



No. 81

N° 81

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 41st Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 7 May 2015

Jeudi 7 mai 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

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 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 7 May 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 7 mai 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2015 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2015

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 6, 2015, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated this issue, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke had finished his speech. We are now moving into questions and comments. The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm sure it was the most electrifying speech that the Legislature has seen in some time, because we know that the member from—where?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is always an animated debater when it comes to this Legislature.

I'm sure that he talked about what I think a lot of Ontarians are talking about with regard to this particular government budget. In the last election, we all ran and understood what we thought the issues would be coming into this particular session. I don't know about you guys, but I don't ever remember the Conservatives—the Liberals, I should say. I call the Liberals Conservatives because they're actually outflanking the Conservatives on the right, but that's a whole other issue.

I don't ever remember the Liberals running in the last election saying, "Vote for me and I'm going to privatize your hydro system." I don't ever remember Kathleen Wynne going to any political event or any media event and saying that she was going to privatize hydro. She talked about unlocking the assets of some things, but she never talked about privatizing hydro.

Nobody thought in a million years that the Liberals, who said they were progressive, would do what ultimately not even Mike Harris or Ernie Eves did, because, quite frankly, even they understood it was a very bad idea.

But the Liberals, who as always run on the left when they're running for election and are all the way on the right now that they're in government, have decided they are going to privatize Hydro One. It's not bad enough

that our electricity price has gone up by 320% since the Liberals have taken office, mostly because of their failed policies when it comes to privatization on the generation side with all of this private power. They're not happy that we had a 320% increase in electricity; they're not happy that we're going to get another 30% increase over the next couple of years. They want to drive it up even more. What in Sam Hill's name are these Liberals up to when it comes to privatizing hydro?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm very pleased to follow the member from Timmins–James Bay and speak in support of the proposed budget. I want to remind the member opposite that in the proposed budget, we are making a commitment to the largest infrastructure investment in the province's history, more than \$130 billion over 10 years in dedicated funds for Moving Ontario Forward.

Every dollar that we receive from part of the ownership of Hydro One will be placed in the Trillium Trust—that the member opposite does not want to talk about. It's being dedicated to roads, transit and bridges under Moving Ontario Forward.

Every region, every riding in our community, has a bridge. I know, in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, right now as we speak, we are improving the 401 and Victoria Park. We just finished the improvement of Warden and the 401. I know the members opposite will be travelling along the 401, and there are bridges in every riding in this province. So, as outlined in the 2014 budget, Moving Ontario Forward, it is a priority of this government to invest in public transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure in Ontario. The member opposite somehow forgot how many hospitals we have built and how many universities and colleges we have improved. Somehow they have this selective memory loss.

The other piece here is that they don't have to say that we're not doing it. They have evidence to prove that we've been doing it. Across Ontario, we are improving the infrastructure because for the last 25 years we haven't done any improvements, resulting in congestion. I remember listening yesterday to my colleague from Etobicoke, in this particular debate, talking about how much financial cost is due to congestion, but he did not even talk about the health care costs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll be speaking much later and more in depth on the budget, but I just want to mention about what budgeting means. I think the families at home

really understand what it means to balance the home budget and to prioritize their expenditures.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Would they sell the furniture to pay the hydro bill?

Mrs. Gila Martow: That's exactly what I was going to say.

I was just going to say that, when they want to invest in their home's assets, perhaps renovate their house—they always say an up-to-date kitchen or washroom can add value to a house. The fact is, they're not going and maxing out their credit cards, putting on a second mortgage—I certainly hope—just to renovate their kitchen and then calling it an investment, because then we all understand that they have to pay interest upon interest and they can't dig themselves out of the hole.

We do see people retiring with debt. That's part of the problem with retirement income: It's not just the actual income from a pension, it's also the debt that people are carrying. We have to set an example, as leaders in our communities and leaders here in the Legislature. We have to show the public that we do understand what investment means: It means that you put away money in good times, and then you have it to invest to do job creation and invest in infrastructure in bad times.

I think we need to focus on prioritizing. We need to focus on finding those real efficiencies, not just talking about them. We can't just keep creating new government bureaucracies every time we have a new government program. We have to look at the government bureaucracies and programs that maybe don't need as much staff because of computerization or because of off-loading to other administrators like the LHINs.

Thank you for allowing me to just focus on the importance of the big picture of what it means to budget and what it means to actually invest.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. It's always nice to rise again to talk about the budget. I talked a little bit yesterday about the tourist sector in Niagara Falls, where I got a call from the hotel owners. Now, think about this: The hotel owners are calling me. Their hydro has gone up twice as much, from 8 cents to 16 cents during peak times. So they said to me, "Well, here's the problem we have: We can't shut the lights off. We have 12 million people coming to Niagara Falls." They start coming really in May until September, maybe October, and then it kind of spreads out over the winter months even though they still come. He said, "What are we going to do? Do we have to pass on the cost of hydro to people coming to visit Niagara Falls?" What are you thinking here? So now what do you do? You make this thing—we're going to sell Hydro. We all know hydro is going to go up. It makes absolutely no sense.

What it is, it's 3%. Now, if you take a look at 3% of the total cost of your infrastructure over a period of 10 years—and I'm not sure the government will be here in 10 years, but that's a whole other debate for another day. What do we do? We're getting \$387 million in profit

from Hydro One this year. That works out to almost \$4 billion that you're going to get over 10 years.

0910

What have we got from that over the last number of years? We got money that we used for what? The Liberal Party should listen to this: Over the last number of years, from the profits from that, we spent that money in health care, we spent that money in transportation and we spent that money in education. If we continue to do that, we wouldn't have to force teachers out on strike today. You could have reinvested in schools. It makes absolutely no sense.

I'm going to finish my last 20 seconds on selling the GM shares. It makes absolutely no sense. We need to be at the table. At General Motors, the workers there are doing their job. Their productivity is high, they're highly skilled, our dollar is down—82 cents, although it should be around 78 cents—and in 2009, we—I'm done? Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the members from Timmins–James Bay, Scarborough–Agincourt, Thornhill and Niagara Falls for their comments.

I want to touch briefly—I wish I had a lot of time; I wish I had a week—

Mr. Todd Smith: So do we.

Mr. John Yakabuski:—but I do want to touch briefly on the comments by the member from Scarborough–Agincourt. We hear over and over again how this government is saying, "But we're investing in infrastructure—\$130 billion." You'd think they were the first government in history to invest in infrastructure. But you know what, Speaker? If they hadn't messed it up so badly over the last 12 years, they wouldn't have to trade away the family inheritance in order to pay for infrastructure. But that's what they've had to do because they have mismanaged it so badly—

Ms. Soo Wong: What about the 407?

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're not in your seat, Soo. Go back to your seat.

They've spent the last 12 years lining the pockets of Liberal friends with their Green Energy Act fiasco, taking away money from the people of Ontario. Now their backs are against the wall, and what are they doing? They're going to sell off Hydro One. We don't even know where it's going to end, I say to my friend from Timmins–James Bay. What will be left when this government is done the fire sale? When they're done the fire sale, do they start the yard sale, and then do they start the bankruptcy auction?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What comes next under this Liberal government for them to raise enough money to get back into investing in infrastructure after they've paid off all their Liberal friends in the energy sector? That's what has happened with the Green Energy Act. That's what has driven up those hydro bills.

I got a letter from Ottawa today—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

I got a letter from a lady from Ottawa complaining to the Minister of Energy: 600 and some dollars to pay for hydro in a month in a small home. That is disgraceful in this province, and it is this government that has driven it through the roof.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Now that we've come to order, I would ask everybody to be a little bit civil, and if we could remove the personal attacks in some of the comments, I'd appreciate it, too.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, it is clear that the speaker from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke needs more time. I ask for unanimous consent for another 20 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I heard a no.

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, maybe you'll say no to him, but I've got 20 minutes. Let me see what I can do.

First of all, I want to say that I don't take any particular pleasure in having time to debate this particular motion today, because what the government is doing, quite frankly, is pretty catastrophic when it comes to what this is going to mean to people back home and across this province.

Before I get to hydro, I just want to say a couple of things in response to what I've heard from the government side. This government is trying to make it look as if there's nobody in the history of the province of Ontario who has ever invested in infrastructure. They're trying to make an argument that by selling Hydro One for \$9 billion and keeping \$4 billion to build transit, they're going to do something that Ontarians had never done before, and that is to make important investments in transit. Well, I've just got to say, my God, the furthest thing from the truth is what the Liberals are putting forward, because governments in this House over the last 100 years have been investing in all kinds of infrastructure, everything from highways—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There goes the government member who used to be the one responsible for infrastructure saying, "Not true." Did we not build bridges in this province? Did we not build highways in this province? Did we not invest in subways in this province? Did we not buy transit cars in this province? Did we not buy buses in this province? We have been investing in infrastructure for years in this province.

I would argue, is it enough? Probably not. But we have been investing in this province for years, and we've built up a system of transit and a system of roads that, quite frankly, is not a bad one. Could it be better? Absolutely, nobody argues that it can't be better. You can

always improve on what you've got. But they're trying to create this narrative that you absolutely have to sell Hydro One or else the world is going to come to an end because we're not going to be able to build any more transit.

Well, I'd just say, first of all, what have governments done in the past to pay for things like subways? I was a member of the NDP government that was building two subway lines in the city of Toronto, the Crosstown Eglinton line and the line that's north by Steeles. We did that not by selling Hydro; we did that not by selling the public assets of Ontario; we did that by doing what everybody else does in the world, and that is to borrow the money over time and to pay it back. You pay it back by the increased ridership that you get from those particular lines, and you get it back from the taxes we all pay across this province.

So this argument that the only way that you can build transit in the city of Toronto is for us to sell one of our crown jewels and to sell the assets of Hydro One to the tune of 60% is a preposterous argument. Every government in the world that invests in transit, roads, inner-city rail, airports and others does so by either having the money up front, if they're lucky enough to have that money, or they borrow to do it.

What do you think towns and municipalities across Ontario have done when it comes to building arenas in their communities, when it comes to building facilities of any type in their cities or building roads? They take out a debenture; that is, to borrow money. That's how this is done.

This government argues that the only way they can build transit in the city of Toronto is by selling Hydro. It's a silly argument. In fact, if they sell Hydro, we're going to lose about \$700 million a year in revenue that we currently get from Hydro, because they pay money back to the province from the business they do in the province of Ontario. We're going to lose a big chunk of that, which means we're going to lose over time much more money than the \$4 billion they're going to get to put into transit. It's a really, really dumb argument.

I've just got to say to the government across the way that if somebody had come to me and said, "You know what? The government is going to sell Hydro," and they told me that a year ago, I would have said, "The Liberals aren't stupid enough to do that. There isn't a government in Ontario that would be stupid enough to sell Hydro." Why would you sell something that, quite frankly, is an important economic development tool in this province, as it used to be when electricity was being sold at cost before we did the privatization on the generation side? The political capital that they would have to pay as a result of selling Hydro would be enough for them to stop.

I remember; I was here when Mike Harris mused about privatizing Hydro and Ernie Eves then did some actions when he became the Premier of Ontario. They didn't just back down because CUPE brought them to court. Yes, that was a big part of it, but they backed down because the people of this province said, "Are you nuts?"

You're going to privatize what? I don't want you to privatize Hydro One, because I understand that if a business owns Hydro One, they're going to want to make a profit, and that profit will come by way of higher rates."

So the government of Ontario of the day said, "No, we're backing off the selling of Hydro." Even the Conservatives understood that, and if anybody was going to sell Hydro One, it should have been the Conservatives. At least we understand—I don't agree with them—but they're the party of doing everything private sector, business kind of stuff, and they would see this as a way of being able to give the private sector yet more business opportunity. I would have understood the Conservatives doing it. I wouldn't have liked it; I would have opposed it; I would have spoken against it; and I would have fought it, as we did back in the 1990s when Mr. Eves was trying to do that. But in fact, it's the Liberals that are doing it. I'm saying, "My God, what is going on?"

I remember the speeches of members on the government side, like the honourable Mr. Bradley. The honourable Mr. Dalton McGuinty was here at the time and others—I don't know the ridings, I'm sorry, Speaker. I wish I knew everybody's ridings, but after 25 years, it's not something that comes easy to me. I know the names. I know all your names—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm from Vaughan. Vaughan.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Steve, you're a good guy. I get along with you quite well.

My point is that it's the Liberals who are doing it. They were the guys, I remember, in opposition to the Tories when the Tories talked about doing it. They were going apoplectic on the opposition benches, as if somebody had taken a knife and stabbed them in the heart. They just couldn't believe that the government was going in that direction, and they were just swinging from the chandeliers.

0920

I still think there are finger marks up on top of that chandelier from some of the Liberal members who were swinging off that chandelier when Ernie Eves was trying to privatize hydro. I think, if you went up there, you'd find the fingerprint marks on that chandelier.

But now you've got the right-wing Liberal Party. They're like Jim Prentice in Alberta. Really; they are Jim Prentice in Alberta when it comes to privatization. I listen to the government front bench heckle during question period when our leader, Andrea Horwath, stands in her place every day, day in and day out, and fights against privatization. They're using the same lines that Jim Prentice tried to use in Alberta. I just warn you: What happened in Alberta, my friends, could happen to you quite easily. People understand and smell a rat when there's a rat. And this is a rat. They just don't like this thing, and they understand that you can't survive more hydro increases.

It used to be in Ontario that Ontario Hydro was one public utility that generated electricity at cost. We decided many years ago that having one public utility generate

electricity at cost meant our rates would be cheaper. We had among the lowest hydro rates in all of Canada here in Ontario. We were there because we understood it wasn't just a question that our residents needed to have affordable electricity, but it was also a question of economic development.

All of those plants in southwestern Ontario, all of those mining and forestry operations in northern Ontario—large industrial users of electricity—they situated themselves and invested in Ontario. One of the reasons they did that was you were able to have access to safe, affordable, dependable electricity in the province of Ontario. So they invested billions of dollars to build plants, mines, paper mills—you name it—in Ontario, because one of the advantages was that Ontario advantage: Electricity was affordable and reliable.

Along comes a Liberal government, which was opposed to the Tories' musing on privatization. The Tories had started to do some privatization on the generation side by doing private power contracts. The Liberals swung on the chandeliers; their thumb marks are still up on that chandelier, I swear to God. And they were—

Mr. Han Dong: Not mine.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not yours; you weren't here, in fairness. I can tell you Rosario's are up there. I can probably still see his particular thumb marks up there because he was pretty apoplectic about it.

Mr. Han Dong: Yours were there.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mine were there for darn sure, I've got to tell you.

Anyway, my point is, what we ended up with is that the Liberals, who were opposed to privatization, started privatizing on the generation side by signing all kinds of private power deals in order to build new electricity generation in the province of Ontario. As a result of that, the price of electricity in Ontario has gone up by 320%. That means if you were paying a hydro bill of \$100 a month 12 years ago, that \$100 hydro bill is closer to \$400 today. How does that make any sense to the consumer? And now these guys are saying, "Trust us. We did such a good job the last time. Trust us. We're going to privatize hydro."

Look what happened when they privatized winter road maintenance in this province. Granted, it wasn't the Liberals who started the privatization of winter road maintenance. It was started under Mike Harris and the Tories. They decided to get rid of the Ontario—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It didn't start under Harris.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It started under Harris. I was there. I know it was under Harris. You weren't here; I was.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It was 50-50 under you guys.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was always 50-50.

See, the Minister of Transportation should understand the history of Ontario. Our winter road maintenance system in this province was a very good system. MTO had snowplows, sand trucks and others, and then they would augment that by hiring contractors if they needed that extra help cleaning our highways. It was a good system because Ontario didn't have to keep all of the snowplows

and trucks that it doesn't always use on the fleet. They had a very big fleet of sand trucks, plows and others, but they would augment using the private sector. The difference was that MTO was the one that decided when the snowplow would go out and when the plowing was to take place.

My point is this: The Tories started privatizing by getting rid of all of the government's snowplows. They got rid of all the snowplows. The Liberals stood in opposition to that. I remember because I had Mr. Bartolucci running around the province with me condemning the Conservatives for the privatization and the sell-off of MTO equipment when it came to winter road maintenance. We predicted together, "My God, this is going to be a real problem when it comes to highway safety in Ontario."

The Liberals get elected, and what do they do? They didn't just continue the privatization of the plows; they privatized the whole damn thing. They got rid of the engineers; they got rid of the inspectors; they got rid of the patrols. The whole darn thing was given over to the private sector.

Now, during that time, we were out there, my good friend John Vanthof and I and others, saying, "Look at what's happening on our highways. We have highways shutting down; we've got accidents going on." I'm getting phone calls from the police in the middle of winter saying, "I've got to close down Highway 11," or, "I've got to close down Highway 101," or Highway 144 or whatever it might be, "because of winter road conditions. This is something I've never had to do before."

We sounded the alarm. Give the former Minister of Transportation some credit. As a result of pressures that we put on him—mayors, myself and citizens who took the time to take pictures and videos of the condition of our roads and brought it to the minister—the minister bought some extra snowplows. We gave him full credit for that. We said, "Well, that is a step in the right direction." There were some 50 new plows that were bought for northern Ontario and about 100 overall for the province. But we still have a problem. The problem is, we still have those third-generation contracts that are in place today.

So the auditor comes out and says, "This thing is a disaster. It's a question where highway safety has been put at risk as a result of the privatization of our highway winter road maintenance system." And then the government stands in this House and says, "Trust us. We're going to privatize hydro. It's going to be great. It's going to be better. We're going to still have control." Give me a break. We saw what happened with the OPG privatization. We saw what has happened with the winter road maintenance. It doesn't work. It costs us more money, and in the end we have less control and the quality goes down.

So what's the upside for the province? Ms. Wynne, the Premier, stands in this House and says, "You know, we need to sell Hydro because the only way we could ever build infrastructure in this province is to sell off

Ontario Hydro." What a silly, silly argument from a very smart person, I've got to say.

You want to build infrastructure and you want \$4 billion extra—which is only about 3% of what we have to spend on transit, by the way. Well, there are ways of doing it. The first thing is what we've always done, which is to borrow. Borrow what you can afford. Don't borrow more than you can, and pay for it over time.

The government, in way of its HST inputs and changes to the HST, has given corporations \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion in gifts when it comes to this new HST policy that's now being enacted. It means to say that we, the taxpayers of Ontario, will be taking our tax dollars of working-class people and we're going to be transferring them over to the corporate sector to the tune of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion a year so they can wine and dine people when they take them out on business meetings somewhere. Is that good for business? Is that good for the people? Is that a way of being able to responsibly spend the dollars of the people? You would expect Mr. Prentice to do that, and that's exactly what Mr. Prentice was doing. This Liberal government is doing exactly what Conservative governments have done in Alberta and are doing in Ottawa.

So the government says, "How do I find \$4 billion to be able to invest in transit?" You're talking about one \$4-billion hit in one year. I'm telling you right now that New Democrats have shown you where you can make \$1.5 billion each and every year to be able to offset the cost of transit: a moderate increase in corporate taxes. Our corporate taxes in this province are among the lowest in North America. I'm not arguing, as Jim Prentice would argue, as he did in the debates, that we have to raise corporate taxes to record numbers. No, no, no. Nobody here is arguing that. New Democrats understand you can't raise corporate taxes and let them rip, because there is a reality that we do compete with other jurisdictions. But when you're the lowest tax rate when it comes to corporations, how about we just raise them to the rate of Alabama? Why don't we try that? You think that raising our corporate tax rate to the same level as Alabama's is going to scare the heck out of the business community? I know they're not going to like it. I know they're going to rail about it. I know there's going to be four or five business executives sitting down on Bay Street talking about how they won't be able to donate to hospitals and how they have their own mortgages to pay and how brutally wounded they're going to be if they have to share some of the responsibility for building transit in this province. I understand that. I understand they would take full ads, if we were the government in Ontario, and they would fight us for five years, as they did when we were in government, because those guys, some of them—I'm not saying all of them. The more radical, right-wing ones are the ones we hear from. We don't hear from the reasonable people in the business community. We hear from the radicals, like my good friend O'Leary, whom I turn off every time he comes on TV because he nauseates me.

0930

Seriously, there are ways of being able to do this that doesn't mean we have to sell off Hydro. If we were to have a small increase on the corporate taxes, if we were to eliminate the HST input break that you're giving to corporations, we would have more than enough to be able to invest in transit, not only in the city of Toronto, not only in the GTA, but we would also have money to invest in northern Ontario. And here's the great thing: It wouldn't be one \$4-billion hit, it would be money that we'd have each and every year to make some good decisions about how we invest in transit.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I heard "Hear, hear" from my good friend the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm trying to be supportive.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm being very supportive. I'm giving you some ideas about how you can probably raise about \$3 billion a year each and every year to invest in transit.

But here's the other one: When you're investing, there are other places in Ontario called central Ontario, south-western Ontario, southeastern Ontario and northern Ontario, which also—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Niagara.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, that's the region I just mentioned.

They are the other places we need to invest in. We have infrastructure deficits in those communities—and the former Minister of Transport would know this—at a pretty serious level, and we need to find some way where we make sure that those communities are getting the assistance they need.

I give the city of Timmins as one example. We have a highway going through our municipality, Highway 101, which is called Algonquin Boulevard. It used to be a provincial highway. Mike Harris downloaded it to the municipality, along with a whole bunch of other highways to municipalities in northern Ontario and across this province. It used to be, when they would fix that road, it was a 90-10 split on what they called the Connecting Link Program. The province would pay 90%, the municipality would pay 10%. We now pay 100% of that money as a municipality to be able to fix that road.

I invite the Minister of Transportation to please take his ATV bike and run up Algonquin with me because that's what you're going to need pretty soon. That road is in such rough shape, it is horrid. We've actually got pylons along this four-lane highway where people are not able to drive because the road is in such bad shape. The municipality wants to make the investment that they need in order to fix the pipes underneath and to fix the road, but it's \$70 million. For a municipality, that's one hell of a hit.

I can say to the minister across the way, he has re-announced some Connecting Links dollars, but it's not—what is it, \$5 million?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's \$15 million, like it was before.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's \$15 million? Well, that project alone—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's \$15 million, same as it was before.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no. It used to be 90-10. Listen, it was 90-10. I was here. I know. I delivered the cheques myself when we were in government. It was 90-10, 90% province, 10% municipalities.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order, please.

I would ask the member if he would address the Chair and not the minister.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's okay. He's trying to argue something that is not.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Don't get him into the argument.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: But the point is, the municipalities are not able to front that bill alone, because these were provincial highways. They were never designed as municipal roads. They happen to be a highway that was going through your municipality that was downloaded to the municipality, and they can't afford to pay.

So I say to this government: Your plan to privatize hydro is one of the stupidest things that you guys have come out with, and it's going to be one of the things that is going to come back to bite you, should you proceed with it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think the member for Timmins—James Bay accurately put the debate between our two parties: They believe that infrastructure has always been adequately paid for in Ontario, and we say not.

So let's actually have a history lesson, Mr. Speaker. When was the last time we spent anywhere near the amount that we're spending, of about \$13 billion, \$14 billion a year? I will tell you. It was 1968. I was 11 years old and John Robarts was Premier.

As a matter of fact, we are supposed to spend, in Canada, 5% of our GDP on infrastructure if we are going to keep up with countries like the OECD countries, never mind big countries like China. We got down to spending as little as 1.5% or 2%. We are doing what a lot of other places have done, which is, revaluing assets and taking that money to attract broader investments in those assets, and repurposing it. That's \$4 billion, Mr. Speaker, directly into infrastructure. Do you know that that is more than two entire years of infrastructure spending under Mike Harris's Conservative government? Just on that alone.

We went through years in Ontario when we didn't build any highways; we built no subways; we didn't repair bridges. Kenora has 19 bridges. I think we're the first government in 30 or 40 years to actually replace and start rebuilding bridges, thanks to our excellent Minister of Transportation. We barely broke \$3 billion or \$4 billion.

I would ask the member to take five seconds, go to a computer, press Google, "Canada's Infrastructure Gap"

by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. You can see, since 1955, that you barely broke \$3 billion or \$4 billion or \$5 billion in infrastructure. We are now three times that.

That's the reason they're the third party: because their facts are wrong, their analysis is wrong. We're very proud to be doing it. Now, if the federal government would ever come back to the level of spending that we had in the 1960s and 1950s, we wouldn't have an infrastructure problem anymore in this country.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm pleased to bring some comments on the fine presentation by the member from Timmins–James Bay. I was actually looking at some old footage from question period back in 2006, and he hasn't changed a bit, I must say.

You know what? There have been some good arguments here on both sides, but the fact of the matter is that this government has done very, very little over the last 12 years when it comes to infrastructure. Now they're trying to make up for it, but at what cost? Spending has gone up dramatically and the debt has increased substantially in the province of Ontario, up to \$325 billion. At what cost are they dangling these carrots in front of municipalities, saying they're going to fix their infrastructure? Well, we know, because we've talked to the Auditor General. The Auditor General has reported back to this Legislature what the cost is. You can't build your way out of the economic recession that we're in right now with infrastructure. You have to manage your finances properly. The AG has said just that.

If you continue to spend more than you're taking in year after year after year, you have to pay for it somewhere. We're seeing it now with the crowding out of services that the province is supposed to fund. In our health care system, we have physiotherapy gone; diabetes test strips gone; registered nurses, 58 of them at Quinte Health Care, gone. We're seeing the crowding out of the services that this government is supposed to be providing at the cost of dangling infrastructure dollars that haven't even started to flow yet in front of municipalities. They're empty promises. They announced \$130 billion in their budget this year. They did that last year, and what has happened? Nothing. This is all a charade. It's all a shell game. Until they start to manage their funding and their finances properly, we're going to keep digging the hole deeper in this province—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm going to say to all the members on the government side that the noise is very loud, and I'm going to start singling people out.

Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was quite interesting, listening to my fellow northern MPP. What he's saying is true. Come and see Highway 144 just outside of Chelmsford going towards Dowling and Cartier; it is unbelievable. You cannot drive in your lane. The potholes are so big,

and they all happen to be about three feet from the right margin. So you can't go right, because you will be in the ditch. There is no shoulder on Highway 144—it's not a road like down south, but it is a provincial highway. So you have no choice but to go left. What happens when you go left, Speaker? Well, then you're in the lane of traffic of the people coming the other way. This is the main road for all of the mines that are in the northwest part of my riding; they all take Highway 144. You have those great big trucks—double tandem trucks—full of ore, coming down this highway non-stop. The highway is so bad that every day I get worried people; they are worried for their lives. Do we need infrastructure money up north? Absolutely, but not by selling Hydro One. This is the wrong way to go. Hydro One is only 3% of the infrastructure money that you are making promises on. This is the wrong way to go. Hydro One gives us dividends. It helps us by hundreds of millions of dollars every year to reinvest in infrastructure—in hospitals and roads.

0940

When we see in the budget things like “money will flow in areas that have population growth,” what does that mean to me, representing a northern riding? It means none of that money will come to Nickel Belt. There is no growth in the northern rural regions of Nickel Belt. Sure, Sudbury has growth but not Nickel Belt.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me. I'm very happy to speak to the budget motion.

The budget motion talks about building Ontario up. Let me tell you why I support this budget motion: For me, it is building Ottawa up. I have the great privilege of representing the great riding of Ottawa Centre. It's the second-largest city in the province of Ontario. We have a lot of infrastructure needs in my community. What this budget means is that we'll continue to invest in the critical infrastructure that we need in the second-largest city of this great province, the nation's capital.

Our government is already spending \$600 million in building phase 1 of the light rail transit system, the Confederation line. It's a state-of-the-art rail system that we are building that will be running through my riding of Ottawa Centre to the riding of Ottawa–Vanier and will be connecting our two universities together with the downtown core. We need to continue with that momentum in Ottawa. We need to build the second phase of our LRT, which will go into the great ridings of Ottawa West, Ottawa–Orléans and Ottawa South, so that our entire city, from the airport to the train station to our two universities, is connected to our downtown core.

The only way we are going to be able to do that is by supporting this budget, by making the very important infrastructure investments that we are talking about in this budget to ensure that we've got that public transit infrastructure that is so needed, because it's critical for

our economy in Ottawa and it's critical for our quality of life. I support this budget because it is building Ottawa up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We return to the member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just have to say, it's very disappointing to listen to the government. I don't think either the Conservatives or New Democrats are saying they're opposed to investing in infrastructure. We have all, as governments, had to invest. I was part of a government that put two subway lines into the city. Unfortunately, the Tories cemented the one on Eglinton. But we did that how? We did that in a thoughtful way by doing what other governments have done in the past: finding the money within our budgets or borrowing the money to do it.

I've said to the government that there are options for them. They don't have to sell Hydro. You can stop the HST inputs—a billion and a half dollars. You can look at a modest increase to the corporate tax rate, at least to the rate of Alabama. That would at least give you, between those two initiatives, about \$3 billion a year. Well, the government is saying, “No, no. The only way we can do this is to sell Hydro once, and we'll have \$4 billion”—once.

What are you going to do the second year, the third year, the fourth year? Are you going to have to sell everything and have nothing left to even get close to what you need to spend on infrastructure? It's a bad fiscal decision. Selling Hydro is not the way to build infrastructure.

I encourage those people who are watching: What they should be doing is writing to the Clerk of the finance committee, Katch Koch, by email, asking to have the finance committee come to their community when it comes to hearings on the budget so that the public can express its views about this government's policy when it comes to the privatization of hydro. All you have to do to register and be in committee is to send an email to Katch Koch: kkoch@ola.org. That will allow you to come to committee and tell these Liberals across the way, who campaign like New Democrats and govern like Prentice Tories, that they've lost their way and they have to stop doing what they're doing with the privatization of hydro.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'll be sharing my time with the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, as well as the member for Ottawa–Orléans.

This has been very instructive to understand why those of us on this side of the House brought this budget forward, believe in it, will vote on it, and why the members opposite won't. It's been an abject lesson.

I'm going to be using a lot of the material in Hansard to help my constituents better understand the NDP and the Conservatives in their own words.

Let's take the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, who's a very thoughtful guy, and I quite like him; he's an excellent member here. But I have a feeling he's a little

lost today. He talked about how he thought infrastructure was important. Then maybe he can explain to us—and this is also true for the period of time the New Democrats were in power. During that entire period of time, studies done by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity—their friends, one left- and one generally right-of-centre policy group. They point out that during the Rae government and during the Harris government, we spent in Ontario two and a half times less on infrastructure than the other provinces.

As a matter of fact, since I was born, in 1957, that was the lowest period of spending in the history of Ontario. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings might like to know that in the last year of the Conservative government, which was the closest indication to me of how they behaved, they spent \$1.9 billion. That was the smallest infrastructure spend in Ontario history.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: They shut the lights.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We had rolling brownouts. We had infrastructure problems—potholes popping up like potatoes. It was a state of disrepair.

As a matter of fact, you have to go back to the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s to see total government spending in Canada at 3.5% of GDP. At the same time, through most of this period of time, the Europeans, the Chinese, most of the major, strong economies were spending 4%, 5% and sometimes 6% or 7% of their GDP. We are up to about 2.5% to 3% of GDP in Ontario, just on the provincial spend alone.

I want to give a shout-out to municipalities. I remember in 1989, when I first took my seat as a city councillor, my very first speech when I started my first day as a politician was on the need to get back to 5%-of-GDP spending. It was 26 years ago that I started that. We did the deal with the former Liberal government. We got five cents of the gas tax transferred to municipalities. That was one of the biggest permanent infrastructure investments, which we're very proud of, and we've continued to protect that and build on additional programs with our municipalities. I'm very proud of our Minister of Infrastructure and our Minister of Transportation, who have been a very dynamic team, who are ensuring that we're getting good value for our tax dollars through innovative programs, like our AFP program and many of our investment programs, and the restoration of Connecting Links.

During the period from about 1968 to 2003, we saw a steady decline. As early as 1970, two years after we abandoned this high level of investment—the year I started my first year in high school—we were already down to less than 1% of GDP being spent. They actually got to what was an effective rate, when you use the actuarial system, in about 2000 or 2001. When you look at the accrual or the—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Amortization.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —amortization of costs and the lack of investment and decline, the Centre for Policy Alternatives actually has their chart on infrastructure in Ontario going into the negative for the first time.

The problem we have is that when we were in surplus, which we will be back to in two years, we started re-investing in infrastructure. We went from the \$2 billion the Tories were spending per year, up to \$3 billion, to \$4 billion. By 2006, we were at about \$8 billion. By 2010, we were up to about \$10 billion, \$11 billion, and then up to \$13 billion and \$14 billion, where we need to be and where we need the federal government to make an equivalent commitment, because they should be paying as in most countries, like the United States, where they pay for 100% of the national highway system, and unlike Canada, where we pay for 100% of the Trans-Canada system.

0950

Ontario is picking up almost half of the entire infrastructure spend annually in our province, and municipalities the other half. You're getting from the federal government, depending on the year, 5% or 10%, if we're lucky, and less than that in some critical areas.

