses registered since we've been in office, and 8,000 doctors have registered since we've been in office. Last year was a record-setting year for new nurses at an amount of 12,000. We're building 52 major hospital expansions or brand new hospitals, which you neglected for 15 years.

1110

We're fixing health care. We're ending this hallway health care that you created, and we're bringing health care back to the standards of a world-class health care system—the best in the world.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: My question is for the Minister of Education. When students feel safe, welcome and included, they are more likely to be actively engaged in classroom learning and participation. However, many children and youth are struggling with mental health challenges which make school and other aspects of their life difficult. To help our students thrive, they need to be

equipped with knowledge about mental health and know where they can get help when they need it.

It is vital that the mental health and well-being of our students continues to be the top priority of our government. The need for more support is greater than ever. Can the minister please explain what our government is doing to expand mental health literacy for our students?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: I want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for her exceptional work in promoting health in the classroom. I'd be remiss to also give a message of gratitude, I think on behalf of all parliamentarians, to the member from Burlington for her leadership in this House, in this province and country, advancing mental health literacy for the next generation. We are inspired through her work, and because of her motion, we're standing today proudly to advance the cause of mental health literacy, mandating it across the curriculum, including strengthening it in grades 7 and 8 for our teachers and for our students, as well as mandatory learning in grade 10. Connecting it with the real-life skills, young people can now use part of this curriculum in grade 10 careers as they start to give thought to higher learning post-secondary, skilled trades learning and to come up with a useful tool kit of ways by which they can manage stress and angst in their life.

Speaker, I also want to affirm that part of this announcement is the expansion of funding. Under our Premier's leadership, we've increased funding by 550%, a positive step forward as we help to ensure the success and the health of children—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary question?

M^{me} Dawn Gallagher Murphy: Thank you to the minister for that response. It is great to hear about the important measures that our government is implementing to ensure that students have the tools and confidence to help them succeed.

Our government understands that students need access to consistent and reliable mental health supports in our schools. Previous investments made by our government into student mental health initiatives have been significant and well received. Just this past Friday, I met with the co-founders of the Bully Free Community Alliance of York region in my constituency office to discuss mental health supports for students, and this initiative was very well received.

But we all know that more needs to be done and should be done to help and support students and their families beyond the school year. Can the minister please explain how our government is delivering on the commitment to expand access to mental health professionals and services?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: We want to make sure that no child has to face mental health in silence. We want to make sure that parents know that there are resources and capacity in a system that is prepared to step up to support young people.

When you compare the former Liberal government peak of spending in mental health in schools, we were

around \$18 million per year. Today, under our government's leadership, we've increased funding to \$114 million, a 550% increase in mental health. I accept fully that we have to keep going, keep investing, keep lifting standards and keep supporting these kids, because demands are rising—the member is absolutely right.

As part of the announcement we made last week, and thanks to the leadership of the member from Burlington, we are going to be funding summer learning to create an annualized experience, access 12 months a year. The system wasn't designed for kids. Kids would have access to a psychologist, a psychotherapist till June and then have to pivot to community in the summer. We're going to expand capacity this year, add \$14 million next year and \$16 million the year after to ensure kids have dependable access to mental health in every community across Ontario.

LANDLORD AND TENANT BOARD

Ms. Doly Begum: My question is to the Attorney General. The Ombudsman's investigation into delays at the Landlord and Tenant Board was a damning indictment of this government's failure to provide justice to tenants and landlords. The Conservatives have had five years to fix the Landlord and Tenant Board, yet this report shows that the government has made the problem worse. Delays at the LTB have increased, and the number of people waiting for hearings has doubled to 38,000 people.

This government has accepted all the Ombudsman's 61 recommendations to fix the LTB. When do you plan to implement those recommendations?

Hon. Doug Downey: I appreciate the opportunity to address the Ombudsman's report, which is well received.

I'll remind the member opposite that the Landlord and Tenant Board—the data that he is using was from a previous moment in time. But let me tell you this, and I'm going to quote the Ombudsman, where he says that a factor was the transition of government in 2018. The Landlord and Tenant Board should not have been in that precarious a situation before the 2018 election. So it was a mess when we got it.

What he's recommending is that we add more adjudicators. Well, we're doubling the number of adjudicators. That is done. The NDP did not support us.

The Ombudsman says we should add more resources to the back office staff. Well, when we brought that forward, the NDP opposed it. We did it anyway.

We are fixing the Landlord and Tenant Board for all Ontarians, and I wish the NDP would support us on one of the many things that the Ombudsman has highlighted that we're already doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Doly Begum: That was not an answer to the 38,000 people waiting. You've had five years to implement it, but you just blame the Liberal government. Yes, they made a mistake, and it was horrible, but you have had five years to change that. You did not.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is a mess. Tenants are waiting up to two years to get their landlords to do basic repairs, stop harassing them, to deal with vermin. Landlords are waiting for months—if not years—just for a hearing while they lose on rent or lose their homes because they cannot keep up with their mortgages. This system isn't working for anybody, and they have had five years to fix that.

Speaker, my question is, can this government actually commit to making those changes that the Ombudsman has recommended? Because Ontarians deserve a Landlord and Tenant Board that actually is working right now for Ontarians.

Hon. Doug Downey: I wasn't blaming the former Liberal government. It was so obvious: the Ombudsman blamed the former Liberal government.

But let me be clear, Mr. Speaker: The member is asking, will we do the things the Ombudsman is saying we should do? Well, we've already done most of the things that he's told us to do. We've doubled the number of adjudicators. We've supported back office staff. He said technology was failing when this government came to power. Well, this government spent \$28.5 million on a new state-of-the-art system. It's working very well, and they opposed it.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Adil Shamji: For the Premier: Bill 60 is reckless, incomplete and poorly conceived. It ignores the root causes of the problems in our health care system and fails to prioritize patient health over private wealth. Bill 60 could have been salvaged, but of 45 amendments I proposed, all were thrown out. When the government was asked to ensure that the bill allow Indigenous consultation, they said no. When they were asked to establish conflict-of-interest rules for directors who issue licences, they said no. They said no to protections against upselling, up-charging, profiteering and cycling of health workers out of the public hospitals.

Ontarians are outraged. I know this. I know government members are hearing it from their constituents, because when their constituents don't hear back from them, they reach out to me instead.

So to every government member: Who will have the courage to listen to the people of Ontario and vote against Bill 60?

And to the Premier: Since this government isn't serving the interests of Ontarians, whose interest is it actually serving?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. Although, I have to say, I get back to all my constituents—I know my colleagues do the same thing—and I haven't really heard what you're suggesting.

In fact, Bill 60 actually expands oversight and patient protections, when it comes to Your Health. As you know, we've had 800 community clinics operating in Ontario for

many, many years. Bill 60 brings them into the health care system and integrates them with all of the other parts of the health care system, which will enable more of that oversight.

1120

But lots of things in there also protect people from the kinds of things you're suggesting, like upselling. You now have to post any uninsured charges both online and in person. Every surgical and diagnostic centre must have a process for receiving and responding to patient complaints. Patients cannot be denied access to treatment if they don't purchase uninsured services. We're expanding the oversight of the Patient Ombudsman to include integrated community health services.

These safeguards are in place to ensure that no one has to pay—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. And the supplementary question.

Mr. Adil Shamji: That's not what stakeholder after stakeholder said during public hearings. What this bill actually allows is the simplest surgeries to be done for the highest price. They will be funded by our tax dollars—and it is the shareholders who will be laughing all the way to the bank. Meanwhile, patients will be left with lighter wallets since this government refused to put protections against upselling and up-charging in place. They refused. I find that strange, when the Premier insists patients will never pay with their credit card even though they already are.

So the bottom line is, this government isn't about protecting patients; they aren't about protecting our public health care system. All they are doing is protecting shareholders. They're letting private for-profit companies have unfettered access to the demand that exists in our health care system.

So, Mr. Speaker, why won't the Premier recognize the need to clear the surgical backlog and protect patients, as well as our public health care system, at the same time?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Premier.

Hon. Doug Ford: Under their government, they created 800 diagnostic centres, which I agree with. Just imagine if we took the diagnostic centres out of Ontario—you talk about a backlog. We need to add to that. And I find it very ironic, coming from the member from Don Valley East. His own colleagues at the Ontario Medical Association endorsed it. The Ontario Hospital Association endorsed it. So I think you're way off on this.

We need more opportunities, convenient care closer to home so that you can actually walk in the clinic down the street and actually get an MRI, rather than waiting God knows how long—months and months. We're going to shorten the list; we're going to give people the care they need in a rapid fashion.

HOUSING

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The lack of housing supply in Ontario has reached alarming levels, with home prices and rents in many areas being among the highest in Canada, including in my riding of Carleton and across Ottawa. Our government was given a strong mandate by the people of Ontario to address the housing shortage and our government must meet our goal of building more homes by 2031 so that people across our province can find housing that meets their needs and budget. As we work towards delivering on our commitment, the people of Ontario expect that these homes and buildings are safe and accessible.

So, Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain what measures our government is taking to ensure the quality of construction so that Ontarians can access safe and secure homes they deserve?

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, through you to the member for Carleton: She just does such a fantastic job advocating for her constituents. It's great that she was able to recognize some of her staff here today.

We're proud, as a government, that we've declared May as Building Safety Month. I really want members to take the opportunity to recognize the critical role that Ontario's building officials play in public health and safety, while at the same time tackling our housing supply problem.

I'd also like to again thank and acknowledge the members of the Ontario Building Officials Association who are joining us today in the Legislature. I want to thank you for your incredible work in Ontario's 444 municipalities and I want to encourage everyone to reach out to their building departments and promote Building Safety Month. It's so important.

I want to thank the member for Carleton again for the question and bringing it up.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: My supplemental question is for the Associate Minister of Housing. It's great that the minister brought up Building Safety Month, because I think it's so important to celebrate Building Safety Month this year by reflecting on the steps our government is taking to ensure that Ontarians have access to safe, secure and affordable homes.

Changes introduced by our government to Ontario's building code are crucial in addressing the important issues of safety, reducing barriers and helping to speed up construction. At a time when so many hard-working Ontarians are priced out of the housing market, our government must be responsible to ensure that we are doing everything we can to address our province's critically low housing supply and to ensure that Ontarians are kept safe.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, can the associate minister please expand on what actions our government is taking to address the housing supply crisis?

Hon. Nina Tangri: I'd like to thank the member from Carleton for her question. This government has been given a strong mandate to ensure that Ontarians have access to safe and secure housing. We're taking action to deliver on our mandate by encouraging innovative approaches to

home ownership and housing supply, including tiny homes, second units and laneway suites.

We regularly update our building code to take advantage of technological advances, innovative new solutions and expert research, all while reducing red tape and making it easier and faster to build new homes. Through our Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, we are also proposing to continue streamlining developments and approvals while making it easier to train and recruit building inspectors.

Our government is committed to keeping Ontarians safe while also laying a solid foundation to address Ontario's housing supply crisis over the long term.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, on her 83rd birthday, Christel received a misleading, intimidating letter from her building management, claiming she's being evicted. Another resident, Julie, a 72-year-old widow, fears becoming homeless by renovation.

Conservative and Liberal governments ignored renters for years and instead bow to greedy corporate landlords, changing laws to let them pad their pockets while people become homeless. Will this government stand up for seniors, stand up for renters and stand up for people at risk of homelessness by ending vacancy decontrol, yes or no?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Steve Clark: In Bill 97, the Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act, we're proposing greater legal protection for tenants on renovations, we're proposing greater legal protection for tenants on landlord's own use, and our government is imposing the strictest penalties in Canada against bad actor landlords. Over and over again, this government, as part of our Housing Supply Action Plan, is building upon the success of some of our policies, but these tenant protection policies are extremely important for the reasons that the member has articulated.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question? The member for London—Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, last week I received an influx of emails and calls from residents at 1270 and 1280 Webster Street, many of them vulnerable seniors and people on social assistance. After a recent purchase, one third of tenants of the building were receiving N13 notices and facing evictions. Many others are waiting to hear when their necks are on the chopping block.

It is clear that the paltry protections in Bill 97 offer very little improvement to a very big problem. The Ombudsman report's message was clear: The Landlord and Tenant Board isn't working for anyone.

Can the Premier please tell me and all the tenants at Webster Apartments when he will take real action to protect tenants from renovations? And will he commit to passing our NDP Bill 58, Protecting Renters from Illegal Evictions and Bill 25, Rent Stabilization Act? Will he do that and give a darn?

Hon. Steve Clark: Well, Speaker, I think we now know why the NDP are asking these questions. They're trying to find a reason to not support our tenant protections in Bill 97. We were in London with Mayor Morgan, where we celebrated with the Attorney General the historic investment that this government is making in the Landlord and Tenant Board: \$6.5 million, doubling the size of adjudicators and, importantly, adding additional staff at the tribunals, as the Attorney General has talked about.

We responded directly from the Ombudsman report—*Interjections.*

Hon. Steve Clark: Despite the heckles from across, we're going to continue to stand up for tenants and we're going to continue to add measures like those that are in Bill 97. But I think that question just sets the stage for their party, again, to not support increased protections for tenants in our province.

1130

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Ric Bresee: My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure. We all know that reliable high-speed Internet is key to building a stronger Ontario. It allows for improved access to health services, supports and strengthens remote business operations and innovation in the agricultural sector and boosts our overall economy. Unfortunately, the previous government ignored many rural, remote and northern communities when it came to making investments in broadband infrastructure. Our government understands that reliable high-speed Internet is a necessity, not a luxury.

However, our government must continue to live up to our commitments and build on the progress already made in constructing broadband projects. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is addressing connectivity concerns so that no rural community is left behind?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Thank you so much to the member for the question. It was such a pleasure to visit Thunder Bay with my colleagues last week. While we were in Thunder Bay, we announced the Internet service providers that will be building 14 high-speed Internet projects, an investment of \$8.4 million through the province of Ontario's ICON program, which was actually the very first application-based program created by my colleague the MPP from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. This \$8.4 million will go a long way, as it will connect 11,000 businesses and homes in northern Ontario to high-speed Internet.

It was such a pleasure to speak with municipalities as well as residents in Thunder Bay about the importance of getting that work done as quickly as possible and making sure that no one is left behind.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Ric Bresee: Thank you to the minister for that comment. It's great to hear that our government remains focused on bringing reliable high-speed Internet to the unserved or underserved communities across the province.

These investments by our government will make our communities stronger and make life more convenient for individual families, workers and businesses.

The people of our province deserve to be kept informed about the progress our government is making in delivering on our promises for broadband infrastructure. The people of Ontario need to be assured through up-to-date information that our government is doing what we promised.

Can the minister please explain how Ontarians can stay informed about the progress of critical Internet projects across the province?

Hon. Kinga Surma: Again, thank you to the member. It was such a pleasure to be joined by the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan but also the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing as well as the Minister of Agriculture to announce a brand new interactive map that is made public so that constituents and residents across the province of Ontario can log in, access it and see which projects are happening in their area. I would highly encourage that all members in this House promote this website: ontario.ca/highspeedinternet.

Why this is so important is, we're investing in over 200 projects currently today—\$2.3 billion. We want every single resident to be able to access that information online and see when the project starts, how much funding is being committed to it and which technology will be used. Again, we will not leave anyone behind.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: My question is to the Premier. Premier, Grace is 13 years old. She was told last March that the only treatment option for her severe scoliosis is surgery. After 14 months of waiting, she still hasn't even received a surgery date. Grace has 76% curvature to her spine and it's getting worse. Her father, Andrew, is in the gallery today. After being told by the surgical board at SickKids that he should contact the Ministry of Health, the ministry told Andrew to contact me.

When is this Conservative government going to take responsibility for the suffering that children like Grace are enduring because of surgical backlogs?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

To reply, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the member opposite for the question. As I said the last time she raised an issue like this on the floor of the House, I would be happy to meet with her afterward and with Andrew to discuss the situation and see what we can do to help.

But this government has invested almost \$1 billion in the surgical backlog and recovering from the surgical backlog—we are now back to pre-pandemic levels, so the number of people waiting now is about the same as what existed pre-pandemic. The issue is it isn't good enough, and this government knows that. That is why we have brought forward Bill 60 to make sure that hospitals can focus on the care. Hospitals are the only ones that can do

this kind of care. The simple procedures can be done in community clinics, where they can be done more quickly in a timely and convenient way for everybody. Vote for Bill 60 so that we can help people.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: Back to the Premier: Waiting for surgery has left Grace in chronic pain. Her mental health is suffering. She is socially isolated from her peers. She's about to start high school—such an important time for a young person. No one should be left to suffer like this. Grace's quality of life is deteriorating physically, mentally and socially, all because she can't get surgery that she needs.

What will the Premier do to make sure that young people like Grace, for whom this age is so formative, do not have to wait indefinitely to live their lives free of pain, stress and isolation?

Mrs. Robin Martin: We agree: Grace should not have to wait. That is why we're taking all the steps we're taking to make sure we clear the surgical backlog and do better than that to make sure people like Grace do not have to wait but can get timely care. We've made a lot of specific investments into pediatric hospitals and pediatric care very recently, including SickKids, CHEO, McMaster—all of the children's hospitals. We will continue to make those investments to make sure that people get the care they need in a timely way.

If you would support Bill 60, we might see some progress here in Ontario on reducing the backlog, so please vote with us today to support Bill 60 to make sure that care is timely and convenient for all Ontarians.

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Mr. David Smith: My question is to the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. All children and youth deserve to live happy and healthy lives. However, for children and youth with complex needs and for their families, it can be difficult for them to access the care and service they need. Every situation is different, and every child deserves to have the care and support that meets their individual needs.

Speaker, can the minister please explain what our government is doing to expand access to service for youth and children with complex needs?

Hon. Michael Parsa: I want to thank my colleague from Scarborough Centre for the great question and for the remarkable job that he's doing for his constituents in Scarborough.

As I've said many times in this House, this government will not leave anyone behind. We'll continue to support children and youth with complex needs and provide them with the specialized care that's necessary to help them live the best lives possible.

Mr. Speaker, we supported this commitment by launching our Integrated Pathway for Children and Youth with Extensive Needs pilot to help children and youth with complex special needs. We're investing \$97 million over

three years at three major hospitals in Toronto, in Hamilton and in Ottawa to connect children and youth to highly individualized and special care that is designed for them. We'll continue to look for ways to improve their lives—every single life of every single Ontarian across this province, including our children and our youth.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The supplementary question.

Mr. David Smith: It's good news that our government is finding solutions that connect families and children with complex needs to the care that they need. There are many children and youth in Ontario with complex needs. These young people and their families face many struggles every day. They deserve to be connected with health care and social service providers at hospitals and community agencies.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how this program will support children and youth in our province?

Hon. Michael Parsa: Gladly. Again, I thank my colleague for the question.

1140

Speaker, families participating in this program will be connected to a team of professionals who will work with them to provide a tailored, support-based experience that focuses on their child's unique needs—services like medication adjustments, personalized behaviour support plans, mental health assessment and treatment. We know parents need support as well, which is why we offer counselling programs for parents and caregivers. We have also included a specialized assistant to help children and youth build skills such as communication and self-regulation.

This government, under the leadership of this Premier, will always stand up for children, youth and families across the province, and we will continue to take action to ensure every single person in this province has the support they need.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Health. In March, your government eliminated the Physician and Hospital Services for Uninsured Persons program. I've been contacted by midwives in my community pleading for restoration of that program. They dealt with pregnant residents of this province who faced life-threatening conditions and needed that program. You've made public statements that such women would be able to receive care under other programs. I want to tell you, midwives have made it clear to me that there are no alternative sources of care and their patients are facing the fear of crippling medical debt.

Will you restore the program in order to avoid unnecessary suffering and needless deaths?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Member for Eglinton—Lawrence.

Mrs. Robin Martin: I thank the member opposite for the question.

As we said, the program was a COVID program, when people could not travel. Now that people can move around

the province, the program is no longer necessary. The only thing that has changed is the way the government reimburses hospitals and physicians for that kind of care. And from the patient's point of view, care will be available when they need it at hospitals and in physicians' offices.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Again to the Minister of Health: That is not what the midwives are finding.

I'll give you an example. I was told by a local midwife about a woman who, after suffering a complication from a miscarriage, was avoiding going to the hospital out of fear of medical debt. If this woman had not been convinced to go to the ER by her midwives when the program was in operation, she would have likely hemorrhaged and died at home because of her fear of medical debt. This is one of a number of cases I've been told about.

These are tragedies just waiting to happen. Why won't you act to prevent these tragedies?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I thank the member opposite. This government is acting to make sure that health care is delivered in a timely way to everyone in Ontario.

For a decade, the NDP propped up the Liberals while they created the longest health care wait times in Ontario's history. They sat idly by while the Liberals fired 1,600 nurses, froze health care spending, reduced medical school spots.

On this side of the House, we're taking action to ensure Ontarians have access to the care they need.

The former Liberal Premier, propped up by the NDP, admitted to freezing hospital spending for years and, in 2015, eliminated 50 medical residency positions from Ontario. That means 50 less doctors in 2019, 100 less doctors in 2020, 150 less doctors in Ontario in 2021, and 200 less doctors in 2022; this year, that would have meant 250 doctors we now don't have because of decisions made by that—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The next question.

IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

Every day, Ontario welcomes individuals and families from many countries around the world who have arrived here in our province to make Ontario their home. We are proud to welcome so many talented, skilled and hard-working individuals who are helping to build a stronger Ontario.

In my riding of Markham–Thornhill, I can think of many individuals and families who have built happy and successful lives here. Diversity helps our province's businesses, communities and social networks to grow and thrive. All people who come to Ontario deserve to be respected, no matter where they come from.

Can the minister please explain how our government is supporting diverse and inclusive communities across Ontario?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: Thank you to the incredible member from Markham–Thornhill for the question. You're absolutely correct; Ontario's strength is in our diversity. We are home to many vibrant and successful communities. For generations, newcomers from around the world have been calling Ontario home. They see it as a place where they can pursue their dreams and create a brighter future for themselves and their families. They have played an integral part in the social and economic growth of our province and have been vital in making Ontario the incredible place it is today.

Just this last month alone, we saw the brilliant and vibrant celebrations such as Sikh Heritage Month, Tartan Day, Easter, Passover, Ramadan, Eid and Puthandu. And this month, we're celebrating Asian, Jewish, Dutch and Polish communities. Our government will always be a champion for Ontarians from different backgrounds, regions and beliefs. We will continue to work to build a stronger, more inclusive Ontario, where people from all walks of life have every opportunity—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary question?

Mr. Logan Kanapathi: Thank you, Minister, for that response. I'm pleased to hear about the success of these communities and that Ontario remains a top destination for those seeking new opportunities.

Last year alone, we welcomed a record number of newcomers to the province that will help secure Ontario's future for years to come. With the ongoing labour shortage in many sectors, there are many jobs available, but newcomers and people in diverse communities need support to access these opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is supporting all Ontarians, no matter where they come from, by providing them with opportunities to succeed?

Hon. Michael D. Ford: I'm glad that the member asked that question, because across every part of our government, we are working around the clock to build a stronger Ontario for all people who choose to make Ontario home. I know that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade are working to create jobs and build a resilient economy. The Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development is helping people get the skills and training they need to find good-paying jobs. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is working to meet our goal of building 1.5 million homes to help newcomers and all Ontarians find an affordable home, and many more are working to get shovels in the ground to build highways, transit and infrastructure to support our growing province.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to help people, families, workers and businesses today while building a stronger Ontario for tomorrow.

NURSES

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Premier. This is the headline regarding agency nurses in Ontario: "'It's Going to Bankrupt Health Care': Spending on Temp

Agency Nurses Up More Than 550% Since Pre-Pandemic at One Toronto Hospital Network.

“As Ontario hospitals grapple with a staffing crisis, critics warn the rising reliance of temp agencies is not financially sustainable.”

Erin Ariss, who is here with us today, is the new Ontario Nurses' Association president. She's also an emergency nurse at Grand River Hospital in KW. This is what she has to say: “As a nurse in a unionized position, I would often make half of what an agency nurse would make. In some cases, they would make three times what we would make.”

There are 43 days until the Bill 124 appeal is decided. This government continues to fight unconstitutional legislation in the courts. It's never too late to do the right thing.

Will you respect nurses in the province of Ontario and end the Bill 60 scheme that actually removes nurses and poaches nurses from the health care system?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): To reply, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, with the greatest of respect, the member opposite is not saying things that are accurate. Bill 60 will actually improve community and surgical centres in the province of Ontario. Why? Because we don't want people having to wait an inordinate amount of time for their surgeries.

It's important that people have access to these community surgical centres, whether it is in their local hospital—and Speaker, I had the honour of actually visiting Grand River Hospital last week. Some of the innovation that they've been able to do in very creative ways, working with partners in community, speaks to why it is so important that Bill 60 passes and we get to a stage in the province of Ontario where all of the other innovations are happening—whether it is the 50-plus projects and new builds that are happening in the province of Ontario, whether it is in the Learn and Stay program led by—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. That concludes our question period for this morning.

CORONATION CELEBRATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand the Premier has a point of order.

Hon. Doug Ford: I just wanted to thank everyone for coming out on Saturday. What a huge success. This was a non-partisan event and I want to thank the staff; I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Culture—that you put this together. You could just see the success when thousands and thousands—Mr. Speaker, I think, after two or three hours, one of the beef farmers or pork farmers said they handed out 10,000 hot dogs or hamburgers. We need to do this more often, put the politics aside and work for the community.