This is completely unsustainable. If the Conservatives actually really believe in infrastructure, why aren't they jumping all over the federal government to start matching us? Why can we not find, since John Robarts—they tease us that we go back to John A. Macdonald. I have to actually go back to John Robarts to find a Conservative Premier who spent more than 1% of GDP on infrastructure.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will send the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock both studies that were just completed. I'm happy to share them with you. You want to argue with the experts who have no political agenda and certainly don't tilt towards our party.

Finally, I want to make the point of the problems that we have right now. For 50 years in Ontario, prior to the 2004-05 period, two problems occurred. We spent—they estimate in Ontario—about \$24 billion less than we should have total between all governments annually. That accrued over time to become a very big problem, and it became a very big problem in many ways. If you go to Vaughan, or you go to Oshawa, or you go to Ottawa-Vanier, or you go to Glengarry-Prescott-Russell or Kitchener, you'll find that each of those communities have highways that should have been built in the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and widened, and needed transit systems that should have been built 30 or 40 years ago.

When every other province in Canada was spending 250% more per year than we were based on population, they were building those things. Montreal has a great subway system. Vancouver has a great LRT system. They built highways and roads. We did not build because we were spending at a two and a half times lesser rate of investment. That means that for 50 years, we actually doubled our population but we did not double our infrastructure. We barely, barely, barely kept up. We didn't keep up with population growth. We have entire communities that don't have the basic infrastructure that other Canadians and Americans have.

The second piece of that is it's all old. Stuff that was built in the 1950s, like those of us who were born in the

1950s, need new bits and new pieces, and a little bit of an uplift and a tuck here and there. So all of this stuff, because 80% of our infrastructure out there was built in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s—80% of it is all aging at the same time. My friend the Minister of Transportation, my friend the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and the Premier would all tell you, and any member of this House will tell you, that we have an infrastructure crisis in this country; that we are the first government to stand up and address that problem, because almost all of the infrastructure in this province is underinvested in.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member from James Bay continues his mythological view of the world, that somehow he thinks that they actually spent more than 1%. So I will, after I speak, send him a copy of the report so he can see it himself and acquaint himself with the facts.

Finally, not only do we have this huge repair bill—the underinvestment—now we've got climate change. That's the third leg of the problem. We spent 50 years underinvesting by as much as \$24 billion a year. We spent 50 years not doing the basic repair work, so it all—we have a huge backlog of repair on bridges, culverts, roads and transit. The third problem now is, we have climate change. So if you're in Pembina or if you're in Burlington, what you would know is this: You would know that your sewer system, built to a one-in-a-hundred-years flood event, as in Burlington, has had two one-in-a-hundred-years flood events in 24 months. I think that makes it a one-in-one-year flood event that that sewer system has actually been built for, effectively, if you look at the last two years. So we now have to address climate change, which is a bigger challenge than any other government has.

Those three challenges we are taking on. We are spending at levels not seen since John Robarts, and we're darn proud of it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Today's subject for me to speak about is the budget. I think this is very important to Ontarians and to Ontario. In the budget, you will notice on page 104 that the budget talks about international trade.

Recently, in April, I was away—not on holiday—I was away on a couple of trade missions. One to China—I came back for one day, and then I went to Mexico for another trade mission that lasted five days. I spent the majority of April out of the country, trying to do something good for Ontario and for Ontarians.

Allow me to talk a bit about the trade missions, and I'm going to get back to why I talk about them. I had the fortune to co-lead the trade mission to China with Minister Leal, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We spent about nine days in China. We visited Beijing and a province called Shandong, and after

that we went to Nanjing in Jiangsu province, which has a 30-year trading relationship with Ontario. After that, we went to Shanghai, and after that, our last stop was in Hong Kong.

We were in Beijing, and we did a lot of things. For example, we had a grand presentation telling the Beijingers how good Ontario is and the reasons that people from China should invest in Ontario. At the same time, we had a smaller-sized meeting—we call it a round table—where we requalified about eight entrepreneurs and had them come to a meeting room and do some really hard selling, in terms of trade and in terms of investments, and, again, persuading these people, so hopefully one day they will come to Ontario and look at Ontario—look at our products—as well as look at the investment opportunities that we may have provided for these people.

There's one supermarket, which is a very famous supermarket in Beijing. It's called the Beijing Hualian Group. Last year, I think, they set up a head office in the Toronto area. The reason for that is really having people in Ontario go to every corner of Ontario and purchase products from Ontario, and very specifically agricultural products.

After Beijing, we went to the province of Shandong. By the way, Shandong is one of the three leading economic provinces of China. Also, Shandong ranks number one in terms of agriculture. We went there, we had a very successful time because Mr. Leal was able to attend one of the largest—I think it's the largest—vegetable shows in all of China. There were billions of people—really a lot of people—there that morning. There were only three speakers, and Minister Leal was able to speak for a few minutes and tell billions of people how good Ontario is and how good our agriculture and environment is for growing, for food processing and all that. So Minister Leal did a fantastic job in terms of promoting trade in Ontario.

At the same time, again, we had the round table in Shandong with about eight to 10 people, and we talked to these people. The good news is, after the meeting, at the end of this month, in May, a majority of these 10 people will be coming to Ontario. They're actually committed to a reverse trade mission to Ontario at the end of this month, so that they have the opportunity to look at us and fund our products—perhaps a project for investment there.

Leaving Shandong, we went to Nanjing—as I mentioned before—the capital of Jiangsu province. Jiangsu has a 30—oh no, the time is running out and I haven't touched on anything here. Anyway, I was in Nanjing, and then I moved on to Shanghai and Hong Kong.

1000

Let me talk about Mexico, Mexico City. I can tell you, yes, Mexico has challenges. At the same time, Mexico has tremendous potential for Ontario to expand into that market because, after all, Canada, America and Mexico are the three amigos of NAFTA. There is tremendous potential there. That's my observation.

After Mexico City, we went to Guadalajara, the city that hosted the last Pan American Games.

I have people now pointing at me and telling me to stop. Maybe I'll find another opportunity. I'm going to sit down and allow my colleague to speak for five minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It gives me actually great pleasure. Je me lève aujourd'hui avec fierté pour parler de notre budget, un budget dont le but ultime est de favoriser l'essor de notre extraordinaire province, l'Ontario.

Our government is committed to making the important and tough decisions in order to help Ontarians, including my constituents of Ottawa—Orléans. This budget contains many measures that ensure Ontarians continue to succeed and thrive. This legislation is all about building Ontario up and helping all of our communities.

This budget addresses the issues that face all Ontarians. I want to take the opportunity to talk to you, when I read the budget, about a few aspects where I think the people of my riding will actually—although Ottawa—Orléans is not mentioned, do you know what, Mr. Speaker? In several aspects, my residents, my constituents, will benefit from this.

If I look at one aspect, I was very happy to see our renewed investment of \$250 million over two years in our youth strategy fund. That fund previously helped over 200 students or new graduates in my riding. So I was very happy, très fière de voir qu'on avait renouvelé notre investissement dans la jeunesse. Donc, merci aux gens qui ont pris cette décision-là.

I know that my constituents also want access to mental health care outside the clinical hospital setting. They want services that are in the community, closer to home. This is why, again, I was happy to see a \$138-million investment that we will be making over the next three years to expand community mental health services.

I must say, I had prepared about seven minutes of debate here, so I have to reduce my time a little bit.

One thing, and I'm going to look at my minister right across from here, right beside me: Over the past decade, the east end of Ottawa, particularly in my riding of Ottawa—Orléans, has seen a housing boom. Our government has put in place a lot of apprenticeship programs. Again, we have renewed that investment of \$55 million to support apprenticeship training.

Another aspect of this budget that I found most interesting is the aspect where—you know, governments sometimes have to make tough decisions, and in the past few weeks we have made some very tough decisions so that our government can build the infrastructure our province and our economy need to stay competitive. We will invest \$130 billion over the next 10 years, including dedicated funds for Moving Ontario Forward. This is a record investment, not just for Ontario, but for Canada.

I want to take this opportunity to talk about our Moving Ontario Forward strategy. This will invest \$31.5 billion over the next 10 years in making our roads better, investing in cutting gridlock and making sure Ontarians arrive home faster and safer so they can spend more time with their family.

Une majorité d'Ontariennes et d'Ontariens doivent se déplacer pour se rendre à leur lieu de travail, que ce soit en voiture, en train ou en autobus. Croyez-moi, je sais ce que cela veut dire. Je représente une circonscription qui se déplace en grande majorité pour aller travailler, donc je sais que cette infrastructure et ces montants alloués vont permettre possiblement à ma communauté d'Ottawa-Orléans de bénéficier.

Je crois que mon collègue d'Ottawa-Centre a fait les références. Nous avons désespérément besoin d'infrastructure dans Ottawa-Orléans—la phase 2 du train léger—donc, je vais continuer de discuter de ça ici dans la Chambre.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have to commend people across the room for speaking positively about the budget, because it takes a lot of talent to spin that you're somehow making an investment whenever you spend money. That isn't always the case.

Most of us here are homeowners and we can certainly understand, now that we're starting to see—certainly in Vaughan, my city—secondary suites become legalized. People are starting to invest in their homes to build these secondary suites, which are often basement apartments, but they could also be an apartment over a garage. That is an investment. Why, Mr. Speaker? Yes, you're spending money on your home, but you're going to get income from it. You're going to rent it out to a family or an individual, and then that will provide you with income. So in terms of investing in our province, "investment" means there's going to be some kind of income.

We do not believe that maintaining our highways is going to somehow bring income and prosperity to our province. Yes, we have to maintain our roads, and yes, we have to invest in developing better transit and infrastructure and building more bridges, but we also have to focus on the fact that we have to work within our budget. That's what we're here to talk about. We're here to prioritize our spending, to focus on the things that will bring investment into the province. I think that we have to speak to those future investors and we have to ask them, "What will help you to invest in our province?"

We just heard last week, a few days ago, that GM is not investing in Oshawa. It's very simple. Let's talk to GM. They're going to say the high hydro costs that this government is wearing is the cause of them moving out of the province. The future pension plan—these are all things that are costing us revenue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise and add some comment to the discussion around the budget.

There's been a lot of talk about having money to build infrastructure. One of the solutions from the other side, from the government side, is to privatize hydro. I can tell you that I've not had one single constituent in my riding, or in any of Windsor-Essex county, who have supported selling off Hydro. In fact, time and time again we're

hearing that they already can't afford to pay their bills. So if we're looking at selling off Hydro, the price of hydro is going to go up even more, and the people in my riding aren't going to be able to use the roads. They're probably not even going to be able to afford to get to work. They're not going to be able to afford public transit, they're not going to be able to afford a vehicle, so they won't be able to afford the roads that they're suggesting they're selling off Hydro for.

It's clear that the people in my riding are saying that the government's not listening to them. I think that's a clear message across Ontario. The government's going to do whatever it is they want to do. They say they're listening, but—my father-in-law has this wonderful saying: "Just because we've spoken doesn't mean we've communicated." What that means is, just because you've heard me doesn't mean you're listening. I think that's the motto from the other side: We hear you, but we're not really listening.

Another important thing: When we're talking about the money that we actually make as a province from hydro that can be invested back into Ontario, one of the big issues right now is education. I know the minister stands up all the time and says that we're holding the line on education. It's stable. But in their own budget, page 230 of the budget, "Summary of Expense Changes Since the 2014 Budget," they brag about saving \$248 million on education. They're spending \$248 million less. They're bragging about it. Yet we have infrastructure in education. Renewal costs haven't gone down. The cost of hydro: not going down, and it's going to go up even more if they sell Hydro. Cost of transportation: not going down, and special education needs are going up. That's money that could have gone back into the system to support the students and the families.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: With the two minutes that I have, I want to begin by congratulating the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade and of course our colleague from Ottawa-Orléans for the enlightened contribution that they made to this morning's discussion around the budget. Of course, it is unfortunate that members across the way from both the PC and NDP caucuses have chosen yet again to express what I would argue is a somewhat confusing and mixed message with respect to how we should be moving the province forward.

1010

I would say to the member from Thornhill, my neighbour in York region, that I can't think of many other regions in the province—and I say this somewhat proudly—that are benefiting in terms of economic productivity because of our infrastructure investments over that which is occurring in York region.

Specifically around job creation, I would let that member know that the investments we're bringing forward through our Moving Ontario Forward plan, the in-

vestments in transit, transportation and other critical forms of infrastructure across this province, are actually helping to create and sustain 20,000 jobs annually. That's not just 20,000 jobs; that's 20,000 families that are benefiting directly because they have that ability to improve their quality of life to afford so much more, specifically because of our ambitious plan.

Of course, all morning I've had the opportunity to hear members from the NDP caucus, including the member from Windsor West who just spoke, but more interestingly the member from Timmins–James Bay, who spoke at length this morning on the budget. I'm sure that people watching at home, whether they're from Timmins–James Bay or my riding of Vaughan, when they see that member from Timmins–James Bay speak, could be forgiven if they thought instead that they were tuning into the Alberta legislative channel.

But having said that, on this side of the House, whether we're representing communities like Markham or Toronto or Glengarry–Prescott–Russell or Kitchener or Davenport or Ottawa, the north, the southwest, the east, on this side of the aisle we are supporting this budget because it will help every single corner, every single region of Ontario. Let's support the budget. Let's keep building our province up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to add a couple of comments. I'm conscious of the fact that most people bring to the table a vast array of numbers. I believe there are only two numbers that you need to understand. One is the fact that the debt of this province is close to \$300 billion and the interest that it requires to be paid is \$11 billion. Those are the two numbers.

Normally, in a more healthy, balanced system, a government would use its revenue to pay for infrastructure. That's actually what people think we're doing. What they don't understand is the impact of \$300 billion worth of debt and the \$11 billion that goes to service it. If you take that \$11 billion, it could actually be spent on the kind of infrastructure that we're all talking about.

No one disputes the nature of the need for any economic unit to have infrastructure. What we object to is the fact that this is like selling the car and you now can't get to work, or looking at selling something that makes money, which is Hydro One, but you're going to prevent that revenue from being generated. And it's all because of the lack of proper, balanced funding.

When you look at the accumulation of this almost \$300-billion debt, it has accumulated exponentially under the Liberals. And when you look at \$11 billion—individuals know about paying interest on personal debt. Can you imagine what this province could do with \$11 billion? A lot of infrastructure.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the Minister of the Environment. You have two minutes to respond.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I would like to thank the members for Thornhill, Windsor West and York–Simcoe,

and the Minister of Transportation for their insightful comments.

Maybe I should just pick up from the member for York–Simcoe. First of all, when you last left office—if you're going to be critical of us, one should be prepared to have the mirror held up back again—you had a \$5.6-billion deficit and you were spending \$1.9 billion on infrastructure that year. That was the lowest infrastructure spend and, I'll remind you, it was a deficit that we got rid of. We're now getting rid of a second deficit that was at the end of a global tech boom.

Through the period of time when the New Democrats and Conservatives were in power from the mid-1990s to the beginning of the last decade, Ontario was spending two and a half times less on infrastructure per person than every other province in Canada, and it was the record low.

Then the deficit: Well, every province in Canada and the federal government went into deficit after 2008. We all did that together to rebuild.

We committed, as we were coming back to balance, that one of the things we would not cut was infrastructure. So we continue to build. The \$13 billion: The last time we saw that level of spending, as I said, was in 1968 under John Robarts. That was the last Premier of this province who actually made that commitment to at least 2.5% to 3% of GDP going to infrastructure.

It is the oldest and most Conservative notion in Ontario—when you weren't the second party, and had 50 or 60 seats—that you used to believe in. I would say to both parties opposite, if you embrace this idea, this very long Ontario tradition of spending at least 2.5% of GDP on that and working to get the federal government to do that—Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a shout-out to municipalities which have consistently been investing about 2.5% of GDP in Canada and across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, with your indulgence, I've got a good group of people here visiting Queen's Park today. With the Unifor national skilled trades council, we have Dave Cassidy, Joe Elworthy, John Breslin, Phil Fryer, Ray Hamel, Mike Aquilina, Nelson Gagné, Bill Dickson, Paul Renaud and Ashok Venkatarangam.

As well, I have great friends, corrections officers, who are here with their daughters: Randy Simpraga, who is the president of Local 135 with OPSEU, and Carsten Schiller. They are joined by their daughters Sydney Simpraga and Briana Schiller. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park here today.

Hon. Michael Chan: I have two individuals who have been stalking me for the last three days. Luckily, they are my interns. They are in the members' gallery. Their names are Alexis Green and Mitchell Stein. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to welcome to the House Lori and Rob Gordon. They hail from the Belgrave area, and they're here with their daughter Clarissa, who will be participating in the Minister of Education's forum today.

On behalf of Bill Walker, I'd also like to welcome Matthew Milencoff, a student from St. Mary's High School in Owen Sound, and Phil Dodd, executive director of Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure for me to introduce two interns of mine, Gazal Amin and Carly Byberg, sitting in the members' gallery. They are the most enthusiastic and hard-working interns I have ever had. Please join me in welcoming them.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'd like to welcome Mackenzie Bass-Simpson, with the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board and my alma mater of St. Joseph-Scollard Hall, who is here participating as well.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's with great honour that I introduce three people in the east members' gallery: Mr. J. Murray Jones, the outstanding warden of Peterborough county; His Worship Mayor Daryl Bennett, mayor of the city of Peterborough; and Jay Amer, who is Ontario's representative for New York state and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

I'd like to welcome everybody from 11:30 to 1, room 228 to 230, for the annual Peterborough Day here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to welcome two interns who are working in my office this summer: Meg Cormack and Domenic Bitondo. Welcome and enjoy.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I am delighted to introduce the family of page captain Ethan McCready-Branch, from the great riding of Kitchener Centre: mom, Estelle McCready-Branch; dad, Greg Branch; sister Brianna; sister Eliza; brother Brent; brother Eli—it's a big, happy family—and grandmother Margaret McCready. Welcome.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park David Houston, Tom Sears and Pietro Pantarotto Perego, a Rotary exchange student from Brazil. Welcome.

Mr. Bob Delaney: On behalf of the member for Mississauga-Brampton South and page Thomas Atkinson, I'd like to welcome to the Legislature Thomas's mother, Cindy; his sister Angie; and his godmother, Denise Edwards. They will be in the public gallery this morning. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's a great pleasure to introduce Evan Conover, who's a son of a good friend of mine and the nephew of my sister Diana, and an aspiring cabinet minister. Welcome Evan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? I have my own introduction. I'm glad no one stepped on it this time.

In the Speaker's gallery is my lovely and long-suffering wife, Rosemarie.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): She has also been known to jump from higher places in defence of her family.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just thought I'd offer. Just saying.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a serious note, members will be aware that, on today's Orders and Notices paper, there appear two notices of an opposition day to be debated next week. Under standing order 43(c), the Speaker is required to select one of these notices for consideration.

As occurred in November 2013, once again we have a situation where only four out of the possible five opposition days in the spring sessional period will take place. Each of the opposition parties is entitled to designate another opposition day, but only one is available. Therefore, I will be applying the same principle in selecting one of the notices today as I used in 2013.

Standing order 43(a)(iii) provides that five available opposition days in a sessional period are to be allocated between the two opposition parties on the basis of the membership of their caucuses relative to each other. In applying that same formula to the total of four opposition days instead of five, the result is that the third party is mathematically closer to being entitled to two out of the four opposition days than the official opposition is to being entitled to three of the four. Therefore, I decide that the motion standing in the name of Ms. Horwath is the one that will be selected for debate next week.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Congratulations, Gilles. Two wins this week to the NDP.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And one check for the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Just a notice that I'm listening.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a very serious note, on May 5, 2015, the member from Timmins-James Bay, Monsieur Bisson, rose on a question of privilege concerning tentative settlements in labour negotiations between Hydro One and OPG, and a union representing their employees.

Relying on media reports and statements by government ministers in the House and to the media, the member submits that a provision in the settlements would grant Hydro One shares to those employees. The member indicated that this provision undermines the authority of the House because it anticipates a reorganization of Hydro One and the passage of Bill 91, thereby amounting to a breach of privilege and a contempt of the House. The House leader of the official opposition, Mr. Clark; and the government House leader, Mr. Naqvi, also spoke to the matter.

Having reviewed various procedural authorities, our precedents and the oral and written submissions of all three members, I am now ready to rule.

I will deal first with the threshold issue. The government House leader raised a concern about the time lag between giving the requisite notice of the question of privilege and the incident giving rise to the notice. He pointed to my April 21, 2015, ruling where, acting under standing order 21(d), I exercised my authority without hearing from any member because of the unacceptable time lag in giving notice to the Speaker.

I do not have concerns about the timeliness of the notice here because, whereas the April 21 situation dealt with a single pre-planned incident which was complained about only four days later, this one deals with a series of interrelated pieces of information in an evolving public policy matter. This is not to give permission to members to delay raising a matter of privilege when they first perceive the possibility that one exists, but rather to accept that there may be circumstances when it could validly take some time on an evolving matter before any implications for parliamentary privilege are sensed. I therefore remind members that if a matter is serious enough to warrant a question of privilege, it should be raised in a timely way, in the manner outlined in standing order 21(c).

Turning now to the substance of the member's claim, I will deal first with the argument based on breach of privilege before turning to the argument based on contempt.

1040

With respect to the contention that there has been a breach of privilege, no member has identified which individual or collective privilege has been violated. For example, there is no indication that any member's privilege of freedom of speech has been compromised by virtue of anything that has happened—or been said—inside or outside the House with respect to the developments mentioned in the notice and the submissions. In fact, members have been exercising that privilege, and they may continue to exercise it when they speak in the House about those developments. Therefore, I find that a *prima facie* case of privilege has not been established.

With respect to the contention that there has been a contempt, the member for Timmins–James Bay referred to a January 22, 1997, ruling in which Speaker Stockwell found that a *prima facie* case of contempt had been established in circumstances where statements in government-sponsored advertising tended to “convey the impression that the passage of the requisite legislation was not necessary or was a foregone conclusion, or that the assembly and the Legislature had a pro forma, tangential, even inferior role in the legislative and law-making process, and in doing so, they appear to diminish the respect that is due to this House.” However, in a June 16, 1998, ruling, Speaker Stockwell approvingly cited a seminal 1989 ruling by Speaker Edighoffer indicating that “it is perfectly valid for the public service to proceed with plans based on a bill that is already in the system in order to be able to act swiftly, once that bill becomes law.” In a September 25, 2000, ruling, Speaker Carr reiterated this

view and also indicated that it is “a legitimate and necessary activity” for a government to plan for changes.

The takeaway from these and subsequent rulings is that, compared to a broad publicly directed advertising scenario that anticipates the passage of legislation, a targeted or internal planning scenario that prudently prepares for the enactment of legislation is less likely to raise a matter of contempt; such plans are part and parcel of the function of government. Although a Speaker could be convinced that a *prima facie* case of contempt has been established in either scenario, the prerequisite of establishing either a motive to, or the effect of, undermining the Legislature's role in the latter scenario is considerably more unlikely, as both common sense and procedural precedent confirms.

Let me now apply this to the case at hand. The member from Timmins–James Bay points to statements by the government to the effect that the tentative settlements between Hydro One and OPG and the union representing their employees provides for the distribution of shares to union members, a distribution that, according to the member, is contingent on the passage of Bill 91. The member indicates that the presence of the share provision in the settlements was premature, did not show sufficient respect for the role of the House and has pre-empted the legislative process on Bill 91.

In comparing the current matter with that faced by Speaker Stockwell in 1997, the very important difference is that Speaker Stockwell had in his hands a publicly directed advertising piece, authored by the government of the day, which in his findings explicitly diminished the role of the Legislature and presumed that the outcome of its consideration of legislation was a foregone conclusion. In the present case, there is no similar concrete evidence of that nature. The material presented to me and relied upon by the member for Timmins–James Bay is not in that same vein. I simply have not been presented with any document or communication authored by the government that inarguably presents the arrangements complained about as a *fait accompli*.

These arrangements described appear to be in the nature of normal planning the affected organizations would be expected to engage in. Presumably, if the legislation does not pass, these arrangements will not be implemented.

For the foregoing reasons, I find that there is no *prima facie* case of contempt.

In closing, I would like to thank the member for Timmins–James Bay, the House leader of the official opposition and the government House leader for their oral and written submissions on this matter.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Each and every day, Carol Milojkovich wakes up and thinks about her husband, Robert, and her son

Daniel. She wonders if they would be alive if the roads had been properly maintained. She wonders if they would be alive today if the Liberal government hadn't chosen to save a few bucks and sacrifice the lives of Ontarians like Robert and Daniel.

Carol Milojkovich deserves answers from this government. Deputy Premier, will your government call for a coroner's inquest into the wrongful deaths of Robert and Daniel Milojkovich?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the leader of the opposition for his question this morning. Certainly any time, as Minister of Transportation, I hear of a fatality on any of Ontario's highways during any season, my heartfelt condolences go out to the friends and the family of the victims involved.

The auditor's report that was brought forward publicly last week contained eight important recommendations. I, as Minister of Transportation, accept responsibility and accept those recommendations, as was explicitly stated in that report.

Of course, the auditor's report does follow up on the 2013 internal review that the Ministry of Transportation conducted that was undertaken or at least initially launched by my predecessor in this portfolio. There are a number of measures that were brought forward as a result of the internal review in 2013, and I'm sure I'll have a chance to discuss those.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Deputy Premier: The Wynne government ignored repeated warnings from staff and engineers that Ontario highways were unsafe. This Liberal government knew they were putting Ontarians' lives at risk. This Liberal government knew the contractors weren't doing their jobs. This Liberal government didn't act.

This Liberal government turned a blind eye for five years. The deaths of these innocent Ontarians is on this government's hands. These families need and deserve answers.

Deputy Premier, will you call for a coroner's inquest into these wrongful deaths?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: What I said last week, what I will continue to say and what I'll continue to focus on is making sure that, as Minister of Transportation, I take the responsibility, as I have, to make sure that we go forward, that we continue to work with our area maintenance contractors, that we pass the budget that the Minister of Finance presented here in this Legislature last week, because that budget contains provisions that will provide us with the resources to make sure that we have, for example, additional anti-icing liquid that can be used on highways around the province, that we have additional equipment that will help in congested urban areas and also across northern Ontario.

I'll also mention, as I've said before in this House, that since 2013, since we conducted the internal review at the Ministry of Transportation, we've added 105 pieces of equipment. We have brought additional oversight to this

entire undertaking. There is more work to do. That's the work that I'm responsible for, and we're going to get it right.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Back to the Deputy Premier: On Tuesday, January 4, 2012, the families of Alyssa McKeown and Jessica Chamberland were shattered. These two women did everything right. They waited an extra day after the storm to travel on Ontario highways. They had snow tires. They weren't speeding. They were not drinking. The only thing that went wrong was that the roads they were driving on were not properly cleared of ice and snow. That wrong-headed decision to sacrifice proper road maintenance in order to save a few bucks was made by this government. That decision shattered these families.

Deputy Premier, will your government call for a coroner's inquest into the wrongful deaths of Alyssa McKeown and Jessica Chamberland?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank the leader for his question and for his interest in this important issue. I know it sounds like I'm repeating myself, but I did say this in the chamber the other day. I've lived for 41 years in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—my entire life—and every single day to this day, including this morning, I use highways. My wife uses highways. Everyone on this side of the aisle does and on that side, as well. Very often my young daughters are in the car with us when we travel highways. I feel a very sincere and profound responsibility for making sure that we get this right.

In addition to what we've done at the Ministry of Transportation since 2013, in addition to accepting all eight recommendations from the auditor, we will continue to move forward. We will add more resources. We will work with our area maintenance contractors. We will continue to improve and enhance the winter maintenance program. It's what the people of Ontario expect and deserve.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Education. The parents of over 800,000 elementary students in Ontario don't know if their children will be in school on Monday. These parents don't know if they need to find alternative child care options. Everything is up in the air.

Minister, your response to those parents was you hoped "it will be a work-to-rule and not a full withdrawal of services."

1050

Yesterday, when talking about negotiations, you said that you saw a light at end of the tunnel. Well, Minister, I have news for you: That light was the train. It's coming at you and it's going to wreck.

When are you going to get serious about negotiations before you wreck the school year for these children?

Hon. Liz Sandals: It might surprise you to know this, but I actually agree with something that you said at the beginning of the question; I don't agree with the way you ended up. But I too am very concerned that we know that the elementary teachers are in a legal strike position. They have not informed us officially. They have not informed the boards officially as to whether it will be a work-to-rule strike or whether it will be a full withdrawal of services.

I know that the boards across the province—the English public boards—have been sending notices out to their parents and saying something is going to happen on Monday. Unfortunately, we have not yet been informed. I would encourage the union to get on with informing the parents what will happen on Monday.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Back to the minister: Over 800,000 children will be impacted on Monday and all you could say was that teachers have a general desire to strike. That's simply not true.

This Liberal government introduced Bill 122 and guaranteed a clear and consistent framework that works for all parties. You know what? We know that's not working. The Wynne government said this process has clear roles and responsibilities. Apparently, it hasn't been clear to you. Your role is to get a deal done and your responsibility is to keep these kids in the classroom.

Minister, step down or do your job. Will you promise these kids that they will be able to finish their school year?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I repeat what I have repeated over and over again: The only way that we will resolve this situation is by negotiating a collective agreement. I actually believe that the teachers would prefer to be in the classroom, for those who are out; that those who are being told to work to rule and withdraw things like preparing report cards or refusing to do the EQAO tests, refusing to take part in math—I believe those teachers would actually really prefer to be doing their whole job. Certainly, the children want to be in the classrooms. Parents want them in the classrooms. But the only way we can fix this is to negotiate. And unlike you, I do believe that—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Again, to the minister: The Premier said she was going to light a fire underneath these negotiations. Well, apparently it's not hot enough yet. The students in Peel have been out for four days, at Rainbow in Sudbury they've been out for nine days, and now 14 days in Durham—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Many people seem to want to give a question and answer, so let's just settle down.

Please.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, that's 72,000 students out of the classroom right now. By the way, it is

your mess. Another day goes by, and the students are still out of the classroom.

Over 800,000 students could be affected as early as Monday. Each day is a day closer to prom and graduation, and you have to quit using these students as pawns.

Minister, why won't you resign and let someone who is actually willing to work get the job done?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. I will remind you that when I stand, I want quiet. No last shots.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I do need to remind the member opposite that their solution of how to manage the education system was to fire 22,700 education workers and teachers. That—

Interjections.

Hon. Liz Sandals: They seem not to believe me, but I'd like to quote from a—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to remind—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, I think she's finished.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can get my exercise. The next person who does it will get named and I'll make sure you hear that. Do you want to play that game? I will name you.

Carry on.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would remind the member opposite of an exchange during the last election when the leader of their party was asked, "Will it mean fewer teachers?" The response was, "It does ... it will mean fewer teachers in our system." I would like to remind you that that was their response.

I have a totally different response. I want to negotiate a collective agreement, but I do need people on the other side to come to the table because it takes somebody—

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday, I asked the Premier how many budget hearings she would schedule in northern Ontario so that families and businesses from northern Ontario can have their say. She didn't commit to hearing from northern Ontarians, in fact, not at all, not a single hour.

Why is this Liberal government shutting down people? Why are they shutting the door on people from northern Ontario who want to have their say on the sell-off of their Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, we really believe that it's important that Ontarians do have an opportunity to contribute to a budget and to let government know what they think should be included in a budget. They should have the opportunity to speak. We also think it's

important that members of all opposition parties have the opportunity to examine important legislation.

The government House leader has presented a plan, a proposal to the opposition parties that would increase the standard for committee consideration to six days. That's more committee time than almost any budget has had in the last 25 years.

Let's just compare: under the PC government in 2002, zero days of committees; in the year 2000, two days; in 1997, two days; in 1996, two days; and under the NDP in 1991 and 1992, one day of committee consideration—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will come to order.

Mr. Paul Miller: It wasn't me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I will allow someone to withdraw.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I apologize to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what the Acting Premier is talking about is closure. Closure is shutting down debate and shutting down the voices of Ontarians. She's crowing about how proud they are about closing down the debate.

Yesterday I asked the Premier how many hearings she would schedule in southwestern Ontario so that families and businesses in southwestern Ontario could have their say. She didn't commit to hearing from the people in southwestern Ontario either, not for a single hour.

Why is the Liberal government shutting the door on people from the southwest who want to have a say on the sell-off of their hydro system?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm sure the leader of the third party would like to know that there were pre-budget consultations in Windsor, London, Cambridge, Ottawa, Toronto and Mississauga. In addition, the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs held public hearings in Fort Frances, Cornwall, Toronto, Sudbury, Fort Erie, London and in Ottawa.

We have been very open and transparent about our plan to maximize the value of the assets. It was included in the 2014 budget. It was included in the 2014 platform, the budget that was introduced twice—noting that the NDP ran on the very same fiscal plan.

In October, the advisory council released their interim report. That final report was made public before the budget. We've been debating this issue in this House for months. That will continue. As I say, there will be six days—

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

Final supplementary.

1100

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Shame on the transparent Liberals. They had all those meetings, and not one single time were they coming clean with the people of Ontario about their plan to sell Hydro One. Shame on them.

Yesterday, I asked the Premier how many budget hearings she would schedule in eastern Ontario so that families and businesses from eastern Ontario could have their say. She didn't commit to a single hearing being set up for the people east of Toronto, either.

Why is this Liberal government shutting down people? Why are they shutting the door on people from eastern Ontario who want to have a say on the sell-off of their Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me quote from the 2014 budget. The 2014 budget says, "Unlocking the value of these assets through operational improvements or asset sales gives the government an innovative revenue source to reinvest back into the economy. Net revenue gains from the divestment of certain assets will be invested"—

Interjections.

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

Please finish. Wrap up.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Even the leader of the third party said today on Newstalk 1010, "So there's no doubt we did talk in our platform about looking at some of the"—

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. Well over 26,000 people have sent the Liberals the message that they don't want the Premier to sell Hydro One. They know it's the wrong decision and they don't want to pay the price.

That's not just me, Speaker. That's not just card-carrying New Democrats; that is Ontario families, the people who actually own Hydro One. They know that once Hydro One is gone, it is gone forever.

Why is the Liberal government refusing to listen to the people who actually own Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have listened very, very carefully, and what the people in Ontario are saying is they want us to invest in transportation and other infrastructure that is so vitally important to the economy and to the lives of people who are fighting that traffic every day.

This budget is all about building Ontario up. It's about creating jobs. It's about increasing economic growth. We're going to build infrastructure. We're going to invest in people's skills and talents, create that business climate that businesses are asking for so they can flourish, and we want to move forward on building that retirement security.

We are increasing the Moving Ontario Forward fund so that we can invest in much-needed infrastructure, the largest investment in the province's history.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm hearing from people every day that they don't want the Premier to sell off Hydro One. They don't remember hearing about this plan be-

cause there isn't a single Liberal MPP who ran on selling Hydro One.

I once again remind all the folks on the backbench that they are the ones—they are the ones—who are going to have to defend this. Those backbenchers are the ones who are going to have to explain to their constituents why Hydro One is for sale and why hydro bills are going up. I know that because those Liberal MPPs have been hearing from people through our website.

Can the Acting Premier explain why Liberals are refusing to listen to the growing—

Interjections.

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

I expect the same on both sides.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Can the Acting Premier explain why the Liberals are refusing to listen to the growing numbers of Ontarians who say that selling Hydro One is the wrong thing to do?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, we ran on building infrastructure, and that is what we are going to do.

I think it's important that we listen to what the leader of the third party said on the radio just this morning. She said, "So there's no doubt we did talk in our platform about looking at some of the physical assets that the province owns." The leader of the third party, on the radio just this morning, admitted finally that they ran on the very same platform that we did—the same fiscal plan that we did. They took our budget. They took our assumptions. They cut and pasted and put it in their platform. Whether they know it or not, they ran on the same fiscal platform, and that includes maximizing our assets so we can build this badly needed infrastructure.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier's plan helps out Bay Street bankers, it helps out consultants and it helps out well-connected Liberals—not surprisingly, because the Liberals are listening to Bay Street bankers, they are listening to consultants and they are listening to their well-connected Liberal friends. But they are refusing to listen to families, and families are the ones paying the price.

The Premier keeps the budget hearings in lockdown. She's not prepared to hear from the people of Ontario. It's undemocratic. It is not right.

Now, will the Acting Premier and the Liberal government listen to the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario—and stop the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I understand that the leader of the third party is heading west today. I hope, when she's there, she will ask the people about whether 15-minute service from Union Station to Bramalea is something that they would like to see. I hope, when she travels through the province, she will talk about regional express rail. Over 10 years, weekly GO trips will go from 1,500 to nearly 6,000 trips. That is what the people of this province are asking their government to provide.

There have been insufficient investments in the past. We are making the decision to build the infrastructure that individual people need and will benefit from in their daily lives, to say nothing of the economic benefit. We are spending billions of dollars, wasting billions of dollars, because—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Careful.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the President of the Treasury Board. For the past month, we've been talking about your government's sale of Hydro One, and you have justified it time and time again by saying it is needed for infrastructure. But we now know you've decided to give away shares of Hydro One to employees of OPG and Hydro One as part of their new contracts, and I've sent you copies of those contracts, the tentative agreements.

You claim the deal is net zero—

Hon. Charles Sousa: It is.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: —but we know that in that deal, you're giving away stocks to those employees. You are providing wage increases over each of the next three years. You are increasing travel allowances. You're adding in possible lump-sum payments.

Minister, what are Ontarians getting to make this a net-zero deal?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me just finish my last sentence. Billions of dollars are being wasted in economic prosperity, lost—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. Thank you.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Trucks are stuck on the highways, costing businesses billions of dollars. We are paying for that additional cost; make no mistake about it.

When it comes to the power workers' agreement—and I thank you for sending over not copies of the contract but—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Tentative.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: No, actually, what you've sent over is what the Power Workers' Union is using to communicate with their workers, but whatever. This is a deal that is under ratification. We are going through the ratification process. We will continue to respect the ratification. It is actually a net-zero deal. Over time, it addresses the Leech report recommendations. This is a good deal—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Very close.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. I will name.

Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakubski: Wage increases each of the years and shares with nothing in return sure sounds like zero to me.

Again to the Treasury Board president: You're trying to buy labour peace with the sale of Hydro One. Minister, you're giving away shares and massive increases funded by the sale. I'm still looking for what is net zero about these deals, as are the people of Ontario. You're setting a terrible precedent by having a fire sale to fund labour peace.

1110

We know that taxpayers were paying the power workers' pensions at a ratio of about 5 to 1. In this agreement, did you at least get those pensions contributions down to 1 to 1, as is the standard across the public service? Will that make this deal net zero? Is that how it's going to be net zero? Because we're still trying to figure out how you get zero. We've got all these numbers, but they all add up to zero. You are amazing with your math over there on that Liberal side of the House.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We actually respect the ratification process. We will not be talking about details of the deal because the workers are now in the process—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The workers are in the process of ratification, and we will not jeopardize that by talking about the deal in any kind of detail.

What I can tell you is that it is net zero. I can tell you that over time it addresses the recommendations of the Leech report but, most importantly, what I'm really delighted about is that workers are being given the opportunity—we'll see how they decide—and we are excited that the workers will actually have a stake in the success of a company.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the Deputy Premier: Can the Deputy Premier please tell Ontarians where in her platform or in her budget it said she was selling Hydro One shares to pay for a collective agreement?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Many, many times in this House we have talked about how we have talked about maximizing the value of our assets. It was in the 2014 budget that I just quoted. It was in our platform. It was in our second 2014 budget. It was in your platform.

We are pleased that the workers have the opportunity to actually participate in the success of their company. That's a good thing, and I think the NDP actually would support the notion that workers would have a stake in the success of their company. We are moving forward. We are planning to move forward with the plan to build the infrastructure across this province that is so badly needed. That is why we are moving forward—

Mr. John Yakubski: With your math, by the end of tomorrow we'll have a surplus.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —to maximize the value of our assets.

Interjection.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the Deputy Premier: Nowhere in your platform, nowhere up until this budget did you ever give an indication that, in fact, there would be a selling of shares as a way to negotiate a collective agreement. That's dollars that you're taking away that are not going to be invested into infrastructure. It's not going to be invested into transit. It's not going to do anything when it comes to achieving the goals that the government wants.

I ask you again: Can the Deputy Premier explain to the people why the Liberals are giving away shares in Hydro One without ever asking the people of Ontario, who actually own Hydro One, what they think?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, over and over and over again in this Legislature we have quoted from our budget—the 2014 budget, the 2015 budget—about the decision to actually maximize the value of the shares of our assets so that we can build the infrastructure that I think all of us would agree is badly needed.

Let's talk about what we're getting. We are getting electrified Barrie line weekly trips from 70 to over 200; the Kitchener line—we've heard that from members of your own caucus—weekly trips from 80 to over 250, quadrupling the numbers. On the Lakeshore East line, the annual ridership will go from 10 million to 32 million. The Lakeshore West line annual ridership will go from 10 million to 33 million. These are huge improvements in our transportation infrastructure.

Across the province, through Connecting Links, through the Ring of Fire, through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, Ontario is building up again. That's the decision we're making: to keep building this province up.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE POUR ENFANTS

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, I know that every year in May we celebrate Children's Mental Health Week. Doctors, mental health workers, parents and advocates take this week to increase the awareness of the signs of children and youth facing mental health challenges in their lives, work on ending the stigma around mental health issues, and help children and youth understand the places they can go to receive treatment.

In fact, Minister, this past Monday I had the opportunity to join a number of leaders in children's mental health from Etobicoke at an event to celebrate Children's Mental Health Week: Ewa Deszynski from the Etobicoke

Children's Centre, Jane Bray from the George Hull Centre for Children and Families, and Barb Macdonald.

Minister, could you share with us how the government is recognizing Children's Mental Health Week this year?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I appreciate the question from the member during Children's Mental Health Week—fantastic.

Je suis fière de l'attention que notre gouvernement porte sur les matières de santé mentale des jeunes et des adolescents, non seulement cette semaine mais année après année.

Speaker, our government has a strong record of increasing investments in children and youth mental health services; in fact, more than \$440 million last year. We're improving treatment to children and families so they get it at the right time and close to where they live.

Just yesterday, I was at Sketch, a creative space that gives opportunities to street-involved youth, to announce our support for a program from the Toronto Homeless Youth Transitions Collaborative that will provide wrap-around mental health services to some of our most at-risk youth.

All these things focus on getting children the right support where they need it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you, Minister. The program you spoke about sounds like it will help vulnerable youth who may not have other supports really get the focus and care they need to get back on their feet.

Mr. Speaker, it has been great to see the interest in Children's Mental Health Week this year. I can say that first-hand, based on the event I attended on Monday. We know that when our children and youth are happy and healthy, they have the conditions to thrive.

Could the government let this House know of any other investments it has made this week for Children's Mental Health Week?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: First, I want to thank all MPPs from all parties who came out Monday on the front steps of the Legislature for the formal launch of the mental health bus, which is an important service for youth in York region.

I want to also talk about an event that Minister MacCharles and I joined on Tuesday to announce that we're investing more than \$5 million to support a new facility within Youthdale here in Toronto that has in-patient beds specifically targeted for teens between the ages of 16 and 19. Once construction is complete, this facility is going to provide 10 additional beds and care for approximately 175 young people who are dealing with complex mental health challenges each year. On top of that, we're also helping Youthdale provide a day program for youth with difficult mental health challenges that will help more than 6,000 youth annually through that facility.

Mr. Spooker—sometimes, Mr. Speaker.

Laughter.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, through the mental health and addictions strategy, we're working—

Interjections.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm on a roll after "the member from"—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Nickelback.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Through the mental health and addictions strategy, we're working to ensure our children and youth have the supports they need at such a critical time in their lives.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Jim McDonell: To the Deputy Premier: Your government sacrificed people's safety to save a few bucks on winter maintenance. The simple fact is that in the eastern region, you cut the number of snowplows by almost 50%. When accidents and fatalities started to mount, you blamed it on the weather. When your ministry engineers tried to tell you there weren't enough plows, you ignored them. When contractors met with us for help—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader—second time.

Mr. Jim McDonell: —you punished them.

Deputy Premier, how could you refuse to act when you knew it was your maintenance policy changes that were the cause of increased accidents, personal injuries and deaths? Why did it take the Auditor General's scathing report to finally get action? Is that why you're now limiting her powers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank this member for this question. I know it's important to people living in his community, as it is for people living right across the province of Ontario.

I've said this many times, and I have no problem whatsoever repeating it: The Ministry of Transportation began an internal review in 2013. It is important to note that the auditor was actually asked by the public accounts committee to come in during 2014. So prior to the auditor being asked to conduct her review, the Ministry of Transportation had taken it upon itself—as it should—to take a look at the program and to update it.

As a result of the internal review, Speaker, there were 105 additional pieces of equipment for both northern Ontario, for truck climbing and passing lanes, and also for southern Ontario, for ramps and shoulders. I remember being in the riding of Northumberland-Quinte West to make the announcement last fall with respect to the other 50 pieces of equipment that were being used—again, for ramps and shoulders—in southern Ontario.

I accept full responsibility. In fact, all eight of the auditor's recommendations have been accepted by me, as minister, and by the ministry. We continue to look for—

ward to working on this program to make sure that it continues to improve.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Back to the Deputy Premier. The Auditor General's report on winter road maintenance should make this government hang its head in shame. In her report, the Auditor General suggested that the problems were "foreseeable and could have been avoided..." But it's more than that. The decisions taken by this government were careless, arguably even reckless and irresponsible. Winter road maintenance is not some kind of frill service. It's an essential government function because in the winter in Ontario, if the highways aren't properly plowed, safety is compromised and the lives of motorists are at risk.

How does the government have the audacity to stand in this House and defend the indefensible?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for that question. I think it's important to recognize—I understand that it doesn't fit entirely well with the narrative that the members opposite are trying to develop here, and that's fine—but in that same report, the report that contained eight recommendations, which we've accepted, the auditor did acknowledge that the additional resources that we've brought to bear since the internal review in 2013 have had a positive impact. That same report, along with other independent information, does demonstrate that over the last 13 years, the province of Ontario has ranked first or second in North America for highway safety. In fact, as I said the other day, in 2012, the only other jurisdiction in North America that had a better record for highway safety was the District of Columbia.

That doesn't mean the work is over. In fact, following her report the other day, I asked the auditor to come back here—

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

NUCLEAR WASTE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Yesterday, we learned that a panel has signed off on this government's plan to bury nuclear waste near the shores of Lake Huron. Some 152 communities that share our Great Lakes are against this plan, including London, Windsor, Chicago and Toronto. Resolutions have been passed in at least five Great Lakes states to oppose this project. Ironically, this new threat to Lake Huron comes at the same time this government is introducing legislation to protect the Great Lakes.

Mr. Speaker, does the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change support his government's plan to bury nuclear waste in the watershed of Lake Huron?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have a very good process in this country around making these decisions. This is under federal regulation and is a federal responsibility. I

think it would be very inappropriate for me or other members of this House to weigh in and create any impression that there's bias in that process.

We have nuclear storage in a province where 50% of our energy is generated by nuclear. There's obviously an issue of nuclear waste and nuclear waste management. The government's biggest priority is to ensure public safety and that this is stored properly and safely to the highest standards in the world, and to respect the regulation and jurisdictions of other governments that regulate and have to make these—

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, this government may have faith in Stephen Harper. We don't. The government knows full well that the federal government has gutted environmental oversight in recent years. Due diligence has become more like a rubber stamp. We can't count on the federal government to do the right thing. We know a similar waste dump in New Mexico has used similar technology and failed twice, releasing radioactivity to the surface.

Will the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change step in to fill the gap in federal oversight?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: There is something called the Canadian Constitution, which both enables and limits the authorities of different governments. It is, quite frankly, beyond the ability of any government to interfere with that, and we're not about to start.

What we have done is that we introduced the Clean Water Act. We have water protection plans developed by these communities that address those things. We will ensure that within the jurisdiction and authority of the province of Ontario, we will take all measures within our constitutional authority to ensure that all waste—nuclear and other—is properly disposed of.

I'm not sure whether the member right now is suggesting that the current storage practices are better than what's being proposed. I'd like to hear his defence of the status quo.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario's apprenticeship system is a key part of building the highly skilled workforce our province needs to compete in today's global economy.

I understand that our government has already made substantial investments in the apprenticeship training system. Last year, our government invested \$164 million in grants and loans that are providing critical training and state-of-the-art equipment to both apprentices and employers.

Recently I was pleased to join the Premier and the minister at the Ironworkers Local 721 in my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore to announce additional funding for apprenticeship training as part of Ontario's renewed youth jobs strategy.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the minister update the members of the House on how this new funding will benefit apprentices working in skilled trades across Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore for this question. Our government is committed to supporting Ontario’s skilled trades and apprenticeship system. I was proud to join Premier Wynne and two members of this House, my colleagues, at the Ironworkers Local 721 last month to announce funding for three existing apprenticeship programs.

Our government is investing \$55 million in three programs that will help the next generation of skilled tradespeople in the province of Ontario to access the training, equipment and facilities they need to get high-quality jobs.

As part of Ontario’s renewed youth jobs strategy, we are investing \$23 million in new funding in the Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund program and \$13 million in new funding in the Pre-apprenticeship Training Program. We are also committed to an additional \$19 million in the Apprenticeship Seat Purchase Program.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It’s reassuring to know that our government remains committed to supporting a high-quality skilled trades and apprenticeship system in Ontario.

Almost one in five new jobs in Ontario over this decade is expected to be in trades-related occupations. I understand that these new annual apprenticeship registrations have grown from about 17,000 in 2002-03 to more than 28,000 in 2013-14. It’s imperative that our government continues to support Ontario’s apprenticeship system in order to encourage young people to pursue apprenticeship and benefit employers who are seeking these highly skilled workers.

In my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore, we’re graduating a number of young people from Humber College, from the Ironworkers local. They depend on having a strong apprenticeship system. Can the minister tell the House more about this additional funding—

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

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member again for that question.

I have toured dozens of training centres and colleges across the province of Ontario and have seen first-hand the passion and the pride that our skilled tradespeople take in their work. These new investments in apprenticeship training will help colleges and other training institutions to train more apprentices by investing in equipment, technology and space, and provide more in-class training sessions and work placements to people considering to enter a career in the trades.

Our government is also increasing the amount that all training delivery agents across the province of Ontario receive to train our apprentices. This additional funding in the Pre-apprenticeship Training Program will target underrepresented groups in the skilled trades, including

at-risk youth, aboriginals, women and newcomers to our country. Our government will continue investing in our young people by supporting a highly qualified apprenticeship program in our province of Ontario.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. Former justice of the peace Santino Spadafora retired days before he was to appear before the Justices of the Peace Review Council to face a disciplinary hearing for submitting false expense claims for over \$16,000.

1130

By retiring before the hearing, the charges were dropped and Spadafora has avoided his disciplinary hearing. We will never know whether the \$16,000 in expense claims were appropriate or false. What we do know is that by retiring the disciplinary hearing was dropped and Spadafora keeps his pension as a justice of the peace.

Spadafora asked, and the Justices of the Peace Review Council agrees, that his legal fees of over \$15,000 should be covered. You’ve had that recommendation on your desk since April 7. Do you intend to pay Spadafora’s legal fees?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, Mr. Speaker, the Justices of the Peace Review Council is an independent body that investigates complaints about the conduct of a justice of the peace and determines appropriate sanctions where necessary.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, the member from Leeds–Grenville

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The council is also—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Perth–Wellington. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:—legislated to make recommendations to government about compensation for costs associated with hearings. If a recommendation is made, when it is made, I can assure you that we will review the council recommendation carefully.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You’re warned. I missed it, so the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

You have one wrap-up sentence.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The recommendations are done by an independent body, so when it comes to me, we review it and I’ll take the appropriate decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The council is absolutely independent, but the recommendations go to you for a decision, Minister. The Justices of the Peace Review Council stated, “We note that the allegations were serious. This is not a case where the allegations of misconduct have been dismissed. His Worship Spadafora retired before the

evidence was called.” The only reason the Justices of the Peace Review Council did not hold the hearing is because Spadafora retired and they no longer have jurisdiction.

Minister, the public will never know whether costs over \$16,000 were false or true. He obviously retired early to avoid the disciplinary hearing. Why would you reward that bad behaviour by paying his legal fees? Do the right thing, Minister. Turn down Spadafora’s request to have his legal fees covered.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, the legal fees—it is reviewed carefully by the justices of the peace. They make recommendations. They make arguments before the Justices of the Peace Review Council, and then the recommendations—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned, and I’m not impressed with what you’re saying.

Carry on.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: And then they make recommendations. The ministry, in this case, has received and is considering the council recommendation that it pays partial costs in this case. They are considering the council recommendation. I will take the appropriate decision in this case.

NORTHERN ONTARIO

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Acting Premier. As you know, I represent a northern riding. Do you know what has been on the mind of most northerners lately? The move of our search and rescue helicopter from Sudbury to southern Ontario, an hour-and-a-half flight away. The Premier is in Sudbury today. When asked about this risk to the health and safety of northerners, she said that she will have to make some sort of supplication on bent knees to her minister to see if he can help us keep our helicopter in northeastern Ontario.

Speaker, as far as I know, the buck stops with our Premier. So we’re all really worried. Where is the leadership on northern safety issues?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do understand that the minister is working with the deputy minister to get some important answers to this decision. It’s very important that we have the information about how Sudbury and the north are served by aircraft and search and rescue operations, and how this decision will affect service. The OPP are mandated to provide certain police services across the province, including aviation support. So, Speaker, we are actively looking at this decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It does not stop there. Gogama and Mattagami are trying to cope with the worst rail disaster in Ontario history: 33 cars derailed, caught fire, exploded, dumped their crude into the beautiful Makami River and Minisinakwa Lake. It has been 82 long days and our Premier still has not seen fit to come and visit us to support the locals, to reassure them that the province is

on their side, that they will be there to help them take on this multi-billion-dollar company so that they get treated fairly, and to answer some of their questions, questions as simple as, “Pickerel season opens next weekend; can we eat the fish?” Where is the leadership on northern safety issues?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do want to thank the MPP from Nickel Belt for raising this issue. I think you have heard from the minister directly that this is an issue that he is looking into. He is actively pursuing the information he needs to assure himself that this is, in fact, the right decision. If it isn’t, that decision will be changed.

Again, I thank the member for raising the issue, and I thank the minister for actually doing his job when it comes to making sure this is the right decision.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question this morning is for the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. Ontario is home to about 71 million hectares of forest and about 75 billion trees. This adds character to our province, and the people of Durham know well the recreational spirit and sense of connectedness with nature that this brings to rural communities. But it’s not just about character. Ontario’s forestry industry generates over \$11 billion in economic activity for our province and supports over 170,000 jobs in 260 communities across Ontario.

In northern Ontario, allowing industry greater access to forestry resources would support jobs and drive growth for many communities.

Could the minister please tell the House how the 2015 Ontario budget will provide more access to Ontario’s forest resources?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member very much for the question.

As a ministry, we’re very excited by the improvement in the growth that we are seeing in the forest industry. We’ve gone from a low at the bottom of the recession of about eight million cubic metres per year being harvested in the forestry industry—now we’re up somewhere in the neighbourhood of 12 million to 14 million cubic metres being harvested on an annual basis.

There are still challenges in the industry. This is still an evolving industry. But I’m very proud to say that this year’s budget commits an increase from a total last year up to this year of \$60 million for our resource roads access programs that will go specifically to helping the forest industry. This announcement in this year’s budget brings a total, should the budget pass, of over \$600 million for the forest industry on this one program only since about 2005-06.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to thank the minister for his answer and his continued advocacy for Ontario’s forestry industry.

Voices like his are important for those in our province who do not thrive in urban industries such as those in my riding. I’m pleased to see that our government is making

investments in infrastructure that would allow Ontario's forestry sector to gain more access to our province's forest resources.

But the forest industry is changing. We are seeing innovative technologies come out of the pulp and paper sector, new engineered forestry products, biomass fuel and even medicine being generated from our forests.

Could the minister please explain how our government plans to help the forestry sector make these important investments in Ontario communities?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Again, I want to thank the member for the question. As I mentioned in the opening answer, the budget contains \$60 million for the resource roads access program.

Another piece contained in the budget, and another reason why I'm hoping we're going to get the support of the opposition parties on the budget, is that, for the first time, forestry will now be eligible, under our Jobs and Prosperity Fund, to make applications. This is a very significant move for the forest industry. We are going to work very closely with my colleague the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure to design a stream for the JPF through which forestry can make application. We'll work very closely with the minister to make that happen as quickly as we can.

1140

There is room for growth. There is room for innovation. We've increased the JPF from \$2.5 billion up to \$2.7 billion. That's in the budget as well. We're counting on the support of the other members to try to make this happen.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, over a year ago, I raised an issue with the Minister of Transportation, who is now the Minister of the Environment, regarding changes to the Glanworth underpass at the 401. The minister committed in committee—he promised to listen and incorporate suggestions from local farmers and businesses in the final decision.

Minister, your ministry did not incorporate a single idea and is now favouring an option to eliminate the underpass completely, forcing heavy, slow-moving farm equipment onto a busy highway. Your ministry seems intent on putting the public at risk.

Minister, will you direct your ministry to select the option that listens to farmers and businesses and keeps the public safe?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London for that question. I'd be happy to have a conversation with him—either ourselves, one on one, or staff to staff—about the specific item that he's raising here today. I know obviously it's of great importance to him and his community. I'm happy to have that conversation, and I appreciate him raising it here in the House this morning.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, we've been exchanging letters back and forth for over a year now and nothing has changed.

Minister, your ministry promised to work with the local community, and not a single concern has been addressed. Obviously, the ministry is trying to save money; however, the option the ministry is favouring is going to endanger lives. We have seen with your winter maintenance what happens when your ministry cuts corners to save money: It puts people's lives at risk.

Will you intervene, listen to the concerns of the farmers and businesses and the municipalities who also agree with the options of the local businesses and farmers, and make the changes necessary and make the highways safe in the London area?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up question. As I said, I'm happy to have that continued conversation with that member to do our best to make sure that we are moving forward with a plan on that specific project that reflects what's best for the area but also what's best for the entire transportation network that we have.

Of course, because the member alluded to safety, I will say, once again, that over the last 13 years, here in the province of Ontario, we have had the first- or second-ranked highways across all of North America as it relates to highway safety. That's a standard and a record of which we're proud. Work needs to continue with respect to making sure we maintain that standard, but I am quite happy to have the conversation with the member following question period or in the hours or days ahead.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Acting Premier. Yesterday, Children's Mental Health Ontario released their first-ever report card on the state of child and youth mental health programs in Ontario. The findings are very concerning: 6,000 kids wait more than one year for mental health treatment. By next year, it will be double: 12,000 kids. Something must be done.

Will the Acting Premier step in and immediately eliminate the wait-list for child and youth mental health programs in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I appreciated meeting with the executive director of Children's Mental Health Ontario, Kim Moran, earlier this week. The efforts that are reflected in their report card are saying that youth and families are being engaged to build a system that meets their needs.

I commend CMHO for recognizing the progress we have made in the mental health and addictions strategy with the Ministry of Health, and I appreciated their input as they walked me through that report card.

As I mentioned earlier, our investments are very significant in children and youth mental health. That's why we, as a government, introduced the Ontario comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy. More than 50,000 children and their families are benefiting from quicker and easier access to the right mental health supports.

We've supported the hiring of 770 mental health workers across the province, and we have the tele-mental health service, which provided 2,800 consults to kids last year. That's specifically recognized in the CMHO—

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, simply by announcing money for mental health means nothing if we don't know where that money is actually going. We know that 70% of mental health issues emerge by adolescence, and without help these kids spiral downwards.

The report cited one parent who explained that his daughter tried to end her life while she was waiting for help. I think it's unconscionable that kids have to wait for life-saving treatment.

Will the Acting Premier immediately eliminate the wait-list for children and youth mental health programs in Ontario?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: We always know there is more that can be done to help children who are facing mental health issues, but we are very proud of our investments and we know exactly where those investments go.

As Minister Hoskins said, just on Tuesday we announced \$5.2 million for the Youthdale Treatment Centre to expand a very innovative and compassionate mental health centre there, a 10-bed facility as well as a day program for 150 youth.

As I said, we know there is always more that can be done, and we want to make sure that children and youth access mental health and addiction services where and when they need them. That's why we're transforming this sector, through our lead agency model, to coordinate the care that children, youth and their families receive.

I am proud that our government has buy-in from partners like CMHO, who said the lead agency model places the community sector at the centre of planning and coordination across—

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

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. Steve Clark: On a point of order: My party has a convention this weekend, so I would just ask that all members thank the member for Simcoe–Grey, the leader of Her Majesty's official opposition, for his hard work.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While I—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Here we go. Hey, listen, I'm standing; I'm still going to name somebody.

I thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for stealing my thunder, because I had written a note for myself. I do want to say this as Speaker. I want to take the opportunity—just in case; we never know what happens, but just in case—I want to compliment and thank the member for his conduct, his service and his decorum when it came to being the official leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition. I enjoyed our time. So thank you very much, sir.

On a point of order, the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'll just say thank you to all sides of the House. It's been a pleasure, and I'm not dead yet; I'll be back Monday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York on a point of order.

Mr. Arthur Potts: On a point of order from our side of the House: I've known the member from Simcoe for many years, attending his golf tournaments up in Nottawasaga. I'm delighted with the courage and respect you've brought into this House. I appreciate and admire your work. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Knowing that you're still going to be around, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have two great groups of people to introduce today. It being Children's Mental Health Week, we have folks from Children's Mental Health Ontario, and a number of them are here. A number of them have been at Queen's Park this week, including Kim Moran, Sibel Cicek, Christine Pelletier, Janice Kelly and Margo Warren. Thank you for being here.

On their way in, I believe, are representatives from a number of our lead agencies for children's mental health: Cathy Paul from Kinark's York service area; Humphrey Mitchell from Peel Children's Centre—that's going to be our Peel service area; Claire Fainer from East Metro Youth Services—that's in our Toronto service area, and will be the lead agency for Toronto; Phil Dodd from Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services—that's in the Grey-Bruce service area; Alex Thomson from Lynwood Charlton Centre—that's in the Hamilton service area; and Joanne Sherin from Vanier Children's Services—that's in the Middlesex service area.

All are our initial lead agency reps for children's mental health. I want to thank them for taking on this very important role. And here they are; they're all here now. Wonderful.

Mr. Granville Anderson: From Courtice, Ontario, I would like to welcome my colleague and friend Councillor Joe Neal from Clarington regional council for wards 1 and 2. Welcome to Queen's Park, Joe.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It is my pleasure to welcome J.P. and Angela Mrochek. They have come all the way to the Legislature from Sudbury in support of my

bill that I'll be introducing, the Protecting Victims of Occupational Disease Act.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I would like to introduce Parween Taheri from Dalewood public school in the District School Board of Niagara, who is at Queen's Park today as part of the 2015-16 Education Minister's Student Advisory Council.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from—I did that last time. Prince Edward—Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: You're slipping, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, I'm getting better.

Mr. Todd Smith: You're getting better? Oh, okay.

I would also like to welcome a couple of young people from Prince Edward—Hastings who are members of the Minister's Student Advisory Council. We have Benjamin Bacic, who's from Moira Secondary School in Belleville, and also Esegent Lemma, who is from the Algonquin Catholic school board. She goes to Nicholson Catholic College in Belleville. We welcome them to the Legislature.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm very pleased to welcome to the House today, from my riding of Burlington, Cheryl Woodhead and Barbara Furlan, with whom I had a lovely lunch in the parliamentary restaurant. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to recognize May as the official Lyme Disease Awareness Month. Yesterday I was pleased to join several people from across this province as we came together to rally the government to get down to business and bring in an action plan to address Lyme disease in Ontario.

I would like to take this moment as well to commend my colleagues: first of all, my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk on his private member's bill, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases, 2014, and I'd also like to thank the member from Algoma—Manitoulin. His passion and his commitment to his constituents suffering from Lyme disease are second to none as well.

I'm pleased to stand with them, but we can't stop at just a rally. I, myself, have a number of individuals in my riding who are struggling with this horrible disease. It's debilitating. I also, just a few weeks ago, attended the Huron-Perth Trappers Association meeting, and at that meeting I met a gentleman from Barrie who, too, is suffering from Lyme disease. We can't spin our wheels any longer. We need an action plan now.

While I recognize the government's support in moving forward on Lyme disease, I hope, again, that we have a realistic timeline so that we can get into action and address this disease that is haunting and causing so many people a lot of stress and heartache.

I want to share with you that I ask this government to put partisan colours aside and implement a strategy in Ontario because it's for the likes of Doris and Lyn and Julie and Marie and Joe. I stand on their shoulders and sincerely ask for action now.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITY EMPLOYEES

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Today here at Queen's Park was the annual corrections ceremony of remembrance. It was a memorial ceremony for us to remember each and every corrections officer who has died in the line of service. It was a chance for us to pay respect to those who have given their lives to keep the peace and to help keep people safe. It will always be important to remember.

It is also important to appreciate the corrections officers who serve now. While we pay respect to those who have served before them, we must look at the present state of our system and ensure that corrections officers are respected today.

Every day, officers across the province are faced with overcrowding, understaffing and very real and very dangerous health and safety issues that must be addressed. Issues ranging from lack of appropriate safety equipment to mental health challenges create tensions and unsafe working conditions. Fewer resources and more layers of challenges create more opportunities for something to go terribly wrong.

Corrections peace officers do so much to keep us safe. I ask this government: Is the province doing everything necessary to keep them safe?