I want to thank the three opposition parties. I know I saw some of them come by, but again, Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank everyone for the collaboration.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 36(a), the member for Ottawa West–Nepean has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Health concerning access to publicly funded operating rooms in Ottawa. This matter will be debated tomorrow following private members' public business.

DEFERRED VOTES

YOUR HEALTH ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023

CONCERNANT VOTRE SANTÉ

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

Bill 60, An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system / Projet de loi 60, Loi visant à modifier et à édicter diverses lois en ce qui concerne le système de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1152 to 1157.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

On April 6, 2023, Ms. Williams moved third reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system.

On April 27, 2023, Mr. Calandra moved that the question be now put. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie
Babikian, Aris	Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Shamji, Adil
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 68; the nays are 34.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

Ms. Williams has moved third reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members will please take their seats.

On April 6, 2023, Ms. Williams moved third reading of Bill 60, An Act to amend and enact various Acts with respect to the health system.

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

Ayes

Anand, Deepak	Ghamari, Goldie	Pierre, Natalie
Babikian, Aris	Gill, Parm	Quinn, Nolan
Bailey, Robert	Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Rae, Matthew
Barnes, Patrice	Hardeman, Ernie	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bethlenfalvy, Peter	Holland, Kevin	Riddell, Brian
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Kerzner, Michael S.	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Khanjin, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lecce, Stephen	Smith, Dave
Crawford, Stephen	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, David
Cuzzetto, Rudy	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Laura
Dowie, Andrew	Martin, Robin	Smith, Todd
Downey, Doug	McCarthy, Todd J.	Surma, Kinga
Dunlop, Jill	McGregor, Graham	Tangri, Nina
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Tibollo, Michael A.
Flack, Rob	Oosterhoff, Sam	Wai, Daisy
Ford, Doug	Pang, Billy	Williams, Charmaine A.
Ford, Michael D.	Parsa, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Shamji, Adil
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Shaw, Sandy
Blais, Stephen	Harden, Joel	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bourgouin, Guy	Karpoche, Bhutla	Stiles, Marit
Bowman, Stephanie	Kernaghan, Terence	Tabuns, Peter
Burch, Jeff	Mamakwa, Sol	Taylor, Monique
Collard, Lucille	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fraser, John	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
French, Jennifer K.	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
Gates, Wayne	Sattler, Peggy	
Gélinas, France	Schreiner, Mike	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 68; the nays are 34.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I declare the motion carried.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): There being no further business at this time, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1209 to 1300.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

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

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 79, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour and other matters / Projet de loi 79, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi, le travail et d'autres questions.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE INTERIOR**

Mr. Aris Babikian: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Interior on the estimates selected by the standing committee for consideration.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. Wai Lam (William) Wong): Mr. Babikian from the Standing Committee on the Interior presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to standing order 63, your committee has selected the 2023-24 estimates of the following ministries for consideration: Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural

Affairs; Ministry of Energy; Ministry of Mines; Ministry of Northern Development; Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.
Report presented.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ASSESSING FITNESS TO DRIVE ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 SUR L'ÉVALUATION DE L'APTITUDE À LA CONDUITE

Mr. Mantha moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act respecting mandatory reports / Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les rapports obligatoires.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I'd like to invite the member for Algoma–Manitoulin to briefly explain his bill.

Mr. Michael Mantha: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act by repealing and replacing section 203. This changes the approach to required medical reports under the act. The old section 203 required every prescribed person to report to the registrar every person who is at least 16 years old who, in the opinion of the prescribed person, has or appears to have a prescribed medical condition, functional impairment or visual impairment. The old section 203 also permitted every prescribed person to report to the registrar a person who is at least 16 years old who, in the opinion of the prescribed person, has or appears to have a medical condition, functional impairment or visual impairment that may make it dangerous for the person to operate a motor vehicle.

The new section 203 requires every legally qualified and registered psychologist, optometrist, medical practitioner and nurse practitioner to report to the registrar the name, address and medical condition of any patient 16 years old of age or older who has a medical condition that, in the opinion of the psychologist, optometrist, medical practitioner or nurse practitioner, makes it dangerous for the patient to drive a motor vehicle and who continues to drive the motor vehicle after being warned of the danger by the psychologist, optometrist, medical practitioner or nurse practitioner.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

Hon. Michael Parsa: I stand in the House today to recognize May as Sexual Assault Prevention Month here in the province of Ontario. Speaker, the fact is that most of us know someone who has been sexually assaulted. That's because statistics show that in Canada, one in three women and one in eight men will experience sexual violence in their lifetime. While it can happen to anyone, women are more likely to experience sexual assault and physical violence. Indigenous women, racialized women, older women, and women with disabilities face even higher levels of violence. Sexual assault and all forms of gender-based violence have a devastating impact on individuals, communities and society as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, it is critical that people affected by violence and exploitation receive the support they need and that offenders are held accountable through the justice system.

I want to be clear: Our government has zero tolerance for sexual assault and other sexual offences. That's why we're taking action to prevent and address gender-based violence in all forms and providing critical supports to survivors and their children, making sure that they have the support they need to be able to heal and rebuild their lives.

Over the last year alone, our ministry invested more than \$250 million for victims of violence and violence prevention initiatives. This investment supports key services such as crisis lines, sexual assault centres and emergency shelters for women and their children. It also provides programs and connects women with supports like safety planning, counselling, mental health services, supportive housing and culturally responsive healing programs.

Speaker, it would be impossible to talk about sexual assault prevention without mentioning efforts under way to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and youth. In 2020, we released our five-year anti-human trafficking strategy with an investment of \$307 million. This is the largest investment in anti-human trafficking initiatives in our history and one of the largest strategies in Canadian history among all levels of government. Under this strategy, \$96 million is going directly to community-based organizations that provide wrap-around, trauma-informed, culturally responsive care to survivors, including specialized support to children and youth.

We also recognize the need for specific actions to address the disproportionately high rate of violence Indigenous women and girls experience, which is why, last year, we invested more than \$90 million in the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy. This strategy includes measures to help address violence against First Nations, Inuit and Métis women and girls through investments in culturally responsive programs to reduce family violence and violence against Indigenous women and children, as well as resources to support First Nations police with sexual assault, human trafficking and domestic violence investigations.

Speaker, together with community partners, we're working towards an Ontario that is free of violence.

In March, my colleague the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity joined the federal government to announce \$8 million over four years in additional funding to support Ontario's provincial crisis lines. These lines provide urgent help in times of crisis and support long-term healing and recovery by connecting victims to services and supports. This investment will assist our dedicated crisis lines in offering more robust services, resources and supports for survivors of gender-based violence and their families.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the many front-line service providers across the province who are working tirelessly each and every day to help victims, survivors and their children rebuild their lives. We commend them for helping people who have experienced violence at their time of greatest need.

As we mark Sexual Assault Prevention Month, I hope Ontarians will take the opportunity, not only this month, but every single day, to reflect on the role we can all play in supporting survivors and ending gender-based violence. And I know that my colleague the Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity has more to say on this very important matter.

1310

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Statements by the ministry? The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams: I stand today with my colleague the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services in recognizing Sexual Assault Prevention Month. May marks an important opportunity for us to reaffirm our support for women and girls and to shine a light on the horrific crime of sexual assault.

Tragically, the incidence and severity of gender-based violence increased during the pandemic, both in Canada and around the world.

Across the province, Ontarians struggle with the pain and trauma of sexual assault every day. That's why my colleague noted that our government is taking action to prevent and address gender-based violence in all forms.

Women's safety and well-being are fundamental to their ability to thrive. As associate minister, my work focuses on improving women's social and economic opportunities. I'd like to share a few examples of how we are working toward both goals.

We know that financial stability can be an important factor in helping women leave abusive situations. That's why Ontario supports women's economic empowerment and invests in programs that help women build in-demand skills and improve their economic security and independence.

Through my ministry, we are investing \$25 million over three years in our Women's Economic Security Program and the Investing in Women's Futures Program. These programs provide supports for women who experience social and economic barriers, including abuse and violence and isolation, so they can increase their well-being, build skills and gain employment. This investment includes a \$6.9-million expansion of the Investing in Women's Futures Program, which I announced in March.

This expansion adds 10 new program sites, bringing the total number of service delivery locations across the province to 33, so more women can access the supports they need.

Another highlight of our work is our continued collaboration with the federal government, including, as my colleague mentioned, a recent announcement with our federal government partners for additional funding for Ontario's support crisis lines.

It also includes our work on the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence that was announced last fall. Endorsed by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women, this action plan represents a commitment to work together to address gender-based violence and support victims, survivors and their families across the country.

Speaker, we continue to listen to stakeholders about how we can better prevent gender-based violence and support people experiencing or at risk of violence.

For example, across Canada, Indigenous women between the ages of 15 and 24 are three times more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. That's one of the reasons why we established the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council. The council centres the voices, perspectives and experiences of Indigenous women in our violence prevention efforts. Their expertise is helping us to better understand how violence and racism impacts First Nation, Métis and Inuit women and girls. We're also continuing to work with the council across government on Pathways to Safety: Ontario's Strategy in Response to the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. This whole-of-government strategy is helping us to confront the root causes of violence as well as identifying and addressing gaps in Ontario's current system of supports.

We're also investing in programs like I am a Kind Man. I am a Kind Man provides community-based healing, prevention and education, counselling and supports for Indigenous men and youth to resolve trauma and help them change attitudes and behaviours to help reduce violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Speaker, these are just a few more of the examples of how our government is working towards an Ontario free of violence and full of opportunity for all. We believe that everyone has the right to live in safety and with dignity, free from intimidation and the threat of violence, and we are working every day to make this happen.

Speaker, as we mark this month, I encourage Ontarians to have conversations with your friends and have conversations with your colleagues and family members about how we can all play a part in stopping violence.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Responses?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's my honour to rise on behalf of the official opposition to respond to this statement from the ministers.

I want to begin with a comment about language. Instead of Sexual Assault Prevention Month, the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres now recognizes the month of May as Sexual Violence Prevention Month. From a survivor-

centred perspective, this is a critical and necessary distinction. It shifts the focus from the legal terminology of assault to the broader experience of sexual violence, which is important given that just 6% of sexual assaults are reported to the police and even fewer are brought to court. I urge the government to follow the lead of the OCRCC and make that change as well.

Speaker, there is an epidemic of gender-based violence happening in Ontario and across Canada. The most recent StatsCan data shows that sexual assault rates are at their highest since 1996.

While anyone can experience sexual violence, we must acknowledge the social and systemic issues that make certain people more vulnerable and more at risk—particularly young people, persons living with disabilities, and trans and gender-diverse people.

On Friday, we marked Red Dress Day, which highlights the shockingly disproportionate rates of sexual violence experienced by Indigenous women and girls. That day calls on all of us to end the systemic racism that has led to so many stolen lives of Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people.

The 6% of sexual assaults that are reported to the police are just the tip of the iceberg, as more survivors of sexual violence are turning to rape crisis centres and sexual assault centres than ever before. The OCRCC reports that in the last year alone, 81% of all Ontario sexual assault centres saw an increase in crisis line calls.

In my community, the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse reported a 54% increase in crisis calls in 2022, more than 10,000 calls in a single year.

Of course, London is not alone. Across this province, sexual assault centres, rape crisis centres and women's shelters are stretched to the breaking point, operating on what is essentially the same funding model that was in place in the 1990s, without the vital increase in core funding that's necessary to keep up with the increased demand.

Speaker, a government that was serious about sexual violence prevention would invest in proactive sexual and gender-based violence training, services and supports for survivors, and would take proactive measures to keep our post-secondary campuses safe, like passing Bill 18 to officially proclaim Consent Awareness Week every September. Instead, this government has ignored the recommendations from student organizations like OUSA during the debate on Bill 28 for training, ongoing research and data collection on campus, and consistent and effective responses to disclosures of sexual violence on campuses.

A government that was serious about sexual violence prevention would commit to implementing all of the recommendations of the Renfrew coroner's inquest, including formally declaring intimate partner violence an epidemic. Instead, most of the recommendations remain ignored. There is still no intimate partner violence commission, still no survivor advocate, still no provincial implementation committee.

1320

A government that was serious about sexual violence prevention would be carefully reviewing the findings of the Mass Casualty Commission report, looking at how to strengthen education requirements for police to provide

more training on investigating sexual assault complaints. Instead, we see this government watering down police qualifications, even while police officers are asking for more training to help them better respond to sexual assaults.

This government had an opportunity in their 2023 budget to take meaningful action to prevent sexual violence but chose not to. In the face of the profound trauma and devastating harm caused by gender-based violence, this government made absolutely no new investments to provide the increase in stable core funding that is necessary to respond to the epidemic of gender-based violence.

Speaker, this government's failure to act on any of these fronts tells Ontarians and especially women and girls that the epidemic of sexual violence is going to continue.

PETITIONS

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: I'm pleased to rise to present the following petition on behalf of Dr. Sally Palmer, professor emerita from the school of social work at the faculty of social services at McMaster University. It's titled "Petition to Raise Social Assistance Rates," and it reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

"Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

"Whereas the recent small increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to survive at this time of alarming inflation;

"Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a 'basic income' of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

"We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP."

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with page Liam to the Clerks.

ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: The petition is entitled "Prevent Overdoses in the North.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario has some of the highest rates of opioid-related deaths in the province and that this number continues to grow; and

“Whereas urgent action by the provincial government to save lives ... in the north;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to declare the opioid crisis a public health emergency in northern Ontario and commit to funding comprehensive local evidence-based initiatives such as harm reduction strategies, awareness programs, anti-stigma training, residential treatment, and overdose prevention services.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and present it to page Mackenzie to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Catherine Fife: It’s my pleasure to present this petition by the Grand River Environmental Network and specifically the students from Waterloo-Oxford District Secondary School in the riding of Kitchener–Conestoga, and it reads as follows:

“Petition to the province of Ontario Premier and members of provincial Parliament:

“We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, call upon the Legislative Assembly ... to stop ordering sprawl via urban boundary expansion and development on farmland and natural spaces.”

I fully support the intent of this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Akshitha.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order, the government House leader.

Hon. Paul Calandra: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Pursuant to standing order 7(e), I wish to inform the House that tonight’s evening meeting is cancelled.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you.

Petitions.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of folks across Ontario to protect the greenbelt and repeal Bills 23 and 39.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government’s latest attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing wealthy developers to profit by bulldozing over 7,000 acres of farmland;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats, prevent flooding, and mitigate from future climate disasters with Ontario losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt, showcasing that Bill 23 was never about housing but about making the rich richer;

“Whereas the power of conservation authorities will be taken away, weakening environmental protections, and preventing future development;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bills 23 and 39, stop all plans to further remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland in the province by passing the NDP’s Protecting Agricultural Land Act.”

Of course, I support this wholeheartedly. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Claire.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Petitions.

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order?

Mr. Sheref Sabawy: I have Thomas Street Middle School from my riding visiting Queen’s Park. I wanted to welcome them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. That is not a point of order.

Petitions.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Olivia to take it to the Clerks.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Chris Glover: This petition is from City View Alternative school.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Elementary Teachers of Toronto to Stop the Cuts and Invest in the Schools our Students Deserve.

“Whereas the Ford government cut funding to our schools by \$800 per student during the pandemic period,

and plans to cut an additional \$6 billion to our schools over the next six years;

“Whereas these massive cuts have resulted in larger class sizes, reduced special education and mental health supports and resources for our students, and neglected and unsafe buildings;

“Whereas the Financial Accountability Office reported a \$2.1-billion surplus in 2021-22, and surpluses growing to \$8.5 billion in 2027-28, demonstrating there is more than enough money to fund a robust public education system;

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

—immediately reverse the cuts to our schools;

—fix the inadequate education funding formula;

—provide schools the funding to ensure the supports necessary to address the impacts of the pandemic on our students;

—make the needed investments to provide smaller class sizes, increased levels of staffing to support our students’ special education, mental health, English language learner and wraparound supports needs, and safe and healthy buildings and classrooms.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and pass it to page Christopher to take to the table.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I have a petition entitled “Stop ... Health Care Privatization Plan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of their wallet;”

Whereas the Premier and health minister are “planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of their public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to further privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

1330

—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials certified;

—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

I support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Leonard.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have a petition entitled “To Raise Social Assistance Rates.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s social assistance rates are well below Canada’s official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and soon \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens well below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a ‘basic income’ of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I agree with this petition and present it to page Liam to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition here entitled “Stop the 413 GTA West Highway.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government is pushing ahead with plans to build Highway 413, a redundant and wasteful 400-series highway through the greenbelt that would cost taxpayers an estimated \$10 billion or more; and

“Whereas according to a TorStar/National Observer investigation entitled ‘Friends with Benefits?’ powerful developers and land speculators with political and donor ties to the Premier and the PC Party of Ontario own thousands of acres along the proposed highway corridor and would profit from its construction, suggesting that this \$10-billion taxpayer-funded highway is about serving the private interests of the Premier’s friends and donors, not the public interest; and

“Whereas the Ontario government’s expert panel concluded in 2017 that Highway 413 would be a waste of taxpayer money that would only save drivers 30 to 60 seconds on their commutes; and

“Whereas that expert panel identified less costly and less destructive alternatives to new highway construction, such as making better use of the underused Highway 407, just 15 kilometres away; and

“Whereas Highway 413 would pave over 400 acres of greenbelt and 2,000 acres of farmland, destroy the habitats of at-risk and endangered species, and pollute rivers and streams; and

“Whereas building more highways encourages more vehicle use and increases traffic and congestion; and

“Whereas the highway would cause significant harm to historic Indigenous sites;

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

“Stop the plans for building Highway 413.”

Of course, I support this. I will affix my signature and send it with page Sophie.

LAND USE PLANNING

Mr. Terence Kernaghan: The following petition I have is entitled “Protect the Greenbelt and Repeal Bills 23 and 39.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bills 23 and 39 are the Ford government’s ... attempt to remove protected land from the greenbelt, allowing wealthy developers to profit over bulldozing over 7,000 acres of farmland;

“Whereas green spaces and farmland are what we rely on to grow our food, support natural habitats, prevent flooding, and mitigate from future climate disasters with Ontario losing 319.6 acres of farmland daily to development;

“Whereas the government’s Housing Affordability Task Force found there are plenty of places to build homes without destroying the greenbelt, showcasing that Bill 23 was never about housing but about making the rich richer;

“Whereas the power of conservation authorities will be taken away, weakening environmental protections, and preventing future development;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bills 23 and 39, stop all plans to further remove protected land from the greenbelt and protect existing farmland in the province....”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and deliver it with the page to the Clerks.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Doly Begum: “Support Ontario Families with Autism.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas every child with autism deserves access to sufficient treatment and support so that they can live to their fullest potential;

“Whereas the Ontario Autism Program was badly broken under the Liberals, and the changes introduced by the Conservatives have made it worse;

“Whereas the new funding caps are based on age and income, and not the clinical needs of the child;

“Whereas Ontario needs a true investment in evidence-based autism services that meets the needs of autistic children and their families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to invest in equitable, needs-based autism services for all children who need them.”

Speaker, I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Christopher to take it to the Clerk.

LAND USE PLANNING

Ms. Doly Begum: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government’s Bill 23 will remove environmental protection for wetlands, woodlands and sensitive green spaces;

“Whereas various schedules in this legislation will remove significant powers from conservation authorities and prohibit them from protecting spaces;

“Whereas Bill 23 will take powers away from municipalities to implement their zero-emission and green development standards;

“Whereas Bill 23 will pave over conservation lands, agricultural lands and the greenbelt to profit developers and donors;

“Whereas it is absolutely necessary to maintain green development standards and continue to empower conservation authorities to conduct environmental assessments to ensure sustainability and safety of our spaces, wildlife and residents;

“Whereas this bill will have significant impacts on the powers and finances of municipalities, weaken their ability to provide essential public services;

“Whereas Bill 23 will take away the powers of municipalities to protect tenants in the case of demovictions and harm renters and families who are looking to find safe, climate-friendly and affordable homes;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal this harmful piece of legislation and engage in meaningful consultations with municipalities, conservation authorities and communities to address the housing affordability crisis.”

Speaker, I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and give it to page Christopher to take it to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING MORE MINES ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT L’AMÉNAGEMENT DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Mr. Pirie moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I return to the minister.

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It’s a pleasure to lead off the third reading debate for our government’s proposed Building More Mines Act, 2023. I want to indicate that I’ll be sharing the government’s leadoff time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Mines.

The bill that we’re debating today supports our government’s goal to build a stronger mining sector to capitalize on the global need for critical minerals. We find ourselves at a critical point in time for the global economy. The

world needs minerals, and they are looking for the place to get them. That place is right here. Ontario is blessed with some of the richest mineral-rich deposits in the world—minerals like nickel, cobalt and lithium that are used in manufacturing batteries for electric vehicles.

However, geopolitical events and conflict, as well as the stranglehold that other nations have on the minerals market, have exposed weakness in the global supply chain for these essential minerals. It is during these uncertain times that governments like ours must lead from the front to create the conditions to attract investment, optimize competitive advantages and enable Ontario's minerals sector to do what it does best: build mines—because governments don't build mines; companies do. Those global challenges have presented a generational opportunity that puts Ontario at the centre of the solution.

Speaker, we stand ready to meet this demand for a reliable, sustainable supply of critical minerals for the EV revolution and the technologies of tomorrow. We're also known for our world-class labour, human rights, environmental, and health and safety standards that make us one of the best places in the world to invest and to do business.

1340

As I've mentioned before, I grew up in a proud mining family. I have been around mining operations all my life. I have spent most of my career in this amazing industry, and I have been lucky enough to work around the world in places that have made me proud of Canada and Ontario's world-class mining standards. But just because we are one of the best doesn't mean we can't do better. We know we can always do more in this province to improve our processes and fine-tune our legislation and regulations to help ensure the sector remains effective, efficient and able to meet the demands of the global economy.

Speaker, the mining industry is one of the most important drivers of our economy today, contributing \$13 billion to the province's GDP annually and supplying over 75,000 jobs to people in Ontario. The mining industry is also the single largest employer of Indigenous peoples, who make up 11% of the mining workforce. We believe the mining industry's best days are still ahead. That's why we're creating the conditions for investment that will lead to an era of prosperity and job creation for northern and Indigenous communities and for all of Ontarians.

The changes in our proposed Building More Mines Act will set the stage for our province to become the leading global jurisdiction for mineral investment and development.

Speaker, the reasons we're putting this bill forward are clear: We need to create the right legislative and regulatory environment for companies to build these mines faster to take advantage of the generational opportunity to supply the EV revolution. By passing this bill, we would provide significant economic development opportunities for northern and Indigenous communities without compromising Ontario's world-class environmental protections and the duty to consult.

I'm so proud of the thought and effort that has gone into this bill that is before the members today. I'm equally

proud of the high praise it has received from mining and industry proponents. My ministry has also been engaging directly with Indigenous communities and organizations, and we have listened carefully to their feedback. I want to note that we are extending the timeline for First Nation and Métis communities and organizations to provide feedback on the regulatory amendments associated with the proposed changes until May 31. As always, we'll continue to carefully consider all input we receive.

Before I continue, I want to take a moment to thank all those individuals, associations, organizations and others who have taken the time to provide written submissions and express support for the Building More Mines Act, as well as all those who have provided feedback online through the Environmental Registry of Ontario and the Regulatory Registry.

Of course, I want to personally acknowledge everyone who travelled to Timmins and Sudbury and took time out of their busy schedules to present at the Standing Committee on the Interior.

Industry stakeholders, Indigenous leaders and other experts provided invaluable feedback and insight on the proposed bill. From financing for projects to closure planning and ministry reviews, we have heard those concerns and are addressing them in this bill. Through these appearances and the thoughtful follow-up questions posed at committee, we heard loud and clear that the Building More Mines Act would help create efficiencies, reduce delays, attract investment and boost Ontario's competitive advantage. We value and appreciate everyone's input and efforts to make this the best bill it could possibly be.

Lastly, I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the members of the Standing Committee on the Interior for your thorough consideration of our proposed bill.

I would like to quote some of the written submissions we have received, as they help paint an important picture of the objectives we are aiming to accomplish with this proposed legislation.

I would like to quote Mike van Akkooi, senior vice-president of external affairs and co-head of ESG for Kinross Gold, who stated: "By clearly defining timelines for permitting and other steps in the project, effectively communicating the status of the work being done within the ministry to project proponents, and reducing uncertainty on permitting processes and timelines, the government will make a significant and positive impact on the ability of mining companies to confidently invest and run successful projects in Ontario."

In its presentation deck to the committee, First Mining Gold also spoke of the benefits of the act to the entire sector: "We seek to work in safe jurisdictions with efficient regulatory systems ... improvements to the Mining Act and closure planning processes are an important step towards a more efficient regulatory system in Ontario, supporting ongoing investment in the responsible development of resources."

I would also like to quote an important and long-standing partner of our government, the Ontario Mining Association, who appeared before the committee and whose

president reaffirmed the need for this bill. President Chris Hodgson stated: “This presents a generational opportunity—to create rewarding jobs, build a strong domestic mining-to-manufacturing supply chain, and be a key player in the global energy transition. Given that we are competing with jurisdictions across the world to feed the decarbonization-driven commodity super cycle, the government must take bold action to help Ontario succeed. This includes addressing current challenges in the Mining Act and providing a regulatory pathway forward for our industry leadership in the global marketplace.”

It’s not only the mining industry that has expressed its support for the Building More Mines Act. We have heard from the chambers of commerce in our northern mining hubs, who represent the interests of thousands of local businessmen, including mining supply and service companies—jobs. These folks work tirelessly to improve the quality of life and advocate for their communities.

In a written submission, Charla Robinson, president of the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce, said, “We welcome the proposed changes to the Mining Act that are outlined in Bill 71, Building More Mines Act... The current process for mine approval is unnecessarily duplicative and expensive and has long been a barrier to investment and development of Ontario’s mining resources. We are supportive of Bill 71 which seeks to streamline processes to reduce the time it takes to open a new mine, while continuing to ensure that Indigenous communities are engaged and consulted throughout.”

Debbi M. Nicholson, president and CEO of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, wrote, “We agree that the proposed changes in Bill 71 are integral to the development of new mines across northeastern Ontario that will support Ontario’s efforts to build a strong domestic mining-to-manufacturing supply chain and become a key player in the global energy transition.”

I could go on, but it is evident that people and organizations across this province support the changes we’re proposing. The many stakeholders who have praised our amendments in this bill all agree that Bill 71, if passed, would create more business certainty, remove barriers, increase competitiveness, and lead to more investment, jobs and prosperity for our northern and Indigenous communities.

We have heard time and time again from industry proponents that our current processes are too time-consuming and costly, leading to project delays and lost opportunities for our mineral exploration and mining sector. They’ve provided us with first-hand knowledge and tangible ideas on how to improve the Mining Act and move the industry forward. That is what this bill is all about—a collaboration of ideas from the best and brightest minds, focused on solving the mining challenges of today and tomorrow.

This past March, I attended my first Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada meeting—PDAC—as the Minister of Mines, along with 30,000 attendees from more than 130 countries. I had the opportunity to meet with governments and private sector delegations from all around the world. These countries are searching for a

reliable partner and producer of critical minerals. We can be that place, but we must act with urgency.

However, it cannot take 15 years to build a mine if we’re going to accomplish our goals. I think we can all agree that 15 years is a long time. That is 15 years of lost economic opportunities and good-paying jobs for Ontario workers. It’s a decade and a half of missed opportunities to contribute to new and emerging technologies. We know that capital is mobile, and the pace of technology does not wait for jurisdictions that lag behind or are weighted down by regulatory burden. Because previous governments neglected the industry, we must take decisive and urgent action to solve the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.

I have seen first-hand how opportunities in the mining industry can build up communities and create places where people want to live, work and raise families.

1350

Mr. Speaker, we heard our stakeholders and we listened. Our proposed package of amendments would help attract more investment in the sector, create business certainty and help us meet the ever-growing global demand for critical minerals—critical minerals that support the made-in-Ontario supply chain for technologies like batteries, electric vehicles, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and advanced manufacturing technologies.

I have said it many times in the past, and I will say it again: There is no supply chain for EVs without mining. We knew, as a government, that we needed a plan to build mines faster and unearth these critical minerals that our province is rich with. That’s why we launched our Critical Minerals Strategy last year—our comprehensive five-year blueprint to make Ontario a global leader in supplying critical minerals. The strategy will boost the resiliency of our supply chains, expand innovation and increase our exploration capacity.

We are building an integrated supply chain by connecting critical minerals producers in the north, including those in the Ring of Fire, with the manufacturing might in the south.

I will touch on the importance of the Ring of Fire region in a moment, but unearthing the province’s vast supply of critical minerals starts with exploration. That’s why we are investing a total of \$35 million, which includes \$12 million for our critical minerals stream, into our Ontario Junior Exploration Program, OJEP. This program helps junior mining companies finance early exploration to find the mines of the future. As announced in our 2023 budget, Building a Strong Ontario, we are investing an additional \$6 million over two years in this successful program, which will help more companies search for mineral deposits and attract further investment in this growing sector.

We know that unlocking northern Ontario’s critical minerals is key to the economy of the future. It will help bring investments and better jobs with bigger paycheques to Ontario. But our government hasn’t stopped there.

Last November, I launched the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund, CMIF. The CMIF helps fund research,

development and commercialization of projects to create investments in Ontario's critical minerals supply chain. This \$5-million fund is supporting Ontario-based projects in the critical minerals sector, ranging from mining and mineral processing to the recovery and recycling of minerals. Projects like these showcase that Ontario has the mineral resources and industry expertise to supply and manufacture the innovative technologies of tomorrow.

Ontario is working diligently to build a global, competitive and integrated supply chain—a made-in-Ontario supply chain—that will create good-paying jobs, increase the province's competitive advantage and build up the economy.

Our strategy is backed by strategic investments in these programs—a competitive advantage that simply cannot be ignored. The opposition voted against all of these programs.

So let's be clear: If the opposition votes against this bill, they are voting against jobs in their own ridings. I expect full support of this bill because I know this opposition and their constituents understand the importance of building a supply chain for electric vehicles. It all starts with mining.

Before I conclude, I want to briefly touch on the Ring of Fire, which is central to our plan to become the leading global jurisdiction for mineral development and investment. The Ring of Fire is one of the most promising mineral deposits in Canada and the world. It is a generational opportunity for northern and Indigenous communities and has the potential to support innovative technologies for high-growth sectors such as batteries, electronics, electric vehicles and clean tech.

Unlike the previous Liberal government, we have made progress that we can all be proud of. Our government is investing \$1 billion to support critical legacy infrastructure, such as all-season roads, broadband connectivity and community supports in the Ring of Fire region. We have been working collaboratively with the extraordinary leadership of Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation. By working with the First Nations on these projects, we will build infrastructure to improve education, food security, housing conditions and social and health services for everyone. All-season, dependable road access is vital to seizing opportunities in the region for First Nations and creating better supply chain connections between Ontario industries, resources, workers and communities. We continue to support Marten Falls First Nation and Webequie First Nation as they lead their environmental assessment work for the Marten Falls community access road and the Webequie supply road.

Our approach is working. In March, at the PDAC Convention, I was honoured to join Chief Cornelius of Webequie First Nation and Chief Bruce of Marten Falls First Nation to announce our government's approval of the environmental assessment terms of reference for the Northern Road Link. The First Nations-led project would connect the two nations to the Ontario highway network and the critical minerals in the Ring of Fire area. We will continue to support Marten Falls and Webequie First Nation as they conduct the studies, engage and consult

with their own communities and neighbouring First Nations and make informed decisions on how to best move forward.

As we look ahead, it is clear that there is a great deal to be excited about. We are forging lasting partnerships with Indigenous communities who want to share in the long-term economic benefits afforded by the mining sector. I believe this is the key to future success for the mining industry and to create prosperity. Our government will continue its efforts to consult on potential impacts, including cumulative impacts on Aboriginal and treaty rights across all three proposed road projects. And I want to emphasize again that any proposed development in the Ring of Fire will be subject to Ontario's rigorous regulatory requirements and environmental standards.

Speaker, third reading debate on the proposed Building More Mines Act today coincides with the first day of National Mining Week. National Mining Week begins on the second Monday of May each year to commemorate the significant historical and economic contribution of mining to the development of Canada. It also recognizes that a prosperous mining industry will continue to play a major role in job creation and the economic well-being of all Canadians, and it provides an opportunity for the people of Canada and the people of this great province to consider the importance of mining and the contributions the industry has made to our daily lives. Throughout the week, my ministry will be highlighting a variety of National Mining Week content on the social media channels. As we celebrate this important week, I want to emphasize that the Building More Mines Act reflects the spirit in which this week was created. In proposing changes to Ontario's Mining Act to help this vital sector thrive, we are recognizing the lasting contributions it has made to the country and to the province.

Our government's many investments and initiatives, including the changes put forward in the Building More Mines Act, are working to support every stage of the mining sequence from exploration and development to mine production and closure. This is a generational opportunity to set our province up for success and to become the number one destination for mineral investment and development around the world. Through our proposed Building More Mines Act, we are building up the entire mining sector, and, as a result, building Ontario. We will do this without compromising our world-class environmental protections and the duty to consult with Indigenous communities. Our government is following through on our commitment to build up the critical minerals sector for the benefit of everyone in Ontario. I encourage all members to support this bill and to help us deliver on this global, urgent and important priority.

1400

Thank you once again for listening and being a part of the moment in history that our children and grandchildren will thank us for.

Now I'm very pleased to pass things over to my parliamentary assistant, Anthony Leardi, to say a few words.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutila Karpoche): The member from Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: This afternoon, we are debating third reading of the Building More Mines Act. This afternoon, it will be my intention to hit on the highlights of this proposed legislation. I always find it useful, when you're talking about a piece of legislation like this, not only to talk about what you intend to set out with the new piece of legislation, but also to deal with what this legislation is not about.

First of all, let's talk about what this legislation does not do. This legislation does not change any of the environmental legislation in the province of Ontario. It does not, in any way, shape or form, change any of Ontario's world-class environmental legislation. All of that remains untouched by this act.

Secondly, this act does not change any of the obligations that exist under our treaties with First Nations. Those obligations are set out in section 35 of the Constitution. Section 35 cannot be changed, and none of that is affected by this act. On the contrary, in fact, section 2 of the Mining Act specifically recognizes our treaty obligations as set out under section 35 of the Constitution.

Those are the two things that this legislation, or this proposed legislation, does not change and does not modify in any way.

Let's talk now about what this act does do. The primary issue that this act proposes to deal with is the issue of permitting a mine. There's no actual piece of paper that says "mine permit"; you don't get that when you apply to build a mine. It's a process, and you meet certain milestones and you file your paperwork and you file your financial assurances, and that gives you the permission to build mines. So I'm just going to speak in terms of there actually being a permit. As things stand right now, it can actually take up to 15 years to permit and build a mine. We in the government benches think 15 years is too long. We've said so and that's our position: 15 years is too long to wait for the good-paying jobs that are created by the mining industry.

If you're a skilled tradesperson, if you're a miner, if you're an engineer, if you're a machinist, if you're a heavy equipment operator, if you're a prospector—if you fall into any one of those numerous categories that depend on mining for your livelihood, including the people who supply the mines, not only with the equipment but things like food and services, 15 years is too long to wait for you to earn a living. If you wait 15 years, you lose 15 years of opportunity; you lose 15 years of economic advancement; you lose 15 years of experience. And people don't want to lose that. We in the government benches don't want them to lose it either. That is our primary motivation for putting forward this legislation, because, as I've said, 15 years is too long to wait. Speaker, 15 years is too long to wait for critical minerals, because we're going to need those critical minerals. We can't rely on supply chains that wrap around the world and can be interrupted by any sorts of events. They can be interrupted by war. They can be interrupted by civil uprisings. They can be interrupted by trade disputes. They can be interrupted by the weather. We

don't want to be dependent on those extensive supply chains all around the world to get our critical minerals.

I've mentioned some of the disruptions that can happen, but some of the disruptions that happen are actually planned disruptions. There are other actors around the globe who will intentionally interfere with critical mineral supply in order to deprive Canada and Ontario of critical minerals, and we don't want to make ourselves dependent on them. So building a critical minerals supply chain right here in the province of Ontario, where we mine the critical minerals in Ontario, process the critical minerals in Ontario and then use the critical minerals in Ontario, is vital. It's important. I would go so far as to say it is nation-building.

We have automotive companies setting up plants right here in Ontario to build electric vehicles. They're setting up in places like Windsor, Oakville, Brampton, and St. Thomas. They're already building in Windsor. And we can't wait 15 years for those critical minerals. We won't wait. We have to move this process along faster. In the opinion of the members on the government benches, 15 years is too long to wait.

We know that the opposition members don't share our opinion. While we say 15 years is too long to wait, members of the opposition have said that 15 years is a reasonable time to wait for the permitting and building of a mine. For example, the member from Niagara Centre said that 15 years was a reasonable amount of time, stating as follows: "From speaking to mining executives and people like my seatmate here, who is very experienced in mining, 15 years was a very reasonable amount of time to open a mine." But I disagree, and the members on the government benches disagree.

Where the official opposition believes that 15 years is a reasonable amount of time for the permitting and building of a mine, we say it is too long. We also say that it's not our opinion alone. We say that it is the vast majority of the industry, and perhaps the unanimous opinion of those representing the mining industry, who say that 15 years is far too long to permit and build a mine.

Let me share, for example, the opinion of the past president of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, Alex Christopher. Contrary to the opinion expressed by the official opposition, this is what the former president of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada said: "First of all, if we think about what society is really looking for, it's really moving towards a less carbon-intensive world. One of the things we have to do as an industry is get out there and work hard to change the hearts and minds of society for them to recognize the importance of the industry, how it impacts their lives and how it contributes to that transition to a lower carbon environment. Without mining, we won't have the metals and minerals we need to be able to do that. Given the world wants us to do it at pace, we have to look really hard at how we go about doing our business, how we go about permitting and approving mines so that we can actually have those critical minerals that we need."

1410

He went on to say this about the Critical Minerals Strategy: "Now the government's come out with the

Critical Minerals Strategy and how that works with industry and the implementation of that dovetails with industry to allow us to advance those projects that are required.”

That comes from Alex Christopher, the former president of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada.

But he didn't stop there; he went on and said this: “I think one of the things that we're going to have to watch is permitting timelines for minerals that are critical in the transition to a lower-carbon economy. Time will tell whether we see movement in that area.”

Alex Christopher went on to say this: “I think the U.S. has the same challenges as Canada with respect to permitting timelines and it will be interesting to see how some of their changes in policy really affect that and the ability to develop at a faster pace.”

So, you see, Madam Speaker, it's not just the opinion of government benches that 15 years is too long to permit and build a mine; it's also the opinion of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, speaking through their foremost spokesperson.

My colleague the Minister of Mines has spoken eloquently about all of the opportunities that are presented in the mining industry. Alex Christopher also had something to say about that: “The whole transition to a lower carbon economy, in my mind presents a generational opportunity for young people coming into the industry. Canada is a resource-rich nation and we can lead the way in many areas with respect to this. If I was a young person coming into the industry, I'd be really stoked right now about the opportunities ahead of me.”

What a great endorsement from that organization, to say that young people should be “really stoked” about the mining industry. Those words should sound familiar because others have used those words.

The Minister of Mines has talked about the generational opportunity presented by the mining industry, and the goal of this legislation is to lay the foundation for the future of mining in the province of Ontario. We don't want to push it off and push it off, making mines longer and harder to open. That doesn't serve young people in Ontario. That doesn't serve young miners in Ontario.

When we talk about opening up opportunities, we're talking about opening up opportunities for people in north. That is a common refrain. This is a huge opportunity for people in the north.

But I'm from the south. What does it mean for people in the south, like people in Essex county or people in Windsor? Well, I come from Essex county; in my region, we build vehicles. Canada builds and exports approximately two million vehicles a year. We're going to start building electric vehicles, and we're going to build those vehicles right here in Ontario. We're going to build them in my region of Essex county. We're going to build them in Windsor–Tecumseh. We're going to build them in Brampton. We're going to build them in Oakville.

What does the industry think about that?

Well, let's hear from Luca Giovavazzi, CEO of Wyloo Metals. Here's what Mr. Giovavazzi said: “We want to see the nickel we produce go into a battery metals plant somewhere in Ontario, that can ultimately end up hopefully in a Gigafactory somewhere in Ontario, and in a car that's manufactured in the province.”

We already have that starting. It's starting in Windsor. It's starting in St. Thomas. It's starting in Brampton. It's starting in Oakville. It's starting all across southern Ontario. That is the link that the south has with the north. That is why we in the south are so interested in making sure that the people of the north share in all the economic opportunity that we have, because we're going to create a perfect domestic supply chain right here in the province of Ontario. The optimism is catching. It's astounding. It's spreading all across the province.

Here's what Luca Giovavazzi said about northern Ontario: “We'll need every able-bodied man and woman in the communities to work on the mine site to run Eagle's Nest, including all the other ancillary support services, so there's a tremendous opportunity to employ out of the communities....”

“The nickel we get out of Eagle's Nest should be enough to make 10 million EVs. So, from an environmental perspective, the net benefit is massive.”

Those are the words of Luca Giovavazzi. He's talking about needing every able-bodied man and woman to work at Eagle's Nest. But that's just one project.

What about the other projects? Can you imagine all of the other projects that are possible in Ontario, across northern Ontario, including all of the projects that are made possible by the Ring of Fire? We're talking about job opportunities not only for one community, but for communities all across the north. We're talking about needing more people to fill those job opportunities. That's something that the north might not be used to. I'm told by my colleagues from the north that the north experiences population loss or population stagnation because people leave the north to seek economic opportunity elsewhere. But now we have an opportunity through mining to reverse that flow—not just stop it, but reverse it. In fact, what we might need is so many people working in the north that we have to have immigration to the north to fill all of those job opportunities that will be opening up in this sector.

So far we've heard from individuals in the mining sector about their overwhelming support for this legislation. Let's hear from somebody outside the sector. Let's hear from the Sudbury chamber of commerce: “We welcome the proposed changes to the Mining Act that are outlined in Bill 71, Building More Mines Act, 2023. The current process for mine approval is unnecessarily duplicative and expensive and has long been a barrier to investment and development of Ontario's mining resources. We are supportive of Bill 71 which seeks to streamline processes to reduce the time it takes to open a ... mine, while continuing to ensure that Indigenous communities are engaged and consulted throughout.”

Madam Speaker, this is a submission that shows that not only the mining industry supports the Building More Mines Act, but the general business community also supports it.

Just to reaffirm what we've already said: This bill is about speeding up the building of mines. It's about shortening the permitting process. It does nothing to change Ontario's world-class environmental standards. All of those world-class environmental standards remain 100% intact.

In addition, this bill being about shortening the timeline for the permitting process does nothing to change the treaties' duty-to-consult obligation. That obligation is enshrined in section 35 of the Constitution. It cannot be changed, and it is specifically recognized in section 2 of the Mining Act.

1420

Now here is another key piece of this legislation which I think is very important: This legislation brings mining legislation in Ontario more into line with mining legislation in Quebec. In Quebec, that legislation places some decision-making authority in the hand of the minister, and that is one of the reasons why Quebec moves faster than Ontario when it comes to opening new mines.

I want to share with the House what the committee of the interior heard with regard to that subject. This comes from Michiel van Akkooi, senior vice-president of Kinross Gold Corp.: "The proposed amendments under the act, particularly as they relate to closure plans and the movement of decision-making powers into the hands of the minister, are particularly important. The ability to improve timelines for closure plans while simultaneously reducing initial costs for project proponents is a significant improvement over current rules and will provide enhanced clarity on permitting timelines as well as reducing uncertainty on the same for project proponents. By moving decision-making powers into the hands of the minister, government will reduce the complexity of the process which in turn further reduces uncertainty for project proponents and investors alike. Together these changes, and the others proposed in the act, will enhance Ontario's position as a global leader in mining and mineral exploration while still maintaining the world-class environmental and safety standards that are so vital to the sector's long-term success and trust with greater public."

So you'll notice that Mr. van Akkooi is very, very supportive of the changes that we're making, and in particular, he underscores the fact that we have to move our legislation to be in line with Quebec's legislation, which does exactly the same thing: putting some decision-making authority into the hands of the minister.

Right now, the act hasn't passed yet. So as we speak, Quebec has the leading edge on us. It's not that Quebec has better employees; they don't. It's not that Quebec has better companies; they don't. It's not that Quebec has better explorers or miners; they don't. They have better legislation. That's what they have. But with the passage of this act, our legislation will now be in line with Quebec's legislation, and we will be able to take advantage of the same opportunities that Quebec is taking advantage of.

I recognize, from their comments, that the opposition doesn't support any of this. They've said so plainly and clearly. They do not support these legislative changes that

put our legislation in line with Quebec's legislation, and they've made that clear.

But we are going to make it clear from the government benches that we think that putting our legislation in line to compete with Quebec is important, because that's what the industry is telling us, and that's what needs to be done.

Now I want to turn my attention to a few of the more spectacular objections that were enunciated by the opposition. We previously had a debate on this. I patiently sat through the entire debate. I heard various members speak. I heard the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas speak. The member said some things I thoroughly disagree with. I want to make absolutely clear I thoroughly disagree with those comments. For example, during the course of that member's comments on this proposed legislation, she made reference to towns blowing up. I want to make sure that every member of this House appreciates the fact that I disagree. I don't think this legislation has anything to do with blowing up towns. But that's what the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas alluded to.

Now let's talk about another comment made by the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. Not only did she make those previous references, she also made reference to a sniper death.

I want to make this absolutely clear: I thoroughly disagree with those comments. This legislation has absolutely nothing to do with those allusions made by that member. This legislation is about shortening the timeline for the permitting and building of mines; that's what this legislation proposes to do. It has nothing to do with those two previous comments that the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas alluded to.

In fact, the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas also said that she felt for the people of the north who didn't have the same economic opportunities as people from the south. Well, I'll go back to the comments of Luca Giacobazzi, who said that we need every able-bodied man and woman in the communities to work on the mine site to run Eagle's Nest, including all the other ancillary support services, so there's a tremendous opportunity to employ out of the communities.

So it seems that if you want to create opportunity, part of what you should be doing is promoting this legislation.

Let's talk a little bit more about what this legislation proposes to do. There was a certain individual who expressed a great deal of dissatisfaction with our proposed legislation; that person came to this Legislature and created a disturbance at this Legislature. I thought that person disturbing the proceedings of this Legislature was disruptive, and it should not have been applauded; it should not have been participated in. But I do note that the members of the NDP caucus applauded when that person disrupted the democratic process of this Legislature. Not only did they applaud, but they stood up and they continued to seemingly endorse that behaviour. There were several of them who alluded to it during their speeches and think that that kind of disruption is appropriate; I say it is not, and I think that if we are going to continue the debate on this legislation, it's important that we all recognize some ground rules.

There were also some comments made by some members of the opposition that I felt were useful comments. For example, the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North said, “We know we don’t want the men and women who work in mines to wind up living in mining camps long-term. We want them to be building communities in neighbouring municipalities or creating new communities.” I thought that those comments were very helpful and good, and I agree with those comments. I think that the passage of this legislation will lead to building more mines faster, and that’s good, because that will reverse the loss of population in the north—or hopefully it will lead to that. It might even lead to further immigration to the north, building more communities, as was desired by the member from Thunder Bay–Superior North. I think that’s very good.

Not only did they speak in favour of creating communities and greater communities, I think that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane had some useful comments to make as well. That member spoke very strongly in favour of better roads for the north. In my brief period in this Legislature, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane has struck me as being a gentleman and a farmer, and I think he spoke eloquently in favour of roads for the north. I think that one of the things that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane will be happy about is that we are or will be delivering roads for the north.

1430

Two of the roads that are currently under environmental assessment are being led by Webequie First Nation and Marten Falls First Nation. Those two First Nations are leading the environmental assessment for the building of two roads in the north. These will eventually be all-season roads. They will connect to the northern road network which also will connect to various other cities such as Timmins and Sudbury and to the south, even as far as Essex county eventually. This is what we talk about when we create a domestic supply chain, and it opens up all sorts of opportunity for people in the north.

I would very much like to give the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane exactly what he wants, which is more roads for the north. But do you know what? I think his own caucus members are trying to block him. His own caucus members are trying to put as many roadblocks to roads in the north as they possibly can. They’ve offered a lot of excuses. They’ve offered a lot of roadblocks.

I would venture to guess that the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane might start feeling a bit uncomfortable in his own caucus. The poor guy wants to build roads to his riding and has his own caucus trying to throw him under the bus. But he spoke eloquently, and we’ll see if he can convince the rest of his caucus members to vote in favour of roads to the north and roads to Timiskaming–Cochrane.

What else are we going to talk about today when we’re talking about the Building More Mines Act? Where does that leave us? It leaves us, again, with changing absolutely nothing about the world-class environmental standards in the province of Ontario. The process for opening a mine remains the same, except that it will be introduced in stages.

The old process that we’re talking about is that when you propose to open a mine, you have to submit two things: a plan and a financial security. You have to have the plan submitted up front and the financial security submitted up front. As we’ve all seen, mines can last decades—they can last 50 years, 75 years, maybe even 100 years—so it’s very difficult to predict what the future is going to look like for a mine. Therefore, it’s also very difficult to predict what the closure plan should look like and what should go into that plan, because things change over time, technology changes over time, plans change over time. But for some reason, you have to submit that whole 50- or 75- or 100-year plan up front—very hard to do, and that adds substantially to the time it takes to permit a mine. In addition to that, you have to submit 100% of the financial security up front for a plan that might actually not even take place for 50 years or 60 years or more. That seems to be rather unreasonable—to lock up your funds for 50 or 60 or 70 years, when those funds could be used for something productive, such as building more mines and creating more jobs and creating more economic opportunity.

What this legislation proposes to do is, rather than having that 100% up-front status quo, to change that into a staged process. What would happen in a staged process? In a staged process, you would have to submit a plan at every stage of the process. Let us imagine, for example, you have a plan for the next five years. You submit that plan. The ministry would review that plan, and you would submit, along with that plan, a financial security that covered the next five years, and that stage would be covered. Then you would be able to go forward with that stage of the project. That seems eminently reasonable. Once you’ve reached the five-year stage, if you propose to go any further, you would have to submit another plan. Maybe that plan would be a 10-year plan. Maybe it would be a 12-year plan. Maybe it would be a seven-and-a-half-year plan. Whatever that plan entails, you would have to submit your plan for that. And then, of course, you would have to submit the matching financial security for that plan, and that, of course, is what we refer to as a staged process. It’s perfectly reasonable. It of course preserves all of the environmental legislation in the province of Ontario and does not detract from it whatsoever. It maintains financial security in place; it does not detract from it whatsoever. But what it does do is, it makes the plan and the financial security more responsive to what is actually happening in the mining industry.