I was privileged to stand, as the NDP critic for community safety and correctional services, with officers at the memorial. I hope that on our watch we will never see new names added to the list of those who have given their lives in the line of service. In my role, I will work to make officers safer because I know that every day they do the same for our province.

MOTHER'S DAY

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Members' statements, of course, are an opportunity for us to talk about our home ridings to our own constituents and the people of Ontario. The update I want to give you from Kitchener Centre, my riding, actually is connected to the riding of Willowdale, which is represented by our aboriginal affairs minister. This is where I was born and raised and where my parents still live.

This Sunday is Mother's Day, and many of us will be honouring our mothers and thanking them for their hard work, their dedication and their sacrifices. They teach us so many things.

My mother, Antonietta Vernile, was born in a village in southern Italy during the Depression. She survived war as a child and then, like thousands of others, she moved to Canada as a young parent in search of a better life for her family.

Parents are our first teachers. My mother taught me and my two older sisters the value of putting in a hard day's work; how to grow tomatoes in the backyard; how to make homemade pasta, gnocchi and tomato sauce; and to never put up with an injustice.

There were things that she could not teach us, like how to speak English, because she didn't know herself. She was never able to help us with our school work; she would hover over us, though, insisting that we do our homework. She also insisted that we do our chores and not complain about it.

Mr. Speaker, the mothers of this province and all of Canada, wherever they come from, are our teachers, our guardians and our lifelong supporters. To my mother and all the others, I say: Happy Mother's Day.

CONNOR ROSS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Please join me in congratulating Connor Ross of Bolton, from my riding of Dufferin-Caledon. Connor was the winner of the first-ever Music Monday Anthem Search. His song, *We Are One*, was selected and performed in elementary schools across Canada as part of Music Monday. Music Monday is the single largest event dedicated to raising awareness for music education. Connor's song was selected from over 200 entries, including songs by professionals.

Other notable Canadians who have written songs for Music Monday include Chris Hadfield, Serena Ryder, and Ed Robertson from the Barenaked Ladies. Connor is now part of this illustrious group.

There are some great messages in Connor's song, including how music can serve as a tool to help transform and/or save lives for those with mental illness.

Connor was pleased that his song was selected to be performed across the country. However, he was a bit disappointed that his own school, Mayfield Secondary, couldn't participate since the school is closed as a result of the teachers' strike. To quote Connor, "It was a little bit of a bummer that no one could even go to school that day if they wanted to, but this is mainly for elementary schools anyway so thank goodness they weren't on strike yet."

Once again I'd like to congratulate Connor Ross for this amazing achievement and wish him all the best in his career in music.

1310

LABOUR DISPUTES

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's an honour to rise today, as the NDP critic for labour, to speak to workers who are left with no choice but to take action because of this Liberal government's continued cuts, especially in education and health care. Teachers and nurses have flooded my inbox.

On Monday, almost a million students and 73,000 teachers will be affected by strike action next week, as a result of continued education cuts seen by this government's budget.

The Minister of Education claimed today that she and boards were not notified of the details of the ETFO strike for Monday, when in fact those details were received three days ago.

Constituents are angry about this Liberal government wanting to strip collective agreements, reduce teachers' ability to use their professional judgment, and to remove caps to class sizes. Worse, there has been nothing but indifference in this government's response to these disputes.

In my own riding of Welland, health care workers, nurses, members of OPSEU Local 294, have been on strike for more than a month now. The CCAC responsible for contracting to the for-profit CarePartners has not said a peep, nor has the government, about ensuring transparency and accountability for the for-profit agencies that these nurses are working for, despite that I've raised this three times in the Legislature.

Today I stand to highlight the plight of educators and front-line workers who have been left with no choice but to take strike action because of this Liberal government's failures.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and give special recognition to two really great organizations doing incredible work in Halton. Oak Park Neighbourhood Centre and the Community Youth in Action Network are two organizations that have made significant contributions to so many people's lives. They offer key community support programs, and they're committed to improving education and increasing community engagement for our young people. They recently received grants from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

I paid a visit recently to see the positive influence of these two groups first-hand. Well, let me tell you, from the moment I walked in, it was clear that the Trillium grants were a huge help. It allowed Oak Park to complete some much-needed renovations, but more importantly, it gave the Community Youth in Action Network the resources that they needed to expand their staff and develop new programming.

During my visit, I got to tour the Oak Park facility, speak with staff and teen volunteers, and even take part in some flowerpot art projects. It was a lot of fun. Watching the smiles on those young people's faces, I could really see how important it was for them to know that there are people out there who support them and care for them. When we help our young people to connect better with their neighbourhoods, we all win.

I can't think of two groups more worthy of this vital funding, and I'm proud that the Ontario Trillium Foundation continues to support such important community-building organizations.

CONCORD FOOD CENTRE

Mrs. Gila Martow: Just this week, on Tuesday, I was there for the opening customer appreciation evening for

Concord Food Centre. It's interesting; where I live, in Thornhill, we have what we know as our little deluxe gem of a grocery store, with what we believe are the best fruits and vegetables in the GTA—I'm not going to get into arguments with some of the agriculture colleagues here—but people who live in downtown Toronto have actually asked me, "Where do you live?" I tell them where I live, and they say, "Oh, my goodness, you live right near Concord Food Centre." So it has obviously got a far-reaching network of customers.

We were there celebrating the newly renovated premises. It's absolutely stunning. I recommend that everybody pay us a visit up in Thornhill. Owner Joe Greco was there, with his managers Terry Cruickshank and Rina Virgilio.

Joe's daughter Danielle was there with her natural, holistic and nutritious little snacks made out of seeds and nuts. She uses maple syrup to sweeten them, and they're absolutely fantastic. Silvana and Bianca—Bianca is the daughter—were there from Cannoli Queens pastry, giving out samples. Alessia was giving out Ritter chocolates. Ralph Eisenberg was serving cake from La Rocca cakes. Camille Marcotte, who is the designer of the new premises, was there as well.

They had every reason to be happy, and the customers are thrilled, but unfortunately there are still plans to bring a rapidway down Centre Street and Bathurst in Thornhill, and we're all very concerned about our local businesses.

CANADA-NETHERLANDS FRIENDSHIP DAY

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: On May 2, Burlington celebrated Canada-Netherlands Friendship Day. Burlington has a strong and vital Dutch community whose members continue to contribute significantly to the vitality and prosperity of our city.

In 2010, the former member for Kitchener–Waterloo, who is of Dutch descent, introduced a private member's bill declaring May as Dutch Heritage Month. It passed and is now law. We had the pleasure of welcoming former MPP and minister Elizabeth Witmer to Burlington last Saturday.

This year's celebration was particularly special, as it marked the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian Armed Forces. I'm proud to say that my father, Hugh McMahon, was part of that liberating force. His regiment's crest hangs proudly in Apeldoorn city hall.

What made Saturday equally special is that we also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the city of Burlington's twinning with the city of Apeldoorn.

I had the pleasure of visiting Apeldoorn in 2007 with members of our city council and our mundialization committee, also part of city hall. People like Charles Minken, who chairs the Apeldoorn subcommittee, were there on Saturday, and he organized the event.

At city hall, on that day, we heard beautiful performances from the Soli Deo Gloria Choir visiting from Urk,

the Netherlands; the Alexander's Public School band; and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 60 colour guard.

Finally, we were all touched by the stories shared by students at Lester B. Pearson High School. Led by teacher Judith Genis on a recent trip to Apeldoorn, students conducted research on a fallen soldier buried in the Holten Canadian War Cemetery. Part of this meaningful initiative sees the students sharing that story, which is then stored in a permanent collection on display at Holten.

It was an extremely meaningful celebration, and I would like to thank all of those who played a role in organizing this year's Canada-Netherlands Friendship Day. To them, I say dank je wel.

BLACKBERRY

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Today I rise as a government MPP from Waterloo region to talk about a tech giant in the region. BlackBerry is a prime example of an Ontario success story, of innovators in a new industry and as a homegrown company that today employs over 4,500 workers across Ontario, many of those who live and work in the Waterloo region in my hometown of Cambridge.

BlackBerry is known around the world, and rightly so, as a leader in the smartphone industry. Their enterprise and security software are second to none.

BlackBerry was on the leading edge of the technology and IT sector explosion in Waterloo region, which still benefits the Waterloo region economy and indeed Ontario's economy. It's one of the reasons why the Ontario government has been one of the largest purchasers of BlackBerry products in the world, something I'm extremely proud of.

Since smartphones became ubiquitous, I have only ever used BlackBerry and will only ever use BlackBerry. In fact, I can say with confidence now, I have three of them.

I encourage all four Waterloo region MPPs to avoid negative messages at the expense of a valued Waterloo region business and speak with pride about our homegrown BlackBerry. They continue to contribute and give back immeasurably to our community.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROTECTING VICTIMS OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES VICTIMES DE MALADIES PROFESSIONNELLES

Ms. French moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 98, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to loss of earnings and

survivor benefits / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne les prestations de survivant.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Section 43 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, provides for payments for loss of earnings to a worker where the loss of earnings results from an injury, which includes occupational disease.

The bill addresses the situation of a worker who is no longer working at the time of contracting an occupational disease by providing for loss of earnings to be determined in this case as if the worker had still been working at the time of diagnosis.

1320

Section 48 of the act provides for death benefits to be paid to survivors when a worker dies due to an injury for which the worker would otherwise have been entitled to benefits under the insurance plan. The bill amends that section to address situations where a deceased worker was no longer working at the time of the injury, including at the time of contracting an occupational disease.

The amendments require the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to calculate payments in these situations based on the average earnings of a fully qualified person engaged in the deceased worker's occupation or trade at the time of the diagnosis. The bill also provides for previous determinations of death benefits to be reviewed based on the same criterion.

Speaker, this is a legislative loophole that penalizes victims and their families, and today we have the opportunity to close it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I move to motions, just a reminder that when we do introduce bills, the short statement is supposed to be taken directly from the explanatory notes, with no other editorial comments. That's helpful—we'll have time to debate that, in other words.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is putting forward a motion without—without notice. I'm having these moments. I'm sorry. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item numbers 54, 55, 58 and 59 be waived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley moves that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g)—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK SEMAINE DE LA SANTÉ MENTALE DES ENFANTS

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I rise in the House today to recognize Children's Mental Health Week. The first week of May is dedicated to raising awareness of mental health issues and decreasing the stigma for children living with them.

I want to take this opportunity to stand and acknowledge the hard work, caring and understanding of those who love and care for our children and our youth with mental health challenges: their parents, siblings, other family members and friends. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication and compassion of our mental health partners, including our mental health lead agencies and Children's Mental Health Ontario, whom I introduced earlier. It's great to have them here in the House with us today. I ask that everyone in the House continue to engage in conversations on mental health issues in recognition of Child and Youth Mental Health Week.

Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed in life. Of course, we're all aware of the statistics that approximately one in five young people in Ontario will deal with mental health issues in his or her lifetime, and 70% of mental health and addiction problems begin in childhood and adolescence—70%.

Les statistiques sont connues : environ un jeune sur cinq en Ontario sera aux prises avec des troubles de santé mentale au cours de sa vie, et 70 % des problèmes de santé mentale et de dépendance commencent durant l'enfance et l'adolescence.

We know that the sooner these young people receive the help and the support they need, the more likely they are to participate in school, lead healthy lives and contribute to their communities. That's why our government and the lead agencies that are here with us today—and the ones to be named later this year—are and will be working hard to strengthen our community-based child and youth mental health systems so that parents and youth will know what mental health services are available in their communities and how to access them.

In 2011, we took action by introducing Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. In the first three years of the strategy, my ministry, together with my colleagues from the Ministries of Education, Health and

Long-Term Care, and Training, Colleges and Universities, made significant progress in providing faster access to quality services, identifying and intervening early, and closing critical service gaps for our children and youth.

Since the launch of the strategy, the province has supported the hiring of 770 new mental health workers, and Ontario's new tele-mental health service is providing more than 2,800 psychiatric consults this year alone to benefit children and youth in rural, remote and underserved communities. We've actually surpassed our target on this year's usage numbers.

Overall, more than 50,000 kids and their families are benefiting from quicker and easier access to the right mental health supports. I'm proud of our strategy's record in the first three years, with its very strong focus on developing healthy young minds in our children and youth.

Although the strategy is shifting to focus on transitioning youth and adults in phase 2 under the capable leadership of my colleague Minister Hoskins, our work for children and youth struggling with mental health issues and our support for their families will not stop. We know there is more work to do.

Through many of our initiatives, including the Moving on Mental Health strategy, we remain fully committed to helping young people reach their full potential in life. Through Moving on Mental Health, our goal is to make sure that families across Ontario will know what mental health services are available in their community and how to access the mental health services and supports that meet their needs.

Par l'entremise de la stratégie « Pour l'avancement de la santé mentale », notre objectif est de faire en sorte que les familles de tout l'Ontario sachent quels services de santé mentale sont disponibles dans leurs collectivités et comment accéder aux services et soutiens en matière de santé mentale permettant de répondre à leurs besoins.

This will help create a mental health system that is stronger and more accountable and responsive to the needs of children, youth and their families. We need to keep talking openly about mental health in our families, in our communities and across the province so we can help change the way society views mental health issues and those living with them.

Our government will continue to take action so that these youth receive the support they need so that they can enjoy the bright futures they deserve and reach their full potential.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, two days ago, Minister Damerla rose to remind the House that May is South Asian Heritage Month in Ontario. I rise today to let members know that during this month, we also celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

The extraordinary contributions made to our society by Asian newcomers speak for themselves. We can look to the arts, to business, to science and health care, to

education. In all of these areas, Asian immigrants have excelled, and, in the process, they have helped build this province we call Ontario.

Our province is what it is because of the immigrants we have welcomed over the course of our history, and a great many of those have been Asian. Today in Ontario, almost two million people are of Asian descent. This is nearly one in six Ontarians. They contribute to what truly is an ethnic, cultural and religious mosaic, and we are infinitely richer for it.

We're also a much more significant global trade and business force as a result of our diverse and internationally connected population. Every immigrant from Asia holds an important connection to their former home. The success of our two recent trade missions to Asia—one by myself and Minister Leal, the other one by Minister Moridi—is proof again of the opportunities to be found in the vibrant and emerging economies in Asia.

Over the course of the coming weeks, I urge my colleagues and all Ontarians to enjoy the many festivities and celebrations associated with Asian Heritage Month. I urge them to also reflect on how fortunate we are in this province to have different communities we can celebrate, with so many achievements from which we can benefit. Our diversity has truly made Ontario a wonderful place to live, to work and to raise a family. Of course, while it's good to have a designated month in which to acknowledge that blessing, it is something we should all take pride in year-round.

1330

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

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus to recognize Children's Mental Health Week and the representatives of Children's Mental Health Ontario who have joined us here today in the Legislature.

Half a million children in Ontario suffer from some form of mental health concerns. Children's Mental Health Week is about increasing awareness of these conditions, providing parents and educators the knowledge they need to identify signs of trouble before it is too late, and reminding all members of the community that help and support are available.

Children need action and a focus on front-line services. Through the tireless effort of our health care critic, Christine Elliott, the government finally struck the Select Committee on Developmental Services.

Many support agencies, including ones in my own riding, haven't seen funding increases for years, despite a growing waiting list. Real funding levels have been eroded due to inflation, and the situation will only get worse unless there's a significant change, of course, by this government.

Too often with this Liberal government, we see money wasted in the vast bureaucracy, never getting to the front-

line workers or the people in need. Without proper, reliable funding, many support services will have to close, sending children to the emergency room and letting their conditions deteriorate.

Too many children and families are waiting for support services, losing valuable time that could be spent assisting children and preventing their condition from getting worse. Every day on a waiting list is a day that a child can't fulfil their potential at home, at school and in the community. It is a loss for all, and for the province.

We have heard warnings from independent officers of the Legislature that the growing debt servicing costs will crowd out essential government services. As legislators, we must work tirelessly to ensure this doesn't happen. We can't let bad economic management deprive our children and families in need of the support services that can save their lives and help them thrive at such an important stage in their development.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Gila Martow: I rise today to recognize May as Asian Heritage Month. It's with great pleasure that I greet you, or try to greet you, in some of the native tongues of almost two million Ontarians. Namaste. Sat sri akal. Annyong haseyo. Kumustá. Nín hão. Lay ho ma. Ohayo-gozaimasu.

We are incredibly fortunate to reside in a harmonious province with a level of diversity and tolerance simply unparalleled anywhere else on the planet. Whether we are in the community, at our jobs, in our homes or among our friends and family, we do not simply tolerate diversity; we celebrate it.

Ontario is home to two million Ontarians of Asian heritage who have made incredible contributions to the social and economic fabric of our province. In the fields of culture, technology, innovation and commerce, we owe these tireless citizens incredible thanks for leading our economy into the knowledge era of the 21st century.

The diversity of these communities in culture, religion, profession and every other aspect of human life is nothing short of astounding and truly showcases Ontario as the world capital of harmony and respect.

Some may trace their roots in Ontario to the years prior to 1900, in which racism and hostility were the norm rather than the exception. Despite these challenges, brave individuals refused to allow ignorance to detour them and quickly became prominent members of their communities. Others are more recent arrivals, yet whether coming last month or in the last decade, these people have integrated seamlessly into our way of life, enrich the communities in which they live and demonstrate a commitment to civic participation.

I just want to mention a few individuals whom I'm friendly with and I have a lot of respect for. One is York region resident Soon Young Lee. She's a member of both the Korean Community Federation of Canada and the For You Telecare Family Service, two organizations that work to assist new Canadians in finding success in em-

ployment and commerce, and harmony in daily life. Soon Young has helped many Korean Canadians integrate, and she was here just yesterday for the Queen's Park day to promote counselling for at-risk families with Family Service Ontario.

I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention Erlinda Insigne. She's the president of the Filipino-Canadian Association of Vaughan, and has raised funds for various endeavours, such as Typhoon Yolanda relief. She has also worked very hard to promote a community centre near where I live, the Patricia Kemp Community Centre, as a centre of activity for her community.

Regardless of when these people have arrived, these communities have made an intense and incredible contribution to the entire province, and no Ontarian is untouched. We celebrate their efforts and smile, knowing that their contributions will continue for generations to come.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Ms. Cindy Forster: On behalf of Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats, I'm proud to stand with Ontarians today in celebrating Children's Mental Health Week. Children's mental health has not been given its rightful priority in our health system. The ripple effects of this can be seen in our emergency rooms, our community clinics and, over the long term, in our courts and our justice system.

The Children's Mental Health Ontario report indicates that we are failing, and at this rate we are heading for a systemic crisis. This year alone, 6,000 kids are waiting more than one full year for service, and that could double to 12,000 by next year.

The good news is that the stigma is on the decline, which means that services are on the rise. Without additional funding or proper streamlining of services, child and youth mental health centres won't be able to provide the needed care.

It doesn't have to be this way. It is estimated that 70% of childhood mental health issues can be solved with early intervention and therapy. Our children and youth—our province's most valuable assets—deserve better. Like good physical health, mental health is an essential part of being able to lead a happy life and to grow up happy, healthy, productive adults. This is something every parent wants for their child, and something every child in our country deserves.

The community-based agencies that are the backbone of Ontario's mental health system for children and youth also deserve the necessary supports to be able to deliver the critically needed services.

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I'd like to thank Children's Mental Health Ontario for this year's important report card. I'd also like to recognize the countless other agencies, front-line staff, dedicated professionals and volunteers across our province who continue to do excellent care with limited resources for our youth.

I'd also like to recognize my colleague, MPP Teresa Fanshawe, who has tabled a bill that will go to second

reading this afternoon. If passed, it will address the lack of uniformity in access to and delivery of services and treatments across Ontario. Bill 95 would streamline fragmented programs, regulate the sector and give the Ombudsman oversight authority to provide more accountability and transparency.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is my pleasure today to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP in recognition of Asian Heritage Month.

I am glad that across Ontario there is recognition for the many contributions of the Asian community in our province. Of course, Asia is vast and varied, encompassing many diverse peoples, including those of Korean, Tibetan, Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese heritage.

The history of the Asian—particularly Chinese—contribution to this country is a long, proud and sometimes sorrowful one, Speaker.

As mentioned in my remarks on South Asian Heritage Month, Canadians of Asian heritage make up more than five million, or 16%, of the population. Nearly half of these are Chinese.

I'll take a minute to single out the contributions and storied history of Chinese migrants to this province. The impact that the Chinese community has had is unmistakable, especially in the greater Toronto area, with one of the world's greatest and largest Chinatowns—the original one, at least in Ontario, in the Spadina corridor of the city. Now, of course, the Chinese community is prevalent throughout the GTA, in Markham and across the province. Tourists come from all around the world to spend time in this historic neighbourhood.

Of the most spoken languages in Canada are the various Chinese dialects. That should tell us something about the impact this community has had.

We should, however, recognize that the hard work of Chinese Canadians was first brought about by a painful chapter of relying on the labour of Chinese migrants to build the Canadian Pacific Railway. That really was such a huge part of connecting what we know as Canada today. It came at a terrible cost. Every Canadian since should acknowledge this past.

1340

Today, Chinese and other Asian Ontarians' contributions to every aspect of our lives can be felt throughout the GTA and clear across the province, from business to the arts. We note that this government has recently taken steps to cement a further relationship to Asia through trade. New Democrats join with other parties in recognizing the vital Asian-Canadian contributions to this province.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Ms. Cindy Forster: Speaker, I'd like to correct my record. I meant to say, "the good news is that the stigma is on the decline, which means demand for services is on

the rise." I also called the member from London—Fanshawe "Teresa Fanshawe"; it's Teresa Armstrong.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is correct to correct her own record.

A point of order, the member from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a point of order: I mentioned the Select Committee on Developmental Services; I meant to say "the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions." She was involved with both, and that's what I meant.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. That is also a point of order, and you can correct your own record.

I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I support this petition and give it to page Thomas to take to the table.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from Dolores Roberts. She lives in my riding in Val Caron. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature and give it to Olivia to bring down.

DEMONSTRATION AT QUEEN’S PARK

Mrs. Gila Martow: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“With great urgency we write to call public attention to the repeated demand of a group of public citizens to stage a demonstration of a deeply offensive and deplorable nature on the grounds of Queen’s Park;

“The Al-Quds Day tradition was initiated in 1979 by Ayatollah Khomeini to endorse and promote a fundamentalist strain of Islam as well as the hatred and destruction of both the Israeli state and the Jewish people. In recent years, rallies have occurred across the globe, including in a number of cities in North America. Organizers and attendees chant slogans that perpetuate these obscene sentiments and wave placards and flags that signify the banned terrorist organization Hamas;

“Regretfully, Al-Quds Day has been celebrated for several years on the grounds of the provincial Legislature, the very institution that acts to protect the rights and dignity of each and every single Ontarian, regardless of religion, creed, orientation or ancestry;

“Although the spirit of Queen’s Park seeks to encourage and foster healthy democratic discussion and debate, we, the undersigned, believe a gathering of such a reprehensible nature and blatantly racist ideology should not be permitted on the grounds of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario nor the premises of any provincial or federal institution.”

I am affixing my name to this petition and giving it to Jae Min.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads:

“Whereas emergency response workers (paramedics, police officers, and firefighters) confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

“Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

“Whereas Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’ sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.’”

I absolutely agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and send it to the Clerks’ table through page Carina.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Granville Anderson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, with over 600 signatures.

“Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

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

“That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018.”

I agree with this petition, and I will affix my name to it and give it to page Megan.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Julia Munro: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government has brought forward a payroll tax in the form of a mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP); and

“Whereas the Liberal government has not conducted nor released a cost-benefit analysis of this new payroll tax; and

“Whereas internal Ministry of Finance documents show that the Liberals are aware that the ORPP will increase the cost of doing business in Ontario and kill jobs in the province; and

“Whereas a McKinsey and Co. survey shows that more than four out of every five Canadians already save enough for their retirement; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has stated that a majority of its members would have to lay off workers; and

“Whereas the government’s plan would force the cancellation of many existing retirement plans that have better employer contribution rates; and

“Whereas low-income earners will have their retirement savings clawed back under this scheme; and

“Whereas Ontarians cannot afford another tax on top of their already skyrocketing hydro bills and ever-increasing cost of living;

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

“To abandon the idea of an Ontario pension tax.”

As I am in agreement, I have affixed my signature to give it to page Thomas.

1350

SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a petition to maintain the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre annually helps about 2,500 children with physical, neurological and developmental challenges;

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program is an exceptional program administered by expert faculty and staff that offers youth and their

families a transformative experience that they would not receive in a less specialized setting;

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program faces a shortfall in provincial funding;

“Whereas families raising children with special needs incur increased costs for care which the income test does not properly reflect;

“Whereas compliance with the provincial requirements means that the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program is unable to be sustained;

“Whereas the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program closure will mean a loss of a valued skill set of expertise from teachers and support staff in our community that will leave some of the area’s most vulnerable children and families without proper child care;

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

“To make up any funding shortfalls that result from transitioning to a fee subsidy model so that the John McGivney Children’s Centre preschool program can remain operational and consider changes to the income test to better reflect the increased costs families raising children with special needs incur.”

I support this, will sign my name to it and give it to page Ishika.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition here that is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are no mandatory requirements for teachers and school volunteers to have completed CPR training in Ontario;

“Whereas the primary responsibility for the care and safety of students rests with each school board and its employees;

“Whereas the safety of children in elementary schools in Ontario should be paramount;

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

“To work in conjunction with all Ontario school boards to ensure that adequate CPR training is available to school employees and volunteers.”

I agree with this petition. I’m going to affix my name to it and send it to the table with page Joshua.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas repeated cuts to health care funding under the present government are having a negative impact on the residents of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, including seniors, diabetics and those suffering from eye or cardiovascular conditions; and

“Whereas the heart rehabilitation program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre provided a valuable service for many residents; and

“Whereas it is in everyone’s interests to help all Ontarians stay healthy and prevent the occurrence of acute and dangerous conditions, such as heart failure; and

“Whereas this interest is best served through adequate funding to programs that have proven their value;

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

“To take all necessary action to restore the heart rehab program at the Seaway Valley Health Centre.”

I agree with this petition and will be passing it off to page Olivia.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from the people of Sudbury and the northeast. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Health Sciences North is facing major direct care cuts, including: the closure of beds on the surgical unit, cuts to vital patient support services including hospital cleaning, and more than 87,000 nursing and direct patient care hours per year to be cut from departments across the hospital, including in-patient psychiatry, day surgery, the surgical units, obstetrics, mental health services, oncology, critical care and the emergency department; and

“Whereas Ontario’s provincial government has cut hospital funding in real dollar terms for the last eight years in a row; and

“Whereas these cuts will risk higher medical accident rates as nursing and direct patient care hours are dramatically cut and will reduce levels of care all across our hospital;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) Stop the proposed cuts to Health Sciences North and protect the beds and services;

“(2) Improve overall hospital funding in Ontario with a plan to increase funding at least to the average of other provinces.”

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

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly funded French-language education; and

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto (Beaches–East York and Toronto–Danforth) and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school (grades 7-12) yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school, while several English schools in east

Toronto sit half-empty since there are no requirements or incentives for school boards to release underutilized schools to other boards in need; and

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools, and yet, not a single French secondary school has opened in east Toronto; and

“Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that ‘... time is running out to address the serious shortage of at least one new French-language school at the secondary level in the eastern part of the city of Toronto’; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Education has confirmed that we all benefit when school board properties are used effectively in support of publicly funded education and that the various components of our education system should be aligned to serve the needs of students; and

“Whereas parents and students from both French Catholic and French public elementary schools in east Toronto are prepared to find common ground across all language school systems to secure space for a French-language secondary school in east Toronto;

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

“That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school (grades 7-12) in the community by September 2015, so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

J’affixe ma signature et donne la pétition à page Ethan.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES IN ONTARIO ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L’AMÉLIORATION DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE ET DE LUTTE CONTRE LES DÉPENDANCES EN ONTARIO

Ms. Armstrong moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 95, An Act to continue the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council and to amend the Ombudsman Act in respect of providers of mental health and addictions services / *Projet de loi 95, Loi visant à proroger le Conseil consultatif pour le leadership en santé mentale et en lutte contre les dépendances et à modifier la Loi sur l'ombudsman à l'égard des fournisseurs de services de santé mentale et de lutte contre les dépendances.*

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation. The member for London–Fanshawe.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today for the second reading of my private member's bill, the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015. For me, the introduction of this bill is very personal and dear to my heart.

As many members here may know, there was a deadly fire that broke out in an apartment building in London, Ontario, last year. The needless tragedy revealed a serious gap in safe, affordable housing for our province's homeless, addicted, disabled and mentally ill people. In this particular case, a 72-year-old man, David MacPherson, died of injuries from the blaze and another person was injured.

What has been happening in London, Speaker, highlights the deficiencies in the mental health system. In another case, a young man spent five days in an emergency department, in the isolation room. His family told reporters that he was scraping his hands against the walls until his knuckles bled and was summarily discharged after only a week of treatment in the psychiatric ward. In another case, at the Victoria Hospital, six mentally ill patients were left for 20 hours and resorted to sleeping on the floor.

1400

London's news outlets continue to report on the city's shrinking psychiatric hospitals and beds: 138 beds were moved to Windsor, Kitchener, St. Thomas and Hamilton; 70 beds were cut with cash that was shifted to provide care in the community. These reductions left London hospitals with the capacity to treat only 156 patients.

I know that London isn't the only major city whose hospitals have been clogged with mental health patients due to chronic underfunding. It's happening throughout this province, and the intention of this bill is to take the necessary steps toward addressing those problems.

When I shared my concerns about what was happening in London with my colleague from Nickel Belt, the critic for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, she too was concerned about what was happening and told me stories about things that happened in her community. She also brought to light the select committee that originated here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. She talked about the report that the select committee had done—because the member from Nickel Belt sat on that committee. That report was named the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions in Ontario report for 2010.

At that point, I read the report. It was surprising, the number of deputations that went into the making of that report. More than 300 individuals and organizations gave deputations, with more submitting written reports along the way. The final report represented more than 18 months of work by the members of all parties.

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who contributed to this report. This definitely was not a partisan issue, Speaker. All parties had a hand in the work and a hand in the report-writing. It was a very well-written report, I must say. Congratulations to everyone who did all that work. It's really humbling to read that report and to know the dedication that each member put into coming up with some very well-thought-out recommendations and solutions to some of the problems, barriers and access pieces we have in mental health.

What they achieved together was a clear vision forward for mental health and addiction services in Ontario. It is my intention to see that effort compensated by driving the recommendations of the committee forward. More than that, it is time for Ontarians who are suffering from mental illness and addictions to access the treatments they need to heal.

The prevalence and incidence of poor mental health is staggering. One in five Canadians will experience a mental health illness in their lifetime. The remaining four will have a friend, family member or colleague who will have experienced mental health illness. Mental illness affects thinking, mood or behaviour, and can be associated with distress and/or impairment of functioning, with symptoms that vary from mild to severe. Schizophrenia affects 1%; major depression impacts 8%; and anxiety disorder 12% of people.

Who are those affected most by mental illness and addiction? Some 70% of mental health problems and illnesses have their onset during childhood or adolescence. Young people aged 15 to 24 are more likely to report mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders than any other age group. Women were one and a half times more likely to meet the criteria for mood or anxiety disorder than men. Canadians in the lowest income group were three to four times more likely than those in the highest income group to report fair to poor mental health.

Yet the real problems with mental health illness and addictions can be found in access to services, or lack thereof. Public confidence and trust in the mental health system is vital, yet too many Ontarians are going without the supports they need. Only one third of those who need mental health services in Canada actually receive them, and 71% of family physicians ranked access to psychiatrists in Ontario fair to poor. While mental illnesses constitute more than 15% of the burden of disease in Canada, these illnesses receive only 5.5% of our health care dollars.

Despite access to service, one of the greatest barriers to achieving good mental health is the stigma associated with it. We did talk about how the stigma is getting better; it's being slowly eroded, and that's a good thing. Only 50% of Canadians would tell friends or co-workers

that they have a family member with mental illness, compared to 72% who would discuss a diagnosis of cancer—or 68%, diabetes—in the family. Quite simply, the numbers are not good.

In tough economic climates, these are the services that often see funding cuts or freezes. I appeal to the members of the chamber that we simply cannot afford not to fund mental health services and addictions appropriately in this province. We have to make sure that funding is there and stable.

There is an overwhelming financial cost to society and our economy for being short-sighted in this regard. In Canada, mental illness is the second leading cause of human disability and premature death. Every day, 500 Canadians are absent from work due to psychiatric problems. Mental health is the number one cause of disability in Canada, accounting for nearly 30% of disability claims and 70% of the total costs. Some \$51 billion is the estimated cost of mental illness to Canadian society in terms of health care and lost productivity; \$34 billion of that represents the cost of mental illness and addictions to Ontario's economy. In many respects, passing this bill should be a done deal, so to speak, as I am seeking to implement the work that all parties in this House have already agreed to. It is even based upon a proven model of success: Cancer Care Ontario.