If you have any qualms about that, just think about it for a second. If you were required to embark on a project and lock up your money for, let’s even say, 10 years or 20 years—lock up your money for 20 years without any prospect on a return on your investment, lock up your money for 20 years without any prospect of being able to access that money for the purpose of actually doing mining, and lock up that money for 20 years in essentially a non-performing and non-productive way, what would that do for mining? What would that do for job creation? What would that do for the creation of mining jobs in

northern Ontario? What would it do for the creation of a domestic supply chain? And what would that do for the automobile plants, the electric vehicle plants in my area and in the areas of so many of the members of this Legislature? We all know what the answer is. The answer is delay, if not worse.

That is the genesis of this piece of legislation. The genesis of this legislation is to address timelines. That's what it does. It shortens the timelines for the permitting and building of mines in Ontario. We in the government benches support that wholeheartedly because we support the Critical Minerals Strategy and we support the mining industry.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions? The member from Kiiwetinoong.

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Meegwetch, Speaker. Through you, a question to the Minister of Mines: Do you know that it's colonial not to speak to all First Nations?

Hon. George Pirie: The proposed bill does not touch anything in relation to the duty to consult. Section 2 does not change a word—the proposed legislation is the same as the current legislation, full stop. This bill is all about making mining more efficient and more effective so, in fact, we get things done in a reasonable fashion at the speed of business. It does not impact the duty to consult. It does not impact on environmental regulation. It's a very simple bill that recognizes that 15 years is simply too long to build a mine, especially when we're talking about critical minerals.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Thank you to the Minister of Mines and his parliamentary assistant from Essex for their presentation.

1440

We know that for 15 years, the Liberals and the NDP who helped prop them up did absolutely nothing for mining—zero, absolutely nothing.

A big part of this bill, if you read it, talks about prosperity, building prosperity in northern Ontario, allowing communities to take control of their particular destiny. I'd like the member from Essex to talk a little bit more about how that's going to occur within the framework of this legislation.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: I thank the member for that question. The member asked how this helps people take control of their destiny.

I'm from southern Ontario. I'm from the county of Essex. We have a nice mixed economy in Essex county. We have farming, we have industry, we have tourism, so that when one area of the economy is flagging, other areas of the economy have made up for that. We've always had opportunity in the riding of Essex, and we want to share that. We want to share that with all of Ontario. We want people in northern Ontario to have that too. People in northern Ontario, to a great extent, are dependent on mining. We want to share our kind of economic thriving with northern Ontario, and we can do that through this legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Minister of Mines: Do you know that it's colonial to divide and conquer First Nations?

Hon. George Pirie: Again, I'll repeat: There isn't a single thing in the proposed legislation that's different than the current legislation.

I will tell you that the largest number of individuals who are employed by the mining industry are Indigenous people—11%. They fully participate in the mining industry.

Where we in fact have situations like Cote Lake that took 15 years, they were fully supported by the Indigenous communities. They were waiting for those permits. What did we see after that? We see a company and a mine that is spending \$2 billion, they're employing 1,600 people, and the Indigenous people who are supporting that are extremely, extremely happy with the development that they participate within fully.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: My father used to say, being from northern Ontario, that the mining and industry in northern Ontario used to fuel southern Ontario. That changed over time—regulations and changes.

Now that I live in southern Ontario and I have built my home here in southern Ontario, I'm wondering if the minister or his parliamentary assistant could say what this act does to help people in the GTA and our prosperity here.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: The awesome thing about this act is that it's going to build more mines faster. Why is that awesome? It's because we're going to be able to access critical minerals from the north. We won't have to rely on actors all around the world—actors we cannot rely on. We don't have to have these extended supply chains around the world that might break at any minute. We're going to have it right here in Ontario. It's going to be stable, and it's going to bring in billions of dollars of investment, just like the Minister of Economic Development has made—so far, \$22 billion worth of automotive investments since 2020 in the province of Ontario. That's what it means for southern Ontario—so far, \$22 billion worth of auto investment. And, right now, the sky is the limit.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sol Mamakwa: Back to the Minister of Mines: Do you know, if you continue to be colonial, that the Ring of Fire will not happen?

Hon. George Pirie: Speaker, as you know, we're fully committed to the duty to consult. In fact, we are fully committed to working with Indigenous people. In fact, we're not just committed; they're at the heart of what we're doing with Marten Falls and Webequie. They are leading the duty to consult on the environmental assessment process with all of the communities in that area. They're being led by the Indigenous people. They're running it; it isn't the province. We're supporting it, but it's the Indigenous people of Marten Falls and Webequie who are leading the environmental assessment on these roads.

We also know that the Indigenous communities that support development are thriving.

Take a look at TTN. Take a look at Chief Bruce Archibald and his older sister RoseAnne. Before they were fully committed to development, the unemployment rate in TTN was 85%, and now, Chief Archibald tells us that, in fact, it's less than the national number. They fully support development.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My question for the minister.

I know we've spoken a lot in this House of the importance of building more mines faster, and I think that is absolutely true. We sometimes talk about some of the larger companies and some of the large mines, which is really, really important, but I'm wondering if you'd talk a little bit about a population that I've had actually brought up in my riding a couple of times that I know is important to you as well: the juniors. Could you speak a little bit about why this legislation is going to help more entrepreneurs, more small business owners, and not just the large mining giants, but the junior mining exploration sector, and what this is going to do for those people who take risks, who want to invest in the mining sector and make a go of it—not just the big guys, but the little guys too.

Hon. George Pirie: Thank you again for that question.

This is how it works. The prospector on the ground looks for minerals. They might find something. Then they have to get involved with a junior exploration company. Junior exploration companies are the entrepreneurs. They're the true risk-takers. For them to take risks, they must have certainty about their investment—and that's what this does. Can you imagine a situation where you're asking someone to put money into the ground and they have no reasonable opportunity to get a return on that money for 15 years—not possible, not going to happen. The junior exploration companies will see that there is an opportunity to attract—and that's what happens. The larger companies that, in fact, have the financial ability to raise the capital invest with the junior companies. So that's how this works. But they need certainty in relation to the regulations and what it takes to permit the mines.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The minister has said in his comments that he appreciates all those who participated in defining this bill. What the minister has not referenced is all the voices that were intentionally left out. In fact, we have heard in this House that if you're not fully on board with Bill 71, then you better get out of the way. This message applies to the very Indigenous nations that were not consulted, perpetuating colonialism in the year 2023.

Why have you sabotaged your own bill by disrespecting First Nations people in Ontario?

Hon. George Pirie: Thanks so much for the question.

Once again, I'll say we're fully committed to the duty to consult. That hasn't changed. There isn't a word in the proposed legislation that changes that fact. This government is committed to the duty to consult, and we will carry out that duty.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

MPP Jamie West: I'm very happy to be talking about Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. We had debated this at second reading. Basically, what we said is that it's a pretty good bill, but it's flawed. The idea was that we would support it at second reading, hoping to fix those flaws. Honestly, I think no bill is ever going to be perfect.

The two major flaws in this bill really have to do with the environment. The member opposite just said that it doesn't change the environmental regulations at all, but that's not accurate. It changes it. The old standard used to be "better than"—you leave the mine site better than before—and the new standard is "comparable to." And I'll get into that afterwards, but basically, when you do something like that, it's very clear to see what's better. When you say "comparable," that's just an invitation to have lawyers come forward and start arguing about what's comparable and what's not comparable. In our opinion, that does weaken the environmental standard, which is kind of par for the course for what's happening here.

We have heard this morning during debate about the mining community and mining organizations. I'm proud to come from a mining community. I've always lived in Sudbury. My parents met in Nova Scotia. They came to Sudbury because my dad had a job working at Inco. He was working at Stobie mine and the Froid mine. I also worked in the mining industry, at the smelter, for nearly two decades. My stepfather also worked in the mining industry. Really, anybody in Sudbury—if you don't have a connection to the mining industry, you've probably just recently moved there and haven't met enough people yet, because it is a mining town and has been for more than 100 years. It's much more diversified, but it is a mining town, to the point that growing up as a kid, my friends and I all thought that flashlights only came in yellow and black, because those are mining flashlights. Those were the Inco colours, and so everybody had a yellow and black flashlight. When you'd go out at Halloween, you had a yellow and black flashlight. That's how ingrained it was in our community.

1450

When we talk about mining, sometimes we get into rhetoric: "This party likes this. This party doesn't like this." I want to be very clear: As New Democrats, we understand how important mining is. And leading off the debate here, I want to be very clear that I understand how important mining is, because it's what put bread on the table and food on the table for my family when I was a child, and it's what puts food on the table for my family now that I'm a parent. I understand how important it is, and I understand the values of the mining community and mining organizations, and I have to tell you that there are parts of this bill that don't match those values.

Mining organizations care about the environment, and it is an uphill battle for a mining organization to demonstrate that, because part of that process is disturbing the environment. Part of the process is pulling things out of the ground and refining them. There are waste products that damage the environment, and in the old days, there was nothing to be done with those waste products.

I've talked in the past about growing up in Sudbury and how it looked like a moonscape, how the ground was scorched from acid rain; certain things wouldn't grow; how I didn't know that trees could grow any taller than 20 feet tall, and that in many places, in what we would call the mountains, because you'd see so much black rock, there would be these large tree stumps that had just dried out and died from acid rain. I remember as a child—not kindergarten, but later on, in grade 4 or grade 5—playing in the mountains with my friends and picking up these tree stumps that were so dried out and throwing them around, pretending we were the Incredible Hulk. So I know first-hand the environmental damage that has gone on there.

But I also know first-hand how hard the mining industry—the OMA—in Ontario has worked to rebuild that relationship and to demonstrate their commitment to the environment.

So even though it's a slight weakening, it is a weakening, and it doesn't reflect the values of the mining community.

Mining organizations also value the communities where they work. That is important to them. I live in a mining town. I know that Sudbury—Vale and Glencore are the two largest mining companies there, and there are a couple of smaller ones. I know how important my community is to them, and I know the relationship they have with the workers there—because they're all workers there. As you get farther away, they're global companies, but the core group all live in the community. We all play together, swim together, hunt together. And so those communities are important.

I have to say, the best mining companies and the largest mining companies in Ontario have worked really, really hard on building true nation-to-nation partnerships with Indigenous communities. One of the things that we're being told—and I'll get into it—is that they're asking the government for a framework for this. I can only imagine that if the large companies are struggling to find the ways, the junior companies really are having a difficult time making it up as they go along. Wanting to do the right thing but not having the framework to work with is difficult for these junior mining companies, because it's difficult for the large mining companies who have been doing it for decades in finding their way.

Our position was that we were going to support this in second reading, because we think there are parts of this bill that are really good, things that are going to help, and I'll get into that part of it.

The part about helping a mining company develop at different stages and not have the financial surety through the whole project makes a lot of sense. When you're trying to develop and raise capital—I worked at Vale; I can't remember if they're second or first, but they're a very large company. They could raise capital if they want to. But if you're a junior mining company, you're going to have a difficult time raising enough money for the end-life of the project.

If you were to think of it—people have a hard time understanding mining being built, but let's say it's a

neighbourhood, and you're going to bring in the road. You just have to have enough money to restore that road, and then you're going to start developing to bring in the infrastructure, the pipes and electricity and stuff. You just need enough money to cover that if things go bad; if you end up going bankrupt, if the economy changes and suddenly cobalt is not as valuable as it was and you have to close down—you have enough money to close that section. I think it makes sense that before you start the next stage you have enough to cover that stage and the one before. I think that part of it is good.

But these parts about the environment, taking care of the community and having a positive relationship with Indigenous communities—those are hurdles that, unfortunately, I don't think we can overcome on our side to support this legislation. These are big barriers. These are core values—core values for New Democrats and core values for the mining industry. So it would be difficult for us to support this.

After the second reading, I had asked for it to be travelled. The government House leader said, "Absolutely, we're going to travel it." I was excited for this because I thought this would be a real opportunity. Sometimes we put on our team jerseys and our team hats and we don't listen to each other. When you go out there, you hear stuff from the community, and sometimes you hear stuff that you think is inaccurate; it's not what you thought. But those people who work in the industry tell you stuff, and you've got to think about changing your point of view or adjusting it and moving that way. So we did travel. We travelled to Timmins, and we travelled to Sudbury. In northern Ontario, the distance between Timmins and Sudbury is pretty small. It's very common in northern Ontario that we describe distance in hours. Last night I drove four hours to get here, and that's not a big deal for people in Sudbury. I don't know if you have the same relationship with distance in southern Ontario. Sudbury and Timmins is about a four-hour drive; it's fine.

A lot of the talk here about mining has been about the Ring of Fire. Even if you don't know anything about mining, over the last five or six years, I think if someone asked you about mining anywhere you are in Ontario, you would think of the Ring of Fire because it has been in the news so much. It's a massive deposit there. It's very exciting for the mining industry. Let's be honest: There is a lot of proposed work going into the Ring of Fire. We did not go anywhere near that side of Ontario. Northern Ontario, if you look on a map, is about the size of the nation of France. We went to eastern Ontario, where Timmins and Sudbury is, but we didn't go to western Ontario, where Sault Ste. Marie is, or, farther up the coast, to Thunder Bay or Rainy River, where the Ring of Fire would be. In fact, if you wanted to travel from one of those communities where the Ring of Fire is, if you wanted to travel from that side of the province to Timmins or Sudbury, it's more than 1,000 kilometres of travel. I don't know if we give adequate resources for those people to be heard on a bill that's going to have so much to do with the Ring of Fire. It would be like if we were discussing a

farming bill and you came to Sudbury. We do have farms around and in Nickel Belt, but Sudbury is typically not the hotbed of farming. And if we're talking about the hotbed of mining right now, it is the Ring of Fire, and we just didn't go there.

I talked about being from Sudbury and being in a mining town. I wanted something in my office to reflect the growth of Sudbury and what had happened, so I have a painting from Ray Laporte, who, I later found out, when my mom came to see my office, was friends with my mom. Ray is best known for what's known as rock bass sculptures. He has passed on now, but a lot of people know him because he would make these sculptures of fish but with rock in between, because Sudbury is so entwined with rock, and called them rock bass. A lot of people have those in their house.

I have a painting in my office of Delki Dozzi, which is a community park in Gatchell. Gatchell is an Italian neighbourhood. Delki Dozzi park—there's a landscape of it, and across from it you can see the slag dump. The slag dump resonates with me for a couple of reasons. One, Sudbury was known for a long time for being able to watch the slag. Slag is melted rock. It's the waste rock after you smelt it. It used to be a tourist attraction—to come and park on the side of the road, and they would dump slag and you could watch it. In fact, if you have old postcards of Sudbury, they are probably of slag dumps. That is the one connection I have.

The second connection I have is, it's where I proposed to my wife. In my head, I thought this would be romantic. The first date I had with my wife—she lived outside of Sudbury, in Nickel Belt—she was talking about how she'd never seen a slag dump, so we went to go see it. There wasn't anything there, and she thought I'd just brought her to go parking. So—I can't remember, five years later—when I proposed, I decided I was going to go to where we had our first date. It's a dirty parking lot, so my advice to anybody thinking of proposing is plan ahead and check out the area. But I have a soft spot in my heart for that.

1500

The third reason that it's important to me is, that was my job. After I got married, when I got hired at Inco originally, now Vale, my job was furnace operator. I filled the bowls that would fill the slag.

So there's that connection that I have from, as a child going out to watch and having Dairy Queen, to the connection of that I have a wife from that area and how every time we drive past it, my kids and she make fun of me—and filling those bowls and having that sort of blue-collar job that I've always been proud of.

The reason I talk about Ray's painting is, you cannot—I went to go take a photo of that area to show the before and after because there's been my lifelong experience of re-greening Sudbury, and I wanted to show how you can't see the slag anymore. There's grass and there are some trees growing on top of it, and it looks like a big grass hill now. I can't get a photo of it because there are trees in the way. The trees have wrecked my photo, so I can't show how it used to look and how it looks now because there's

no way to line it up because the trees are all blocking the shot, and that is my experience in a lifetime.

So if someone in my community were to say to me, "I cannot believe, Jamie, the NDP didn't support the mining bill," I would say to them, "I grew up in Sudbury when it was a moonscape, and throughout my lifetime we have worked tirelessly to re-green this community, we have worked so that we can restore the pollution that was caused to Junction Creek—Junction Creek used to be a yellow and green, highly polluted creek; we restored it to the point that brook trout are now swimming in it."

Throughout my lifetime, we have turned a moonscape into Earth. This law weakens environmental protections for mining communities, and I won't have another community in northern Ontario go through what we went through in Sudbury.

We all agree that mining is important. The Conservatives as well—all of us understand this. Mining includes the product but also includes the people and the environment, and the product I want to talk about first is metals and minerals.

There has been a lot of talk since the bill was tabled about the importance of e-vehicles—and absolutely, it is. E-vehicles are the next wave of the future. I remember when I was first elected, auto companies were speaking with me about the importance of the government understanding that e-vehicles are happening—that we are set for the next Detroit is what I was told. It's a worldwide business. So the next Detroit could be in Ontario because we have not just the trades skill—because you need that to build these cars—but we have the post-secondary education, because a lot of these cars are as much technology as they are physical matter.

I'm glad that we're excited today because, in 2018, when I was excited about electric vehicles and people were getting involved with electric vehicles—my son, in fact, bought a hybrid just before the election and was able to get the rebate that was there that was cancelled afterwards. But the same government that's now touting electric vehicles was cancelling rebates allowing people to get into electric vehicles early. The same Conservative government that is bragging about electric vehicles now was ripping up charging stations. As my car starts to slowly disintegrate with over 200,000 kilometres on it and I'm looking at my next vehicle, I would love to get an e-vehicle. There are very few charging stations between Sudbury and here, so I don't know if I can get to Toronto in order to drive my vehicle, but I would like that opportunity. If we weren't ripping up charging stations, if we were installing more charging stations during the time from 2018 to 2022, there may be more places for me to charge. But I am glad that they're excited.

I also want to remind everybody that mining was really important before anyone knew what an EV was. There's a reason that a half-tonne truck is really heavy. It's not the rubber and the moulding—that thing is made out of steel, man. It's heavy because of all the steel that's into it. You peel off everything that's not steel—a lot of people would even consider maybe the tires, but the tires are steel-belted,

so mining is integral to everything we've done. We stumbled into the new frontier, I guess, of e-vehicles, but mining has always been important to society for as long as I can remember. Maybe because I'm from a mining community, it stands out more to me.

I was thinking this morning—first thing this morning, my alarm went off. I've set it on my cellphone because I travel back and forth from Sudbury to Toronto. My cellphone—none of those components would be available without mining. It's instrumental to that.

I go for a shower and I'm reminded that all the pipes that bring the water up to the shower is all because of mining.

I get dressed and because I have no waist I have to wear a belt, and the attachment for my belt is there because of mining.

I get something to drink out of the kitchen sink. It has a stainless steel tub which is available because of mining.

The door handle is there because of mining. The key I lock the door with is there because of mining.

The elevator, the entire shaft and all the components, except for the plastic buttons, is there because of mining.

That entire building, the rebar holding it in place, is there because of mining.

As I walk here and I see the subway or trolley cars going by—that is all there because of mining, including the rails that they're on.

Every car and bike—everything that you see, there's a component of mining.

Even in this room, which has a lot of beautiful wood, there is mining all around us that is valuable.

And so while there is some excitement, I just want to remind people that mining has always been core and important to us.

I talked about people as well. There's a famous expression, an important expression: "The most important thing to come out of the mine is the worker." I like that because it's a reminder of the deaths that happen in the mining industry. My passion was health and safety. We just had the Day of Mourning on April 28. The Steelworkers, which is the union that represents the workers at Vale, have a Day of Mourning ceremony. Management from Vale comes. They say, "We remember the workers who died." The families come as well. There's a slide show. I should have counted the names, but there are a countless number of names, over the last 100-plus years, of people who have died underground or on the surface in the mining industry. The number goes down, but it's very important to recognize that workers die in the mining industry.

They also live in those communities. During deputations, when the committee travelled, Eric Delparte came from USW Local 6500. Eric is a miner. He's a union steward. He's a community activist. Eric, when I first met him, worked on the honey wagon. I know the minister knows what that is, but other people here probably don't know. I'll talk about what this is afterwards. He talked about mining, and he's very proud, like most people who are miners, of the work that they do. It's a work hard, play

hard workplace. And when they're not mining, when they're not underground and blasting, mucking, scooping—when they're not doing all of that work, people in the mining community hunt and fish and they play ball, and they get together. And so Eric said that Sudbury is a place where we work, fish, hunt and play. I think that's an important thing to think about. What we hear about a lot today is the prosperity and the jobs, which is all important to community. When times are good, community is generally better. But you have to understand that community is also where you live. It's where you work. It's where you hunt. It's where you fish. It's where you play. It's where you raise your families and take care of your families. And you can't replace a good-paying job and eliminate everything else in your community that's important to you. You need that balance between the two of them.

I mentioned earlier that Eric, when I first met him, worked on the honey wagon. A honey wagon is a polite way of saying—there's washroom facilities underground, and the person who cleans them and maintains them works in the honey wagon. Eric, in his typical style of joking around, would wear a tool belt with the hoses and different attachments on it. And I say that because I know there are members here who didn't know what that meant—when I said "honey wagon" earlier. I say that to remind us all as MPPs that we don't know everything; we think that we do. We think we know a lot of stuff. We get a lot of briefing notes. We're fortunate to have access to a lot of resources. But really, it's the people in the province, the workers in the province, the people in the community who will inform us and educate us and allow us to make really good decisions.

1510

I'm going to talk about some of the flaws. I mentioned some of them earlier, but I'm going to go a little more into them.

There are sections of the bill where the director of mines has been replaced with the minister.

I have said this several times in the past, and I think that the minister understands: I have a lot of respect for the minister. We've had some conversations. Following the election, when I was working with the Minister of Labour to get the apology for the McIntyre miners, I went to go talk to the Minister of Mines about it. He cut me off right away and he said, "Oh, I know that. My dad had to breathe the McIntyre aluminum dust." We talked a little bit about his history and his past. I know his father worked in mining; I believe his grandfather did as well, which is typical in northern Ontario, where it's multi-generational. I wasn't able to confirm it, so I don't want to misspeak.

All through this act, they're going to change the director to the minister. This isn't anything personal about the Minister of Mines right now, who I think knows a lot but may not know a lot about all industries. I don't know his whole background, so open pit might be different for him, or surface plants might be something where it's a blind spot for him.

The director works for all of us. The director is non-partisan by nature. The director has the historical knowledge of what has happened in the past, has all the resources.

All of us in this room have to recognize that we're only renting these seats, that there are people who were here before us and there are people who are going to be holding these seats after us. Some of us will lose an election, some of us will retire, but none of us get to keep these forever. So you need that institutional knowledge, you need that non-partisan knowledge to ensure that things go well for all the people of Ontario.

Frankly, during deputations, I kept asking people if they had asked for this, and nobody could tell me that they asked for this to happen. No one in the mining industry could tell me, the Indigenous communities didn't tell me, the environmentalists—none of them wanted this. It's curious that the Conservative government very clearly wants this, because they couldn't provide anybody else who wanted it as well. When we had an amendment to remove it, they fought very hard and voted against it, so it wasn't removed. But it seems like a weird thing to have in a bill that nobody is asking for.

I mentioned, as well, one of the other flaws earlier about the closure planning. They changed the wording about qualified professionals to certify the plan. At first, they couldn't define what "qualified" meant—it was just "qualified." I'm not a lawyer, and I don't know the technical term, so I'll just say it's a bit of a weasel word. When you say "qualified," it's vague. What I think is qualified might be different from what my colleague thinks is qualified, and then you end up in the weeds. When you're not clear about stuff, you open the door to lawyers and lawsuits and delays.

One of the things we wanted to ensure was that this qualified individual—once it was defined—would be independent of the mining company, because that's clearly a conflict of interest. Sometimes at Vale, somebody would do something that was clearly a mistake, and the polite way of phrasing it was, "That was a career-limiting move." If you are a qualified individual having to sign off on the stage of a project for a mining company that pays your wages, not signing off could be a career-limiting move for you. So we believe, as New Democrats, that this qualified individual really should be independent and separate from the mining companies that are looking for the permits; it's possible they could be, but the Conservative government wouldn't allow us to have this as part of the legislation in the amendments to ensure it happened. I don't believe in "trust us"—not because of the Conservative government specifically. I think it's bad policy to just say, "Trust us, that will never happen," because when you leave doors open, people walk through them.

There's another part about allowing more flexibility in the techniques used to rehabilitate mines once they're closed. They changed the wording from "better" to "similar." I heard the parliamentary assistant say that there was no change, but I think that changing from "better" to "similar" is a change, and it's actually a weakening of the

process. When we come into this House, for example, we all have the placemats that spell out where everyone is sitting and the different names and stuff, and it's very clean and tidy. If we were to leave, at the end of the day, with water glasses and pieces of paper around, that's not better. It's very easy to tell what's better and what's not.

In fact, growing up, I was involved with the Scouts. I was a Cub, and then I was a Scout—and then when I got older it was that "pay it forward," where I was a Beaver leader and a Cub leader and a Scout leader. When we go camping in Scouting, it's very common to say that we're going to leave our campsite better than we found it.

If eight-year-old kids can leave a campsite better than they found it, I believe that multi-billion dollar mining companies can do that as well and don't need that watered down.

During deputations, we heard mining companies talk about infrastructure that was there and how it would help to leave it behind. There were hydro lines that were there, and there were structures that were there that it would be nice to leave behind. And I do agree with that, if the community wanted it. One of the communities said that the reason they didn't want the hydro lines is that they don't want to be liable for that infrastructure; they have to pay for it and be liable for any kind of damage. So I understand if a community says no, but I don't know if they'll be able to when it says "similar," because now the mining company can say, "Well, we have a great place. They can use this as an emergency shelter. We don't have to tear it down. They can use this as a place to store things." And so it just opens the door. And I'm not saying this is specifically why I would vote against this, but I am saying we could have found a middle ground that would allow the mining company and the community to work together so that they could come forward and they could agree: "We'd like to keep these structures; we'd like this structure to be back in place. The road has been handy to us. We'd like to keep the road and not have it returned." But that didn't happen. That was voted down as well.

The part I did think made sense to me—and I mentioned it earlier—was the stages of financial assurance. The way mining works is, before you open your mine, you have to pay to close the mine—and so it's a little misleading to think of it in a hundred years, because you get to adjust over time. But if you're going to open up a mine and you're trying to find capital and investors, especially as a junior company, for the end project, it's very, very difficult. So if you can do it in stages—and I mentioned this earlier, so I won't go through it again, but if you can start at the first stage and have the surety to restore that if you had to close the mine. And then, before you start the second stage—you've already had the money in place for the first one—you have the money in place to restore the mine site for the second stage. That's a part of this bill that really I think we can get behind. It would help move mining forward.

I mentioned earlier about mining company values and the value to people and the environment, and you'll see this in mission statements. Most mining companies—most

corporations—have a mission statement somewhere, and in there somewhere they'll have something about the importance of the community and the importance of the environment. I believe that, in the past, these were words on a wall. They sounded well to someone in HR or PR, who probably wrote them. And if it happened, it happened, but it wasn't really front and centre. Those were the old days; those were the old "black-rock Sudbury" days. But mining companies really are committed to these values of the environment and values of people.

The old days of saying, "I'm going to drive the bulldozer to the Ring of Fire" are over, and they were over long before the Premier said them—literally decades before he said them. It really did a disservice to mining companies. I'm not saying this to be hurtful. I'm saying this because it's honest, and you need to hear it. You put mining on its back foot, and you damaged relationships that they had spent a very long time building.

The mining companies, the big players, the ones that were investing—and, honestly, any smaller one that wants to be invested in—they are committed to building a true nation-to-nation partnership with Indigenous communities. They're struggling sometimes but they are doing their best to find their way, and what we heard clearly through the deputations, when the committee travelled, is that they would like advice and a framework on how to do this. Many of them are finding their way, and they're working at it, but they've gone—in the old days, they used to do this: "Hi, we're doing this." That was consultation. They don't do it anymore. They really have ongoing relationships and meetings—the best ones. And the best ones should be lighting the path forward for the other ones. And, really, as government, when they're asking us for frameworks and for help for them to do this even better, we should be providing that to them.

1520

As I said earlier, driving a bulldozer—it's not helpful. When you're trying to build a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations in Ontario and you don't separate the Indigenous file from the northern development file, it sends a message to Indigenous people in Ontario, First Nations in Ontario, that their value is connected to the wealth of the land where they live, that their value isn't about them specifically; it's what's beneath their feet or what grows around them that we can harvest and make money from.

When the Conservatives tabled the bill, it was during PDAC, and I think one of the reasons it was tabled that week is because the prospector development conference was out and it's a good talking point while you're there. There are good things in the bill, for sure, but, the Conservative government tabled this without consulting Indigenous communities. True, meaningful consultation, like I said, is not showing and is not coming after the bill is tabled and saying, "This is what we're doing." With all due respect to the minister, it's not saying, "If you want to provide feedback, you can do it to the end of this month"—I may have heard it inaccurately, but it's later this month—especially when the bill is probably going to be voted on

by the end of this week. That is not consultation. That's a formality, that's a checked box, but that formality, that checked box—mining companies are moving away from that, and they want to really have true consultation, that true relationship.

I just want to talk for a minute about the request that we had from mining companies to have this framework, because I think it's important. We heard a couple of times from the PA earlier in debate about how nothing in the federal legislation that requires consultation has been changed. He's accurate. What he's not sharing with you is that there wasn't any consultation on this bill. There is legislation in place saying it has to happen, but it didn't happen. I'm pointing this out because that means there's a flaw, there's a loophole in this. And when industry comes to us and says, "Do you know what would help us as we try develop this process? It would be nice if there was a framework that was spelled out, because we're not sure when we should start, we're not sure how to start, we're not sure who to approach"—I'm not pointing fingers, because my relationship, my knowledge with Indigenous communities where I live, started when I was 40. I've talked in the past about this—thinking I was an ally, and then, somewhere in my forties, realizing I was polite. I didn't know about Atikameksheng Anishnawbek—I didn't know they were part of the Robinson-Huron Treaties territory. There are lots of us who are like this because our school system didn't teach us this, and so we're learning together and moving together. We're walking the good path, as they would say, together. As we're walking down the good path, when people are coming forward from the mining industry saying, "This would help us be more successful; we'd be better at this if you could help us do this," it would be great if we were to say, "That's a good idea."

The way we could have said, "This is a good idea," is that when we brought forward the amendments—my colleague MPP Mamakwa read the amendment and spoke about it very passionately. I think not voting it down would have been a first sign, or saying, "We're not able to do it now, but we're going to commit to have that done within a year," would have been a good sign. I don't believe that saying, "It's good enough," is a good sign—"It's good enough. It isn't working, it isn't happening, but it's good enough, and it's already there."

There were 22 amendments—there were a little more; some of them were withdrawn. There were 22 amendments: 20 of them were from the New Democrats, one was from the independents, and one was from the Conservative Party. We also had three motions. They were all voted down. The Conservative amendment was a technical amendment just to fix wording in their bill. All the amendments were voted down. We don't write amendments to make bills worse; we write them to make them better. Very little conversation—we spoke very candidly on our side about why these were important amendments. We spoke for a very long time, specifically about the ones that would strengthen the First Nations relationships and true ability

to have free, prior and informed consent, and the Conservative government, unfortunately, just voted against them.

When I'm in this room and I hear the Conservative members speak about prosperity and the importance of the north and bringing jobs to the north, I'm concerned that maybe they don't understand what northern Ontario is like. I'll be honest: I'm from the north, and there are things about southern Ontario that I don't understand, and I'm always open to learning.

We have had First Nations chiefs come here several times to talk about the importance of being consulted, and we have had First Nations chiefs who have been removed from the gallery, because in the gallery you're not able to speak—but about how important this is to them, and to demand meetings with the minister, to demand meetings with the Premier, and to not have those happen. I think when my colleague from the other side says, "I'm very disappointed the NDP applauded"—I'm not disappointed to have applauded. I grew up in a city that was decimated by the environmental damage from mining communities, and so when a chief comes and says, "I want you to speak with me before you destroy the environment in my community," I do applaud that.

I understand how important mining is, and I believe in how important mining is, but I also believe that the commitment to the community and commitment to the environment that mining companies talk about are equally as important. And when somebody who is a leader in their community says, "I care about my community and I want to ensure that it is taken care of—and not just about jobs, but that you have a real, true, free, prior and informed consent conversation with me," that has to happen. And if you have to yell because people aren't listening to the polite conversations—maybe you do have to yell to be heard.

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: I heard that. The member said it wasn't appropriate.

A lot of this bill really is about the Premier saying, "Trust us." At the end of question period, the Premier came over and talked to me. He said, "I hope I'll have your support on this bill"—and unfortunately, he doesn't. There are parts of it that I think are going to help, but there are parts of it that are damaging and parts of it that are weakening, and I do not trust that things will go well. When the Premier and the Conservative government don't provide free, prior and informed consent to Indigenous communities before tabling this bill, I do not trust that he will do it before moving forward with mining applications.

Neskantaga First Nation has come several times. The first time I met them was in MPP Mamakwa's office, and they had a bottle of water—I had heard about the polluted water in the past, but I hadn't seen it. It is visibly polluted. I always thought there were chemicals in it that would be harmful to drink; you can see in it that it is—it looks a little like swamp water. It is cloudy and unclear, and there are bits of debris in it. You don't need a microscope to understand. When I spoke with these members of this community about the water that they brought from Neskantaga, they told me that even in Toronto, where they're told

that the water is safe to drink, they will not drink the water, because this has been going on for generations—28 years without clean water: "My oldest just turned 26, so for more than his lifetime, I could not bathe him. I couldn't give him water out of the tap to drink. I couldn't clean his clothes. These are all basic things. When he spit up on me, I couldn't have a shower."

You cannot go forward and say, "Trust us. It's going to work out," when you have communities like this who have been unable to trust multiple governments—not just the Conservatives, multiple governments—for 28 years. The last time the government said "trust us" was 28 years ago. If you waited 28 years for clean drinking water, would you trust the government? If they tabled a bill without speaking to you, would you trust the government? Would you think, "Oh, next time"? This is a "the cheque is in the mail" conversation. None of us believe people when they say the cheque is in the mail.

Honestly, with the Conservative record on the environment, I do not trust them. It has not been a good record.

1530

In Alberta, the Conservative government of Alberta told the citizens to trust them—this is about oil lines and gas lines—that industry will do the right thing and the polluters will pay to clean up their mess. And I think that the company that made the mess—there's high risk, there's high reward. When you see mining companies post profits with a billion per quarter, they're doing all right. They have to have the structure in place to restore things and to clean up the environment where they do business, and so weakening it doesn't make any sense.

In Alberta, there are currently 170,000 abandoned oil wells. That's 37% of all their oil wells that are abandoned. Do you know who's going to pay to clean those up? It's not the oil companies that made the money; it's the taxpayers. Even if it cost a dollar, it's going to cost taxpayers \$170,000 to clean up these abandoned wells. But it's not going to cost a dollar; it's going to cost a fortune to clean up these wells.

What the Conservative government did in Alberta is that they started offering royalty money—so taxpayers' dollars—to these companies to pay them with taxpayer money to clean up the mess that they made while getting profitable. Think about that for a second. I think about starting a small business, maybe a coffee shop, and I'm worried about the risk if my coffee shop isn't successful. So I go to the government and I say, "I'd like to open a coffee shop, but I don't want any risk. Can you buy all of the infrastructure for me? And if my coffee shop goes under, if I'm not able to make ends meet, I'd like to just leave, and then someone else can clean it up for me." That's kind of what they're saying on this, and it doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make sense because people understand that business is about risk. It's great to want to minimize risk for people and make it better for people to want to invest, but "minimize" and "eliminate" are different. And basically telling people who have mining companies building and developing in their communities,

“Trust us, they’ll clean it up”—well, the history hasn’t been great for cleaning up. I talked about Sudbury several times—it hasn’t been great.

I talked about these oil wells in Alberta. I think on this plan that the Conservatives in Alberta are doing, where they’re paying companies who refuse to clean the land taxpayer money to clean up their own mess—it kind of goes in the face of the quote that the company that made the mess and profited from it has to clean it up, and I think that’s why the Globe called it corporate welfare. Previously, they gave a \$1-billion payout by the federal government to deal with some of the damage—so at both levels they’re getting a payout, from the federal and provincial governments. It’s easy to brush that aside and say, “That’s oil wells. That would never happen for mining because mining is totally different.”

What could go wrong in mining? Ironically, the first place we travelled to when we travelled the bill was Timmins, and outside of Timmins is the Kam Kotia mine disaster. This is Ontario’s most notorious mine waste project. They had a mine in Kam Kotia, and they abandoned it—and this was years ago, before the legislation was strengthened. It was an American company, and then a couple of junior ones tried to take it over and make a run at it. Basically, they ran for a while and they mined, and they left a mess behind, and now taxpayers are ponying up \$28 million to fix this mess. Speaker, \$28 million dollars is a lot of money. Whenever I hear the Conservative government talk about, “If we had the money, we could invest in schools and health care”—well, if you didn’t give \$28 million away to the Kam Kotia mine disaster, we would have that money. Some of the examples they talk about in the description—the mine only operated from September 1943 until December 1944, and its legacy still lingers on. If you were to go there, you would see that “dead trees sticking out of the swamp and rotting vegetation create a scene from a Hollywood horror movie. Oxidation of sulphide in the mine tailings (treated remains of ore) and waste rock causes an acidic runoff affecting creeks and rivers close to the mine.” So those all flow. There are about 200,000 tonnes of waste rock and six million tonnes of mine tailings on the site. So when the Conservative government and the Premier are saying, “Trust us,” or “I hope I can count on your support, Jamie,” I think of the \$28 million that taxpayers had to pay to clean up this one mine site four hours north of Sudbury, and I don’t really trust on this issue.

I’ve already talked about the director, so I’m going to skip over that.

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: Oh, I thought I did.

The member from Oshawa is saying I didn’t talk about “better than” and “comparable to.”

Interjection.

MPP Jamie West: I know. I did talk about it. I talked about how Scouts, how eight-year-old kids can leave a campsite better than—they don’t have to water it down and say “comparable.”

I think this is a funny one, but just because I have the time to talk about it—there has been a lot of discussion about the 15 years to open a mine site. I made a comment when I was doing the lead debate at second reading on this, and I explained that 15 years is kind of normal. Conservatives have been all over the place, that it shouldn’t be 15 years for an open-pit mine, it shouldn’t be 15 years for a—I don’t care. If you’re planting crops and you’re upset that it takes a growing season to grow your crops, you’re not being realistic. That’s just what it takes. If we can shorten the time and get it to less than 15 years, by all means, let’s do that. But if you’re going to stand here and tell me that you can open a mine and you want to cut it down by bypassing the protections that are in place—there are all kinds of FEL studies, there are investments, there are environmental studies, there’s all kinds of stuff that has to happen, and winter also throws a wrench into things. So it really shouldn’t be something that we’re arguing about; it’s just the reality of the workplace.

Anyone going around Toronto, when you see a skyscraper being built—it takes time to build a skyscraper. I’d love it to be done tomorrow. They’re building near my place, and it’s super loud. It would be great if it only took a month. It just takes a little bit longer. People are working. It takes time.

It’s also a little misleading, I think, to say that no one’s employed until the 15 years is over. The bulk of your employees don’t show up, but there are people who work all the way through that. The prospector is working before that. The people who are doing the core samples are working before that. The engineers are working before that. The environmental specialists are working before that. There is a lot of work going on.

I talked about the minister’s powers. I’ve mentioned several times my respect for the minister and his knowledge of the mining industry. But ministries don’t last. Cabinets will shuffle. Governments rise and fall. The parliamentary assistant, for example—I believe his background is in law; I don’t know if it’s in mining law. As much information as the minister has with his lifelong knowledge—I’m sure he learned a lot under his father before he was working in the industry, and then while working in the industry—when we make this change, this change lasts forever, until it’s amended.

The knowledge that the Minister of Mines has right now could change if there’s a cabinet shuffle or if he decides not to run again in the future or if anything happens, and it could just land in anyone’s hands. They’ll do the best they can, but honestly, they will not have the institutional knowledge that the director will have. They won’t have that framework to be able to share. And any decision that the minister makes, just because of the nature of where we work, will be considered as partisan—even if it’s not, it will always be looked at as a partisan lens because all of this in this House are seen as party members. All the ministers are Conservative. The opposition members are New Democrats. The independent members are Liberal and Green. Two are just independent, but most of us are seen with whatever colour is part of our party, and

it's very difficult, if the minister makes a decision, for it not to be seen as a Conservative decision and not an independent decision. So I don't understand why they want this.

I said earlier that I don't think industry wanted this or asked for this; there's no way to demonstrate it. When I asked them in committee, when I ask people at PDAC, when I talked to my colleagues and friends from the mining industry at PDAC—none of them seemed to be really interested or cared or knew why it was there or not. So it's an odd thing to do, and I think it hurts us all as elected officials, because whenever things look like we're doing things for what's best for our party above what's best for the people of Ontario, it is a bad look for all of us, no matter which side of the House you sit on. It's a weakening.

1540

As I said earlier, it's a flawed bill. At second reading, I was clear about it; it's really not terrible, but it's flawed. The issues when it comes to Indigenous communities and the issues when it comes to the environment are things that are just a bridge too far in terms of support. It's hard to measure the parts that are going to help. We would have been open to addressing those or fixing them through the amendments that we brought forward, but they voted against those amendments.

I want to speak briefly about tailings. I don't think I heard you earlier. I apologize; I had to get something out of my office, so it may have been spoken about. Part of the bill does talk about tailings, and I want to talk about this because it is important. If you're doing an aerial map—if you go to Google Maps, you can see some of the tailings ponds around Sudbury. Tailings are basically the waste rock. If you're in mining, they bring muck to the surface. If you're not from mining, you think of mud; the muck is actually big chunks of rock. Then, at the crushing plant, they literally crush this rock. There are a bunch of methods. The ones we use are ball mills and rod mills. Basically, the rock bounces against these big metal balls or rods, crushed into smaller and smaller fragments until it's almost like a powder. There's a lot of water that's used in that and slowly and surely, through a variety of processes—I'll just use flotation—the valuable stuff sinks and the waste floats off. You end up with a lot of waste sludge. It's kind of gross to look at, to be honest. It's muddy. It's not disgusting; it's just muddy. It's not super clean. They pump this into tailings ponds.

For a long time, especially in Sudbury—we've been mining for a very long time—you build a dam and you build the dam bigger every year as the tailings ponds come. Some of the water will evaporate, but you always have this sludge that's in there. Mining creates a lot of this sludge, tailings. For every tonne of metal—I have a stat here—you get between 20 and 200 tonnes of solid waste.

In the old days, they weren't as good at refining. We're still not great at it. There's always some good product that gets into that sludge. But in the old days, there was gold in them there ponds. So I'm excited about the part of this that

will move toward allowing some recovery from the tailings ponds.

Not only are tailings ponds a huge liability, but they take up a lot of space in nearby communities. When I was at the smelter, one of our major hazards when we did hazard assessments was that if the tailings pond broke, we could very likely explode the smelter because of the hot metal. Hot metal does not like being cooled down suddenly, and it will explode. Also, there was a community nearby that we more than likely would have buried in tailings. I don't want anyone to be panicked, because Vale and Copper Cliff are world leaders when it comes to tailings ponds. They've invested close to \$1 billion. They have a world-class facility when it comes to tailings. So I don't want people to be overly concerned, because hazard assessment is what we do in the mining industry all the time.

But there have been tailings dam failures in the past. In 2019, there was one in Brazil that buried an entire town, just completely covered it. Think of an avalanche, but it's water and mud. Speaker, 267 people were killed, and a lot of those people were never recovered. They're just assumed to have been in that waste because they weren't able to find them. That was in 2019.

Since then, there have been 18 major tailings dam failures—six last year alone. It's a major liability around the world. Canada doesn't have as many of them, but we did have one in BC, at Mount Polley mine. There were about 17 million cubic metres of water and eight million cubic metres of tailings and materials. There were no penalties for that spill, either. I'm not sure of the details, but I would assume that the taxpayers are helping to clean that up.

The tailings recovery—the point I'm trying to get to—I think is a win-win solution. It minimizes that risk, and we also get to process more of the minerals that have come up.

As we get deeper into the tailings pond, it's going to be even more valuable. It's going to be the easiest mining ever, honestly. Any mining company would love to have that rich a resource so close to the surface without having to go very, very far below the surface.

There are going to be ways for this to remove pollutants and to reduce the size of these ponds. It's exciting because Dr. Mykytczuk from MIRARCO in Sudbury is doing this leading-edge research on this. This is groundbreaking work that they're doing that will be in Ontario and—I'm sure the minister would agree with me—that we'll be able to celebrate around the world. People will be banging on the doors to figure out how they're doing this. It will be something we could celebrate and show off. I want to thank the minister because I know, during second reading, he made an announcement to invest in MIRARCO and the work that she was doing. So thank you very much, Minister, for doing that.

I want to go back to Eric. Eric Delparte is a friend of mine. We've been friends a long time. I was very happy that he came. I didn't ask Eric, specifically, to come to speak, but I'm glad that he did.

I often say that Sudbury is a small town disguised as a city. You don't know everybody, but you've seen everybody before. It's difficult as a politician, because you recognize everybody, and then when I meet somebody, they often know who I am because I'm more visible as a politician. So you'll meet somebody and not be sure if you've actually met them before. But it has a small-town feel. People care about each other, look out for each other. If you don't know somebody and you're passing them on the sidewalk, you have to say hello. That's the small-town charm that it has there, and I love it, just like my friends from every riding love where they're from.

When Eric said that it's not just where we work, but it's where we hunt and fish and play—I think that's a core of this that we need to understand. It's very important to have good-paying jobs, it's very important to support industry that creates jobs, but we have to recognize that life is more than work. The Steelworkers, when they pushed hard for the eight-hour workday, and then they do shift work that works out to an eight-hour workday—one of the mottos they talked about really was eight hours of work, eight hours with family, and eight hours of sleep, so your life is more than work, your value is more than work. I think it's important to emphasize that when miners come out of the underground—when I said earlier that the most important thing to come from out of the mine is the worker—they go see their families or they go together on trips.

When I was junior and I didn't have that much seniority, most of my vacation time was fishing trips with the crew I worked with. We would get together because we would have a Tuesday off and nobody else is off on a Tuesday. Or we would have vacation time in the middle of the winter, so we would have vacation together. There's a tight bond—and I'm including my supervisor. This wasn't like an hourly-versus-staff thing; we all hung out. We worked together. We played together. Our value was more than our job. Our job is what allows us to pay for the things that we do the rest of the day.

So when I talk about the flaws in here, I really am talking about the importance of the community, the importance of the environment—and not just the community of the individual employees, but everyone who is there. When you're so close that you say hi and nod and ask how people are doing that you haven't met in a small community, that's reflective of the values of that community and the values of mining companies, as I said earlier. This is why we can't support the bill—it's those small parts with the environment and that lack of helping have free, prior and informed consultation with First Nations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you to the member for Sudbury for his participation this afternoon—a very important participation, having had a depth of experience in the mining sector that I'm sure not many of us have. I really appreciated hearing about his lived experience and some of the concerns and also the interesting personal perspectives from his community.

I'm wondering if he could speak a little bit more about the tailing ponds. That was something that was very interesting to me—some of the reclamation. I know in Niagara we've had different—they're not, I guess, formal tailing ponds, but different deposits and different by-products of manufacturing from 100, 110, 120 years ago that are now beginning to be reclaimed as actually assets that were sort of sitting there for a long time and now are being reutilized. I'm wondering if he could speak a little bit about that process and what he sees coming down the pipe with regard to the future—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. Response?

1550

MPP Jamie West: This is a good aspect of the bill. I mentioned earlier complimenting the minister about the funding for Dr. Mykytczuk's work from MIRARCO. Basically, to shorten it—when you mine, there's a by-product, there's a sludge, and there are valuable materials and also pollutants that are there. She has explained the process to me, and I usually end it by saying, "Exactly." That's why she has a PhD and I don't. The process, basically, will use, I think, biological leaching to extract these and also capture some of the pollutants. It's a way that we can shrink the liability of the tailings pond but also allow mining organizations to be profitable for stuff that they already brought to surface, and be able to mine that and process that in the future. So it's a win-win for the environment, the community and the mining company.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to be able to ask the member, who just gave an hour speech about mining—I appreciated that we all probably learned a couple of things about Sudbury, but about mining in a community: the good, the bad and the ugly; the historical and the potential here.

As he mentioned, this bill was tabled without free, prior and informed consent of First Nations. We have heard a lot about the fact that the Premier used the term "bulldozing" and is essentially bulldozing relationships. When we see a government that is playing First Nation off First Nation, I have concerns. Obviously, we on this side have concerns. Even today, we heard the government refer to "our First Nations" or "our Indigenous communities," and they're not ours. They don't belong to us. Why is it so hard for this government to realize that they're not stakeholders but that they are partners and should be properly consulted?

MPP Jamie West: I think that's a good question.

I'm going to be fair to people: Our journey and knowledge when it comes to Indigenous communities, First Nations communities in Canada, I think for most of us of a certain age, has been stilted. You only know what you know. But we're at the point now where we need to know more, and we know that we need to know more, and so we can't pretend anymore—any of us—that we didn't know any better.

I don't understand why the bill didn't have the consultation. I don't know why we're not moving towards free, prior and informed consultation. I don't know why, when mining companies are asking for a framework, the Conservative government isn't making that commitment to build the framework so mining companies can be more successful with this process. We really are in a stage where we should be doing this, and it makes perfect sense to me.

So I think it's a great question and something we should be moving forward on.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Speaking of good aspects of the bill, the Mining Act would increase certainty for business planning and generate investment in northern Ontario. It involves engagement with industry, Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations on the proposed changes, and there are no proposed changes to our world-class environmental protections. Given these positive features, why is the opposition voting against this act, when members from the party, the official opposition, are clearly in favour of the industry and understand how important it is to the overall economic well-being of the province of Ontario and to Indigenous and northern communities?

MPP Jamie West: It took me an hour, but I think I was clear about why we weren't supporting it. There are environmental protections that are being weakened. "Better than" is not the same as "equal to." "Better than" is very clear.

The other thing is, you can say that there's a good relationship with Indigenous communities, but there isn't—there is for some mining companies who have worked individually to build a nation-to-nation agreement, nation-to-nation relationships, but the Conservative government hasn't done a good job first-hand on this. If they had, we wouldn't have chiefs saying, "You have to drag dead bodies off the roads to develop through my land." This isn't something that chiefs do off the hop; that is something they do when they're being ignored. We're urging them to build this relationship that the rest of the mining communities are asking for, have established, but the Conservative government has to be here and be an asset for mining companies when it comes to nation-to-nation relationships with First Nations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: To the member from Sudbury: Thank you for your presentation. I always learn so much listening to you, especially on the subject of mining.