The first recommendation of the report of the select committee is to bring all mental health and addiction services and programs under one umbrella organization. Currently, mental health and addiction services are spread across more than 12 ministries, and there is no coherent system for the delivery of all mental health and addiction services in the province. Community care is delivered by 440 children's mental health agencies, 330 community mental health agencies, 150 substance abuse treatment agencies and approximately 50 problem-gaming centres. In other words, this lack of cohesion in the mental health system prevents us from gaining a clear picture of all mental health services in the province.

We know this sector is underfunded and resources are scarce. Therefore, we must ensure that they are used to their full capacity for the benefit of all Ontarians. But most importantly, it's difficult for people who need these services to easily access them. That's what's happening. It does become very difficult to try to find your way to access services when you don't know where they are and who's offering them. Having this bill with one umbrella organization will help coordinate and designate some of those services so that people are aware of them.

This bill is entirely about helping all vulnerable Ontarians by ensuring they have access to programs and services, regardless of age or where they live in the province. That's another thing under the umbrella recommendations; they talk about children and youth services also being under one ministry. We've heard that children and youth talk about transitioning from mental health services to adult services. It isn't a smooth process.

My offices reached out to a diverse group of stakeholders, and the feedback we received has been quite

positive, for the most part. We believe that this bill is a good first step in the right direction. It represents a tremendous amount of collaboration within the mental health sector; however, we also know that there is much more work to be done.

I want to take a moment to recognize the efforts of all those working and providing mental health and addiction services throughout Ontario, from the front-line workers who are seeing increased mental health cases with not enough training—as is the case with our police, correctional officers, personal support workers and nurses—to the organizations that are dedicated to providing the research and the expertise, for example, the Ontario Peer Development Initiative, Children's Mental Health Ontario, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, Alzheimer Society and all the other employees who make a difference in the lives of those with mental health and addictions.

Lastly, I want to speak to those Ontarians who are in need of mental health supports. The good news is, mental health issues can be managed and overcome. The sooner you get help, the quicker you can heal. I pledge to continue working towards making sure that the services you need are available to you, the people in Ontario—the services that people need in Ontario. I know that people in the Legislature are very dedicated and conscious of mental health services and addiction, and I know that we're going to continue that work and to make things better.

Having this bill come forward today is the right thing to do. It's a good first step into getting the coordination of mental health services under one home, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. It's extremely important. People have come to the committee when it was taking deputations and they were very passionate about what they needed. It's incumbent upon us to listen to the voices of Ontarians and to help them along with this legislation.

1410

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I'm very pleased to speak to this private member's bill, introduced by the member from London—Fanshawe. In spirit, I agree with the bill. I think it's very necessary to address some of the demand that we've been facing in the last little while in the mental health and addiction area.

I would also like to remind the House that this government has been doing a lot of good work on this front. Last year, we announced the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, which brings together experts and patients from across Ontario who have lived through the experience. This council will serve as a central body to identify issues across and within the mental health and addictions system and will advise us on ways to resolve these issues.

Personally, last winter I remember that I made a statement in this House with regard to the opening of the new Gerald Sheff and Shanitha Kachan Emergency

Department at CAMH on College Street, not too far from where I live. CAMH has been doing fantastic work. We've been very supportive of CAMH, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, as you know. They've gone through quite a bit of revitalization, and as I said, they've been doing good work not just in the riding of Trinity–Spadina but for all Ontarians.

I want to speak about this new emergency department, which the province has contributed \$4.2 million to as part of this \$220-million-over-three-years project. I believe that's the only emergency department that is available right now, because they've seen tremendous growth in demand—I believe it's somewhere around 70% or 75%—between 2006 and 2014.

The member is correct: One in five Ontarians will experience some degree of mental health illness in their lifetime. Many of us are deeply touched by this issue, so we've got to tackle this right away. I'm pretty proud of the government's initiative in the last little while, not only in recognizing that this is a major challenge for Ontarians and the Ontario government, but also in coming up with innovative ways to deal with it. We know it's a complex issue, and it requires complex solutions. I'm happy that different ministries are working together to find a solution to tackle this.

I agree with the spirit of this bill. I look forward to supporting this bill, but I also want to get on the record that this government has been doing a lot of work addressing mental health and addiction issues.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to speak in support of the member from London–Fanshawe's private member's Bill 95. I have to give her full points, because she has done something that the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions was unable to do. As a member of that committee, we spent a good deal of time in the last part of our deliberations trying to figure out, after we'd done all this fabulous work, how we then ensure that the report doesn't just get filed. By bringing forward Bill 95, you have essentially encapsulated the recommendations that we collectively—I really want to remind people of that, because all of us who were on that committee know very intimately how involved each of us was. It was a commitment of 18 months that we all made. I don't actually recall anybody subbing out at any point. We were all there because we wanted to be there. We saw challenges in our community and wanted to make changes. And we all participated in the recommendations. They were all consensus-based.

So, congratulations to you for putting it into a bill. The select committee was able to look at many, many different issues and ministries, but one thing we couldn't do, short of the last recommendation, which I think essentially said that in two years the government has to pull back the report and review the recommendations—we couldn't do. So I'm happy to support it.

You know, I will acknowledge that the report hasn't been filed. People have talked about it. It is much more

out of the shadows, so to speak. Many more corporate initiatives are occurring. Many more government initiatives are happening that are truly making a difference in the lives and family members who are trying to support someone who has a mental illness or addiction.

I will give a little credit where credit is due, but the number one recommendation we made, and spent a lot of time on, was bringing all of these services together, making sure that whether you live in London or Kenora or Orangeville or Ottawa, you are going to know very definitively what kind of services are provided.

When you get a cancer diagnosis, it doesn't matter if you're 30 or three. The Ministry of Health steps up and provides the diagnosis and the treatment. That's all we were saying with mental health. Mental health is an illness. It's not divided by age. It doesn't start or stop at 18 or 21. What we wanted to see with that recommendation was to put it together in the Ministry of Health: Mental health is a health issue, so acknowledge that fact.

There was a lot of discussion because at the time, again, there were issues in the Ministry of Health. There were many things going on, and some concerns were raised about: Well, is the Ministry of Health already too big? Would mental health care and addictions issues once again be pushed to the side because it's such a large ministry and there are so many things going on? At the end of the day, again, as a consensus, we decided that, no, it was more important to acknowledge that it is a health problem.

Part of the stigma that you hear about, and the reason there is a stigma with mental health and addictions issues, is in fact because people think you can suck it up and move on: "Go for a walk, and you'll get better." You know what? Life is not like that, and mental health isn't like that.

For us to say in a very clear, legislative way, "Put it into health because it is a health care issue," was a very conscious decision that we did. I think we deliberated on it for quite some time before we came to that conclusion.

I just want to say: Well done for figuring out how to take this report and put it into a legislative process, so we can move on and actually continue to move the issue forward. One of the benefits of legislation is that you have the ability to pull it out and say, "Are you following it? Are you maintaining it? Is it happening?" We do that with legislation. We have that ability. If we had Bill 95 on the books, so to speak—even in committee—it would allow us to once again pull forward and say, "Absolutely."

There are some things that have happened in the last number of years that have been good news for people who have mental health issues or families who are supporting those individuals. But it also allows us to say, "Where can we do more? Where are the gaps in the system?" Without a doubt, there is no one in this chamber who can say that all the gaps have been filled. We still have stories of people waiting for assistance who are going far too far away from their home community and that peer support to look for services. We have an

opportunity here to make that easier and accessible for all, and so I'm happy to support Bill 95 and wish you all the best.

1420

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's truly a privilege for me, as MPP for London West, to be participating in second reading debate on this important legislation, the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act. I really want to congratulate the member for London-Fanshawe for bringing this bill forward. I am very proud to be her colleague, not just in the NDP caucus but as a representative of our community of London.

This is an issue that is critically important for Londoners, and the member for London-Fanshawe knows this and is taking action on pushing this issue forward. It's hard to imagine another community in this province that has been as directly affected by the crisis in mental health as London. Last year, we heard from the London police that there has been a 40% increase in calls over one year in dealing with mental illness, and this comes at a cost of \$14 million, which is 15% of the police budget. What should be a health care issue is becoming a policing issue. This not only has significant financial implications but also enormous personal costs to the dignity and the health and well-being of the person who is experiencing a mental health crisis. Certainly, there's no question that police need training to understand mental illness and to understand how to respond appropriately to someone who is in crisis, but it makes no sense to have police as front-line mental health workers.

When the pre-budget hearings were held in London just a couple of months ago, in January, we learned that London Health Sciences Centre is running at 114% capacity every day for acute-care mental health patients. On any given day, you can walk into the ER and see up to 14 patients waiting for an in-patient bed. In December, over the holidays, we know that Victoria Hospital was at 125% capacity because of people facing mental health emergencies. As the member for London-Fanshawe mentioned, just last March, we learned of patients with mental illness who were forced to wait 20 hours or more at Victoria Hospital and ended up sleeping on the floor because of chronic overcrowding. So ER has become the default for mental health and addictions because people don't know where else to go in the community for services.

Those who are discharged often don't get the supports they need, and that has resulted in the tragic death of a Londoner, David MacPherson, who was living in a substandard, unregulated rooming house. He died in a tragic fire, completely unsupported by any community agencies.

That's why this bill is so important. It will bring together in a single umbrella organization the hundreds of agencies that provide mental health services currently administered by 10 different ministries. It will bring

some much-needed coordination and coherence to the system. Frankly, right now, we don't have a system of mental health services in this province, and that is what Bill 95 will do. The recommendation to create this agency was the first recommendation of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, but from it flowed all of the other recommendations of the report.

Before I close, I want to quickly mention the final recommendation. I met with a group of families—parents who support adult children with mental health issues—in my community of London, and what was critically important to them was the recommendation about the need for changes to the Personal Health Information Protection Act so that family members can be involved in treatment plans and discharge strategies for their loved ones. I'm just going to read what they said: "As the ones who continually have to pick up the pieces of our family members, we feel we have valuable information that should be integral in the treatment plan of our loved one. In the regular health care system, as opposed to the mental health system, caregivers have access to the patient's health problems and their treatment plan, and are often asked to take a very active role in the patient's recovery."

This legislation will address that gap. I congratulate, once again, the member for bringing this forward. Let's all support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I rise with pleasure today to speak on Bill 95, on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge.

I've had a long history, in my career as a nurse, working with patients with mental health and addiction issues, as a pediatric nurse, critical care nurse and, most recently, working for the community care access centre. I saw all kinds of individuals, from every walk of life and from every age group, suffering from these things.

The reason we talk about mental health and addictions together in the same sentence is because they are so connected. Those with mental health issues sometimes fall into an addiction type of pattern, which is a severe health risk for them; and those who become addicted then end up with mental health issues. It's why we combine them in the same sentence.

In my work as a nurse, knowing how many individuals suffer from these kinds of illnesses, over the years—it has only really recently become such an issue across so many sectors. There has been, certainly, much broader and larger focus on these Ontarians who suffer from mental health and addictions issues, which is actually a good thing.

I also was privileged to sit on the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council for some years. This is a council whose mission, with three pillars at one time, is to really focus on addressing the root causes of crime in our community, poverty reduction, alienation and a number of things. But it came to light, with so many of our partners around the table from police services, education,

youth services and senior services, across many, many sectors—that really identified the fact that mental health and addictions issues cost us all across many, many sectors. So at that point, a few years ago, the crime prevention council added a fourth pillar, mental health and addictions, to start more intensive work on that particular file.

It's interesting that across all sectors, I think, we're now seeing the need for increased mental health awareness and also more services.

I did want to lend my support to Bill 95, but I also recognize that the Ontario government is doing many things to already address some of the things that we're talking about here.

For instance, I know that a single provincial coordinating body, as proposed in Bill 95, would not recognize the diversity of local needs. Health care services, as we know, are best managed at the local level, where they can be delivered and properly integrated into the community. I certainly learned about the diversity in my own community of Cambridge and, indeed, Waterloo region, through my work at the crime prevention council—to find out that our needs in our local area were sometimes very different across the province.

We also recognize that one in five Ontarians experience mental health illnesses in their lifetime. It's also why our government created a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy, which I'm proud of, to support Ontarians, from childhood to old age, with mental health and addictions problems.

Speaker, as I said, I'm supportive of Bill 95, but I think it could duplicate some of the work that my ministry is already doing. Last year, we announced the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, which brings together experts and patients with lived experiences across Ontario. I know from personal experience how valuable that is at a committee table and for some of our leaders to learn about first-hand, to be able to tailor the programs to those who really need the services.

The council will provide advice on the strategy's investments, promote collaboration across the sectors and report annually on the strategy's progress. The council also serves as a central body to identify the issues across and within the mental health and addictions system, and advises us on ways to resolve these issues.

I also want to point out in my last few minutes that the council also promotes collaboration across the 15 ministries that deliver supports to people with mental health or addictions issues, something that I'm very proud our government is doing.

1430

In conclusion, as I said, I thank the member from London—Fanshawe for bringing forward a very important issue. I know she has done a lot of work on Bill 95, and certainly I support it in spirit. I also know that I'm proud that we are continuing to work on this file.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: The member from this side of the House was talking about this report. I think she was a little shy. I just want to mention that there were members from all parties who worked for about 18 months to put together this report. I'm sorry to say that I didn't know about it until today, because it came up before I was elected, but I look forward to reading it and seeing some, many or possibly all of its suggestions being implemented by this Legislature.

We've been talking a lot about mental health, and I've noticed that we haven't spoken very much on the part of the bill that's focusing on addictions. Sometimes we hear of what's called an addictive personality. I always found that challenging in my work as an optometrist. I used to feel that I wasn't adequately prepared in my university program for the fact that—we all know that people have different personalities and personality quirks, but often-times you're seeing patients, and you don't know if people have mental illness, and you're being a little bit of a detective trying to figure it out. As an optometrist, you don't know if people have addictions—whether it's legal drug addictions, illegal drug addictions or something else entirely—that are causing them to have visual problems. People have red eyes, people have dry eyes—people have all kinds of problems with their eyes, and you often feel a little bit lost in terms of how to commence that discussion.

I think it's something that we have to teach not just the health care professionals and the teachers in our communities, but all of us. It needs to involve all of us—parents, siblings, friends and neighbours—to think in the back of our heads of what we can do to support people in our communities and in our families and help them deal with possible mental health problems, but also that addictive personality, to kind of catch people before they get into trouble.

This week, we've heard a lot about children's mental health. There have been some fantastic events going on in communities all around the GTA and Ontario. Just on Monday, I was with some members of the Legislature at a fantastic event. It was highlighting some videos done by youth in our communities—high school students, university students—who work to get kids to have an understanding of mental health. Maybe that's where it all has to begin, just like we've learned that by getting kids to understand the dangers of smoking, we prepare ourselves for the next generation to be healthier. That's what we also have to do with mental health: to get kids to understand what mental health challenges are, that it's an illness; not to stigmatize people, not to bully people and to be supportive and understanding.

I really want to congratulate the winning team for their "Will You Be There?" video. It was a group of high school students, interestingly enough. They really had a very emotional video. The hashtag, if you want to look for some of the comments and videos and links, is #ChangetheView2015. There's a website, thenewmentality.ca. Jasmine from The New Mentality: It's "a network promoting youth engagement in mental

health and reducing the stigma of mental illness.” She’s so welcoming, and you can see why the kids want to work with her and work on these projects.

There are events going on that we can attend, and that’s wonderful. We’re all invited to events, but there’s so much more that we can do, as legislators, in our community in terms of promoting awareness and ending the stigma. I think that maybe we’re sometimes part of the problem and not enough of the solution when we don’t write about it in the columns we sometimes write for our local paper, when we don’t talk about the anxiety and the panic attacks we go through during an election campaign—which can be very stressful, as you know.

There’s the “What’s Up” Walk-In Clinic in Toronto. It’s open five days a week for mental health counselling. It’s a service for children, youth, young adults and families.

At the event that I just mentioned, I spoke to Chris Brown from the East Metro Youth Services, and I invite people to spread the word. That’s what we have our websites for; that’s what we have our social media for: to spread the word, use our constituency offices, call up and get pamphlets from anything that is within walking distance or public transit of our constituency offices. Also, there’s Telehealth and there are phone numbers that people can call and get help.

I also met with the York Centre for Children, Youth and Families. I was really impressed with the dedication and the fact that they reached out to me because, unfortunately, that’s how it has to be done; we’re not always aware of all the groups in our community to interact with. Noreen Lee really highlighted some of the challenges in York region in terms of getting access to mental health support, particularly for youth. Too often, what people tell me is that until you go to an emergency room and a child or teenager or young adult is threatening suicide, you do not get help.

So when we talk about these waiting lists, what do they really mean? They mean that if you just ask your family doctor to refer you to get an appointment, you’re basically never getting seen, pretty much, so either the problem resolves itself or the worst, the unimaginable, happens. So I think we can do better, and I hope that we will do better.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I was the lucky one who got to represent my party, the NDP, on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. We published this report, *Navigating the Journey to Wellness: The Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan for Ontarians*. The report was published and made public in August 2010. Unfortunately, since 2010, not much has changed. So I congratulate my colleague from London–Fanshawe for bringing forward our first recommendation.

The report is so simple, although we spent a ton of time on it: 18 months, 230 deputants. We went to Toronto, Windsor, St. Thomas, Hamilton, Kingston, Ottawa, Sudbury and Thunder Bay. We visited Weeneebayko on

the James Bay coast. We went to fly in-only reserves. We really reached out to and visited a lot of best practices in mental health and addiction that exist right here in Ontario. We put all of this knowledge together in an 18-page document; 18 pages is what we have, and it’s the way forward.

Our first recommendation, and the one that is included in the member from London–Fanshawe’s bill, is the most important one: It is to give mental health and addiction a home. It is to create an agency whose responsibility will be to cut across the 13 different ministries who presently have bits and pieces of mental health. The sad thing, Speaker—and you would very well know this—is that when they came and presented at committee, most of those ministries would say, “Yes, we do this, but take it away. We would be really, really happy if somebody else could do this and not us.” I can still remember the people from corrections saying that, yes, they do have all of those inmates that have mental health issues, and they needed help. The budget that they had allocated to that was not working.

So we took all of this, and we were able to summarize it into 18 pages and 23 recommendations, where the number one recommendation is to create Mental Health and Addictions Ontario. We spent a lot of time going through what the mandate of this organization will be. We’re not trying to create a new ministry; we’re not trying to reinvent the wheel. We’re giving mental health and addiction a home so that somebody has a responsibility to move this important file forward to improve it.

Unfortunately, I’m out of time; I could go on. Please support this important bill.

1440

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: It’s a pleasure of mine to rise today to speak about Bill 95. There’s no question that our government takes the issue of mental health very seriously, and I want to commend the member from London–Fanshawe for bringing this bill forward.

Bill 95 is important, but in many ways it would actually duplicate some of the work our government is already doing. In communities throughout the province, we have allocated significant resources so that patients, their families and caregivers are given access to the care and services they need when they need it. We’ve done this because we know how deeply mental health issues affect Ontario families. As we heard earlier, one in five Ontarians will experience a mental health illness in their lifetime. Nearly everyone, as we all know, will be affected in some way, either directly or indirectly, through a family member, a friend, or a loved one. That’s why our government created a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy to support Ontarians from childhood to old age with mental health and addictions issues.

Since 2003, funding for mental health and addictions services has increased by over \$506 million to a total of \$1 billion. Just think about it. That is a lot of money.

Why are we doing this? Because we know that there are Ontarians out there who need real support. That's what governments should be doing: giving people support.

Our plan is also to increase funding by \$220 million over three years as we renew our commitment to our mental health and addictions strategy. The first three years were focused on the early years of life and provided more than 50,000 additional children and youth access to mental health and addictions services. Amazing.

In November, we announced our strategy's phase 2. Phase 2 addresses better access, quality and value by focusing on five strategic goals. We will also invest \$16 million over the next three years and work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to create 1,000 new supportive housing units.

Many aspects of Bill 95 mirror the work, as I mentioned, that is already under way in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The purpose of creating an agency like the Mental Health and Addictions Ontario proposed in Bill 95 is already being fulfilled by the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, our local health integration networks, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and our government's patient ombudsman. Finally, the MHALAC promotes collaboration across the 15 ministries delivering supports to people with mental illness or addictions. This is reflective of the diversity of the needs of the people with mental illness or addictions.

Health care services are best managed at the local level, where they can be delivered and properly integrated into the community. This is how we deliver the best care possible to the people of Ontario. We need to remain focused on providing Ontarians with the best care possible. That's why I urge my fellow members to support this bill but to keep in mind that we are doing what's best for the people of this province. Be careful not to create confusion and needless redundancies as we move ahead, but together we will create a great health care system.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's a pleasure to be here today to support my friend the MPP from London-Fanshawe with her private member's bill, the Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act.

Before being elected, I also had a career as a registered nurse, and I can tell you first-hand what the challenges are that exist for patients and clients in a fragmented health care system. I've seen first-hand the long- and the short-term consequences when patients do not have the care that they need. Finally, as a front-line nurse for many years, I experienced the frustration of those caregivers not being able to deliver the care when it's needed most.

Only one in three Ontarians who need mental health or addiction services actually get it, which means 70% of people actually don't get any care. We can do better, and this bill will do that. It's long overdue and it's a good

step forward. By streamlining these processes under one umbrella and extending oversight to the Ombudsman, it will provide accountability and it will provide the transparency that's needed.

The services currently are spread across 13 ministries, 440 children's agencies, 330 community agencies, 150 substance agencies and 50 gaming agencies.

In my riding of Welland, I was able to talk to a few of those agencies. At RAFT, which supports thousands of youth, I spoke to a support worker. One of the things he raised was the inability to get ODSP for the youth population. With proper supports, he said they could do so much more. They could actually help people maintain housing, and they could do outreach work. He said their clients are subject to arrest because of vagrancy or their actions, and he spoke about the outrageous wait times.

I spoke to Gateway of Niagara, another great organization in my riding. They talked about having created a smaller version of this bill called the Niagara Mental Health and Addictions Charter, built by 65 diverse organizations across the Niagara region: "The charter aims to create a common agenda in Niagara where ... optimal mental health and wellbeing ... is an essential element to be included in the planning as we build a stronger future." Imagine if we were able to do that across the province.

I spoke to the Oak Centre, to Ru Tauro, who is the executive director there. Their program focuses on mental health but in a different way. Rather than traditional mental health services, their focus is on recovery via holistic ways. They focus on clients' strengths versus deficiencies. This year, they're celebrating their 30th anniversary. She also spoke about the larger need for collaboration that should be led through legislation.

I know that these issues are not specific to my riding. Today, the Children's Mental Health Ontario report certainly speaks to how severe the issues are across our province.

I want to close by repeating what the MPP from Nickel Belt had to say: Give mental health a home in this province. It was supported by all in Navigating the Journey to Wellness, the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions report. That report needs to be moved forward. This was, I think, the number one recommendation in that report.

I look forward to having all-party support here in the House today for the member for London-Fanshawe's bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for London-Fanshawe. You have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, you heard all the members in the House talk about how important mental health and addictions is, and specifically that it should be identified in the health care ministry. It does need a home. It's the illness that people don't like to talk about; the illness that people feel is something that people do not understand. We've come a long way in our society in bringing mental illness to the forefront, but we have much, much more work to do.

When we were doing a consultation in London last week, students from post-secondary education were at our consultation table. They talked about how mental illness is really something that is becoming a very large issue in post-secondary education, and how services—access to health on campus—are really pitiful. What they did was that they took it upon themselves—students are so creative and such innovators—and went around to seven other post-secondary education facilities to find out what they had to offer, so that they could have best practices at Western University.

This is what this bill is asking the Legislative Assembly to do: Have an umbrella organization so that all services can be encompassed under one ministry, and that umbrella organization can coordinate and manage and look at duplication and efficiencies to make sure it works for the people who need those services; that it works for mental health patients and for people who have addictions, and they're not lost and just flying in the wind, wondering where to go. "Do I go to the hospital? Do I go to a community health centre? Do I call 911?"

This is why this bill is extremely important. This is not a duplication of mental health. This is a solution to help the Ministry of Health find ways—clear paths—to get treatment for mental health patients and addictions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITIES
ACT (FENTANYL PATCH FOR PATCH
RETURN POLICY), 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR PROTÉGER
NOS COLLECTIVITÉS
(POLITIQUE D'ÉCHANGE
DE TIMBRES DE FENTANYL)

Mr. Fedeli moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches / Projet de loi 33, Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl.

1450

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Speaker. Before I address the details of Bill 33, I'd first like to say that it's my firm belief that any time we can do something in this House that can literally save lives, we should do so. I stated that when we debated the Hawkins Gignac Act on carbon monoxide detectors, which is now law, and I firmly believe that the Safeguarding our Communities Act (Fentanyl Patch for Patch Return Policy) will do likewise.

Drugs are killing people throughout our province and in our cities. I want to read you an email I received from Sherry Albert of New Liskeard shortly after I introduced Bill 33 last fall. She wrote the following:

"Dear Sir,

"I am writing to express my gratitude for your undertaking of this initiative. In 2011, I lost my 19-year-old son to this tragic abuse of medication. He was a gentle young man with many plans, who was at the wrong place at the wrong time and, as many others, did not know the dangers of prescription medication. The police determined that the patch was sold to his friend for \$100.

"Since May 2011, I have heard of at least four more senseless fentanyl-related deaths in our very small community. I, too, am afraid for our youth.

"I would like to extend my offer to support this program by sharing my story with whomever cares enough to listen. My life has been forever changed and my heart eternally broken by the loss caused by this serious problem in our area."

The abuse of fentanyl is a growing and dangerous trend in Ontario. In fact, in North Bay alone, at least 15 deaths have been linked to fentanyl in recent years. One death is too many; 15 is a number this Legislature cannot, with any measure of conscience, ignore.

Fentanyl is a powerful pain medication that is sold in small patches via prescription. Like any opioid, it is prone to abuse. The patches are cut up and sold illicitly to addicts who have found ways to smoke, ingest or inject the drug.

When this program began, a full patch was going for \$400 on the street. Since my community—and I'll talk about that in a moment—has introduced a Patch 4 Patch program, the cost has risen to \$600 a patch. We are seeing an impact on our streets, and it is impacting our police services and resources.

Last year, a North Bay man was arrested and charged with drug trafficking after police seized 59 patches with a street value of more than \$23,000. In May 2014, Barrie police arrested eight people connected to a fentanyl patch scheme with links to North Bay and Toronto. These are just a couple of examples of the serious crime issues, but I can tell you, and the officers from the North Bay Police Service can tell you, that they were making arrests on a weekly, if not daily, basis directly related to the trafficking of fentanyl patches. That's now been greatly reduced due to this Patch 4 Patch program. Not only are there serious health considerations; the sale of these patches is empowering criminal elements in communities across the province, straining our policing resources.

The Ontario College of Pharmacists notes in the winter 2015 edition of their publication, Pharmacy Connection, that the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police is leading this Patch 4 Patch Initiative. It also notes that the Ontario College of Pharmacists and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario both support initiatives that curb opioid abuse, including participation in the Patch 4 Patch program.

Dr. Kieran Moore writes: "As president of the Kingston Academy of Medicine, I am supportive of this bill. The Patch 4 Patch Initiative is an important step in reducing deaths from accidental fentanyl overdoses, which have more than doubled in Ontario since 2008."

What is Bill 33 all about? What is a Patch 4 Patch policy? Well, I am joined here in the Legislature today by the very folks who pioneered the Patch 4 Patch program in North Bay that has had such wonderful success in curbing the trend of drug abuse.

Pat Cliche—a dear, lifelong friend of mine—of the North Bay anti-drug strategy is here today. North Bay police detective constables Brad Reaume and Tom Robertson are here today. I welcome all of you for being here. In addition, Carlene Variyan of RBP Canada, who is very supportive of the program, is here today.

We had a wonderful news conference at 1:15, and we are enjoying the support that has happened—I haven't even told you—between 1:15 and now. The phone is ringing and the emails are coming in, looking for how they can help. We're thrilled.

Bill 33 would require a person prescribing fentanyl patches to record on the prescription the name and location of the pharmacy that will fill the prescription, and to notify the pharmacy about the prescription. It also sets out various rules that apply to persons who dispense fentanyl patches, including a requirement that a new fentanyl patch may only be dispensed if the dispenser collects a used fentanyl patch from the patient or his or her authorized representative. It would also authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations.

Basically, here is how Patch 4 Patch has been working so successfully in North Bay and now in many other cities, and why it needs to be a legislated process across the province. This policy, developed in partnership with local doctors and pharmacists, stipulates that in order for patients to get a new fentanyl patch, they have to return the old one intact—pretty simple. Pat and the others can tell you that it has a positive effect in North Bay. Now, 22 other communities have adopted the Patch 4 Patch solution, 17 are in the process of adopting it and three more are considering it.

In Guelph, the Wellington Guelph Drug Strategy produced an informational video on the problem of fentanyl abuse last fall as part of their program launch. Other communities to get on board include Windsor, Peterborough, Sault Ste. Marie, St. Thomas, Sudbury, Timmins and Muskoka. Right now, this is being done on a voluntary basis, community by community. It's a patchwork solution, if you'll pardon the pun.

The problem is this: So long as a person has a means of transportation to get to a community without a Patch 4 Patch policy, they can still continue this chain of abuse. That's why it's so important to have a province-wide solution and why we brought this bill forward.

There are several other reasons to do this:

- to generate public education and awareness regarding fentanyl abuse and misuse, and to guarantee responsible provision of this potentially deadly drug;
- to address proper disposal of fentanyl patches to avoid harm to others;
- to address an identified increase in associated crime in the community;
- increases seen in the number of overdoses and mortality rates; and

- the significant amount of medical resources these cases can use.

1500

The benefits of doing this are plentiful:

- partnerships with law enforcement, physicians and pharmacists to ensure proper return and disposal of fentanyl patches;
- an anticipated reduction in accidental and non-accidental overdoses from fentanyl. A comprehensive evaluation is currently under way in North Bay;
- limiting the trafficking of fentanyl;
- eliminating the return of counterfeit fentanyl patches and other issues around fentanyl use;
- reduction of the amount of fentanyl on our streets assists local police, as investigations require significant time and substantial police resources to build cases against those with a legitimate prescription;
- assists local efforts to develop public education and awareness programs with various community partners; and
- benefits seen from sharing best practices among numerous areas across the province.

Obviously, any such legislation needs to have a deterrent component to be effective and enforceable. To address that, the bill provides a flexible response. For example, it would allow regulatory oversight bodies to determine if their members are adhering to professional conduct standards and to determine what, if any, action is required if those standards are not being upheld. As well, the bill gives the minister the power to make regulations to deal with a variety of issues that may arise.

I have to say that I was very pleased to receive a response from Minister Hoskins to my order paper question about fentanyl abuse. It stated, "The ministry is supportive of this initiative as it is showing promise in reducing diversion and misuse of fentanyl in communities that have implemented it." I'd like to say to the minister that I would like to work with you moving forward on this.

In closing, I want to say that I believe the approach advocated in my Bill 33, which has already produced positive results in North Bay, is a model that will curb the dangerous and growing trend of fentanyl abuse across Ontario. This bill is about saving lives and helping the most vulnerable people in Ontario. Remember the words of Sherry Albert of New Liskeard and try to put yourself in her shoes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's my pleasure to rise and add comment on Bill 33, the Safeguarding our Communities Act. I commend the member for Nipissing for bringing forward a bill such as this.

Some of you may not know that before I came here, for many years I was a dental assistant. The office that I worked in was right in downtown Windsor. A few blocks over from the office that I worked in was the Salvation Army. They used to run a drug rehab program out of the Salvation Army, separate from the other services they

provide. Often, we would service the clientele in the rehab program. They would come in, and they were obviously coming in with some sort of dental issue, usually pain associated with it. We were always pleased to give them the treatment that they needed, but unfortunately, because of the program that they were in, there were strict rules around what we were allowed to prescribe them for their pain.

Certainly these are people who have come forward and recognized that they have an addiction issue and are trying to get over that. As many people would know, it's very difficult, once you have an addiction, to get over that addiction. They need all the support that they can. So they would come into the office and we would do the dental treatment that was required. Although we weren't dispensing narcotics or writing prescriptions for narcotics, because we certainly wanted to support them to try to get over their addiction, even if we were giving them antibiotics for something, there was a policy through not only our office but through the rehabilitation program that we were required to call in to one specific pharmacy, let them know who the patient was and let them know what it was we were prescribing. That patient was not able to go to the pharmacy and directly pick up that medication. It was sent to the rehab program at the Salvation Army and it was locked up in a dispensary. They had people at the Salvation Army who would then administer any medications, give out any medications that anyone in the program needed. That was their way of helping support those who were in the program trying to kick the addiction that they had.