As part of the deregulation amendments that government Bill 71 contains—I recognize that there are some measures in there that certainly weaken the environmental protections, but there are also measures in there that release companies from financial obligations. One of them is, of course, the rehabilitation of the mines once the extraction is done. There seems to be not a lot of information in here—and perhaps it's coming in the regulations—on who will pay. You've touched upon it that

the taxpayer will most likely end up picking up the bill if the mining companies are released, but is there anyone else who could pay besides the taxpayer? Is there someone else you think the government has in mind who will pick up the bill besides the mining company?

MPP Jamie West: I'm not sure of someone else.

There are some good aspects to the bill. Just to clarify, they're changing the surety so you don't have to pay for the whole project up front; you can do it in stages. So before you start the first stage, you have to have the money up front, and before you start the second stage, you have to have the money up front for the second stage—and the third stage. I think that's a good part of this bill.

The part I'm concerned about is, when you change the aspects of leaving the land at the end of the day "better than" and you weaken that, it allows lawyers to get involved and arguments to happen.

I think, as well, that if you don't have a good structure in place when things fall through, the public pays through taxes, and taxpayers have to pay for it. This is what we saw in the past with it, and I lived this in my own community. We've seen this with other abandoned mine sites, where the community, the taxpayers through all of Ontario have to pay for it.

So we want to make sure we're not weakening those laws. Those laws were written for specific reasons and to insure them.

So there is some good, but there is some bad.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Madam Speaker, Ontario has seen literally billions of dollars of automotive manufacturing investment as a result of the efforts made by this government, and one of those multi-billion dollar investments is from Volkswagen, in the city of St. Thomas. I'd like to hear from the member for Sudbury, why would he want to jeopardize that multi-billion dollar investment by wanting to stop the development of more mines in Ontario?

MPP Jamie West: I don't fully understand the question, because I don't think that this bill specifically is going to jeopardize that process specifically.

I'm very glad that Volkswagen chose to invest in Ontario. I met with auto companies during my first term, in 2018-19. I don't want to say which auto company it was—not Volkswagen, but one of the other large auto companies—that said, "You need to speak to the government. What I need as an international company when I go and say to invest in Ontario is—I need to tell them we have more than a sign at the border that says, 'Open for business.' I need to know what that means and what to spell out." And the government wasn't able to do that for four years. So I'm glad they're able to attract. I'm glad that Volkswagen chose Ontario. We have a lot to offer.

One of the things we have to offer that's being jeopardized today is—we have a universal medicare system that has been weakened. That's what makes us more attractive than the States for these companies to invest

in—but as we get towards the American medicaid system, we're not going to be as competitive, and we're going to lose those jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Quick question? No? Okay.

Further debate?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks this afternoon for being able to rise on behalf of the people of Niagara West and to participate in debate on Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. I'm very thankful to be able to stand in this chamber today and build on the remarks that have already been added to the debate about this piece of legislation that I believe is critical and very important to the future prosperity of Ontario, the current prosperity of Ontario, and continuing a legacy in this province that we have now had for generations upon generations—far before I came here, and far before my family came here some 70 years ago.

First of all, I want to thank the Minister of Mines, the strong member for Timmins, for coming to this chamber with a piece of legislation that will be a legacy not just for him but for our entire Parliament, I believe, in what it will do for so many communities, not just in northern Ontario but, as was already spoken about extensively through the debate from my colleagues—especially the member for Essex county, who spoke about the important investments that the mining sector makes throughout the supply value-added chain, especially in the auto parts sector. I know that's a crucial part of the economy in my neck of the woods, as well.

So I'm thankful to be able to speak today about that. I'm thankful to be able to participate.

I wish to welcome all those who are watching this afternoon and wish them the ability to follow us in what can be sometimes a complex file but one that I believe is very important.

1600

I speak for many constituents in communities across Ontario in thanking the Minister of Mines for his leadership and his tireless work to further build up and improve the mining sector.

Thank you, Minister Pirie, for all of your efforts and your labour and for helping to bring economic prosperity to Ontario.

The minister's advocacy for this bill and his presentation earlier today make it clear that there is an urgent need for the measures in this proposed legislation, and it's why it's my privilege to rise for the third reading and to expand on a few of the details from Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act.

Before I begin, I want to reiterate the minister's point that our government has been actively engaged in the process of consulting with the public, with industry stakeholders and with Indigenous communities, as well as organizations from across Ontario on our proposed amendments to the Mining Act. We have also been consulting on further regulatory changes. As the minister mentioned, which I believe is very important for me to repeat, the measures in Bill 71 are based on the recommendations and the feedback from industry and other stakeholder experts.

This is not an ivory tower exercise where we went and had some academics gathered together in a room, perhaps at the Mowat Block or another downtown office and come up with what ideas should be imposed upon the north, what ideas should be brought forward for this sector. This has been the consequence of a lot of listening, a lot of meaningful engagement to get the very best ideas from the sector to support a more modern, more streamlined legislative framework and regulatory regime for mineral exploration and development. We know that all of these industry partners and leaders brought forward their extensive knowledge and expertise together to provide recommendations that we're using as a road map to help drive the industry forward, to reduce barriers to build more mines more efficiently.

These changes are needed to help seize the economic potential of the province's minerals, to support the geopolitical need for secure access to these resources as outlined by the minister, and to advance the transition to a more sustainable economy.

Our proposed amendments mean to save companies time and money by reducing administrative burdens and clarifying requirements for rehabilitation and creating regulatory efficiencies.

Perhaps most importantly, these changes will help Ontario attract mining investments to support the unlocking of critical minerals, including those in the Ring of Fire region, while maintaining Ontario's strong standards for environmental protection and meeting the duty to consult with Indigenous communities.

Before I highlight some of the key proposed changes in this legislation, I do want to speak briefly to the committee hearings on Bill 71. Our government values the importance of the feedback we receive. It's why separate hearings were held to gather feedback on the bill in two of the province's northern mining hubs: Timmins and Sudbury.

I also want to thank the government House leader for his work on ensuring that we have these active consultations, as well as the other members of the Standing Committee on the Interior.

Our government has acted. We have listened and then moved forward on the recommendations and questions of the various stakeholders and presenters throughout the committee process. In particular, we introduced an amendment through the committee stage that will support a balanced consideration of public health and safety, as well as the environment, for the permit to recover minerals from mining waste.

I'll be elaborating more on this in a moment, but I want to ensure that all of us who are watching today know that your government has heard the importance of listening and ensuring that we are responding to the needs of the people in making this proposed legislation even stronger.

We will always support common sense measures that balance the need to build more mines efficiently with the corresponding need to uphold protections for the public, for safety and for the environment.

This balance is exactly what Bill 71 achieves, and it's what our partners and our global allies expect. Ontario is

known globally for its world-class environmental protections, and improving the Mining Act is crucial to support the transition to a greener economy.

As the minister touched on, this proposed legislation is a very important part of our Critical Minerals Strategy. This strategy supports better supply chain connections between industries, resources and workers in northern Ontario and manufacturing in southern Ontario, including Ontario-based electric vehicle and battery manufacturing—good news for so many communities in the south.

Jobs in the north lead to more jobs in the south, including important manufacturing jobs right in my home of Niagara. For example, the GM St. Catharines Propulsion Plant recently announced a transition to EV—electric vehicle—propulsion systems, securing hundreds of well-paying, secure jobs here in Niagara.

As an aside, it's worth noting that we are attracting over \$16 billion in transformational investments by global automakers; in fact, if I heard the numbers correctly, that number will soon be \$22 billion. We are becoming a world leader in the supplying of EV batteries and battery materials to position Ontario as a leader in the EV supply chain.

Speaker, our Critical Minerals Strategy is helping to secure the province's position as a reliable global supplier and processor of responsibly sourced critical minerals. The five-year road map that's contained in the Critical Minerals Strategy focuses on six pillars, which I'd like to speak about and mention as they do set the stage and provide some context for our government's investments and work thus far to advance that sector, including the initiatives in this legislation. The six pillars of the Critical Minerals Strategy are (1) to enhance geoscience information to support critical minerals exploration; (2) to grow domestic processing and create resilient local supply chains; (3) to improve Ontario's regulatory framework; (4) to invest in critical minerals innovation, research and development; (5) to build economic development opportunities with Indigenous partners; (6) to grow the labour supply and develop a skilled labour force.

We heard the Minister of Mines speak about the importance of a major objective in Bill 71. That objective is to improve the Mining Act so that we can attract more investments and help secure the critical minerals that support this made-in-Ontario supply chain I know we all want. It's why we're bringing forward a suite of changes which will address current challenges and support a modern, robust and effective mining sector.

Ontarians have seen and witnessed project delays, increased costs and lost opportunities due to a lack of flexibility in closure planning and a lack of clarity within the Mining Act. We know that some processes and requirements can create uncertainty, which leads to a burdensome delay.

I want to reiterate the purpose of the Mining Act because it underscores and informs all of the changes that we're proposing in this legislation. The purpose of the Mining Act is to encourage mineral exploration and development in a manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights,

including the crown's duty to consult, and to minimize the impact of these activities on public health and safety and the environment.

With this overarching purpose in mind, I would like to go into a little bit more detail about some of the particulars of the amendments that we are proposing. If passed, the amendments made through this legislation would save time and money for companies and, ultimately, for workers, providing more jobs and more money for our communities.

Currently, one of the requirements to obtain a permit for mining is that the applicant must demonstrate that the condition of the lands on which the recovery would take place would be "improved" with respect to public health, safety, and the environment after the recovery and remediation activities. The proposed amendments in this bill would replace the requirement to "improve the land" subject to the recovery permit with a requirement that the condition of the land be "comparable to or better than it was before the recovery activity." This would provide greater flexibility for recovery permit applicants. The term "improvement" is ambiguous and creates uncertainty about the degree of improvement needed. What does that even mean? How much improvement is requisite under the act? This clarification will act as an incentive to ensure that companies who are participating in this worthwhile activity can make use of previously existing materials and have greater clarity.

I would also like to note that our government did bring forward a motion to amend section 18 of the bill to further strengthen the language around the requirements for the condition of land following recovery activities. During public hearings of the Standing Committee on the Interior, a number of stakeholders and presenters shared concerns regarding the consistency of the language in this subsection of the bill as it relates to the intended purpose and the conditions of the mineral recovery permit.

1610

Speaker, as always, our government listened. We've heard these concerns, and we've acted. Throughout the legislative process, we've been open to feedback from stakeholders and partners, and we remain committed to strengthening the language in this bill to ensure the legislation reflects the goals we all share: improving the Mining Act, supporting the sector and, fundamentally, supporting local communities. Our proposed amendments to the current language in the legislation address the concerns that were raised and support a balanced consideration of public health and safety, as well as the environment, for the recovery of minerals permitted. Our proposed language ensures that remediation of the land with respect to public health and safety, as well as the environment, would be carried out to a comparable standard or better than it was before the recovery of minerals took place. This amendment would still maintain our commitment to flexibility and our objective in this section of the act to ensure that there is greater flexibility for recovery permit applicants, but also ensure that all of—

not any of—public health and safety and the environment would be remediated to a comparable standard or better.

We know that these proposed improvements to the Mining Act are crucial to supporting the sector and the transition to a cleaner, greener economy. This motion to amend demonstrates that we are always going to uphold Ontario's world-class standards for environmental protection and public health and safety in the mineral development sector.

Before I continue, I'd like to point out that companies in Ontario are already making use of this tactic to retrieve critical minerals from mine waste, which contributes to advancing the circular economy within the mining industry.

For example, we heard recently that Vale Canada is moving to accelerate commercial recovery of critical minerals from mine waste in partnership with the Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation, and Applied Research Corp. at Cambrian College. According to the company's news release, "The industrial research chair program ... will develop, pilot and work towards commercializing bio-leaching and bioremediation processes including efforts to recover nickel and cobalt from ... tailings and other wastes." I appreciated hearing more from the member for Sudbury about the important advancements that are being made in this technology. Our government is supporting this groundbreaking project. We're contributing through the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund, which Minister Pirie outlined in his remarks, as well as contributing through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. To quote the Minister of Northern Development and Indigenous Affairs, the member for Kenora–Rainy River and the chair of the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp.: "The ... Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. is supporting innovative solutions in the resource extraction sector that will change the way we see mining. By partnering with Vale," MIRARCO and Cambrian College, "we are committing to made-in-Ontario solutions that will reduce mine waste and enhance value for materials already involved in the mining process."

Our government's support of this type of innovation to recover critical minerals from mine waste demonstrates our steadfast commitment to helping to move the industry forward in an environmentally sustainable way. This program is just one example.

Our proposed amendments would also simplify and improve closure plans by strengthening qualified professionals' certification of plans and allowing companies to conditionally file a closure plan while deferring certain elements to a later-approved date. A conditional filing order would be issued by the minister on request from a proponent and may include terms and conditions for those elements as determined by the minister.

We are also proposing to eliminate the need for proponents to file a notice of material change for minor site alterations, which will help to alleviate unnecessary burdens.

There are more changes, changes to allow more flexibility in the techniques used to rehabilitate mines once

they're closed while continuing to uphold Ontario's world-class environmental protection standards; our proposed changes to remove administrative burdens, to simplify processes with respect to closure plans and address ongoing concerns we've heard from this industry for years, including at public hearings before the committee. We know that we have to make these changes, because current processes are creating uncertainty, resulting in long delays, cost overruns and lost opportunities for mining proponents. We know that better is possible, and with this legislation, we are accomplishing that.

I do want to speak very briefly in the minutes I have left about those closure plans, because I think that's something perhaps not everyone is aware of in what is entailed within the closure plan process. The Mining Act requires that mining companies have a filed closure plan before starting advanced exploration or mine production. A closure plan describes the measures that the proponent will take during the life cycle of the mine to rehabilitate the mine site.

There is currently no flexibility within the Mining Act to allow for a closure plan to be filed without all of the required materials, regardless of what features will be built or brought online during the life of the mine's operations. Closure plans are supposed to be conceptual, forward-thinking plans for how to close out and rehabilitate a mine. It's not always practical to provide information for features that, frankly, may never be built and for rehabilitation measures which can't be predicted, let alone which innovative future technologies could be used. This is why we're proposing measures to provide mining proponents with more flexibility.

Currently, the term "rehabilitate" in the Mining Act means to take measures so that the use or condition of the site is restored to its former use or condition, or is made suitable for a use that the ministry sees fit. We're amending the definition of "rehabilitate" as well as the related definitions of "protective measures" to allow an alternate use or condition or feature to remain on the site post-closure. This, again, will provide greater flexibility and certainty to industry by allowing alternate post-closure land uses and rehabilitation measures while simultaneously upholding our environmental standards.

We've said it before, and I believe it bears repeating in this chamber: When issuing authorizations under the Mining Act, where those authorizations have the potential to trigger a duty to consult, Ontario will always assess and reassess the potential impacts to Aboriginal and treaty rights and remains committed to meeting its constitutional obligations, including the duty to consult with Indigenous peoples.

These proposed changes would also create more options for companies to pay financial assurance. Instead of paying financial assurance up front, it could be paid in phases tied to the project's construction schedule. Currently, companies have to provide the government with financial assurance, the estimated cost of the rehabilitation measures described in the closure plan. This allows the province access to the money to carry out rehab work

outlined in the plan. But the up-front cost can be sometimes unnecessary as proposed changes or proposed features may never be built, and associated rehab costs never materialize. Amending the Mining Act would update this process to allow proponents to submit financial assurances in a more reasonable timeline.

Speaker, I do see that I'm running close to the conclusion of my comments this afternoon. I just want to wish again, to all members of this Legislature, to remind them of the importance of this legislation and thank the Minister of Mines for taking the leadership that was needed to ensure that we have a strong mining sector, as we have had for generations in the past, for generations to come. Thank you so very much for listening to me this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: We have a lot of questions around this bill, because part of it—they're eliminating the director of mine rehabilitation, and replacing them with the minister to have sole discretion in some of these functions.

Then there's also the question around the number of changes to the act that loosen rules around what financial assurances will be required after these changes become law. The financial assurances in the act are essentially a surety that the miner or the company has the necessary funds to remediate the site upon closure.

When a mine comes in, does its business and then leaves, the community is left with those residual environmental issues. Why is this government loosening up those sureties where mining companies are guaranteeing the remediation of that property, the land?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you. Of course, under this legislation, we understand the importance of having that assurance, but we also recognize that, in many cases, having the complete financial assurance cost up front is unnecessary because we don't know what particular proposed features would never be built and which associated rehabilitation costs would never materialize. You're placing a greater capital requirement on the proponent for costs that may never actually end up materializing.

This does allow for assurance. We obviously still want to ensure that the funds are available to provide for the rehabilitation project, but it will be paid in phases tied to the project's construction schedule to create more options for companies to pay financial assurance. We obviously want to ensure that the funds are available, but we recognize that perhaps, as the situation evolves, we're going to have different requirements, so to have that done in a series of payments as opposed to a one-time, up-front lump sum is about providing that flexibility and additionally ensuring that the funds are available to make the investments that are needed.

1620

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member from Niagara West for his speech. I know last fall I had the pleasure of visiting the member and speaking to many members of the supply chain in the Niagara region, and I know that, like my community, Niagara West has a supply chain industry that is part of a very competitive economy, and Ontario does need to be competitive with other jurisdictions.

I'm wondering if the member could describe to me what the changes to the act or this act will do to ensure that Ontario is the number one jurisdiction for mining globally.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, Ontario already is the number one destination for mining globally, but we know that there's always more that can be done. We're not content to sit there and rest on our laurels. I know that the minister has demonstrated through his active engagement with this sector the necessity of recognizing how all these pieces fit together. We know, at the end of the day, it's not enough simply to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, as the proverbial Canadian archetype might seem; we really need to ensure that we have value-added processing here in Ontario, and I know in Niagara West, with a broad diversity of economic opportunities that exist, seeing the Critical Minerals Strategy as tied in with our local auto parts manufacturing sector is really part and parcel of creating an integrated supply chain from end to end that provides for well-paying, secure jobs—careers, in fact. I don't know if even you just want to call them jobs because these are really careers for so many men and women who are able to put food on the table, pay their mortgage, ensure that they have a better life for them and their children as a result of having this supply chain right here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm wondering if the member for Niagara West could make an important distinction, as I see it, pertaining to mining, and that is the work that needs to be done with Indigenous neighbours in Ontario to make sure that we have actually achieved free, prior, informed consent. Canada has an obligation, under international covenants we've signed, to achieve that, but there's a debate right now all over the country about whether a duty to consult is adequate. What I heard from the Neskantaga people when they were certainly here was that their consent needs to be informed and the consultations need to happen on their territory.

I'm wondering if the member from Niagara West can make that distinction for us today. Does his government believe in the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous folks before projects have—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. Response?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: My thanks to the member opposite, the member for Ottawa Centre, of course the core of our nation's capital, for speaking about an issue I know he cares about greatly, and I know it's one that we've been spoken about a number of times in this House. I believe it's so important, as so many members have brought in this chamber, not just as it pertains to the

Mining Act, but as it pertains to so much legislation and so many different aspects of the provincial government's relationship and the crown's relationship with the Indigenous peoples of this land.

We've said it before and it bears repeating: When issuing authorizations under this legislation, the Mining Act, where those authorizations have the potential to trigger the duty to consult, I know that Ontario will always assess and reassess the potential impacts to Aboriginal and treaty rights, and will remain committed to meeting its constitutional and other obligations, ensuring that we're treating the Indigenous peoples of this land with the dignity and respect that they deserve and ensuring that the continued commitment to consultation with all partners is part of the very DNA of this government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Trevor Jones: I really appreciated the member from Sudbury speaking with poise and experience—direct experience—and even nostalgia, especially about the camaraderie and the fellowship of good-paying jobs, those opportunities that he had—careers, like you said, the member from Niagara West. But there are a lot of blurred lines in among some of the other dialogue.

I'd like the member from Niagara West to please explain a very quick summary and overview of what the actual changes are—what we're proposing—and what they hope to achieve.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: In a minute:

- approve mines faster by eliminating duplication, providing operational flexibility and reducing costs;

- advance critical minerals permits by making it easier for companies to get a permit to recover minerals from mine tailings and waste;

- improve closure planning by having more qualified professionals available to certify plans and allow companies to conditionally file a closure plan;

- allow more flexibility in techniques used to rehabilitate mines once they're closed;

- create more options for companies to pay financial assurance—instead of paying financial assurance up front, it could be paid in phases tied to the project's construction schedule.

All of this is to ensure that we have good jobs, good careers, money to put food on the table, pay mortgages and ensure that we're building up our communities.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Speaker, through you to the member across: The government's Bill 71 makes a consequential change in replacing the title of director of mine rehabilitation with the word "minister." At the same time, I note that senior ministry staff couldn't confirm or would not confirm at the committee where those proposals were coming from. Can the member share some light on where that proposal came from?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Yes, and I would have to go back through some of the committee consultations in full chapter and verse. I don't have a chapter and verse perhaps

exactly at the tip of my fingers. I'm more than happy to have that conversation with the member opposite and perhaps look at where the engagements especially in the northern hubs and some of the feedback there, and I think that's an important question.

I can speak more broadly to the importance of consultation and partnership that I know the Minister of Mines has demonstrated and I know all of my colleagues, regardless of their consultation. I know for myself, working in the Ministry of Red Tape Reduction, one of the key pieces of the role I've been blessed with is reaching out to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to come into downtown Toronto, to go into the ivory tower or the bureaucracy or the academia to make their recommendations, but to go out into community and get their feedback on the ground about what the processes are in place that are perhaps creating roadblocks or barriers or challenges to being able to make the investments that are needed for our communities.

So, you know what? I know there's a lot of different avenues that participants provide their feedback through. I'm happy to go take a peek and see what we can come up with as it pertains to the particular section and then get back to her.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. Questions?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: My question for the member for Niagara West: The legacy of the Liberal government for the years 2003 to 2018 was to ignore the mining sector and refuse to enable Ontario to become a supplier of critical minerals and a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles. The NDP supported the Liberals for three of those 15 years. I guess they must believe that we need to purchase minerals from China or Russia, and I don't know how they would expect us to be ready to build electric vehicles with these critical minerals. How does that contrast with this proposed legislation in terms of prosperity and electric vehicle production?

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Well, Speaker, I don't want to engage in melodramatic hyperbole, but I know in different sectors that I've heard about in my own riding, they've called the Liberals' approach to industry "the lost generation." There was a lack of care towards so many crucial sectors of our economy, and I think it's fair to say that the mining sector was one of those sectors that for absolutely the entire portion of the Liberals' stint here in the Legislature—they pretty much had turned a blind eye or, if anything, they brought in processes that brought in more red tape and regulations to harm that sector. Again, that's in contrast with the leadership of the Minister of Mines, the leadership of Premier Ford and our entire team to hear people and get the job done.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the good people of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas and particularly to speak to such an important bill that we have in front of us.

Just to be clear, the Ontario NDP wants to see projects develop here, that improve our province, that create prosperity for everyone in the province. We know, and we've talked about this in the House, that Ontario's historic commitment to mining, our history when it comes to mining, was important many, many years ago—it helped form Bay Street—and it's still important today. We understand that.

We've heard from members from our side of the House who have worked in mining. We've heard from northern members whose communities are primarily composed of mining. We understand the importance of mining but, most of all, we understand the importance of getting it right, and I'm here to say that this bill does not get it right. There are many parts of this bill that are ill-considered, if you will, and had the government been prepared to listen to reasoned amendments, we would be standing here with a much better bill before us.

I'm going to talk about two things that could have been done better in this bill—actually, could have been done better in all aspects of this government's tenure—and that would be their relationship with First Nations communities and their failure when it comes to their duty to consult.

1630

I also want to talk about the colossal failure of this government when it comes to your role when it comes to protecting the environment, climate change and biodiversity. We have seen a government that does not have a good—actually, has a terrible—reputation when it comes to the environment. I don't know what world this government is talking about when they say they have world-class environmental protections. It's not the case. Your government has dismantled many, many of the protections for the environment, and in fact is short-cutting them as well.

I can't imagine an industry where it would be more important than mining to get those two things right: consulting with First Nations communities—their duty to consult—and protecting the environment.

I'm happy to hear that government is investing in a Critical Minerals Strategy, that the government understands that we are looking forward to an electric vehicle future. We need to decarbonize all aspects of our province. What I have to say to the government is: Welcome to the party, because when this government first got elected, they wouldn't say the words “climate change,” wouldn't acknowledge that there's climate change, didn't have a climate plan, and dismantled protections. This is a government that took away—that literally ripped charging stations out of the ground. So we're happy that you're here now. A little bit late, but we're happy that you're here now, understanding that this is the important future that we need to be moving towards. But again, we need to set out on the right road.

As an aside, I'd like to say that I am actually a proud owner of a very small, completely electric vehicle and I bring that to Queen's Park. There's no charging station here at Queen's Park; I don't understand that. I wonder:

Was there one? Did the Premier rip that out when he ripped out the other charging stations? But in an effort as people are trying to do the right thing, trying actually to be in lockstep with your government's plan to build EVs and EV batteries, I, and I believe the MPP for Guelph, have an electric vehicle and there's no place here to charge it. So I just think there's some pieces missing in your understanding of how we actually build out a true EV future in the province.

The things that I'm talking about when it comes to understanding the importance of protecting the environment and consulting with First Nations are not just important on this side of the House; they're important for the industry, because the mining industry has done a phenomenal job of de-risking, if you will, the industry. They've come a very long way and are continuously improving the way that they conduct their business, continually improving safety measures for their employees and, as we heard from the member from Sudbury, really understanding how you need to make sure that the legacy of mining across the province is looked after, that we don't leave behind a legacy for our children and our grandchildren. Those are important to the people of the province of Ontario, but those are also important considerations for the mining industry itself.

The mining industry, they rely on good corporate reputation. Really, they need to have the moral authority to operate in communities all across Ontario. In order to do that, they need to operate in an environment that is not controversial. They have to operate in an environment that is regulated properly. So when we look at an environment where First Nations are opposed to this in a significant way; when we look at an environment where some of the protections are being taken away; when we have decisions made in the minister's office—which is risky, when it comes to unilateral decisions being made. This is not the kind of move that makes the mining industry—it doesn't work in parallel with what the mining industry has been doing all these years. We've talked about the risk to the environment, we've talked about the risk to people that work in the industry, people that live in communities in and around the industry—those risks need to be taken into consideration.

I think a very important part of this industry are the financial risks that are borne by many people in Ontario. Mining is big business: It costs a lot of money to own, to operate, to open and properly close a mine, and that requires this industry to attract investment. Investment does not like risk. We're not going to see investments coming to this industry when there's controversy and when there's disruption. So it's important to the mining industry, when it's looking to attract finance and investment, that the industry is solid and sound and is a good investment for investors.

But it's not just big investors; we need to look at shareholders. Many of us, if we dug into our RRSPs, if we looked at some of the mutual funds or ETFs that we hold, there's most likely mining in there. If some of your investments are domestic, Canada and Ontario has a huge

resource sector. Resource is huge for our economy, so my guess is the average Ontarian who doesn't have a defined benefit plan, who purchases ETFs and mutual funds to support them in their retirement—we want to make sure that the risk in the industry doesn't fall on those people, people who have put their hard-earned money into investments in this industry.

Finally, we need to protect taxpayers. We have heard time and time again here the unfortunate and rare times when mines have failed, when there have been disasters in mining, and those disasters have cost millions and millions and millions of dollars to correct. So we do not want to be free and easy with taxpayers' money when it comes to protecting their investment but also protecting them from having to step up and cover the cost of mining disasters.

I've talked in the House that a cautionary tale about this are the abandoned oil and gas wells that are all across the province of Ontario. This is a legacy of an oil and gas industry that now—the companies that in fact operated those oil and gas wells have abandoned their obligation. We did see that in the town of Wheatley one of those gas wells blew up. The downtown core was flattened. There were people that were hospitalized, and the city still hasn't recovered from that. That cost millions and millions of dollars.

We need to learn from that example that we need to make sure we're doing this right and that we do not want to water down the requirements of industries and companies that profit and invest in our community. We need to make sure that the legacy of those kinds of extractive industries—the cost of that does not fall onto taxpayers, whether it's their tax dollars or whether it's their property or their lives that have been put at risk.

It's the government's responsibility to make sure that we protect people now and into the future with legislation. It's my considered opinion that some of the aspects of this legislation water down that importance.

The government keeps talking about their record, I suppose, when it comes to the environment, and it's not a good one. You don't have to take it from me. I'll just read a little bit from the Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk. She has been issuing report after report to say that this is a government that's failing to meet its duty under the Environmental Bill of Rights. In fact, this is a government that has been found to have broken the law two, perhaps three times when it comes to the Environmental Bill of Rights. Standing up in the House and saying that none of this bill will impact your environmental protections is not exactly accurate when it comes to your past track record.

The Auditor General found that the government did not properly consult the public about three major policy changes that affected the environment. That's just three. She said while there have been some minor improvements to the public consultation process, she also found that 20% of the Ministry of the Environment's decisions last year were made without giving the public timely notice and failed to make serious consideration of the public's knowledge or perspective.

She went on to say, "Fully embracing the intent of the EBR Act and following transparent and meaningful consultation can only help government make informed, long-term environmental decisions that benefit all Ontarians, while building public understanding and support."

Again, I will re-emphasize that in Ontario, we have few environmental protections left. The government continues to shortchange them. We now see that the government wants to take away consultation periods when it comes to environmental assessments. But the spirit of the law—not just the letter of the law, but the spirit—when it comes to the Environmental Bill of Rights is that the people of Ontario have a right to be consulted and informed on decisions that impact the environment, and that in fact this does build a better Ontario. So the government is, in my opinion, moving in such a short-sighted way to sidestep these regulations that have served us so well and that are important to making sure industries like the mining industry operate in a way that people have confidence in.

1640

I would just like to—these are sort of the highlights of some of the things that this government has done when it comes to the environment. We know Doug Ford is cutting into Ontario's greenbelt; that's clear. Ontario has been making it easier to build on wetlands; that's a fact. Ontario is gutting conservation authorities to speed up development on lands, perhaps on wetlands and protected lands. This article says that the government "is forcing Ontario municipalities to open farmland to development." We know that that's happening. Ontario has greenlit a contentious sewage plant for York region. This is something that we'll be hearing more about, but the fact that this government is rushing to develop certain areas and doesn't have a solution for sewage when they look at these developments, but instead is creating a sewage solution that will impact our waterways very, very negatively—Lake Simcoe, Lake Ontario—this is a government that needs to be more mindful about what they're doing when it comes to the environment.

We also know that the government has started construction on the Bradford Bypass, despite the fact that a federal court has ruled that the federal environment minister has an obligation to look at an environmental assessment for that. I'm sure this is another thing that this government will fight in court, because as we know, there's nothing that this government likes more than to spend taxpayer dollars fighting decisions in court—decisions that don't benefit the government and their friends and associates, but certainly decisions that negatively impact the people of the province of Ontario. It's kind of ironic that people's tax dollars are going to fight decisions that will work against them.

But I would have to say, there's nothing more egregious to hear than this government and the minister saying, "There's nothing in this bill that impacts our duty to consult First Nations." No, that's true; there's nothing in this bill that does that. But guess what? Your government is not consulting with First Nations. You are breaching your duty to consult. So you can say it all you like, but it's

quite clear that you are failing—failing—to consult. Your obligation for free, prior and informed consent is something that—you are a signatory to treaties that require you to do that, and in this case, Bill 71, there's no better example of how you are failing your responsibility.

Your breach of duty when it comes to consulting First Nations is causing real harm. It's causing real harm in First Nations communities. It's probably going to cause real harm when it comes to economic development, when it comes to the mining. Not only is it unlawful; it's been described as an abuse of power.

We hear from the MPP from Kiiwetinoong, who has asked the question, does this government not understand that failure to consult is old colonial ways that we need to be moving forward from? Does this government not understand that dividing and conquering First Nations is colonial in its approach? Time and time again, the government is failing in this responsibility, despite what we hear in this House.

We've had people in this House come from First Nations communities across Ontario and voice their objection to what this government is doing when it comes to the Ring of Fire. We had a guest of the MPP for Brantford—Brant who was here, who stood and said that they are opposed—it was a guest of the government who was so opposed to what this government is doing. It was quite shocking to hear that their own guest was so incensed by this government's rushing to develop without consulting that they felt compelled to speak out.

We had 10 First Nations chiefs here, members from 10 First Nations here in the House, who were quite clear, when they said, directly, actually, back to the Premier that there will be no Ring of Fire road, nothing will happen on their First Nation land without free, prior consent. This confrontation—this is a mess of this government's making. There's no need for this. A good government would not rush this through. A good government wouldn't divide and conquer First Nations. A good government would make sure that the mining industry, that the Ring of Fire operates in a way that there is not controversy, but that is not the case.

In fact, we now have 10 First Nations that are taking this government to court. They are suing this government because of their failure to consult, particularly when it comes to the Ring of Fire. The lawyer for these 10 First Nations said that this “lawsuit will enable them to bring motions to seek injunctions under it to stop alleged unilateral decision-making, ‘especially where those decisions threaten the way of life of the First Nations.’ Those threats include ‘things that may destroy the peatlands, which are locally necessary up in James Bay, Hudson Bay to prevent worsening, catastrophic climate change.’” First Nations communities call these the breathing lands, and they're important to the First Nations' way of life. This government needs to step up and understand that this is the kind of controversy that we could avoid by fulfilling your obligation, by fulfilling your duty to consult, by not skirting it, by not dividing and conquering.

I've heard time and time again members from this side of the House say that 15 years is too long to build a mine. That may be, but do you know what's too long? Too long is waiting 28 years to get clean water. This month is the 28th-year anniversary of Neskantaga's boil-water advisory. That's too long. Sandy Lake have been waiting almost 20 years. That's too long. So while you talk about prosperity and you're rushing into First Nations territory, you're not fulfilling your current obligations, and it really is shameful.

And I would say that there's no more clear evidence that you do not want to hear from First Nations than the fact that you held committee hearings in Timmins and Sudbury. I just want you to know that Sudbury is 1,500 kilometres from the Ring of Fire—you could drive from here to Florida—and those are the lands that you're talking about, but you didn't have the common decency or you didn't fulfill your obligation to make sure that people were able to weigh in at committee on this important bill. So I would say that this government has failed in its duty not only to First Nations, not only to protect our environment but to all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: As a preamble to my question, I'll read something from the Ontario NDP website from 2017. It said the following: “The Ring of Fire is one of the largest potential mineral reserves in Ontario and, if developed, could create thousands of jobs and create massive economic growth and opportunity—both for northern Ontario, and for the rest of the province.

“Why are the Wynne Liberals abandoning the Ring of Fire, and abandoning all the people and communities who are counting on it?” That's from the Ontario website for the NDP in 2017.

So my question to the member is this: Why are the NDP now doing exactly what the Wynne Liberals did and abandoning the Ring of Fire and abandoning all the people and communities who are counting on it?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This hyperbole is not serving us well in this government—

Mr. Anthony Leardi: It's your website.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Order. The member from Essex will come to order.

1650

Ms. Sandy Shaw: The member for Essex, earlier today, said that Wheatley, which is a town that blew up—he disagreed with that. The member said that Dudley George, who was killed by a sniper at Ipperwash over a confrontation—he disagreed with that. So yes, I also disagree with that. We need a government that prevents those kinds of confrontations and does it right, not like this government, which is rushing to develop the Ring of Fire in the most irresponsible way when it comes to both the environment and our Indigenous nations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: I want to thank the member for Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas. She spoke about mining investment, and she talked about the lack of consultation from the Conservative government with First Nations in Ontario. I'd like her to expand on how these two are related.

The member opposite was talking about investment in the Ring of Fire, and I'm wondering, to the member who had the debate today: Do you think that the Ring of Fire will be processed any quicker, knowing that there are 10 First Nations that are in a lawsuit with the government around the Ring of Fire? Is that going to help people's investments come forward quicker? Is that going to help the mine develop any faster? Do you think this will slow it down, and the government basically stepped on a rake and hit themselves in the face?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order: the member from Durham.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: There have been a lot of references to litigation, to matters before the courts. Really, the question is out of order. It's over the top. It's not appropriate, under rule 25(g) of the standing orders. It's a matter just before the courts now.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): It's not a point of order.

To the member, response?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: What is out of order, Speaker, is this government taking midwives to court, this government taking nurses to court. That's out of order. This government taking First Nations to court: I would say that is what is out of order.

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: You have to respect the separation of powers. That's the point of that standing order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): The member from Durham will be seated. I did not recognize you. Thank you.

Please continue.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: To the member for Sudbury, for your question: This is quite clear, that if this government doesn't get their way, despite the mess that they create, they will take it to court. The consequences of their actions will be borne by all of us—by taxpayers, by the environment and by future generations.

As we've said before, you can do the right thing now. You'll always have time to fix it. Get it right the first time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: In 2014, during an election debate, the NDP member from Nickel Belt criticized the Liberal government of the day for failing to develop the Ring of Fire. The NDP member from Nickel Belt said during that election debate that the Liberal government was moving at the speed of "a sleepy turtle."

That was nine years ago now, so my question to the member is this: Why is it that the NDP now wants to do exactly what the Liberals did and move at the pace of a sleepy turtle?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: You know, the member for Essex has just asked the same question three or four times, so

why don't I give him the same answer? The NDP understands the importance of the mining industry. We understand the importance of decarbonizing our economy. We understand the importance of EVs and the infrastructure not just to build EVs and to build batteries, but the infrastructure to support them once people are driving them on the 403 and they cannot find a charging station. That's what we understand.

There's no lesson that we would take from the Tories or the Liberals when it comes to building the Ring of Fire, because we are not going to be like an 800-pound gorilla tromping over First Nations' rights.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm just going to try to find some reason in the debate. What I understand the member for Essex is saying is that he believes, for some reason, based upon a website from six years ago, that we've aligned ourselves somehow with a glacial pace in projects. Actually, I'll just remind the member for Essex that the only government in this province that has historically built co-operative and communal housing at a rapid pace was an NDP government, not this government, not the Liberal governments beforehand.

Do you know the way we did it, Speaker, and the way to tie it into a question to my friend? We did it in consultation with the municipalities we serve. We didn't read out edicts to them. We didn't tell them their development charges were withdrawn. We didn't sever their revenues. We worked with them.

Friend, could you explain to the member for Essex how an NDP government would work with Indigenous nations to make sure they were informed, that they consented to development and that it worked in the best interests of the people of Ontario?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Thank you for that question. That's exactly correct. When you are engaging in something as important as mining in the Ring of Fire, which is an ecologically hugely sensitive area, it has the potential to release as much carbon as burning down the Amazon. This is an important area, so why would you trample on Indigenous rights on their territory to facilitate this when you know that you're going to end up in court and you know that it's going to scare away investors? You need to do this in a way that moves people along, that does it in a socially responsible way. That's how an NDP government would do it. We wouldn't just get on a tractor and bulldoze our way through it, because that is a recipe for failure.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: On March 30, 2023, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, who is a gentleman and a farmer and whom I've had a great deal of respect for, decried the fact that there weren't sufficient roads in northern Ontario to assist people to getting to places where they need to be, to advance economic advancement, to get people jobs. I like that member; I think that member should get more roads in northern Ontario.

My question to the member is this: Why is the NDP now against roads in northern Ontario?

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I don't know; this member proves himself to be more ludicrous every time he stands up and speaks, because we are not opposed to building roads. We are not opposed to supporting—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order, the member from Essex.

Mr. Anthony Leardi: That member has enough experience to know that we can engage in debate and use proper language. That's improper language and I'm asking that member to withdraw that, and I ask the Speaker to direct her to withdraw it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): I'm going to consult with the Clerks.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. I'm going to ask the member to withdraw her comment.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Continue, please.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: I would like to remind this government and the member from Essex that you've been in power for five years and not one boil-water advisory has ended in First Nations communities. You were signatory under Treaty 9. That is your responsibility and your duty, and you failed that.

You've had time to build roads. You've had time to provide those in First Nations communities with the prosperity that you're dangling in front of them right now. So, you know what, your words ring hollow when we see the true circumstances of people in First Nations.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Further debate?

Mr. Dave Smith: There were a number of things I was going to say when I first stood up and talked, but I think I'm going to try to bring the temperature down a little bit on some of the things. Normally, when I stand up for these speeches, I don't usually talk about some of the statistics on things, but I think that I'm going to make an exception today and talk about some statistics that I find rather interesting on it.

1700

The Fraser Institute did a study back in 2014, and they looked at all the mining jurisdictions across Canada. Keep in mind, this was 2014, so some of the data is a little bit old, but there is an interesting thing on it. One of the things that they looked at was the change in time to get permit approval on mining over the last 10 years. Here's where I want to go with it: In Ontario, up until that date, the length of time it took to get a permit either somewhat increased or considerably increased by a total of 68%—68% of mining companies who tried to get a mine approval, up until 2014, saw the length of time to get the approval increase 68% of the time. Where I find this interesting is that a neighbouring jurisdiction, Manitoba, in that same time period, saw "shortened considerably" or "somewhat" or remained "the same" 51% of the time. Why do I bring up Manitoba? The Canadian Shield represents 72% of the

land mass in Ontario, and it goes through Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. The only thing that divides the Canadian Shield is the imaginary lines that we draw for provinces. So here we have Canadian Shield in Manitoba that has exactly the same mineral content as what we have in Ontario and Quebec, and Manitoba found a way to do mining permits 51% of the time either the same over the last 10 years or in a shorter period of time.

Quebec had a change after this report had been done, and their change started around 2015. They saw a significant increase in funding in the mining industry. They've had a reduction in the length of time it takes for a mine to be permitted in Quebec.

Again, the only difference between the minerals in Quebec and Ontario is the imaginary line that we draw between them. That's it. What's in the ground is in the ground, and it is almost identical in Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. If you find lithium in Quebec, you're going to find lithium in Ontario and you're going to find lithium in Manitoba. It is the same mineral makeup: It's the Canadian Shield. What's the difference, though, between them? That is the administrative side.

Another interesting statistic that came from that report was that 38% of the time taken for a permit was considered administrative time. Simply having the request sitting on someone's desk somewhere—38% of that time. The average time it takes to build a mine or to get the permits to do a mine is 12 to 15 years. More than a third of that is simply administration—four to five years of administration. Where is there value in an administrative delay? It's not consultation. It's not studies. It's simply administrative delay. And one of the things that this bill will do is eliminate some of that administrative delay.

One of the things that is in this bill is a change so that, for closure plans, someone can sign off on them if they have one of the proper designations. We do this already in so many different things. If you look at the building permit process, if an engineer signs off on it, that engineer is putting their designation on the line for it.

I'm going to give a personal example of it, because I spoke to the chief building officer in the township that I'm in because I wanted to build another garage at my place. I said to him, over the course of this past winter, I had a number of pine trees that died. Some kind of a disease came through. I've got 34 of them on my property that have died. I've cut down about 26 of them so far. The smallest one is around 12 inches in diameter, and the largest is almost four feet in diameter. I said to him, "This is still really good wood, and I hate to just chop it up and burn it, because there's a lot of value in it." Some of those trees—the one in particular that's almost four feet around is close to 60 feet long. I said, "What can I do if I want to use this to build a pole barn? Because it's not milled lumber. How do I show it?" And he said, "Your property isn't zoned as agriculture. If it was zoned as agriculture, you could just go ahead and build it. You could build a pole barn. There's no problem with that. But your property isn't zoned as agriculture. So what you can do is get an engineer to sign off, to say that those trees at those certain

widths are strong enough to hold the weight.” We do that for building permits. I can build a pole barn on my property using the trees from my property if I have an engineer come in, evaluate the wood and say, “Yes, this is fine. This is safe,” because the engineer is putting their professional opinion on it and their professional record on the line. That makes sense. That’s why the engineer went to school—to do those things.

What we’re proposing in this bill is basically the same thing, on the closure plan. Instead of having to go through an administrative process on it, if we have someone who’s qualified to review the plan and say, “This is safe. This makes sense. This will improve the environmental perspective of the area or improve the land itself,” and they sign off on that, what they’re saying is, in their professional opinion, this makes sense. We do that with doctors. We ask a doctor, “What should I do about whatever ailment?” And the doctor says, “In my professional opinion, here’s what you should do.” I’m a type 2 diabetic. My A1C levels were increasing because the drugs I was on were no longer working. I went to my doctor and I said, “Doc, what can I do about this?” And he said, “In my opinion, this is the drug we should change you to.” And we accept that, because he’s a qualified professional. We’re asking his opinion. This is no different than what we’re proposing here, and yet if you listen to the opposition, not only is the sky falling, but the sun will never rise again if we do this.

It makes sense to cut down on administrative time if we have someone who is a qualified professional to stand up and say, “This is appropriate.”

Miss Monique Taylor: Just trust us.

Mr. Dave Smith: The member from Hamilton said, “Just trust us.”

I’m going to trust a professional engineer. I’m going to trust a doctor. And I think our entire professional university system is based on the fact that these highly educated people are trustworthy; otherwise, we wouldn’t have a single building built in this province—because someone signs off on it and says, “Yes, this is safe.” We wouldn’t have any of the things that we have, because if we didn’t trust the scientists, there would be no scientific advancement. This makes sense.

Another piece of opposition that the NDP has put forward on this is that the closure plan assurance should be paid for up front. They should put the millions of dollars right up front. But we know that it can take, as I said earlier, up to 15 years for that mine. Is it reasonable to say you should put, on day one, millions of dollars up front before you know what’s going to happen, just in case? Or is it possible that over the course of time for the development of the mine we will have technological advancements and it makes more sense to do things slightly differently at the closure? And at every step of the mining process, then, before you get to that next step, you would put down that financial assurance. That, to me, is reasonable. That, to me, says, as the mine is being developed, as there are enhancements, as we know more, you can make the adjustments on your closure plan before the mine opens.

1710

I’m going to come back to something locally, for me. In my riding of Peterborough–Kawartha, we have the only nepheline syenite mine in Ontario. Nepheline syenite is used to reduce the amount of energy required to make glass. It’s used to make latex paint more scrubbable. So when you go into Home Hardware or Home Depot or Pro Hardware or any of the hardware stores and you buy paint that says it’s scrubbable, so that you don’t wash the paint off when you’re washing the wall, that has nepheline syenite in it. That nepheline syenite mine has been operating now for close to 60 years; they believe they have another 105 to 115 years’ worth of nepheline syenite. Does it make sense, today, to say, “Your closure plan in 100 years must be identical to what you said it was going to be 50 years ago,” or does it make sense to make adjustments to those closure plans as technology changes?

One of the things that we know is, the side effect or by-product, a waste product from silver mines, when we first started mining silver—there’s a big chunk of silver downstairs in the museum part of Queen’s Park; it’s a really nice big rock. When we were mining silver, silver was a mineral that people wanted. It was a valuable mineral. The waste product from mining silver is lithium. At the time that the silver mines first started in Ontario, there was no use for lithium. Does it make sense to have a closure plan that says, “You’re going to throw that lithium out,” or does it make sense to say, “You can adjust your closure plan. You can go to that tailings pond and you can remove the lithium that is one of those critical minerals that we need for the green evolution to move to electric vehicles”?

What a novel concept: to take a step back and say everything that we do in our legislation has to be mobile enough so that, as technology changes, that technological change that is to the benefit of people can actually be implemented in that mining closure plan.

Does it make sense to say, “If you’re making adjustments to that closure plan, there will be a change in what the financial assurance is, so you should make adjustments to that financial assurance as you’re developing it”?

A number of the mines that will be closing shortly—and we do have some that are getting close to the end of their life—have certain infrastructure that has been put in place. Previously, all of that had to be removed, regardless of whether there was a benefit from it.

Again, I’ll come back to the mine in my riding. Perhaps there’s a cellphone tower there—I actually know there is a cellphone tower there. But hypothetically speaking, let’s say that there’s a cellphone tower that’s there. When that mine was developed 50 years ago, they would have torn down everything in 100 years when that mine is no longer commissioned. Is there a value to the community for that cellphone tower to remain? It’s providing service to the greater Cordova area. Under the previous incarnation of the Mining Act, that cellphone tower would have to be torn down. This change allows for that cellphone tower to

remain, so the mining company can go back to the community, can go to Bell or Rogers or Telus or any other cellphone provider and say, "This tower exists. Would you like it?" If they were to say yes, there's a benefit to the community for it. "We would love to be able to take that"—under this proposed change, they would.

We've got a number of places in northern Ontario—and my good friend from the riding of Kiiwetinoong and I have had a number of conversations about this, and he has talked to me a number of times about how there is that lack of road access to a number of communities.

You have road access going into every mine because you have to get the product out. Under the current legislation that we're changing, once the mine closes, you would have to find a way to remediate that road and remove it and put the area back to the state that it was in prior to the road being put in.

Again, I'm going to come back to my riding on this, because I think it's important that we actually look at that from a realistic perspective. I'm near the Cordova mine. I'm on Cordova Lake. The Ontario government built a fish hatchery in the 1930s on Cordova Lake, and they built a road in to the fish hatchery. In the 1990s, that fish hatchery was closed. But from the 1930s to the 1990s, land was severed off, and there are more than 300 residences that are fed by that four-kilometre-long road. If we had followed the Mining Act when we closed the fish hatchery, we would have removed that road. Obviously, a fish hatchery is not the same as a mine, so it didn't fall under that jurisdiction. But think about that: You have more than 300 residents in my riding who have access to their property, who have built homes, who have built cottages, who have raised their families for the last 90 years, and the Ontario government would have come in and ripped the road out. That doesn't make any sense.

I get that there is opposition to some of the things that we do. I get that the NDP's job is to say no to everything, because that is what the opposition is supposed to do. They're supposed to stand up and say, "Whatever you're doing is wrong, and you should look at it a different way." But sometimes what they should be doing is looking at it and saying, "These are good things. We're not going to talk about that. We'll talk about something else instead that's in it." Sometimes there are good things in a bill that—even if you're on opposite sides of the political spectrum, you can look at it and say, "Yes, this is something that makes sense."

I would like to think that most of the NDP members are looking at this bill and saying, "If there is infrastructure that's in place already, if there is something that is not going to cost the community anything for it to remain and it has a benefit to the community for it to remain"—members of the opposition are going to look at that and say, "Let's avoid talking about that, because that one actually has some value." I think this is one of those cases where that has significant value.

We know that we have some First Nation communities that flood consistently. We also know that in just about every mine, there is a mining camp that has been set up.

Staff members, mine workers come in; they stay in those residences during the time that they are working in the mine. They go home, the next shift comes in, and it's a rotation through. They're typically modular homes, and it's set up so that multiple people can live. They're almost university dormitory style or college dormitory style. To me, if we know that we've got communities near the mine that seasonally have to be evacuated, if we know that there's the potential for forest fires in the area and that we've got communities that have to be moved out of there for a short period of time, perhaps—and it's not every case—it makes sense to leave that housing to be used on an emergency basis when it's needed on those seasonal opportunities.