I think this is a really important bill, because it talks about how we have people who are dealing with addiction problems, and that's very difficult for them. Because there are people out there who want to make lots of money any way that they can, unfortunately, they prey on people with addiction issues. This bill helps with that because it sets out a rule that says that in order to receive a fentanyl patch, you have to hand one in. I think that's a really good control to help those people who are suffering with addiction issues.

I think it also speaks volumes to trying to curtail criminal activity around people getting hold of prescription drugs and selling them to others. I know, and I'm sure it's across the province, there were issues around people getting prescriptions for stuff like OxyContin or oxycodone, and they would go into their workplace and would sell off the pills to people. They were making money that way. I think that's really an unfortunate way for anybody to try to make money, and it's very dangerous—incredibly dangerous.

So I think that with something like fentanyl patches—and this is a lot of new information for me. I wasn't aware that fentanyl patches were used for severe and chronic pain. We all know that people who suffer with chronic pain—that's not something anybody would want to live with, and we certainly want them supported. But I didn't realize that these patches were 100 times stronger than morphine or 40 times stronger than heroin. That's

startling to me, to think that there are people out there who would take advantage of someone with an addiction issue and take something like a fentanyl patch and sell it to them to make money for their own benefit, to do whatever it is they want to do with that money, and essentially build on those addictions. Even with people who have legitimate reasons for using fentanyl patches, there's always a concern of them developing an addiction. Having to return patches that have been used in order to get patches is definitely another way for the medical professionals to keep an eye on somebody to make sure that there isn't an issue developing and to make sure that these are being used the way that they're supposed to be.

I also found it interesting that even after they are used—and used properly, the way they are supposed to be—when it's time to dispose of them or discard them, there's still enough medication on them to cause an overdose. So there are concerns for me around that. Unfortunately, I think every community has homeless people, and that's certainly something that we don't want to see. But unfortunately, we do have homeless people, and often you will find them accessing, through restaurants or through pharmacies or wherever, private garbage disposals. It's shocking to me that they could potentially come across something like this that somebody has used, thought it safe to get rid of, thrown it into a garbage, and now they've come across it and they don't think anything of using it. They don't realize just how dangerous it is for them to be using these. There's always concern about people accessing medication that was meant for somebody else. There's always concern about someone using medication that would have an adverse effect against something else that they're using when they are mixing medications. To think that somebody could come across something, think it's harmless and use it and could lose their life over it is something that we definitely would like to reduce.

The member from Nipissing also talked about criminal activity, such as taking these patches and selling them for profit. Having been the community safety and corrections critic, I can speak to the challenges they face inside our correctional services on a daily basis. Their resources are stretched very thin already. They face many challenges. They have those with mental health issues who are put in facilities and who perhaps should be redirected into some sort of community support program rather than put into a correctional facility. They have many people with addiction issues who will do anything to feed their addiction, and ultimately break the law and end up in a correctional facility. These are people who actually could also benefit from supports in the community, something like the Salvation Army rehabilitation program.

I think that something like this, where a patch has to be handed in before one is given out, would help address that issue.

1510

In correctional facilities, they are always facing issues with people smuggling drugs in for the inmates, which

always causes issues. Something like this would stop something like fentanyl patches from making it into the correctional system. You may have people with addiction issues already in the system, and now you have somebody who is bringing in these fentanyl patches, smuggling them into a correctional facility and feeding into that addiction. Those people tend to cause more issues for the correctional officers in the system. We certainly don't want to be putting the front-line staff in our correctional facilities at any more risk than they already are, and we certainly don't want people who are in correctional services who have addiction issues having any more access to the very things that caused their addiction issues.

I appreciate the time to comment. I think other members also have comments, so I'll wrap it up for now.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm pleased to rise to speak to private member's Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches, brought forward by the member for Nipissing, and also to speak to some of the points that the member from Windsor West spoke to.

Mr. Speaker, it was really interesting, as well as a learning process, to hear some of the stories that the member from Nipissing shared, and they certainly point to the need for some action in this direction.

Essentially, what Bill 33 tries to do is legislate something that's already being supported by this government on a voluntary basis, which is the fentanyl Patch 4 Patch program that the member for Nipissing referred to. As he mentioned, it's a program that's already in place. It's voluntary. A number of municipali Patch 4 Patch patch-for-patch program. What the legislation would do is make it mandatory and remove the patchwork. I believe that his bill has some merit and is definitely worth considering.

Mr. Speaker, I think I would be remiss if at this point I didn't speak to a few of the things the government is doing on this issue. A core pillar of our narcotics strategy is the creation of a narcotics monitoring system that collects and analyzes pharmacists' dispensing data. The information that is collected by the narcotics monitoring system is then used to detect unusual or inappropriate behaviour, identify trends, enhance education initiatives and develop harm reduction strategies. By understanding how monitored drugs are being prescribed and dispensed, and to whom, the ministry can help make the prescribing, dispensing and use of monitored drugs safer and more secure.

As a matter of fact, since May 14, 2012, all Ontario pharmacies—that's over 3,600 dispensers—are already submitting dispensing data about monitored drugs to the Narcotics Monitoring System. In the fall of 2013, we established the Narcotics Monitoring Working Group, which includes experts who are making recommendations on potential education strategies and initiatives to reduce narcotics addiction.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a worthy initiative, but the fact is that no matter how much we legislate, no

matter how much we monitor, we also have to focus on education and some of the root causes, something to which the member from Windsor West spoke eloquently. To that end, I would like to speak a little bit about what our government has been doing in trying to not only look at how we can monitor or legislate around addiction, but also at what we can do to address those root causes, because I believe that is where the real solution is. The real solution is in addressing the root causes of mental health and addiction. The real solution is in educating people on the potential harm of addiction or misuse of drugs.

It's ironic that so many of these drugs, including fentanyl, are put on the market to help make people's lives better, but sometimes, because of misuse, end up actually hurting people.

As all of us know in this House, our government has been very active on the mental health and addictions file. Since 2003, funding for mental health and addiction services has increased by over \$506 million to a total of \$1 billion, including our plan to increase funding by \$220 million over three years as we renew our commitment to our mental health and addictions strategy. It has provided, so far, more than 50,000 additional children and youth with access to mental health and addictions services.

In November 2014, we announced phase 2 of Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy. Phase 2 has five pillars: promoting resiliency and well-being in all Ontarians; ensuring early identification and intervention; expanding housing, employment supports, and diversion and transitions from the justice system; ensuring the right services at the right time and in the right place; and funding based on need and quality.

All of that said, I would like to reiterate one more time and applaud the member from Nipissing for bringing this legislation forward. It builds on the voluntary strategy that this government already supports, and I believe it merits worthy consideration.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member from Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton—Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You got it, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much. I am pleased to rise today to speak to the bill brought forward by my colleague the member from Nipissing, Safeguarding our Communities Act (Fentanyl Patch for Patch Return Policy). We've heard a lot about this in many of our communities. Basically, the bill saying "patch for patch" is, when a patch is dispensed, they have to get the old patch back. This is to control the substance of fentanyl.

Not everybody knows what fentanyl is, but when OxyContin became harder to get on the streets because of changing legislation, drug users would turn to the fentanyl patch. Fentanyl is a narcotic, but it's generally prescribed as a slow-release form of pain medication. About three days' worth of medication is in the patch. It was used for pain control. When the need for drugs or a high by drug users came in, fentanyl patches were highly

sought after. They would find who was using the patches and they would cut them up into little pieces. They could apply it to their gums to absorb it in their mouths, or sometimes they would smoke the medication.

In my community of Brock township, I was getting some phone calls about the apparent suicides or maybe overdoses in that community. It was on the border of Brock and York region, kind of the Beaverton, Georgina, Sutton area. I phoned up the mayor at the time, Terry Clayton, who is in the gallery with us today, and he contacted, I believe, a Durham region police officer. They're also represented here today with Inspector James Stuart-Haass. So they have come down today, and they are an example of a community where we saw something happening that was, as the mayor said, a "community tragedy," and how do we address this?

I can't say how proud I am of the community that came together with the Durham region police, the York region police. At the first meeting there were crown attorneys there; the coroner's office was there; of course, the municipal council, the health unit, the high school of Brock township, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the Pinewood Centre for Addictions were there. It was just amazing that they came together to say what was happening, because in that 18-month period, eight people had died, and none of those eight people had prescriptions for the drug, the fentanyl patch.

I wanted to put that into perspective because it's not about the drug itself; it's about the control of the drug. It's narcotics safety and it's public safety. That was covered in our newspaper, the Brock Citizen at the time. I've asked about and followed this as it's proceeded since—I believe that we started to get on this in that area in 2013. Now, when I check in with the Durham region police, they're saying that people are actually attempting to forge prescriptions, which is a good sign. They're not able to get them off the street, is what we're saying. So it is a good sign.

1520

The member from Nipissing said that North Bay was the first to start this Patch 4 Patch program—his guests are here, and I welcome them also to the Legislature; I think Durham region was the third. Peterborough now has it also. My local pharmacist in Lindsay, Cathy Puffer, was named Canadian Pharmacist of the Year by the Canadian Pharmacists Association, and she had brought it over to Lindsay and the Kawartha Lakes area, the Patch 4 Patch program.

It's reducing the accidental fentanyl patch overdoses because, of course, people who are using drugs are in a state of mind—mental health and addictions. They don't realize the potency of this fentanyl patch.

I have had deaths located in Kawartha Lakes also that are connected to overdose. One tragic story is that the young man was working to get off his addictions. He was trying to work with a methadone clinic. It's very difficult, fighting addictions. He was having trouble. He had no idea of the potency of the patch that he bought on the

street. Unfortunately, his parents went to his apartment in Lindsay and found that he had passed away. That is the incident that the member from Nipissing brought forward in the examples from his home: that this just occurs now; it is evolving. These community members that I mentioned, the pharmacists involved, all do this voluntarily, which is great, but the member here is asking for some legislative help.

We as provincial policy-makers need to look at this, and I think we should all today agree that the private member's bill he has brought forward and rightfully named the Safeguarding our Communities Act, when brought into law, will help these great community people, the pharmacists, the health care providers, the police services, the health units. It will help them to stop this terrible tragedy that does occur in our communities. I hope, just even by highlighting it here in the Legislature, that more communities want to come on board.

I know it was mentioned that Deputy Chief Burns at the time said that "the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police is working on a province-wide strategy on fentanyl."

I think here, today, if we can all agree that this is a good piece of legislation—and there are actually many nurses in the Legislature this time, but even today, they are nodding their heads; we see it as health care providers—and it's something that needs to be addressed. I commend the member from Nipissing for bringing such effective legislation forward.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very for the time and thank you to our guests for coming today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I, too, want to congratulate the member for Nipissing for bringing forward the Safeguarding our Communities Act.

When we talk about a fentanyl patch, it is important medication for people who have severe, chronic pain. You don't get to that kind of medication as a first line. People, for many different reasons—through accidents, through severe diseases—just cannot bear to live with pain anymore. As they go through the system, they will go from different classes and categories of painkillers. I would say that fentanyl patches are kind of at the end of that road, where you have tried other opiates, you have tried other narcotics, and then you end up on that type of medication, often with other systems to help you support your pain. Then they thrive, and then, finally, they can resume—sort of—the normal activities of daily living, and their pain is under control.

So is this medication important? Yes, absolutely. The problem is that, as has been said before, it is very potent. If you have not had this buildup of opiate medication in your system and you put this on the first time, you are at really high risk of dying. Your brain will stop you from breathing. All of a sudden you will breathe very, very shallowly or you will breathe, then forget to breathe for a couple of minutes, then take another breath and then—you die. It is as simple as that. Your friends may all be

high around you and partying, but you become very quiet and you suddenly stop breathing. And unless somebody dials 911 and knows how to do serious first aid, you will die.

I looked at a number of communities that have passed this: Wawa, Dubreuilville, Durham, Guelph, Peterborough and, certainly, North Bay, which was the first one. My community, the city of Greater Sudbury, is looking at this. The pattern is always the same. Those communities came to the decision to put the Patch 4 Patch system in place after tragedy struck, after the life—usually of a young, thriving person—is taken away.

Let's be a little bit more proactive about this. Let's do a little bit of health promotion. Let's put this system that has been proven to work to save lives—let's implement it throughout Ontario. Let's not wait until there are 15, 20, 30, hundreds more deaths from the misuse of that medication before we actually act. We have a chance to save lives today, and this is by passing this bill. I hope we do this quickly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Our government thinks addiction is a very significant and complex issue that we take very seriously. Our government is committed to reducing and preventing addictions in Ontario in efforts to promote the overall health and safety of all Ontarians.

A core pillar of our narcotics strategy is the creation of a narcotics monitoring system that collects and analyzes pharmacists' dispensing data. This program encourages health care providers to require used fentanyl patches to be returned prior to dispensing refills for fentanyl. This is a voluntary program and includes a number of elements that are mentioned in Bill 33. The program is showing promise in reducing the diversion and misuse of fentanyl in a number of communities that have implemented the program.

Since May 14, 2012, all Ontario pharmacies are submitting dispensing data about monitored drugs to the NMS.

In the fall of 2013, we established a Narcotics Monitoring Working Group, which includes experts who are making recommendations on potential education strategies and initiatives to reduce narcotics and addictions.

In April 2014, we launched a project called ECHO—Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes—which increases provider education in appropriate prescribing and dispensing.

Our Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy is our plan to provide supports to Ontarians who need them if they experience an addiction at any point throughout their lives.

We have invested in mental health and addiction, and we know that one out of five Ontarians will experience a mental health illness in their lifetime, which could relate back to addictions. That's why our government created a Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, to support Ontarians from childhood to old age with mental health issues and with addiction issues.

Since 2003, funding for mental health and addiction services has been increased by over \$506 million, to a total of \$1 billion. Our plan is to increase funding by \$220 million over three years as we renew our commitment to our mental health and addictions strategy.

The first three years of our strategy is focused on the early years of life. It has provided more than 50,000 additional children and youth with access to mental health and addiction services.

In November 2014, we announced our expansion of Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy, phase 2. Phase 2 better addresses access, quality and value by focusing on five strategic goals that will improve our system.

We will remain committed to controlling addiction, and that's why we need to control the dispensing of this specific patch.

1530

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's a privilege to rise today to add my comments to Bill 33, the Safeguarding our Communities Act (Fentanyl Patch for Patch Return Policy). I want to thank and congratulate the member from Nipissing for bringing this bill that concerns a dangerous issue affecting many Ontarians today. It's unfortunate that a drug that is truly the last resort for the managing of pain for many Ontarians is being converted and redistributed in the streets in a very dangerous form to become the drug of choice for many addicts.

Fentanyl made by pharmaceutical companies is used to treat severe pain and to manage pain after surgery. Illegally-made fentanyl is made in drug labs and sold in pill and powder form. The pain-killing fentanyl is being increasingly used in the streets and, experts warn, is a drug that is cheaper and 100 times more potent than morphine.

The drug that started to show up in the streets of Toronto and other North American cities is 750 times stronger than codeine, according to Dr. Michelle Arnot, a professor of pharmacology at the University of Toronto.

Police in Alberta said they are seizing record amounts of fentanyl around Alberta, including more than 88,000 tablets since last April.

RCMP Deputy Commissioner Marianne Ryan says that organized crime is the driving force behind the making and marketing of the drug known in the street as "greenies."

Earlier this year the British Columbia Coroners Service said that fentanyl was detected in about a quarter of the 330 overdose deaths in the province last year, compared to just 5% in 2012.

Matthew Young, with the Canadian Centre for Substance Abuse, said that his group issued an alert in June 2013 that the illicit fentanyl made in organized crime labs posed a danger. The centre is still working to compile hard information on the deaths across Canada that are linked to the use of this drug, but so far reliable data is not available.

Speaker, this bill proposes a simple, cost-effective way to help combat the illegal use of fentanyl and the growing threat to communities, especially youth. We must act now. Where this practice of patch-for-patch dispensing of the drug has been used, the availability has been curbed, making the drug much harder to get. That's what it's all really about: making it much harder for people to get this drug.

Getting as much of the drug off the street as possible is truly a goal that we must strive for. I'm happy to hear that the debate today is in support for the Patch 4 Patch program and that it doesn't hinder the proper or legal use of the drug for people who need it to manage pain. Certainly, we must not forget them as well, as they are usually in severe pain and this drug is something that is shown to have positive effects.

Unfortunately, the fact of society is that there's always someone who is willing to take advantage of people who are in dire straits. We see that with fentanyl as well. It is important to give our police as many tools as possible to combat the illegal trafficking of illicit goods, in this case drugs.

In SD&G we see the side effects of organized crime every day with the contraband cigarettes. In speaking with the special detachment of the OPP, RCMP and QPP officers in our riding, they talk about organized crime and how it generally moves into other fields. In our case it moves from tobacco to firearms and even into human smuggling. So it's not just the case of fentanyl. When we set up these networks, they generally hurt society in many ways.

The quick money appeals to our youth, and that's another threat. We see our youth get involved. They end up generally with a record, a record that stays with them for life. So there are lots of things other than just the use or crime that affect our communities.

Speaker, it's great to see and I look forward to voting on this bill later on this afternoon. I think it's something that the members of this House can get together on and really make a difference. It's something that's easy to do, it's cost-effective and it gives another tool for our law enforcement officers, actually, to make a difference in the community.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon to speak about Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches. Mr. Speaker, let me begin my remarks by thanking the member opposite from Nipissing for bringing this particular bill to our attention.

As a former registered nurse, I spent the latter part of my career before coming here to the chamber dealing with this particular narcotic. This is a common analgesic that we give to post-operative patients for hip and knee replacement and is very commonly dispensed.

While listening attentively to my colleague opposite talking about the bill and his passion for making sure that every young Ontarian, all Ontarians in general, not be part of this addiction and the abuse of this particular

drug—this prescribed medication. But the bill in itself focuses only on the dispenser and the prescriber—meaning physicians and pharmacists, yet his comments to us this afternoon talk about public education, use and misuse—because it is absolutely correct that we need to do a better job collectively, not just in this chamber but province-wide, in terms of public education about narcotics in general.

I know that the member opposite, from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, talked about different ways—what we call the route—the pharmacokinetics of how to administer the fentanyl patch. There are different ways: You can do an IM; an IV; transdermal—that's when we talk about the patches; transmucosal—that's underneath the tongue; and what have you.

The other very serious part about this medication, the member opposite does not really know. As a nurse, we spend a lot of time educating our patients and individuals who are using this kind of narcotic—the whole issue of the onset of the medication and the duration of this medication. In the case of a patch—the patch in itself, the fentanyl patch—the duration is 72 hours. So when someone is applying this particular medication, it is the responsibility of the applicant, in the case of nurses; or the prescribers, the physician; or the dispenser, the pharmacist—must educate the patient. As much as he talks about, in the bill, that there we will do a lot of public education, nowhere in Bill 33 talks about that. When this bill gets discharged to the committee, I would like to see more conversation about that.

I was very pleased that the member opposite did have a conversation with the College of Pharmacists and the College of Physicians and Surgeons, but it's beyond that, because you need all the regulated health professionals. I know that, every day, nurse practitioners, nurses, and other disciplines—dentists—will be using this kind of narcotic, the opiate family, to make sure to provide pain relief for the patient.

The other big portion of this particular bill—I'm pleased that the member opposite is having the conversation about the whole issue of addiction—addiction in general. The associate minister, this afternoon, talked about that we need to spend more time, as well as focusing on how to reduce addiction, and how you work with the law enforcement folks to get this off the streets. We've got to get to the bottom of prevention and to the root of the problem of addiction. At the end of the day, a child does not become an addict; these are learned behaviours. There's a root to this problem. Let's focus on the prevention, because if the focus is almost on the tertiary level—in terms of the criminal justice system or in the case of the addiction—it's too late. Let's put more resources and more energy, and focus on the prevention and the education piece.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to support the comments and the proposed Bill 33.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member from Nipissing. You have two minutes for your response.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: First, I want to thank the additional speakers from Windsor West, the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lake–Brock, and the members from Nickel Belt, Brampton–Springdale, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, and Scarborough–Agincourt. Thank you for speaking in favour of this bill.

Speaker, the legislation is crafted to give the flexibility to make regulations as is seen fit. This is in consultation with the various stakeholders. I truly hope that our members will make this issue a priority and that it becomes a priority within the ministry. I know that Sherry Albert from New Liskeard hopes that too.

I urge all members of all parties in the House today to support Bill 33. We've heard from one side that talked about good control to help those suffering. Fentanyl addiction is taking advantage of someone with an addiction issue. They talked about the criminality.

1540

The member from Nickel Belt said, "Let's not wait for tragedy to strike again." She also reminded us that it's voluntary today but that it needs to be brought into law.

Again, I urge all members of all parties in the House today to support Bill 33 and the fentanyl Patch 4 Patch program so that we can start combating fentanyl abuse and its terrible consequences province-wide.

Again, I want to thank Pat Cliche, my lifelong friend from North Bay. I want to thank the detective constables from North Bay for being here and our police forces from Durham who are here and the supporting mayors and people who have assisted us in getting the bill this far. Speaker, thank you very kindly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We will take the vote on this item at the end of private members' business.

OIL, GAS AND SALT RESOURCES
AMENDMENT ACT
(ANTI-FRACKING), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES RESSOURCES
EN PÉTROLE, EN GAZ ET EN SEL
(ANTI-FRACTURATION)

Mr. Tabuns moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to amend the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and related activities / Projet de loi 82, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en pétrole, en gaz et en sel en vue d'interdire la fracturation hydraulique et les activités connexes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker, and my thanks to the Clerks for their advice on this matter.

On a cold day in 2009—January 1, to be exact—Norma Fiorentino's backyard water well blew up in

Dimock, Pennsylvania. National Public Radio reported at the time: "Fiorentino's drinking water well was a time bomb. For weeks, workers in her small northeastern Pennsylvania town had been plumbing natural gas deposits from a drilling rig a few hundred yards away... Somehow, stray gas worked into tiny crevasses in the rock, leaking upward into the aquifer and slipping quietly into Fiorentino's well." Then apparently a spark from her pump caused a blast that "tossed aside a concrete slab weighing several thousand pounds."

Ms. Fiorentino lives within a nine-square-mile area where Pennsylvania regulators have banned new gas wells after several high-profile cases of contamination led to a \$4.1-million settlement against the gas company.

Water or gas. That's our choice, Speaker: water or gas.

The bill before us today would not stop fracturing of rock to allow farmers and others to sink water wells. The bill before us would not stop the common practice of fracturing the rock at the bottom of a vertical oil or gas well. It would not stop current oil or gas drilling and production in Ontario.

It would block high-volume hydraulic fracturing for gas and oil, which most people refer to as fracking. It would ensure that any future interest in fracking for gas in Ontario, high-volume hydraulic fracturing, would be subject to a review by the Legislature—not just by the government of the day meeting in cabinet, but the Legislature itself.

The choice before us is water or gas. You can pick one or the other, but you can't have both. In some jurisdictions, governments have opted for gas. They've allowed high-volume fracking. That is their choice. They sell gas to us or to others, but someday they will have to buy their water.

Quebec faced this choice and had a review done by its environmental review board. They found that "the activities of the industry could engender consequences for the quality of the environment, particularly on the quality of surface and underground water." Water or gas.

In 2011, the US Academy of Sciences released the methane contamination of drinking water study. They looked in northeastern Pennsylvania and upstate New York—this was in 2011. They found "systematic evidence for methane contamination of drinking water associated with shale-gas extraction," and in some cases, methane levels that were a potential explosion hazard.

The state of New York reviewed the situation and legislated a moratorium. Here is a bit of what their 2014 study said: "The overall weight of the evidence ... in this public health review demonstrates that there are significant uncertainties about ... the effectiveness of some of the mitigation measures in reducing or preventing ... impacts which could adversely affect public health."

There's not enough knowledge of the industry to properly regulate it, control it and protect the public and the environment. They saw risks to drinking water from underground migration of methane and/or fracking chemicals associated with faulty well construction. Speaker, our choice is water or gas.

People have been looking at this issue in Ontario as well. The Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, released his 2010 annual report, *Engaging Solutions*. He talked about gas fracking. He wrote, “Given the close proximity of Ontario’s shale formations to groundwater supplies, such development must be cognizant of the reality that, once groundwater is contaminated, remediation may be prohibitively expensive.”

It’s not just the Environmental Commissioner who is concerned. In December 2013, the Manitoulin Expositor reported, “The Chiefs of Ontario have made it clear they are opposed to fracking taking place anywhere in Ontario, including Manitoulin.”

It’s our choice, Speaker: water or gas?

The Council of Canadians and the Toronto Environmental Alliance support this bill. I want to thank them and other environmental activists for speaking up on this issue.

We don’t need to reinvent the wheel. Quebec and New Brunswick went through the political turmoil that comes with the hydraulic fracturing industry. Quebec responded. They did a study. They concluded that they had to block this industry. Unfortunately, the industry had already started up, so they got stuck with a quarter-billion-dollar lawsuit. If you don’t act quickly, you start getting into legal problems. If the industry gets in first, you’re going to have to pay compensation or you’re going to have to go through a long legal battle to protect the public interest.

There is no legal block to fracking in Ontario today. The stated position of the Minister of Natural Resources is as follows: “At this time, the ministry would not consider applications for the use of high-volume hydraulic fracturing before proper consultations with stakeholders, aboriginal communities, and the public are conducted to ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect the environment.”

“At this time” is no protection. Tomorrow may be another story. Next month may be another story. Next year may be another story. The minister doesn’t have to come back to the Legislature for approval. He isn’t legally required to have any hearings. It is a decision, as they say, that will be taken at the pleasure of the government.

There are a lot of arguments being made by gas lobbyists against our taking action. Some lobbyists say that there isn’t enough gas in Ontario to make hydraulic fracturing viable—not commercially interesting—but that didn’t protect Maryland. Maryland has a small tip of the Marcellus Shale—the richest shale—in its western region. The exploitation of that small bit of shale led to huge conflict in Maryland and a vote in the Legislature to put a moratorium on fracking. We have a tip of the Marcellus Shale running into the southern end of Ontario. It doesn’t take a lot for someone to have interest.

If there is too little to exploit, why is it that gas lobbyists are sticking their nose into our business? Let them run their industry; let them sell their product. Let us make our laws about protecting our own environment.

The other argument they make is that we will be looking at higher gas prices if we somehow discourage the frackers. I don’t think the gas industry has been up front with people about the risk of higher prices that are inherent in this industry.

1550

Many commentators in the United States have expressed their concern about the precarious state of the fracking industry. One article published by Bloomberg News on April 30 last year was entitled, “Shale Drillers Feast on Junk Debt to Stay on Treadmill,” and they talked about Rice Energy Inc., a natural gas producer with risky credit that “raised \$900 million in three days this month.” That was April of last year. Not bad, especially since it has lost money three years in a row and has drilled fewer than 50 wells—most named after superheroes and monster trucks. They said they will spend \$4.09 for every buck they earn in 2014.

They quoted Tim Gramatovich, who helps manage more than \$800 million as chief investment manager at Peritus Asset Management: “There’s a lot of Kool-Aid that’s being drunk now by investors.” Rice Energy’s bond offering a year ago was rated at CCC+ by Standard and Poor’s. That’s seven steps below investment grade. Most pension funds, most insurance companies wouldn’t be allowed to buy this kind of investment. In a related Bloomberg article, it was reported that Standard and Poor’s says that of the 97 energy exploration and production companies it grades, 75 are rated below investment grade.

It’s not just one company; it’s a whole industry that floats on junk bonds. If there’s as much oil and gas as the shale industry says there is, then why are their investments speculative? Why, Speaker? Maybe they know something about the long-run production that the rest of us should know.

The industry says there are huge amounts of gas, but the well-respected journal *Nature* published an article in December called “Natural Gas: The Fracking Fallacy.” They reported that companies are betting big on natural gas, investing, in the United States, hundreds of billions of dollars in new plants that rely on natural gas: fertilizer plants, chemical plants, electricity generation. The industry is working very hard to increase demand dramatically, and we all know what happens when demand is increased dramatically: The price follows.

When academics reanalyzed the data, they found that there are substantial risks here for society as a whole—very substantial risks. A lot of people have been making risky bets on shale gas. Local oil and gas interests want us to bet big on it as well. They want to make sure they can get at the last dregs of gas here in Ontario, should prices go through the roof. They don’t want the Legislature to be an obstacle.

Speaker, the choice before us is simple: Protect our water and farmland or stand aside while the gas fracking industry expands into Ontario. I don’t think we need a long debate to settle this question. I urge all members of the Legislature to support my Bill 82 so that Ontario can protect itself and set its own environmental laws.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's my pleasure to rise today in the House and speak to Bill 82, the anti-fracking bill before us, and in so doing serve to articulate some important messages that will allow us to frame this conversation from our point of view.

Protecting our environment and our water is a top priority for our government. There are currently no applications before the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry requesting approval to explore for shale gas or oil, or to use high-volume hydraulic fracturing, commonly known as fracking. At this time, the ministry would not consider applications for the use of high-volume hydraulic fracturing before proper consultations with stakeholders, aboriginal communities and the public are conducted to ensure that adequate measures are in place to protect the environment. Staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change will continue to monitor the latest developments and research in other jurisdictions.

It's important to underscore that fracking is not occurring anywhere in Ontario. Currently, there are no applications—as I just mentioned—before the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry requesting approval to explore for shale gas or oil, or for the use of fracking. Although Ontario has some bedrock units similar to gas-producing shale rocks located in the United States and Quebec, at this time there is no indication that Ontario hosts economic reserves of shale gas.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry has a mature regulatory framework—and this is critically important—that is in place and that reflects Ontario's broad experience regarding the oil and gas industry. Under the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act, or the OGSRA, all oil and gas wells, including exploratory wells, must be licensed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry for drilling, operation and plugging. The OGSRA authorizes the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to attach conditions to licenses to ensure the establishment, operation and plugging of wells is done safely and in an environmentally-sensitive manner.

Further protections include the Clean Water Act, which ensures communities protect their drinking water supplies through prevention by developing collaborative watershed-based plans that are locally driven and based on science. Despite this important protection, it is important, Speaker, to note that unfortunately both opposition parties voted against the Clean Water Act and taking stronger measures to protect our drinking water. The opposition PC Party voted against protecting our Great Lakes and failed to adequately protect drinking water systems while in government.

Our government is committed to ensuring Ontarians continue to enjoy some of the cleanest drinking water in North America. The Great Lakes are vitally important to the people of Ontario for our drinking water, our quality of life and prosperity. We need to restore them now to

continue to enjoy their benefits for this and future generations. That is why we reintroduced a strengthened Great Lakes Protection Act this year which recognizes the importance of the Great Lakes to Ontario's economy, environment and the health of our citizens. As the member for Burlington, which enjoys a riding on the shores of Lake Ontario, I can tell you that the economy related to our Great Lakes is of critical importance to the citizens of my riding.

In closing, I want to underscore that our government enjoys excellent working relationships with environmental groups, who are watchful, mindful and vigilant. We are proud of our working relationships with industry as well. They have invested significantly in our province's economic development and prosperity.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I want to acknowledge right off the get-go that I'll be splitting my time with the members for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Chatham–Kent–Essex and Niagara West–Glanbrook.

As I rise today to respond to Bill 82 from the member from Toronto–Danforth, I'm very concerned that this bill will have a negative impact on the province of Ontario, its economy. As such, I'll say right now I will not be supporting this bill, and I strongly urge every member of the Legislature that's here to follow suit.

Currently in Ontario there are zero shale gas developments and zero viable opportunities, according to the minister himself, for shale gas development. As such, Bill 82 is completely unnecessary. Mr. Speaker, it sends the wrong message to an industry that has invested billions of dollars in infrastructure and employs thousands of individuals in communities right across this province, and in my own as well. The fact of the matter is that hydraulic fracture treatment of oil and natural gas wells to improve production rates has been in use in this province, as a couple of speakers have already said, for more than 60 years. This practice has also been safely used in Ontario for conventional vertical wells for almost as long. In southwestern Ontario, more than 140 companies are in the oil and natural gas business, and they contribute over \$4 billion to the oil and gas sector and to the provincial economy.

Natural gas from shale formations in the northeastern United States already makes up—and this is important—50% of the gas that's used in Ontario at this time. Residents of Toronto and other parts of Ontario are already benefiting from gas fracture that's taking place already. I don't know whether that's a dog-in-the-manger attitude, that we've got it and we don't want the rest of the people in rural Ontario to. Many people in rural Ontario would like to have gas, and there's gas there. There's a surplus of gas that we would like to make available to rural Ontario.

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Premier herself said they want to expand

agriculture in Ontario. They want to see the agricultural economy improve. The only way they're going to do that, to heat their homes and their barns and to dry grain, is with access to a surplus of natural gas which is available. I wanted to get that on the record.

Also, being parochial, in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton shale gas has made a world of difference. It's been a game-changer in the petrolchemical industry. They were on their last legs prior to 2007-08.