When you look at what's happening in this bill, everything in here is about expediting the process in an intelligent way so that there is benefit to the community, there is benefit to the supply chain in Ontario, there is benefit to the green economy. You cannot be green without having mining in your jurisdiction.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Before we move on to questions, I want to remind all members that if you have a point of order, you first have to wait to be recognized before you begin speaking. Thank you.

Questions?

Mr. Lorne Coe: Speaker, through you: The member from Peterborough–Kawartha mentioned in his presentation the importance of supply chain. I would like him to expand on that. What will this act do to ensure we're the number one jurisdiction for mining globally?

Mr. Dave Smith: Thank you to the member from Whitby for that question.

We know right now that electric vehicles are something that we're transitioning to. The federal government has said that by 2030, all new vehicles need to be electric. Ontario has an opportunity with our manufacturing might in the south and our raw materials in northern Ontario to put the two together, to have the full life cycle here in Ontario, so that you mine the materials in an ethical, green manner, you process it in Ontario in an ethical, green manner, you build it in Ontario in an ethical, green environment, and what you end up with is a global reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in the entire world that has everything together in its borders to make sure that we lead the world in that green revolution.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Joel Harden: I'm just wondering if the member for Peterborough–Kawartha can explain a little bit further about that ethical, green way of doing things, because as I read the bill, what I don't see in the bill is a commitment to free, prior and informed consent from Indigenous neighbours in this province. What I fear is what the member was talking about earlier, about these five- or six-year delays towards getting a mining project open. You're going to make that even worse if you're being led by a Premier talking about hopping on bulldozers, if you're saying,

“This is what we are going to do,” instead of inviting our neighbours up north, who know the land, who want to be consulted on their land about the impact of the projects. I’m wondering if the member can explain to this House this green and ethical way of doing things if this government won’t even show up in the territory being impacted to talk honestly about the projects they’re proposing.

Mr. Dave Smith: Actually, I had the pleasure in 2019 to be at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada conference, where we announced a historic event. It was an MOU that had been signed by Webequie and Marten Falls to lead the environmental assessment for that all-season road to be built up into their territories. No government before had ever signed something like that. That was a historic event. I can’t emphasize it enough: No government before ours had ever signed something like that with the Indigenous community to ensure that the pathway to prosperity went into their communities, so that those communities that have fly-in resources, that only have road access by winter roads, will have full access with an all-season road, led by Webequie and Marten Falls.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: To the member for Peterborough–Kawartha, if I may—and I do appreciate his very thoughtful remarks, engaging in this debate in a very helpful way.

We know that this government is engaging with industry, Indigenous communities and Indigenous organizations on all the proposed changes. We know that this is an act—if passed, it would be compliant with section 35 of the charter and the Constitution Act, 1982. Based on that, could the member explain what this will do, if passed, for northern and Indigenous communities?

Mr. Dave Smith: That’s an excellent question, because, as I was talking about, Webequie and Marten Falls—those are two communities right now that do not have full-time access by road. They have access through a winter road. That means that from January to March, that is the only opportunity that they have to bring up pretty much all the building material they would need to function in there. After March, the only opportunity that they have to bring in food, the only opportunity they have to bring in supplies, the only opportunity that they have to bring in clothing is by plane. That increases the cost significantly for them.

What this bill will do is pave the way for us to make sure that Webequie and Marten Falls can continue down the path that they have started to build that all-season road and provide the same level of supports that we have in southern Ontario for those rural, remote and Indigenous communities. It’s a game-changer for them.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the member from God’s country—

Interjections.

MPP Jamie West: Honestly.

In his debate, he said that the role of the opposition is just to say no to everything, and it’s not; it’s to improve bills.

One of the things he talked about was infrastructure being removed at the end of the mine site closing. I spoke about this in my debate, and we’ve spoken about this very clearly—that it doesn’t make sense to remove everything. However, the way it’s spelled out is that either you remove everything or you have the option to leave it “better than or equal to.” So now people can decide that if they’re going to leave behind facilities and buildings and infrastructure, well, they’re leaving it “equal to” and it’s fine. What we heard from the communities in the area was that sometimes they don’t want this infrastructure because they inherit the liability that it has as well, and they can’t afford the liability. We proposed an amendment that would allow them to have the two parties agree to leave things behind if they both agreed they could do it, but it was voted down by the Conservative Party. Instead of just saying no, why can’t we work together and pass amendments like this?

Mr. Dave Smith: I have the greatest respect for the member from Sudbury, but I think that there was a misunderstanding when he read “better than or equal to”—because it’s better than or equal to the state of what the mine was prior to the mine being built. I talked about that in my speech.

A road coming in would have to be removed; buildings that were there would have to be removed to bring it back to the state that it was prior to the mine being built. What this allows us to do, though, is leave things where it makes sense to leave it. As I said in my speech, in my riding, when the nepheline syenite mine closes, there’s the option for that cell tower to actually remain because it’s servicing everyone that’s there. I talked about Cordova Lake and the road that was there that feeds more than 300 residents. These are the things that this bill will allow us to do that do not happen right now.

The mistake was “prior to the mine being built.”

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member from God’s country, Peterborough–Kawartha, for, to start with, his very kind remarks.

I’m a proud professional engineer and, really, the designs that I’ve undertaken over my career lasted a lifetime. If I’ve messed up, I’m held accountable for it forever, and so my career is gone if I take shortcuts or do anything that compromises the integrity of the process.

Why do you feel it’s important that qualified professionals certify all aspects of a closure plan for a mine?

Mr. Dave Smith: To me, it just makes perfect sense. I’ve talked about how our universities and our colleges in Ontario produce some of the greatest minds in this province. If we’re going to have our scientists, if we’re going to have our engineers, if we’re going to have our qualified professionals do their job, it makes sense to recognize that.

I go to my doctor and I ask him for medical advice; he gives me the medical advice. If he does something wrong, if my doctor makes a massive mistake on it, the doctor has the opportunity of no longer being a doctor through a malpractice suit.

This makes sense—having qualified professionals review it and say, “Yes, this makes sense,” or “No, you need to make an adjustment here; you need to make a change there to it.” We’re asking those professionals who have the education, who have spent their life learning about this, to weigh in on the decision on it because that is what they are trained to do.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): A quick question.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: We take our role as opposition very seriously. At committee, we proposed 20-plus amendments to this bill. One of those was an amendment that would require the government to create a formal framework for free, prior and informed consent consultations between the crown—which is you, signatories to Treaty 9—entities seeking permits under this act, including mining companies big and small, and impacted First Nations. This was a tripartite process that would facilitate development, but your government turned it down, even though the Ontario Mining Association wants this kind of framework and certainty. Why did you vote this down?

Mr. Dave Smith: I think it’s very rich of a white woman to be telling Indigenous communities what they should be signing off on and having a series of checklists rather than saying to those Indigenous communities, “What would you like to see in terms of what’s happening with the mine closure?” Because that is exactly how it works.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Point of order, the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

Ms. Sandy Shaw: This member has absolutely no idea what my heritage is, what my race is. He cannot make assumptions about me when it comes to the colour of my skin, my creed, my nationality, my religion. I think that’s highly, highly offensive.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you. That’s not a point of order.

Further debate?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: It’s an honour to rise today to speak to Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act. There are several things we could commend and recommend about this bill, and I want to be able to get through my notes because I do have some things to speak to about that.

I want to begin by just recognizing that Ontario is actually rich in minerals, and we have a responsibility to develop that. We also have a responsibility to adhere to the environment and make sure that we are good stewards of the land. We want to be able to extract resources where we can in the most responsible manner, and yes, absolutely, we want to be able to build those new batteries in Ontario, especially as we move towards the electrification of

vehicles, both commercial as well as private passenger. We can do all those things, including meeting our climate goals, but we have to do it in a very sustainable, carefully planned way. We can’t be brazen about it, and I think we need to be able to work together to achieve those goals.

1730

Every mining project in Ontario should be, at minimum, safe, sustainable, environmentally sound and beneficial to the community where it is located. Most importantly, every mining project in Ontario must also receive free, prior and informed consent from the Indigenous communities on whose territories those projects are undertaken.

Speaker, as I’ve raised in my previous remarks on this issue, the government is saying that the bill will strengthen Indigenous nations’ rights and that they would have their ability to have their voices heard. But yet, we have learned that even prior to the bill being released, Indigenous communities across Ontario had already been raising red flags about this issue; specifically, around the lack of regulations and how this bill could potentially harm their communities. First of all, let’s dig into that a little bit further. The ministry had engaged with Indigenous stakeholders about this bill only after it was tabled. I will remind all members in the House that this bill was tabled on March 2, 68 days ago, and the government has done very little to actually engage with Indigenous communities. That is not about respect. It’s not about developing relationships with the communities that will be most affected, especially since we are talking about communities that have already been left behind. We want to do everything we can to actually advance mining so it is modern, so therefore, mining companies will be able to engage with communities that will be affected in a way that allows them to drive the innovation together.

I think there are lots of willing partners that are prepared to come together, but the government has a role to play. It can’t be left to be said that mining companies that are fair-minded, modern and forward-thinking are going to do a better job of engaging Indigenous communities than even the government. Their reputation is at stake, and they recognize that. They know that eyes are on them on how they proceed about their business practice, and they understand that. They’re willing to do the work. Why on earth would the government not be willing to support them?

I know that in my practice, preparing a bill takes time. I want to be able to engage with stakeholders before I prepare the bill, so therefore I have more information and I can write a better and stronger bill. That is what the government should have done, and yet they failed to do so.

The CBC published a damning story about how, when they spoke to Craig Nootchtai, the chief of Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, he explained to them that the ministry did not respond in a fair and respectful way. How they found out about this bill was through communication that they described as cold and cruel, and that that ministry also sent out communication that explained that they did not have a duty to consult First Nations when developing legislation

or actually changing the laws. Then they further cited Supreme Court of Canada rulings to back them up. The chief's reply was such: "I believe that's wrong.... [Ontario] has a duty to consult. These changes will have a direct impact on our community and the activity that happens in our territory."

It's incredibly frustrating for Indigenous communities to actually be left behind. They've already experienced long effects of colonization, and yet here we are again, despite the fact that we all should know better—and certainly, as the crown, as government, it should be better.

When my colleague from Sudbury advanced 20 amendments over three motions at committee, each and every single one of them was categorically refused. One of the pieces that the amendments actually spoke to provided language to ensure that there was a duty to consult, but this government voted it down. This does not inspire confidence in anyone that the government is going to be acting in good faith. In fact, the committee only accepted one technical housekeeping change during the entire committee process, despite a very long laundry list of recommendations brought forward by both northern and Indigenous communities, all to strengthen and enhance the bill. Of course, we are concerned and we should all be concerned that without clear language around consultation, it won't be done, because we recognize that the government has opened itself to legal action and direct action in the past. It means that the bill could create obstacles and take longer for the mining of those critical minerals.

We talked about expediting the process. We talked about building relationships with Indigenous communities. If that is the intention of the government, then put it in writing. Why can't we see it? Why can't we read it? And certainly, Indigenous communities are looking for that. No fair-minded, fiscally responsible Ontarian would ever want to come to a place where they're engaged in long, protracted legal action once again, and yet, this is exactly where this bill is going to take us, unfortunately.

I recognize that we need to be globally competitive, and we should be. We have the smartest people in Ontario. We've got all the potential pieces to build that economy from end to end, business to business, businesses to consumers, but yet, we're failing on some very basic, fundamental processes.

The member from Sudbury also talked with Mr. Steve Lines of First Mining Gold during the committee process. First Mining Gold employs 51% Indigenous staff on the ground at their site. The member from Sudbury asked Mr. Lines what advice his company has for the government in order to improve the relationship with Indigenous communities. This is what Mr. Lines had to offer: "I think in the time over the years that I've spent on various different projects, the one thing that always is truly helpful and meaningful is the time spent with the communities and the community members. It's really, at the end of the day, I think, a lot about building trust and relationships, sharing information and doing that on a sustained basis. Sometimes it happens from project to project when issues become difficult, when there are obstacles in the way, and

then discussions take place. But it's sustaining that communication and relationship-building evenly across time so that when things do happen and challenges arise," you can go back to the discussion and "there's a basis and relationship" to build from. That is how you build relationships. That is what is missing from this bill. Mr. Lines was extremely gracious and polite in his answer—and I would add to the fact that if a small mining company can spend the deep, long-term investments of time in relationship-building and employment in the community, there's no reason why it can't be replicated, and there's no reason why this government can't act in the same benevolent but truthful manner in building true partnership.

It's also troubling that this bill would remove the ministerial positions of the director of mines and the director of rehabilitation; instead, it invests the powers in the minister directly. Chief Nootchtaï asked the question on everybody's mind: "I don't understand how" the Minister of Mines "expects to do all that work. Is he going to just rubber-stamp everything? I think so."

It's admirable to propose legislation that would reduce administrative burdens for companies, for governments, even for communities, but only if the outcome is better than what we have today. And so, although there are things in this bill that could be what I would describe as fair, and could be good, we can't necessarily just bulldoze through—as the Premier has said he would just jump on a bulldozer if anybody gets in his way. If that's the mindset and the heart of the government that actually wrote this bill, then I would say it's wrong-headed. I'm certainly not satisfied with the government's red tape reduction in proposing reduced administrative burdens, especially if people and communities are going to be harmed, and especially if it's going to take longer because of protracted legal action or direct action that may come out of bulldozing over community and Indigenous rights.

1740

Linda Byron of Blue Heron Environmental brought this up, and I thought it was worth sharing. She has this to say:

"Some of the issues that we encounter when we're offering mine closure plans"—and she is a consultant in the sector—are because there are things that have to be done. If there's a lack of clarity, that's not helpful. "The Mining Act and the mine closure plan and the rehab code—some of the parts of them are not clear or they're contradictory, which leads to confusion when we're submitting closure plans" and they're being asked by Ministry of Mines personnel. "Some reviewers will take things a certain way and some reviewers will take it a different way, and so we will literally offer the closure plan based on who we know the reviewer is going to be because they're going to look at it from a different perspective. So that leads to some confusion, especially when the public or Indigenous communities are looking at it. We're like, 'Well, this section of the province is doing it this way and this section of the province is doing it another way.' So there's a definite lack of clarity" in Bill 71 that needs to be worked on.

It's great to hear from Ms. Byron, a mining industry consultant who feels that the bill needs to provide additional clarity and, in its current state, does not. I'm glad that even mining consultants, mining experts are coming forward saying, "Do better." Provide the clarity that's necessary so that they, as businesses, have certainty so they know how to invest and move forward. Certainly, I think that that's something that everybody with a business background can agree on.

I have a business background. I want to know before I put my money into any investment: What's the environmental situation I'm walking into? What are the regulatory controls? Who am I speaking to? What do I need to achieve to get from A to B? If I'm going to have lots of questions because of the lack of clarity, it makes me think twice about investing, especially if I want to be a good corporate citizen.

Ms. Byron also stressed the importance of a qualified person signing off on the plans, that that person should be truly qualified and that they should use their expertise to provide constructive feedback and/or to approve the plan. She agreed that a checklist, including a person's level of education, professional experience and an ethics exam, would be a good place to start. It's concerning that none of that is being spelled out in the bill, despite the fact that members of the government have stood up and said that it is in the bill. Or they allude to the fact that it's in the bill, but it's actually not contained in the bill.

I also find it troubling that rehabilitation and protective measures are not defined in the act. Instead, their definitions are being set out in regulation, which is going to take place weeks, if not months, later. The critical pieces that actually help shape how the bill is going to be operationalized are not before the House today. If the government is asking us to just trust them, unfortunately, their track record is not very solid, which is why there are so many people, including and especially Indigenous nations, that are saying, "We can't trust you. You haven't earned our trust."

This bill loosens regulations that currently require mining companies to have the necessary funds secured to remediate the lands that they are working on upon the closure of the mine before they start mining. I think that's okay at times, largely because some mine and extraction processes can be long—sometimes years, if not decades, as we have seen. We know that sometimes it makes sense, especially with respect to the way money flows and capital is moving along stage by stage on when funds from a lender are advanced.

It does sometimes make sense to not necessarily have all the money in the bank right up front. I get that. Certainly, I recognize that anybody who has worked with tier lending will understand that. I can see my friend nodding there.

However, it becomes a major issue if the miner is not a well-resourced operation with multiple projects and streams of revenue that allow them to ebb and flow where the cash flow is. Who are we letting off the hook if we don't have some type of guarantee somewhere along the

way that is measured in a fiscally responsible manner? Because what we do know is that junior miners, newer companies, companies without the deep pockets will see a fluctuation of change in ownership, and they also may become insolvent over time. That's not uncommon. So then who is left to pick up the pieces when the mine has to be rehabilitated? Who is going to be ultimately responsible for the cleanup of the mine as we move towards reclamation of the land? There's nothing in the bill that actually protects the taxpayers at the end of the day. I think that as government and opposition members, as the stewards of the Ontario purse and the reserves, we have to be mindful of that. We can't think about what is politically beneficial for me today; we must start thinking in generations. We must start thinking and governing in 50-year increments. We cannot think about what is expedient and politically advantageous to us and perhaps our local community only. That is not what makes a good parliamentarian. We need to be able to do better, and we need to be able to do it smarter.

There are thousands of abandoned mines right now in Ontario where the cleanup has been left to the province. So we already, unfortunately, are inheriting a problem that has been left behind by previous governments and parliamentarians who were not able to think in that long-term vision and act with that type of long-term interest of Ontarians.

The cleanup of these mines will be in the hundreds of millions of dollars, which is why they're not being cleaned up, as far as I can tell. Nobody wants to pay because the miners have already extracted the profit—both financial profit as well as environmental profit—and they've walked away. So we're left with abandoned mines which are, I would say, environmentally unsound and creating a lot of havoc in those communities. Those communities are left with the problem. They have to drive by it. They're hunting on it. Perhaps they're fishing adjacent to it. That's the legacy previous governments have left them. I don't think that we want to be in the House when we're going to further exacerbate that problem, and yet here we are.

I'm certainly not saying in any way that we need to get everything right, and for sure, legislation is going to evolve, especially as the conditions out there continue to change, whether it's the condition of meeting our environmental goals or the conditions of making sure that we are globally competitive, regionally competitive in the long run. But we can't take any shortcuts, and regrettably, this bill has a number of shortcuts.

We can't simplify things to the point—or dumb it down—that it's a matter of creating polarizing effects, that one group is for mining and one group is against mining. Surely, parliamentarians can be much smarter than that when they talk about creating legislation that is good for generations to come. I entirely reject that preface, that you are either for something or against something. That's what the committee process is for. That's why we move amendments. That's why we talk to each other across the aisle. That's why we talk to consultants. That's why we talk to Indigenous community members.

We have a responsibility. I know that the environment is top of mind for everyone that I speak to in my community. They are so concerned about the next generation and what we leave to our children and our children's children.

Speaker, when we're talking about mineral extraction and we're talking about the Critical Minerals Strategy, I get that; I totally do. It's big-boy talk. But I also want to talk about the kind of world that we want to leave behind. I also want to talk about what our relationships are to Canada and provincial Indigenous communities. I sincerely want to make sure that we meet our truth and reconciliation obligations. And I know, Speaker, in my heart, that every single member here truly cares about whether communities have clean drinking water, whether communities are going to thrive because the economic conditions and the environmental conditions are there.

I truly believe that this bill could be better, and right now, it's not ready to be adopted. It cannot be supported.

1750

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy: I listened carefully to the member for Toronto Centre. I assume when she speaks about looking to the future decades ahead, that she would agree that it was a terrible mistake for the NDP, a decade ago, to prop up the Liberal government that was ignoring the mining sector and refusing to ensure that Ontario could become a supplier of critical minerals. Does the member now agree that we should not be ceding the field to China or Russia; that instead we should bring prosperity here, and in particular to the north and Indigenous communities, and create the environment for critical minerals to be mined here to increase the ability to be a leader in electric vehicle manufacturing? Does she agree that her party was wrong 10 years ago, and that the future can be better by passing this act?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I'm not interested in racing to the bottom with China or Russia, where there is no consultation with their Indigenous communities, where there's no regard for environmental protections. I'm certainly not interested in that race. I am interested in the race for prosperity for all, building better relationships with our Indigenous communities and responsibility in modernizing the mining sector. That's what I'm interested in, and that's what this party is interested in.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The member has made reference to the consequential changes that are happening when they're replacing the director of rehabilitation—anywhere it occurs in the act, they're substituting it with the minister to have basically sole discretion around that. They're also eliminating any reference to the director of rehabilitation altogether in some other clauses.

You had mentioned how we need to think in the future and look towards making sure generational changes are made now. Governments come and go; ministers come

and go. Can you expand a little bit about how this is perceived by consultants, by constituents, when you're applying the—I believe you said it was the—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Response?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Thank you to the member for the question. The director of rehabilitation right now, as I understand it, is more of a public servant role. They obviously are highly skilled, with the qualifications necessary to make those key decisions. It's a non-politicized role. Once you bring it into the hands of a minister, whether it's this government or future governments, it becomes a politicized role.

We also know that there are many people who once worked in the mining industry or mining lobbyists who are now in the position of government, and perhaps even in other places. We want to be able to depoliticize that process and make sure that the very best, most qualified people are there to make the decisions that are impartial and good for the province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Questions?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Several members across the entire House have spoken in favour of roads for the north, including several members from the NDP caucus. The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane and the member from Kiiwetinoong spoke in favour of roads for the north, and part of the plan for developing the Ring of Fire is to build roads in the north.

So my question to the member from Toronto Centre is, is the member from Toronto Centre going to vote in favour of roads for the north?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: If this government really wants to support the northern communities, you would be building roads to the north regardless of a mining bill or not. You would put it in the budget. You would just get it done. To tie it to this bill and say, "If you support the north, you have to vote for this bill, because this mining extraction bill will also come with some roads, some basic infrastructure," Speaker, that's just not the right way to govern.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Joel Harden: I want to continue with that train of thought. I'm wondering if any one of us would appreciate any government, anywhere coming to us, as elected representatives, and saying, "Do you know what? If you support this bill, I'll give you potable water. If you support this bill, I'll build a school in your community." Sadly, when I talk to Indigenous neighbours, these are not imagined circumstances. They only get to talk about core services for their communities if they co-operate with a development project which is prefabricated and already mostly designed. I'm wondering if the member for Toronto Centre could enlighten the House about how you actually build in a collaborative way as opposed to a forced-fed way. Are we not setting ourselves up for disaster if we do what the members are proposing we do in this bill?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I certainly don't think government and legislation should be transactional. I

really don't think that's how Ontarians would want us to govern. I think that most of us recognize that we need to be able to travel across this province in a safe and accessible manner. If there are no roads, it's because of the failing of previous governments. If communities are there with no potable water, it's a failing of previous governments. But this government now has had five years to act on it, and there's no reason why you can't put a strategy in place to build those roads and fill those gaps right away. We will vote for that. We will support that in a budget if that's how you want to put it in there—but it will always come with a poison pill, as we've learned with the government, and oftentimes they want to trick you into voting against something.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Andrew Dowie: I want to thank the member for her speech. I know this bill is quite important for my region, my community. We are reliant on the critical minerals arising from northern Ontario in order to provide for the new NextStar electric vehicle battery plant and St. Thomas's Volkswagen up the road. Understanding this, that it's still going to take a long, long time to get the next mine open, if this bill is not passed, it will leave an unnecessary regulatory burden on companies, driving them out of Ontario into other jurisdictions which are our competitors.

I'm wondering if the member could explain why there isn't a sense of urgency to provide the supply for our plants which are employing thousands of Ontarians going forward.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: There's an assumption from the government side that there's no urgency on our part to get good work done. I would say that the hard work that the member from Sudbury did at committee by advancing 20 amendments over three motions will actually speak to the opposite of that. We are in a hurry to get things done, but we keep putting forward motions and amendments that would make legislation better, and it's the government that continues to vote it down.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

MPP Jamie West: Thank you to the member from Toronto Centre. Near the end of her debate, what she talked about making good legislation and getting away from the rhetoric of one party agrees and one party is against it in this really childish conversation you hear sometimes.

Just as a very simple question, what are one or two very basic things that you think would move forward this bill, make this bill better?

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: I would start with ensuring that there's deep engagement with Indigenous communities so that you can obtain their free, prior and informed consent. Without that as a foundational stone for us to build on, nothing else will work. And we will see that this bill will be stalled, if not here—you have the majority—it will certainly be stalled in court, and if it's not stalled in court, then I suspect that the communities will rise up in protest because their land rights and treaty rights are being abridged.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Question?

Mr. Anthony Leardi: Getting back to questions of budgets and money, in 2017, the NDP position on this topic was as follows—and I take it from the NDP website: “Wynne turns her back on Ring of Fire.”

It says, “During question period Tuesday ... the NDP's critic for northern development and mines denounced the Wynne government for abandoning northern families and communities counting on the Ring of Fire.

“Premier Kathleen Wynne did not allocate a single dollar in the budget to the job-creating and economy-building development.”

That's straight from the NDP website of 2017.

My question is this: Why didn't the NDP vote in favour of our budget which actually did put money towards the Ring of Fire?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): A very quick response.

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam: Until we have free and informed consent from the Indigenous community, as I've noted before—it has to be there in order for us to move forward. This side of the House will not abandon the Indigenous community. We will be with them every step of the way.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): Thank you.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bhutla Karpoche): It is now 6 p.m. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barnes, Patrice (PC)	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Collard, Lucille (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiles et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jama, Sarah (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (IND)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (IND)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Hon. / L'hon. Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associée du Logement
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Kanata—Carleton	