1600

Before I came to this House—some people said it got better after I left, but anyway, when I left to come here, shale gas was just coming on stream in the northeastern United States. The company I worked for, Nova Chemicals, had access to that Marcellus Shale. They've spent hundreds of millions of dollars investing in the local Ontario economy in Sarnia, and there is going to be more money spent there, because they've got access to this cheap form of energy. The opportunity to lower energy rates and for economic growth and increased investment is theirs for the taking.

I'm certain that if the member from Toronto–Danforth asked his colleagues from rural Ontario, like the members from Timmins–James Bay, Kenora–Rainy River, Timiskaming–Cochrane, Algoma–Manitoulin, Nickel Belt and many others, they would say they'd like access to natural gas for their municipalities. They don't have it today, but they'd like to get it. Also for the members across the aisle, I know there are members from Thunder Bay–Superior North, Sault Ste. Marie, Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, and Sudbury who also need natural gas in their ridings.

As I said, I'm going to share my time with my colleague. At this time, we will not be supporting this bill. Those are the reasons why. I could go on at great length, but my time is limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm honoured to be able to stand here today and bring the voice of the environmental community in Windsor and Essex county to this discussion on Bill 82, the anti-fracking bill. I've kept an open mind on the issue, and I hope other members have as well.

I first raised a question on this in the House back on the 9th of December, the day the Auditor General brought in her report. My question to the Premier was: Would we allow the examples set in Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and place a moratorium on fracking in Ontario? The answer given by the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry was that there was no need because there was no fracking under way, and if anyone applied for a fracking licence, it would require a legislative change.

I urged the minister to act anyway, because of the lawsuits that have been launched in the United States claiming Quebec had no right to interfere with an American company wanting to frack below the St. Lawrence River, which leads us today to Bill 82, thanks to the member from Toronto–Danforth, Mr. Tabuns.

Speaker, I don't have to tell you how easy it is to get on the Internet these days and do a search on fracking. Just a few strokes of the keyboard and you can get it. I found there are 500,000 fracking wells in America, each requiring 400 tanker loads of water. I won't burden you with the math, Speaker, but think about it: 500,000 wells, each with 400 tanker trucks back and forth, day after day. That's a lot of air pollution at a time when most of us are expressing grave concern about greenhouse gases.

To complete each fracking job, it takes anywhere from one million to eight million gallons of water, water that will never be used for drinking or recreational purposes again. That water is mixed with sand and chemicals to create what is known as a fracking fluid. For each of these 500,000 wells, it takes about 40,000 gallons of fracking fluid.

At this point, let me point out that each of those wells can be fracked at least 18 times. If you're still doing the math on 500,000 wells, 400 tanker trucks and all of that, it adds up. I won't bother you with the math. They're talking about 72 trillion gallons of water, 360 billion gallons of chemicals. It boggles the mind.

When scientists look at the content in this chemical cocktail, there are 600 chemicals used in fracking fluid. I hope it shocks you, Speaker. It shocked me. There are known carcinogens and toxins in that fracking fluid: lead, mercury, uranium, radium, methanol, formaldehyde and hydrochloric acid.

So they take this chemical cocktail; they flush it down. It goes a mile or two beneath the surface. Pressurized water comes out, then fractures the rock or splinters it, and then the natural gas comes in. It sounds simple, except for the methane gas and toxic chemicals getting in below the earth and staying there, contaminating the groundwater.

When scientists sample the methane in wells used for drinking water near these fracking sites, the methane levels are as much as 17 times higher than in water wells further away. The scientists have documented this. They say that contaminated well water can cause sensory, respiratory and neurological damage.

We've mentioned the huge amounts of water that's required in each of these wells. Only 30% to 50% of that water—the water that's mixed with sand and chemicals—is recovered. The rest stays below the surface, and it's not biodegradable. The recovered water—let's not even call it water; it's more waste fluid—is brought up, trucked away and dumped in open-air pits to evaporate. Of course, as the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change will tell you, this contaminated fluid will release into the air harmful volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. These VOCs contaminate the air and trigger acid rain as well as ground-level ozone.

That's where we're at, Speaker. We can sit on these 300,000 barrels of natural gas a day, or we can pay the long-term price to our environment and risk the damage to our natural environment and hope and pray we don't have an accident. I think the price is too high. I think that stuff should stay where it is.

The problem is that this industry has just blossomed. It's out there, but there hasn't been enough scientific evaluation of how it's done and what the repercussions are. We need the science to catch up to the industry on this. We have so many earthquakes all around us. There was one outside Detroit last week—what was it?—4.2 on the Richter scale. We've had earthquakes around Amherstburg and Leamington. They've had them up in Aurora. We don't need to gamble on accidents. We don't need to gamble that an earthquake is somehow going to fracture something below the ground and all of this fluid is going to get into our groundwater.

I hope to have more to say on it later. I know I'm rapidly running out of time here, and I know the member for Parkdale–High Park wants to speak on this issue as well. But I guess if I have any advice at all, it's to go very slow on this. We don't want to allow fracking if it's going to cause long-term damage in this community. It has been banned pretty well everywhere else in our immediate neighbourhoods. We don't want to extend it into Ontario.

Thank you for your time this afternoon, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, one can ask how this House would feel about this bill if Ontarians felt that the province had a sizable oil and gas industry that creates jobs and builds this province. Well, the truth is that Ontario does have a sizable oil and gas industry that does create jobs and builds this province, and Ontario engineers, trades, fabricators, suppliers and service providers do earn their living serving the Ontario oil and gas sector. In fact, oil has been extracted from Ontario for more than 150 years, and oil and gas shale deposits identified in the United States might not stop at the political border that Canada has with the United States.

So would reasonable people acting in a rational manner forswear the responsible and prudent extraction of oil and gas from Ontario sources for all time, knowing fully that the supplies of oil and gas consumed by Ontarians already come from sources whose resources are extracted using shale fracturing techniques?

This proposal by the member for Toronto–Danforth asks Ontarians to assume that petroleum and gas prices will always be low, that the Middle East will never constrict supplies for political and conflict purposes, that economic growth in North America will always be sluggish and that interest rates will never rise. Everyone who has been alive for more than 20 years knows that all of these underlying assumptions are false.

Do you know why your bills for natural gas in recent years have fallen by close to half? It's because of an abundance of supply created by extracting natural gas from shale deposits in North America. The member's bill would expose you to a shortage of supply and raise prices to heat your home in the wintertime. Just this morning, the same member levelled his criticism at our world-class nuclear power industry. So he has come out squarely against the two most economic, abundant and available

sources of electrical and heating energy that we use in the province of Ontario.

Though your natural gas bill doesn't show where your home heating fuel comes from, it's worth letting Ontarians know that half your natural gas comes from sources where it is obtained by shale fracturing—half. Does the member for Toronto–Danforth think it's okay to extract gas by shale fracturing in the United States or in other parts of Canada, but just not in Ontario? Did the member for Toronto–Danforth spend any time at all considering the impact on Ontario's oil and gas sector before drafting this reactionary bill? I actually know the answer to that: He did no consultation whatsoever.

1610

What this means is that this bill proposes to ban a process that is not taking place and for which nobody is applying for a permit. What a slap in the face to rural Ontario, where people expect Ontario gas companies and their government to work with municipalities to extend natural gas pipelines and enable supply into more areas in rural Ontario. Our gas delivery companies—Enbridge, Union Gas and others—have a record of safely, responsibly and economically delivering natural gas here in Ontario that extends back more than a century. Our suppliers have invested billions of dollars in Ontario.

The correct way to deal with oil and gas extraction through shale fracturing is to allow Ontario towns and cities and their people to consider the merits and drawbacks of shale fracturing through a sensible dialogue, such as what would be achieved in the next version of the long-term energy plan, scheduled for 2016. That would be a fair and prudent way of using the ample time that Ontario has to consider how to develop the potential of Ontario's very own prospecting, extraction, refining, distributing and marketing of petroleum resources.

As nobody is extracting oil and gas through shale fracturing, nor is proposing to do so, there is absolutely no need to rush to an arbitrary ban over something that isn't taking place that would certainly prove inappropriate in a broader and more responsible study of how oil and gas should best contribute to Ontario's total energy supply and demand, now and in the decades going forward.

So I cannot and will not support this bill, and I urge members to reject its narrow approach to the Ontario oil and gas sector.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I am a little concerned from what I just heard from the other side. It has not happened very often, but it's happening today. I'm just not sure who is the token and who is speaking on genuine principle. Well, actually, I do know; it's me.

While I admire the passion of my friend from Toronto–Danforth, he's bringing forth a bill that would be, quite simply, bad policy. He doesn't like the practice. I get it. He likes having a warm home, though. As my colleague Bob Bailey said, and the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—Bob and Bob—50% of the gas

that we use today comes from shale deposits in the United States.

I remember early in my career here when the price of natural gas was at least double, maybe almost three times what it is today. We were talking about liquefied natural gas that was going to be our next source of supply because there was, at maximum, maybe 25 to 30 years of gas supply left here in North America. We were going to be bringing that in from the Middle East by ship, liquefied, in tankers. That's the real environmental way to be shipping this stuff, eh? And then we were going to be processing it in ports. All these plants were going to be built on the seacoasts of the country, and we were going to be reprocessing it into a way that we could use it here in our homes.

Then we were talking about—maybe we're looking at gas—\$13 or \$15 natural gas. Today, it averages, depending upon the season, somewhere between just under \$3 up to \$4 a cubic metre. It is the shale discoveries that have allowed that to happen.

One of the biggest problems we have in this province today is the price of electricity. If we didn't have access to cheap natural gas—I know my friend doesn't want to see nuclear power—can you imagine the cost of running the 19 natural gas power plants we have in this province if we were dealing with \$10 or \$13 natural gas? We have to ask ourselves, “Is that really where we can afford to go?”

I absolutely believe that anything that will happen in the future will be done in an absolutely environmentally responsible way. I expect this government or any other government to conduct it in that fashion. This is not going to be a free-for-all. We're going to make sure that the environment is always protected in whatever we happen to do.

But from the point of view of passing a bill such as this—and I understand how he feels about this—once you close the door to this practice, you are never going to re-open it. You will never get it re-opened. It is much easier—there is no fracking going on in Ontario today but we do have to have that option, should we need it. If you close the door to this practice being done in an environmental way, you will never get that door open again. That would be wrong.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I love it when Conservatives and Liberals come out as versions of the same party. It sort of reminds me of what just happened with Bill C-51 federally, where Justin and Harper voted together again. So, together again, Liberals and Conservatives—love it.

Let's talk about what actually was said by the member from Toronto–Danforth. I want to credit him for being attacked by Union Gas, which is a division of Spectra Energy, a large company from Texas. It's not every day that a private member's bill by an opposition member in the province of Ontario brings on the big guns from Texas in the energy department. You've got to love it. And not just any energy company, but one called Spectra.

It reminds me of Spectre—remember, the James Bond controllers of the world, evil genius? Spectre, Spectra; whatever. They're attacking the member from Toronto–Danforth. You know he hit a nerve.

Interjections.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Methinks our friends across the aisle protest too much. We think our friends to the right of me, quite literally, protest too much.

If there's no possibility of fracking happening in Ontario, if there are no asks from any energy company, what's the problem? In fact, after this bill this afternoon, we're going to be debating Bill 9, ending coal. We've already ended coal, but we're going to be talking about ending coal. There we're saying, “We'll never do it again.” Here we're saying, “Please don't do it.”

I don't understand the protest. If there's no threat of fracking, why don't we pass this bill? Because here's the thing, to my friends to the right: It's not viable. I don't think they were listening when the member from Toronto–Danforth talked about junk bonds financing this industry. It is not economically viable. That's number one. Number two, it is not environmentally viable. So you're not helping the economy by having fracking. In fact, lawsuits abound where fracking happens. It doesn't pay. It doesn't make money. It doesn't do any of that.

And you are absolutely hurting the environment. Again, I'm not saying this; David Suzuki has said this.

Mr. John Yakubuski: It must be gospel.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Well, every environmentalist worth their salt, environmentalists who are listening to this, I think would vote with one accord, saying that fracking hurts our water supply; it hurts our environment. As the member from Toronto–Danforth said, you can have one or the other, but you can't have both. You can't have a safe water supply and fracked gas. You can't have both.

This is proven. I know some members to the right like to believe in creationism still. I'm sorry, I'm a United Church minister: Darwin is real. Okay?

On the same issue here, we cannot dispel the scientific facts and we cannot dispel the economic ones either. That's critical. That should be critical for all of us. Where fracking has happened, lawsuits ensue, money is not made, jobs are not created. That's what the member from Toronto–Danforth was talking about.

If we actually speak to the facts, if we actually look at the facts, never mind the historical facts, the realities of what has happened in Quebec, what has happened in other jurisdictions in the States where fracking has happened—and how did they fare? They didn't fare well. It didn't go well. It ended up in lawsuits; it ended up in a problem. Jobs were not created, money was wasted and the environment was hurt. That's really very simple.

1620

So I want to commend him. I think it's amazing when Spectra, from the great state of Texas, takes on a member of the opposition's private member's bill—the evil geniuses who are trying to mastermind the universe. I think that's really cool. I think it's amazing when Union

Gas writes a letter to every single member of this assembly, trying to pressure them to vote against his bill. I would say that for that reason alone we should support it. For that reason alone we should support it, because lobbying and lobbyists should be spoken to and spoken with, but not bent over to—sorry to say, Mr. Speaker—particularly Spectra Energy from Texas.

I have 42 seconds left. All I can appeal to, to those who care about science and care about the economy, is those two salient details. I'm going to say it again: It doesn't make money, it's not good for the economy and it's bad for the environment. Where is the win here? Where is the win? Please, vote with environmentalists. Vote with scientists. Vote with economists. Vote against the fracking industry, supported by junk bonds and not supported by scientists and environmentalists. Do the right thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Look, I wish we had natural gas and shale deposits in the province of Ontario. I wish this debate was of practical consequence, because I tell you, I would put every ounce of energy I have, full throttle, into helping low-income families, into helping those who are out of work, into helping those struggling to pay their bills to benefit from shale gas, the lower costs and the jobs this would bring to the province of Ontario.

I look across the lake, Speaker, to Pennsylvania. What has it done in Pennsylvania? Some 24,000 drilling jobs, some 200,000 jobs in support in trucking and construction, and an average wage in the industry of US\$62,000, US\$20,000 higher than the state average. They have reversed the downward course. I would love to see the rustbelt of southwestern Ontario under government revitalize the opportunity of lower-cost gas at world-class standards.

I look to North Dakota, where the average per capita income has been driven up to the highest in the union by the fracking industry, up 31%, compared to only 10% for no-fracking South Dakota. Leasing fees have given a new lease on life to landowners and struggling farmers. The United States has saved money for a lot of people across the board, particularly those who are seniors and on fixed incomes. It has brought manufacturing from overseas back to the United States. It has strengthened the middle class and it has given them a greater sense of North American energy security.

To date, fracking has been one of the greatest technological revolutions of this 21st century. You look at what steam did, the automobile, the telephone, flight, the Internet: They lowered costs. They improved the quality of life. They changed the way we live. They had a major transformational impact on day-to-day life. So too with fracking and lower-cost gas, but those across the floor want none of it. They are seeing environmental politics trump environmental science.

There are some like Environmental Defense, a very green organization—Mark Brownstein heads up the natural gas sector of the Environmental Defense Fund.

With the right technology, the right management practices and the right regulations, properly enforced, there are things we can do to reduce the risks that are associated with unconventional oil and gas development.

Speaker, I want to see the lower costs, I want to see more jobs, I want to see a boom in manufacturing in the province of Ontario, I want to see us open for this and I want to see us benefit from the technological change that fracking brings to improve families in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Bill 82 seeks to ban the extraction of natural gas or oil in shale. I've got some real concerns as to why this is even necessary in the first place. The bill seeks to ban a practice that doesn't even exist in the province of Ontario.

Union Gas, based in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, employs hundreds of constituents and nearly 2,200 Ontarians across this province overall. They have assured me that they have no immediate plans to extract natural gas from shale, so we struggle to see why this bill is being brought forward at all.

I stand in defence of our natural gas industry, as it is vital to my constituents. Natural gas is, in fact, incredibly important for the agricultural industry, which my riding's economy is based on.

The Ontario Federation of Agriculture went so far as to state that “the extension of natural gas pipelines in rural Ontario is the largest economic stimulation the provincial government can provide.” It would be misguided and reckless to impose such a restrictive ban on a critical industry to address an issue that simply does not exist in Ontario.

Strict, scientifically-based rules and regulations around the safe extraction of natural gas and oil from shale are welcomed by the natural gas industry. Government and stakeholders must work together. That way we can protect our environment while also creating jobs and driving down energy costs and prices in Ontario.

Speaker, while I sincerely respect the member from Toronto–Danforth, I'm concerned that this bill is doing nothing more than fear-mongering against oil and gas. I cannot and will not support Bill 82, the anti-fracking bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I will be voting in favour of the bill that's before the House. Anybody who has had the position of Minister of the Environment where it was a serious position in the government could not possibly do anything other than vote in favour of this particular bill.

Fracking has the following consequences:

- contamination of groundwater;
- methane pollution and its impact on climate change;
- air pollution impacts;
- exposure to toxic chemicals;
- blow-outs due to gas explosion;
- waste disposal;

- large-volume water use in water-deficient regions;
- fracking-induced earthquakes; and
- workplace safety and infrastructure degradation.

I recognize that there's always the attraction when people will say, "Well, it's going to produce jobs." Of course, people like to see that happen, but not with the consequence of degrading our environment.

As for the Conservatives, I'm not surprised. Every time I've watched in this House when there was a choice between protecting the environment and not doing it, the Conservatives consistently chose not to protect the environment. So I'm not surprised by that.

I will say to some of the members who represent areas that have oil and gas that I understand that. As local members, I do not denounce them for that. I just want to say that one of the toughest jobs always in the Legislature is the environment critic for the Progressive Conservative Party, because they have to take the anti-environment stand every time.

First of all, listen to what the member said in his speech. What the bill actually says is of much less consequence in terms of what you people are objecting to than what he actually said he is endeavouring to do with this bill. He outlined a number of things that his bill doesn't do.

But if we are here as stewards of the future to protect our environment, to allow fracking to take place in the province of Ontario with all of the environmental consequences is simply, in my view, not acceptable—not only for this generation, but for future generations.

We have a chance today to do the following: We can either stand up for the environment, protect our water supply and protect ourselves from the potential air pollution that's out there or we can cave in to those who advocate in favour of this. They've called lobbyists from time to time. We can cave in to those who are never concerned about the environmental consequences of anything done in this province.

I think that this bill is worthy of consideration before this House. I hope it goes to committee, where there will be further discussion of it. I certainly will be voting for it at all stages—first reading, second reading, committee and the final stage. Others will make their particular choice, but at least don't block the member from having his bill go to committee for further analysis and consideration.

1630

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Toronto–Danforth. You have two minutes for your reply.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank all the members who rose to speak, whether they disagreed with me or not. I think it's important for us to have a full, thorough, complete debate in this House.

I want to talk to two issues. In this, I'll address the Liberals: Your other parties in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Quebec have had to confront these issues head-on. Liberals in Atlantic Canada have assessed the

kind of turmoil and environmental price that people had to pay for fracking, and they took steps. You, in voting for this measure, would be in line with your colleagues in other parts of Canada. You should be voting for this bill.

But I want to speak to the points raised by my colleagues in the Conservative Party. A number of decades ago, Ontario Hydro had a surplus of electricity, and it set off on a program called Live Better Electrically. It convinced people throughout rural Ontario to get rid of their wood and get rid of their oil and put in baseboard heating. I have to tell you right now, they are paying the price.

They got sucked into propane: "You're paying too much; get into propane." I talked to my colleagues from rural Ontario who find that their constituents are getting hammered because now the market has been saturated. The demand is there, and the price for propane goes up.

The natural gas industry in the United States has a surplus. They're trying to get LNG plants built so they can ship it overseas. They're building tens of billions of dollars of industrial infrastructure in the United States to soak up all that gas. They want to sell to the market here.

I want to say: Energy companies create demand so they can drive up price. What we're doing here today is protecting our environment. We should be aware of the cautionary tales from a few years before.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH
AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES
IN ONTARIO ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION
DES SERVICES DE SANTÉ MENTALE
ET DE LUTTE CONTRE
LES DÉPENDANCES EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 49, standing in the name of Ms. Armstrong. Ms. Armstrong has moved second reading of Bill 95, An Act to continue the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council and to amend the Ombudsman Act in respect of providers of mental health and addictions services.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j)—the member for London–Fanshawe, would you like it referred to a specific committee?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I'd like to send it to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested it be referred to justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.

SAFEGUARDING OUR COMMUNITIES
ACT (FENTANYL PATCH FOR PATCH
RETURN POLICY), 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR PROTÉGER
NOS COLLECTIVITÉS
(POLITIQUE D'ÉCHANGE
DE TIMBRES DE FENTANYL)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Fedeli has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j)—the member for Nipissing—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: SCOFEA.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to SCOFEA. Agreed?

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs—the Clerk wants all the words in Hansard.

Agreed? Agreed.

OIL, GAS AND SALT RESOURCES
AMENDMENT ACT
(ANTI-FRACKING), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES RESSOURCES
EN PÉTROLE, EN GAZ ET EN SEL
(ANTI-FRACTURATION)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 82, An Act to amend the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and related activities. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1635 to 1640.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask members to please take their seats?

Mr. Tabuns has moved second reading of Bill 82, An Act to amend the Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Act to prohibit hydraulic fracturing and related activities.

All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

Damerla, Dipika
DiNovo, Cheri
Dong, Han
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy

Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
McMahon, Eleanor
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza

Sattler, Peggy
Tabuns, Peter
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Clark, Steve
Delaney, Bob
Dunlop, Garfield
Fedeli, Victor

Hardeman, Ernie
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim
MacLaren, Jack
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim

Munro, Julia
Nicholls, Rick
Scott, Laurie
Smith, Todd
Thompson, Lisa M.
Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 29; the nays are 18.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that it be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENDING COAL
FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015
SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON
POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 28, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Burlington.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'll be sharing my time with the Associate Minister of Health and the Chair of Cabinet.

Speaker, as you know, I don't have much time left in my time allotment for today, but I just wanted to underscore the importance of making sure that we continue to enjoy the kind of health and environmental benefits that come with prohibiting coal use for electricity generation in Ontario. I'm proud to stand and be part of a govern-

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bradley, James J.
Chan, Michael

Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa
Hatfield, Percy
Jaczek, Helena
Malhi, Harinder

Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Natyshak, Taras
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq

ment that got rid of coal and has brought cleaner air to our province.

As an asthmatic, I know that there are less people like me clogging up our hospital emergency departments, and as someone who represents a riding where one person in five is a senior citizen, I know they are enjoying cleaner air as a consequence of our leadership.

I would ask all members of this House to support the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, 2014, today, and underscore the importance of cleaner air in the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I rise and I'm delighted to speak to a bill entitled Ending Coal for Cleaner Air. How can you argue against cleaner air?

This is a transformational bill, because in Ontario, through this bill, it's going to be the single largest greenhouse reduction initiative across North America. It makes Ontario the first North American jurisdiction to close coal-fired electricity generation.

There are two main things to note about this bill. First, the bill would prohibit the use of coal at the following electricity generation stations: Atikokan, Lambton, Nanticoke and Thunder Bay. More importantly, the bill is crafted in such a way that future governments, or any government, cannot, through regulation, create exemptions for stand-alone facilities that would use coal to generate electricity.

What is really interesting, of course, is the fact that the plan was to stop using coal to generate electricity as of December 31, 2014, but here in Ontario we were actually able to stop that well before December 2014. In many ways, the bill is catching up with the reality. Usually it is reality that has to catch up with legislation. But, in this case, it's a good-news story. It speaks to the commitment of this government, the fact that we've already stopped using coal and this legislation is actually catching up with the reality that today, in Ontario, we are the first jurisdiction in North America where we do not use coal for stand-alone electricity generation facilities.

This is transformational. As the associate minister responsible for wellness, I cannot underscore the importance of clean air. It's actually ironic that with so much modernization and this continuous push for higher standards of living, yet, at the same time, because of environmental pollution, so much of our health is compromised.

You'd be interested to know that every year in Ontario—just in Ontario—poor-quality air can cause about \$1.5 billion in environmental damages. Air pollution is a major environmental risk to health. By reducing air pollution levels, we can reduce the burden of disease from stroke, heart disease, lung cancer and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma. This has real benefits for you, me and generations to come.

I'm absolutely delighted to support this bill. It's such a great feeling, once again, to underscore the idea that this is legislation that is catching up with the good-news reality, the fact that coal generation in Ontario has already been phased out.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: One of the most significant initiatives in all of North America, and perhaps around the world, in terms of dealing with air pollution and climate change, has been the discontinuation of the use of coal for the production of electricity in Ontario. It wasn't an easy decision to be made. It wasn't easy, because it's cheaper to burn coal. It's the old story of many people always want the cheapest, not always what's best for the environment and perhaps the economy at large.

They look at the cost based on other forms of producing electricity that are more costly, and yet people within the scientific and medical field have clearly revealed—and among them was the Ontario Medical Association—the damaging effect of coal, the burning of coal for electricity in the province of Ontario, on the health of Ontarians.

I can recall on many occasions going back home to St. Catharines and looking at the ugly yellow streak coming across the sky from the Nanticoke Generating Station. That was coal being used to produce electricity. That contamination was going over the Niagara Peninsula, but also over northwestern New York state. The end of the use of coal in those facilities has made a remarkable difference.

We know that there are other factors that influence air contamination and air pollution, but if you look at the last couple of summers, where we usually have high alerts for pollution, the number of days which were smog days, as we used to call them, has, at least in the last couple of years, since ending the use of coal for the production of electricity—that has diminished remarkably. That means better air quality in our province and better health for people in our province. The federal government, which likes to drag its feet sometimes on environmental initiatives of this kind, is out bragging about how much air pollution has been reduced and what a contribution we are making as a country to reducing greenhouse gases, and it's using the Ontario example, that Ontario example being the discontinuation of the burning of coal for the production of electricity in this province.

1650

Other options are being used—more benign options. Certainly, for many years we have had electrical power produced by hydro, that being water production. There are many smaller initiatives in that regard now. At one time, Ontario Hydro, as it was called, really didn't like these smaller units. They loved the big units, the big nukes, the big units such as Niagara Falls. We've expanded that. There's far more production coming now, despite the fact that the topography of Ontario in the north is rather flat instead of like this—that is, almost vertical in Quebec. We're able to produce a significant amount of electricity utilizing hydro power, which is water power, of course.

We have nuclear generating stations which produce a significant amount of power in this province and have operated over the years, providing that base power.

We're looking at new ways of generating electricity which again are much more environmentally benign than the burning of coal was. The cleaner electricity, the greener electricity that we're using, has made an impact.

Does some of this, such as the nuclear plants, contribute to the cost? It does. If you look at nuclear production in Ontario, how many times have you ever seen any one of these operations come in on time and on budget? Well, the answer is never, because they never have, nor does the refurbishing. But the enemy of the good is the perfect, and we struggle with that. We do the best we can. It is a fact that nuclear produces electricity in this province, for instance. We have to work hard as a province, as other jurisdictions do, to ensure the cost overruns are not out of this world, as they have been in the past.

One of the best ways of dealing with the challenge that we have out there environmentally is conservation, and governments should be very aggressive. Our government has taken a number of steps forward in this regard, but all governments have to be even more aggressive in terms of conservation.

The environment minister has been to California recently, and there are some rather remarkable new initiatives taking place there that really could make a huge impact, particularly on individual homes, but also on virtually every business as well, in terms of new batteries, in terms of solar power and so on. These initiatives are happening quickly.

I see that in the province of Alberta the new Premier has said that one of her goals is to reduce coal-burning for the purpose of producing electricity in Alberta.

South of the border, President Obama has introduced many initiatives that are designed, again, to reduce and perhaps someday eliminate the use of coal for the production of electricity.

This is not to say that coal will never be used for any purpose in Ontario, and this bill doesn't address that.

Some people will say, "Well, why do you need a bill of this kind?" You need it because governments—and this is a hard argument for a government side to make, because usually when you're in opposition you make this argument, and that is, the difference between regulation and legislation. When I sat on the other side of the House, I always thought legislation was very important. Now here I am on this side of the House, once again saying that legislation is more important than regulation. I can't claim consistency in all aspects of government policy in this regard, but I can say that in this particular place, I think it's important that a government not be—they say "behind closed doors"; that simply means within cabinet—committees in cabinet. A government cannot make this decision to reopen these plants or start new plants burning coal for the purpose of producing electricity. It would take the consent of this Legislature and a full debate in this legislature, and I think that's good.

I happen to be one who believes—and I have the distinction of being deputy House leader, which is a challenging point in this regard—that having as much debate as reasonable and possible on legislation is very good. I think that the debate we have here is good.

I think there's a good consensus out there now. At one time, some people were fighting it. I used to jokingly say in the House, with interjections at the wrong time, that Old King Coal was a Tory, from "Old King Cole was a merry old soul." But I think there have even been conversions on the road to Damascus over there. Some of the people on the Conservative benches who were very reluctant to end coal recognize its damaging effects in the production of electricity, and I think there's pretty well a consensus now.

My good friend, and the former member for Kitchener–Waterloo, Elizabeth Witmer, was a person who believed in it, and indeed she started the conversion of Lakeview out of the use of coal. I commend her for that, and I have been a long-time champion of her doing that on that occasion.

I think that some of her colleagues have now come along to say that despite the fact that it's very cheap to produce electricity that way in one particular riding or another, perhaps it isn't the way we should go. So I suspect—although I can't tell from the last vote we had in the House; it's hard to say—that in this case it would be unanimous in this regard.

I know that the moderate member who sits across from me, a member elected in 1990, a long time ago—today he looks exactly the way he did when he was elected; I don't know how he does it. He was from Wellington back in those days. He's always had "Wellington" in there; he's got some other names in his riding now. I call him the member for Highway 6, because he advocates on behalf of that.

I'm pleased to have my colleagues and others—we have some medical doctors in this particular caucus who would tell you what the detrimental impacts of burning coal were.

We always talk about clean coal technology. It is an oxymoron to say "clean coal." You really can't clean coal up. You can do certain things with it, but you really can't take out all the contaminants. I remember that even the Economist, which could never be called a left-wing magazine—certainly it would be called very business-oriented—had on the cover a number of years back a picture of coal and a detrimental headline, and the story inside described the negative impact of coal on that occasion.

I'm pleased that I had the opportunity to bring this bill forward, I believe when I was Minister of the Environment, and other Ministers of the Environment had the opportunity to bring it forward. It's the kind of bill I would have thought would pass very quickly in the House, but the debate has been more fulsome than anticipated. I suspect that the debate will be fairly unanimous in this regard.

I'm hopeful that we can now move this bill to its finality, as it should be, and that we will see unanimity—something that is difficult to achieve in this House—among members of all three political parties on not only ending coal, but making sure that in the future it would be extremely difficult to reinitiate the use of coal in existing plants—converting—and also in new plants.

I suspect that even the most small-c conservative members of the Conservative caucus would be in favour of this particular piece of legislation, and I encourage them very much to vote in favour of this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the government side for the two-minute response.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): No? I've got to go around? Questions and comments. My apologies.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. I thought I got euchred one more time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Well, I picked up the debate in the middle, so it's tough.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, by the way. How are you doing, anyway? Just to get that on the record. Give me some more time on the clock now, eh? We'll get this straight yet.

1700

It's interesting that I'm following the member from the Garden City, St. Catharines, because I have to take exception to some of the things he said earlier today in debate. It's interesting that we're dealing with the ending-of-coal bill, Bill 9. It looked like he meant what he was saying, but I really don't think so. It was just part of the show. Sometimes it's a show here and sometimes it's serious. He was saying that the Conservatives, whenever they have a choice between protecting the environment and not protecting the environment, choose to not protect the environment. I know he can't possibly mean that, because the record of this party over the decades is a stellar one when it comes to the environment. So many of the initiatives that have been taken in this province were taken by Progressive Conservative governments.

I just want to talk for a moment about the coal; I don't have a lot of time. The first regulation to close down a coal plant in this province was the Lakeview coal plant, where my brother James worked in the summers, back in the 1970s. It was taken by then-Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer in our government, the Mike Harris government.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I commended her.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm glad you commended her, but then you'll have to retract some of your statements from earlier today.

I just think there is too much politics in here sometimes. And you know me; I'm not into the political things. I just want to talk about the policies and what is good for the people of Ontario and what I can do to help the people in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I want everybody to remember that that's why they came here: to serve the people who voted them in.

So don't chastise the environmental policies of the Progressive Conservatives, because they are most progressive.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm following the revisionist historian from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

While I'm on my feet, during the last debate I had two residents from my riding, here, Melanie and Evan Tanovich. Evan is a former page. When I first came here, he was a page from my riding, and he was recently appointed to the Ministry of Education student advisory council. He was up all day in the other block learning about his new role. They just had to leave, but they enjoyed the debate earlier.

Getting rid of the coal-burning plants—I remember when this was up before, and I said to the minister, “You've already closed the plants, so why is the bill here?” And the minister said, “Well, because we don't want a future government ever to bring back coal-burning plants in Ontario.” I said at the time, “Well, that makes sense.”

It's like earlier today, when we were talking about banning fracking for shale gas in Ontario. There's none happening now, and the bill would have made sure that a future government couldn't allow it to happen in the future. So I thought anyone who supported the ban in coal would look at that in the same way, because I think we all agree that getting rid of coal has cleaned our air and has protected our environment. Some of us still believe that stopping fracking before it begins will protect our environment for generations to come. I do want to commend the government on the banning of coal.

We can play politics, because this is the place to play politics. There's never too much politics in a political forum, in the Ontario Legislature, because that's what got you here, that's who brought you to the dance. Let's play politics all afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm not going to play politics; I'm just going to speak to bill for a minute. I think that, at the end of the day, we should be proud of our government's track record on eliminating the coal-fired power plants. I think we've done a service to the people of Ontario in terms of the cost impacts that those plants had on our—

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: On your lungs.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Exactly—as Dr. Qadri just pointed out, on our lungs, on our health and our quality of life. We should be proud of that.

To me, this is just a way of reaffirming that we all support the work that has been done. We don't want to go back to days past when we had those plants in place in Ontario, doing damage to our health and doing damage to our economy. I think this is an excellent initiative. I think it's a way of reaffirming that we're all on the same page on both sides of the aisle.

When I think about it, I just came back from my riding in Etobicoke Centre and was touring Centennial Park. For those of you who don't know Centennial Park, it's acres upon acres upon acres in the northwest end of the city. We were out there with Minister Coteau, touring some of the facilities for the Pan Am Games. One of the things that the minister commented on was how beautiful

it was. We looked out from a hilltop at the beautiful sky, at the nature in front of us, at the parkland, the public space that was being used by families and young people and people of all ages.

When I think about this, I think back to my visit just a couple of hours ago and think about how that beauty, those public spaces, that quality of life is preserved by making sure that we don't bring back the kinds of pollutants, the kinds of damage to our environment, that could threaten that.

To me, this bill is about protecting our health. It's about protecting our quality of life. It's about protecting our economy. I think we should just all get it passed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that we all want clean air, we all want clean water, and we want to ensure that we have clean air and clean water for future generations. But we also understand that it's the entire world. We can't have China building coal plants every week and we're sitting here importing from China and contributing to the pollution in China and trying to pretend that somehow that pollution doesn't make its way to other parts of the world. We all know that it does. So we have to focus on climate change, improving our air quality and our water quality, and focus on the entire globe and the entire weather systems of the entire world. That's number one.

Number two is that, yes, we want to have clean air and clean water and reduce pollution and chemicals that are being ingested by ourselves and future generations, but we don't want to do it in a way that costs the taxpayers. We don't want to do it in a way that benefits private investors, which is what we've seen from the failed green energy policies of this government: that private investors have made money off of the efforts to sell what is going to be a cleaner world. That's very unfortunate.

What we want to see is real efforts being made to ensure that future generations have clean air and clean water in a way that doesn't make us uncompetitive with the rest of the world, which is exactly what we have done.

We need to work together as a global economy. We need to work together with, yes, other provinces. I know the Premier Couillard of Quebec is coming to speak just this Monday at 9 a.m. I think it's going to be wonderful to see him here. Yes, we do want to work with him, as well as all the other Premiers across the country, and the other countries across the globe.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now turn to the government for a two-minute response.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's always good to hear the responses from members of the Legislature, and they were generally quite positive. My friend from Barry's Bay, of course, was a little bit on the defensive side, but this is Thursday afternoon. He's permitted to do that. He and I have been good friends for a number of years. We do have our disagreements. But on this, again, I see a good consensus developing.

It's important that we look at all aspects of our society, all of the initiatives that are being taken, and see how we can be much more benign in terms of our impact on our generations to come, but even the present generations.

A lot of changes have been made in the field of the environment. At one time, pollution was called "smoke," for instance. I was born in the city of Sudbury. As a child there, when the smoke, as it was called, came over the city at that time, it choked people. It killed virtually everything around Inco—at that time, it was called Inco. There was virtually no vegetation. Anybody who had any respiratory disease was in real trouble. You'll remember that the space agency in the United States went to Sudbury to practise a moon landing, only because the terrain in those days was similar to what they anticipated finding on the moon.

There's a big difference in Sudbury today. First of all, they built a higher smokestack to send the smoke down to Sturgeon Falls. That wasn't really satisfactory. But we had an opportunity as a government in the 1980s to bring in a non-appealable regulation which compelled a two-thirds reduction in the amount of sulphur dioxide which was produced by the main four sources in Ontario.

1710

We've seen a transformation take place. The arguments were made then: It will cost too much to our society; they're not doing it in China; they're not doing it somewhere else. We did it in the province of Ontario. We took that leadership and, along with co-operation from the federal government, we were able to reduce acid rain to a much lower level than it was in those days.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon, when the House is full to listen to our remarks, to debate Bill 9, as we continue second reading debate on the government's Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act.

I'm especially pleased to follow the member for St. Catharines, the Chair of Cabinet, who has served with distinction in this Legislature going back to 1977. He hasn't changed a bit since that time, either. I remember him quite vividly when he served as the Minister of the Environment in the Peterson years. I was privileged to work with my predecessor, Jack Johnson, which allowed me to occasionally come to Queen's Park, although the vast majority of my time was spent in the constituency office, which was actually great training for politics. But occasionally I would be here. I remember the Minister of the Environment of the day. Quite often, it was a very controversial file in those years. Of course, he had the chance later on, when the Liberals formed the government again, to again serve as the Minister of the Environment.

We are talking about environmental legislation, so I want to talk about an important environmental issue in my riding. It was an issue that I brought to the attention of the Minister of the Environment of the day, the

member for St. Catharines, about a year and a half ago, working with the Environmental Commissioner, suggesting that there needed to be more done to ensure the safe disposal of compromised soil. I have a number of communities in my riding where landowners are receiving a substantial number of truckloads of what we would call compromised soil. It was explained to me that there are various degrees of degradation of soil. Really, what we need, I think, is greater action on the part of the provincial government and the leadership to assist municipalities to ensure this soil is being disposed of safely. Bringing this to the attention of the minister through the Environmental Bill of Rights mechanism, I was pleased that the Minister of the Environment, the member for St. Catharines, did, in fact, agree that there needed to be a review of the policy. He told me at that time that there were provincial guidelines, best-practice guidelines that had been recommended by the ministry, and we were pleased that he agreed to the review.

I was told at that time that it would take 12 to 18 months, I think, to complete the review. If my memory is correct, this June is 18 months. So we are looking forward to hearing the response of the ministry on that important issue.

I would express some measure of disappointment, though, because we also approached the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, asking for their participation in the review, because this is an issue that crosses beyond the responsibility of just the Ministry of the Environment. Certainly it was the contention of the Environmental Commissioner—I don't think he will mind me saying this—that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing really had a substantial responsibility for this issue and should have been willing to participate in the review. But certainly we are looking forward to the response from the ministry.

As to my constituents, they were pleased that the review was being launched, but the trucks continue to bring the fill, and have continued to do so over the last 18 months. We're patient to a point, but we would expect prompt action on the part of the Minister of the Environment when that report is finally completed.

Bill 9: This is a very important piece of government legislation, of course. I'd like to take the members back in terms of the history of our party's support for the protection of the environment. I believe it was our party that created the Ministry of the Environment in the 1970s, if I'm not mistaken, the government of Bill Davis. I'm pretty sure that's the case.

One of my other predecessors, who served the riding of Wellington-Dufferin, John Root, actually served as the chair of the Ontario Water Resources Commission, which was in many ways the predecessor of the Ministry of the Environment. That commission was set up, and a member of Legislature chaired it. In those days, in many cases, members of the Legislature were involved in participating as chairs of government commissions like that. Mr. Root was a leader in terms of environmental protection. I believe that when the Ministry of the En-

vironment was created in the 1970s, the Ontario Water Resources Commission, the staff and much of the mandate were folded into the new Ministry of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: And Norm Sterling and—

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, indeed, and with the support of a number of our Conservative members and, I think, a cross-party consensus.

It's also true that for a significant number of years my former colleague in the Legislature Margaret Marland, who served Mississauga South for years, brought up the issue of the Lakeview generating plant and pushed for some stronger measures to protect the environment and the airshed in her riding—supported by Mayor Hazel McCallion and her council. I know that Margaret was very persistent and advocated for that for many years. It's true that it was our government in 2002, and the Minister of the Environment of the day, Elizabeth Witmer, who actually agreed to proceed and ensured that the appropriate action was taken.

I think the Lakeview generating plant was probably the most polluting coal-burning plant in the province at that time. Actually, Elizabeth was given credit by the Ontario Clean Air Alliance for her leadership in this area. I believe it was in 2001 that the minister “issued a legally binding regulation requiring the phase-out of coal burning at the Lakeview generating station in Mississauga by April 2005. In September 2002, when Ernie Eves was Premier, the government of Ontario adopted the goal of phasing-out the province's four remaining coal-fired power plants by 2015. In August 2007 the McGuinty government issued a legally binding regulation requiring the complete phase-out of coal burning by December 31, 2014.”

Of course, as the member for St. Catharines mentioned, I think there has been an emerging consensus in this Legislature amongst all three political parties that we needed to move towards the phase-out of coal. But I also remember the election campaign in 2003 quite vividly. Our party was in government; we were seeking re-election. Right off the bat we had trouble during the election campaign. Those of us who had been around for a while knew that it was going to be a difficult challenge for the government to be re-elected but we carried on, of course. I remember quite vividly the Liberal Party taking the position that they would phase out the coal-fired generating plants by 2007.

I remember the discussion that took place in our caucus after that, although I can't divulge exactly what was said—caucus confidentiality—but certainly we had a number of conversations about it. We were advised that the technical experts who knew all about this issue—who worked for the government—had advised the government that it would be technically impossible to close the coal-fired plants by 2007. It was absolutely impossible. It would not be in the public interest to try to do so. However, the Liberal Party, then in opposition and seeking to be elected in 2003, had this as their party policy.

I remember the Liberal candidate who contested my seat in the riding of Waterloo-Wellington, at the all-

candidates meeting in Elmira, getting a great overwhelming endorsement of applause by her supporters who were in the room when she promised and committed to close all the coal-fired plants by 2007. I don't know how many votes turned to support the Liberals on that particular issue, but as we all know, it was impossible to close the coal-fired generating plants by 2007. Before long the government acknowledged that that was the case.

We, of course, on our side of the House pointed that out as a broken promise. As you recall, Mr. Speaker, we were pointing that out quite frequently—that a number of promises had been broken in the first few years of the McGuinty government. It seemed that the promise to close the coal-fired plants by 2007 was broken, and it was broken again because another date had been set. In the end, it took until 2014-2015—roughly what we were told at the time in that caucus meeting that I recall quite vividly.

I think it's important that all of us be responsible with our election promises. I point that out to remind all of us that we have to demonstrate integrity in terms of election promises so as to be deserving and earning of the public trust.

I know that Elizabeth Witmer, as Minister of the Environment, was very passionate about this. She wanted to proceed with the policy. It was also well known to us that approximately half of the air pollution in Ontario was not generated in Ontario. It was coming from, primarily, I think, coal-burning in the United States.

Really, we knew that if we took this step it would make a substantial difference in terms of the quality of the air that we breathe in Ontario, but to assume that it was going to solve the problem, that we could do it by ourselves—because of the natural geography of the North American continent, obviously that would not be the case.

1720

I know that some felt that if we closed our coal-burning plants, then we would somehow have the moral authority to go to the American jurisdictions and challenge them to do the same and then they would do it. Well, of course, as we know, I don't think that it's going to work that way, or that it has worked that way. But, at the same time, we have, I think, taken the proper steps in Ontario to close our coal-burning plants.

The member for St. Catharines talked about the importance of conservation. As a Progressive Conservative, I believe in conservation, too. I don't know why we as individuals or as companies in the marketplace or governments—why any of us would want to waste anything. Certainly conservation of our natural resources, conservation of our electricity, conservation of all of our resources should be a high priority for all of us. I believe that's a Progressive Conservative value. I think that, certainly, we need to take greater steps to encourage conservation.

Now, I want to get back to the bill. As we know, "The bill amends the Environmental Protection Act by adding

a new Part VI.1. Section 59.2 prohibits the use of coal to generate electricity at certain specified generation facilities after December 31, 2014." Of course, that was last December. "The greater fines set out in subsections 187(4) and (5) of the act apply in respect of a conviction for breach of the prohibition...."

"Section 59.3 generally prohibits the use of coal at generation facilities to generate electricity after December 31, 2014. This prohibition does not apply in respect of two types of generation facilities. One type is a generation facility at a facility that produces a product other than electricity or steam where the generation of electricity is not the primary purpose of the facility. The other type is a generation facility that uses heat, steam or by-product gas from another facility that produces a product other than electricity or steam where the generation of electricity is not the primary purpose of the other facility.

"The power to make regulations exempting any person or thing from any provision of the act does not apply to a generation facility that uses coal to generate electricity unless the facility is of a type that is similar to the type that is exempted under section 59.3."

Well, what does all that mean? Again, in essence, they are prohibiting the use of coal to generate electricity in the province of Ontario.

Our caucus has expressed support for the principle of this bill, and when the vote takes place I hope to be here to support the bill at second reading. But I also think it's important that the bill be sent to committee and that we give the public an opportunity to participate in public hearings. I think, generally speaking, our legislation is improved by the public process that takes place at standing committees. It's important that groups that have perhaps advocated for this for years would be given the opportunity to express their ideas and, in some cases, perhaps, suggestions for amendments. All of that is part of the process, and it allows for us to ensure that the legislation—that we get it right and that, in fact, it is legislation that will stand up under the test of time. I would think that that would be an important part of this.

The summary of the bill: The bill bans the burning of coal at power generating stations in Ontario by the end of 2014, as I said earlier. If passed, Bill 9 gives the government the ability to impose heavy fines on any person or company that burns coal at a power plant for the purpose of generating power after the end of 2014.

Of course, I think that it's very unlikely that those measures will be necessary, that those penalties will ever be transacted. I suspect there will be a high degree of observance of the law when and if this bill is passed in some form.

Of course, again, exceptions are made for facilities that produce "a product other than electricity or steam where the generation of electricity is not the primary purpose" and facilities that use "heat, steam or by-product gas" from said facilities.

Some of the issues that our caucus has raised about this issue that I think need to be restated in the context of

this debate: We have said that Bill 9 doesn't address how to reduce private sector coal use. Reducing this source of coal pollution represents a real opportunity to clean up Ontario's air. The cement industry has been calling upon the government for some time to make regulatory changes that will allow them to use alternative fuels in cement kilns, and I believe there has been some response on the part of the government in that regard. Certainly I'd be interested in hearing more from the government as to—

Interjection.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Yes, in that regard. That's been a long ask of the cement industry. I remember, going back to the late 1980s, the cement industry was looking for alternative fuels and alternative disposal of things that were difficult to dispose of. They requested, for years, for a pilot project to burn used tires in the production of cement, and it seems to me that the government was persistently turning that down for some reason. But obviously, if the government has made some steps in that direction, we'd be interested in learning more about their plans.

The term "alternative fuels" refers to types of non-recyclable materials like shingles and certain plastics which could be used as a fuel source when making cement.

I want to talk about power plant conversions for a minute. Bill 9 sets out no plans to convert existing coal plants into natural gas or biomass facilities. We have said that the Liberals appear not to have an idea as to how to balance growing our economy and protecting the environment. Any serious piece of legislation would have addressed how to preserve jobs by converting coal plants into natural gas and biomass power generating stations, like the former Auditor General recommended.

We've also said that phasing out coal started with a regulation, as I said before, issued by former Progressive Conservative Environment Minister Elizabeth Witmer to shut down the Lakeview generating station. Since then, the Liberals have continued to phase out coal units at the province's remaining coal-fired plants. All parties have supported the idea of phasing out coal.

When Elizabeth Witmer was the Minister of the Environment, I was privileged to serve as her parliamentary assistant for a time. I remember those years quite vividly. Her passion to protect the environment was something that was very inspiring for all of her staff. I know the deputy minister at the time, Jan Rush, has also been recognized by the Ontario Clean Air Alliance for the work that was done in those days.

I know we've got a tendency as members to assume and think that nothing important happened here before we arrived as members. The day we were elected, all of a sudden, things started to happen. It's important to realize that we do stand on the shoulders of our predecessors, and there was a lot of good work done in the past on issues like the environment. Certainly with all three political parties having been in power in the time that I've been privileged to serve here, in every case each would

point to some significant achievements in terms of environmental protection as things that they're proud of and as legacies for their particular political party.

In our time in government, the work that was done by Norm Sterling as the Minister of the Environment—in so many ways, he did a great job.

Hon. James J. Bradley: And before that, the Niagara Escarpment.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Well, he was the father of the Niagara Escarpment Commission; that's what he told us, and I think that's a fair statement. A lot of work was done when he was, I believe, the Provincial Secretary, if I'm not mistaken—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Provincial Secretary for Resources Development.

Mr. Ted Arnott: —for Resources Development—thank you very much for that—in the Davis government in those years. So we've certainly had a strong tradition within our party. A number of our initiatives in terms of protection of the environment have held up over time and are things that we are very proud of.

When we're talking about clean air, I think I have to put a few comments on the record about the government's commitment to initiate this cap-and-trade scheme. We have the Premier of Quebec coming to address the Ontario Legislature on Monday morning, and I certainly look forward to hearing from him. I think it's a great thing that the Premier of Quebec is coming here. I think it's going to be an important addition to the discussions that we'll have in the next few weeks. I welcome a stronger relationship between the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec—indeed, all the provinces—to the extent that we can encourage greater co-operation and coordination within our policies in the federation. Obviously, I believe that's in the public interest.

I know the government is quite proud of their commitment to enter into this cap-and-trade arrangement with the province of Quebec and the state of California, but we have a lot of concerns about it because we believe it will drive up the cost of doing business in the province of Ontario; there's no question about that. If we're going to maintain an effective manufacturing capability in the province, we have to be paying attention to the various competitive pressures that our manufacturers face on a whole range of issues. In my current role as critic to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade—we talk about this all the time—we have lost something like 300,000 manufacturing jobs in recent years, something that I was highlighting and bringing to the attention of the Legislature going back to, I think, 2005, even before the recession, because I was hearing from manufacturers, especially with the strengthening Canadian dollar at that time, that they were going to be facing real challenges. In fact, we've seen the hollowing out of our manufacturing sector.

1730

Our provincial policy has to be able to, as a goal, find the balance that protects the environment while at the same time allowing our industries to compete success-

fully and to be able to create the jobs that we need. Manufacturing traditionally has been a source of good-paying—in many cases very-good-paying—middle-class jobs. The jobs that have been created in recent years, post recession, in many cases do not pay at the same average rate. For example, we lost an important employer in our community, the A.O. Smith plant, where the workers were making a good wage. The jobs that are being created in the service industry, Tim Hortons, for example—obviously those jobs exist, but the people who are being asked to take them are not being paid at the same level.

Unfortunately, I've run out of time and I recognize that you're ready to call for questions and comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much for your indulgence; I do appreciate it. Certainly my interest in this bill will continue, and I hope to be here to support it at second reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's always a treat to follow the member from Wellington-Halton Hills, one of the most distinguished gentlemen in the House, as are you, Speaker—proof that you don't have to pound the table and raise your voice to get your point across in this Legislature.

When we talk about banning coal-burning plants, when we talk about polling—you know, you do polling to find out what the issues are that are important to people—the environment is always near the top. It's very important. In my area, in Canada South—I mean, the Raptors are, “We the North.” Well, down in Canada South, “We the South.” But we have bad air blowing over from the coal-burning plants in American states. We know the science was there when the government finally banned coal-burning plants. We know the science was there, unlike when we were talking earlier this afternoon about fracking. There is no science on fracking yet.

In fact, a year ago this week, the *Globe and Mail* ran a headline: “Go Slow on Fracking, Scientists Warn.” The article, by Shawn McCarthy and Ivan Semeniuk, started like this: “Canadians face a Pandora's box of potential environmental and health risks as the oil industry charges forward with hydraulic fracturing techniques that are needed to unlock vast natural gas and oil deposits across the country, says a new report for the federal government.”

The report was commissioned way back in 2011, when former environmental minister Peter Kent was there. He wanted to know the impacts of shale gas development in Canada. The independent experts who did the study concluded that development needed to go slow so science could catch up to the impacts that are being documented.

Speaker, it just seems to me that when we talk about getting rid of coal-burning plants or putting a ban on fracturing, we do it for future generations, at least when the science is known; until the science is known, we have to go slow.

Thank you for your time, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member for Etobicoke North.

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J'ai le plaisir de parler de ce projet de loi.

My colleagues have highlighted many of the issues here. I would, with your permission, Speaker, like to speak not only in my capacity as a physician but also as a parliamentarian—but mostly as an MD.

This is one of the major landmark and legacy pieces, I think, that the government of Ontario, in its various incarnations, one and two, is going to be able to leave the people of Ontario. Something on the order of the equivalent of the pollution of two million cars has been removed by virtue of the annihilation and annulment of coal-fired gas plants. We're talking about an extraordinary benefit to human health, animal health, plant health; for example, the provocations of asthma. We know that something on the order of 500 Canadians, unfortunately, still die of asthma; there are two million unscheduled urgent care visits because of asthma. And whether it's concentration of pollution, concentration of populations—and, of course, all that means in terms of particulate matter, carbon pollution, industrial pollution—this affects the lungs. These particles come into our systems. They sit; they simmer; they cook; they percolate. This, of course, is an added reason for not only asthma and COPD but also downstream development of things like cancer and, as we call the group of illnesses, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

These are very real issues, Speaker, and I'm very proud to be part of the Premier McGuinty government, the Premier Wynne government and counting, to help eliminate this massive yet avoidable input into human health. I can tell you, as a doctor who treats these illnesses, as an individual who sees within my own family its consequences, we need to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I only have two minutes for a response, but I do want to take a moment to introduce a special guest I have in the west members' gallery today. I didn't bring him in for question period, because he was working—he's one of the few Ontarians who has a job in Kathleen Wynne's Ontario—my son Lucas, who is here for the very first time. I've been here almost 12 years, and this is the first time he ever got to the members' gallery.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, it's a long way.

But I want to talk about the coal bill, and now I'm down to a minute 18. I remember when I was campaigning in 2003, and the big promise from the Dalton McGuinty Liberals at the time was that they were going to close coal by 2007. There was not a single credible energy expert out there who said it was even possible. In fact, my predecessor, Sean Conway, who was the energy critic, wanted nothing to do with that promise, because he knew enough to know that it was not remotely possible—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: He's your cousin, right?

Mr. John Yakubuski: He is—not remotely possible, yet this party continued to campaign on it. Why? Because they campaigned on the politics, not on what was doable or best for Ontario. They wanted to talk about things that were impossible, hoping that they would attract a new group of supporters to the party during that election. Well, it worked.

And then the promise became 2011, 2013, now 2014-15. You know, Ernie Eves at the time had a coal shutdown promise, too, and it was 2015. Now, isn't that remarkable? Here we are in 2015 and we actually have shut down the coal plants. I wonder who was telling the truth.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You know, there's a difference and contrast between the presentation of the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's. But they're both very good speakers and very informative when they debate in the House. So I did want to thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for his presentation. It was very well received.

I think the bottom line, Speaker, is that we're talking about the environment and we're talking about ways to help the environment, to make sure that it's here for our children, the next generation. The member from—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor-Tecumseh. How soon they forget.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: —Windsor-Tecumseh made a very good point. Way back when, we were putting all kinds of things into our rivers and lakes, not even thinking—our garbage, our waste products, fuel. We didn't actually even think that that made a difference, but we know better now. That's what I think his point was, that we're doing things to the environment. And you have to be cognizant of what that reaction will be or what the consequence will be in the future. Just to keep that in mind.

One thing we're talking about is ending coal for cleaner air. That actually just makes sense, because now we know that coal is dirty air, and nobody wants to breathe in dirty air. It isn't good for our health. It's not good for the environment—we talk about vegetation. So I encourage everyone here in this chamber to go out into their communities and promote the environment and do something good for your environment. We've got recycling, planting trees, passing bills like this one today. There are many, many things we can do for the environment for the future, but I think we have to learn from what we've done in the past and we have to think smarter, so when we do things like ending coal plants for cleaner air, it only makes sense.

I'm glad this has been brought forward, and we look forward to supporting it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Wellington-Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to express my appreciation to the members who responded to my presentation: the member for Windsor-Tecumseh, the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and the member for London-Fanshawe.

1740

The member for Windsor-Tecumseh and the member for London-Fanshawe, thank you very much for your kind remarks. I would say to the member for Windsor-Tecumseh that he is one of the gentlemen of this House, too, and always brings a thoughtful presentation into this Legislature with everything he says and everything he does. The member for London-Fanshawe, thank you as well. She's the same. She does a great job on behalf of her constituents, as was shown today with the passage of her private member's initiative. She deserves congratulations for that.

The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, the physician-politician, thank you very much—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: North.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Etobicoke North, rather. He mentioned his perspective and his experience as a physician. I think, obviously, that's something that is helpful to this debate and is appreciated.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke reiterated his recollections of the 2003 election in a very eloquent manner. Of course, most of us who were around in that election have a similar recollection, but at the same time I think it's important that we do hold the government to account for its previous election promises.

One of the members—I think it was the member for Windsor-Tecumseh—talked about their obligation to future generations. I would say that I agree, as a father of three sons. My wife and I have three boys: Jack is almost 20 years old; Phillip is almost 18; and our youngest, Dean, is 16 years old. I obviously spend a lot of time thinking about their futures, and not just the future of my own sons, but the future of their generation, all of our children and all of our grandchildren.

I think that we, as legislators, need to remind ourselves from time to time that while we look at the electoral cycle, and many of us have plans going forward for the next three years, expecting that the election will come in 2018, we have an obligation and a responsibility to look beyond that and think about the long-term implications of the decisions that we make here, not just on the environment, but also on the finances of the province. Of course, we'll hear more about that in the coming days and weeks as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just want to say before I begin that the member from Wellington-Halton Hills and also the minister without portfolio on the Liberal side—we always say this when we stand up, that it's an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf our constituents and the people of Ontario, but it really is an honour and privilege also to be in this House with people who have such institutional memory and experience. I just want to say

thank you for your experience and institutional memory, because when those members stand and speak about something, we actually learn something about our own history. It's difficult to find out, really, in many ways, about Ontario's history in this Legislature without that. We really should do better on teaching in our educational institutions about our history.

For example, I didn't know that it was Elizabeth Witmer who closed a coal-fired plant. I found that very interesting. Again, you learn here.

What we're dealing with here, of course, is Bill 9. It's kind of an after-the-fact bill, because the coal-fired plants have been closed. I listened, of course, with interest, also, to the member from Etobicoke North when he was talking about the health effects, and there's nothing more true than that. Certainly asthma rates are through the roof. I remember, as a young parent who, at that point, was living in the Beach area of Toronto with my children, that it seemed like every second child in that classroom was on a puffer of some sort. We know how devastating and, in fact, fatal that disease can be. Again, it's directly attributable to what you're breathing in.

Way, way back in the day—in fact, everybody probably in this Legislature can point to the time when they became socially active or politically active, and what that issue was. Certainly for me the issue was the environment. I remember as a teenager watching a phenomenal CBC documentary, a really, really interesting documentary. Back in those days, they didn't talk about climate change—they didn't use those words—but they did talk about pollution and they did talk about the state of our water, the state of our air, the state of our earth, and the fact that this planet has finite resources and an ever-expanding population. We also, of course, have an economic system that's forever growing. It's growing and it needs to grow, and it's consuming, and we're consuming those resources at greater and greater rates per person, year to year to year.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist, as they say, to figure out that something has got to give, that we cannot continue to consume the way we have over generations and generations of human life on this planet and still have a planet that we can pass on to our children. It's not going to happen.

One of the sad realities, and I think it is a reality—certainly, the most depressing evening you can spend these days is with an environmentalist, because anybody will tell you how dire it is and how we really are the generation that is charged with doing something—finally. I mean every generation, of course, was, but now we have the information.

I would hope it's impossible, certainly in this chamber, to deny that climate change is real and caused by humans. Certainly I hope in this chamber some sure facts about the environment are absolutely incontrovertible. The question is: What are we going to do with those facts? We are the generation, we are the legislators who sit right now—federally, provincially, in the States and everywhere in the world—that are charged with

doing something about it. If we don't, we pass on, really, quite a cataclysm for our children.

I remember going down to the States and attending a Council of State Governments conference where one of the speakers was speaking about the fact that extreme weather events used to happen now and then—maybe even per generation, that have some devastating extreme weather event. Now in the States they're preparing, in terms of a budget, for one a month—one a month. Think about the toll of that on human life. Think about the flooding just in Toronto that happens in our basements. Think about the winter we just went through, the extreme summers that we get, the kind of weather that is just genuinely weird, that people haven't seen before, that we're seeing now routinely around the world. This is what we're talking about when we're talking about the environment.

We're also talking about running out of those finite resources. The theory always was that technology would get to the point—some of us are old enough to remember the Jetsons. You remember the idea that in some halcyon future we'd all be flying around, we could get out of here, we'd be travelling? If we pollute this planet, there are other planets. Surely, there is life on Mars; we'll be setting up colonies. All of that—apart from those who go to ComiCon—it's not so real anymore. What is real is, we're stuck here. This is all we have. If we don't look after it and pass it on to our children, we have nothing; absolutely nothing.

Right now, I have constituents in my riding, many of them elderly, who are renters who pay more for their hydro every month than they do for their rent. They're on fixed incomes and they can't afford it anymore. We won't get into the privatization of hydro, which of course, as you know, we virulently oppose and will consistently in the New Democratic Party, but one of the reasons for that is the huge cost overruns for a nuclear industry—the refurbishments at Darlington etc. are what you're paying for when you're getting that bill.

We heard today in question period the member from Toronto–Danforth talk about the side effects of that industry, and the side effects—apart from the Fukushimas of the world, which of course are shocking and devastating—are the production of nuclear waste. Today, we heard that that nuclear waste is going to be buried next to one of our Great Lakes. We heard that the only environmental assessment that could be done on it is federal. We know that the federal government has gutted the environmental assessment process. Think about it. This is in the member from Huron–Bruce's riding. This is going to happen in her riding, next to one of her lakes. This is prime territory, and we know that nothing will ever happen to that nuclear waste. It doesn't go away. It doesn't dissolve. We don't have an answer to that. We have no answer to that, other than to bury it. This is not an environmental answer. So there is a classic case in point.

To return to the bill, the bill, of course, about banning coal—a good thing. I hearken back to the member from

Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and others who have mentioned it—yes, I too was elected in 2006 and I remember the promise: 2007, then 2011, then 2014. I remember it was always sometime in the future, never quite now. It's good that it finally got done, I have to say. It's good that it finally got done; good that the bill prevents it from ever recurring. That's a good thing.

1750

One of the ugly secrets about our friends in Europe is the continuing use of coal, even in countries that have moved to renewables at an incredible rate. Even countries in Europe that are using renewables are still using coal—an ugly little secret about power in Europe. I think we have to take credit in this province: We don't have that ugly little secret anymore.

Is there more to be done? Oh, my goodness, yes. One of our members just mentioned Gord Miller, the Environmental Commissioner. I want to give a shout-out to Gord Miller, who is retiring out of his job, a phenomenal Environmental Commissioner who has done phenomenal work. He's done it for many, many years, and I want to point to some of that work, where some of the promises of this government are concerned.

We forget that at the same time that the government promised to phase out coal, they also committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 6% below 1990 levels. That was also a concomitant promise back then. And that was to 166 megatonnes. That's a lot. Think about it: One megatonne is equal to a million tonnes. So below 1990 levels by 2020, and 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. In July 2014, Gord Miller, that selfsame Environmental Commissioner, reported that while the government was projected to meet its 2014 emissions targets, it will not even come close to meeting its 2020 targets. Apart from closing the coal plants, he said, "Very little has been achieved ... in fact, we have gone backwards."

In September 2014, the government released its most recent greenhouse gas projections, which weren't available to the Environmental Commissioner when he wrote his report. The situation has improved somewhat, and now the government is projected to exceed its greenhouse gas targets by 19 megatonnes instead of 28 megatonnes. What this still means, Mr. Speaker, is that in 2020 Ontario will exceed target emissions by more megatonnes than all the greenhouse gas reductions achieved in the electricity sector since 1990, even with all the coal plant closures.

You know what? I'm going to repeat that, because I know there are lots of side conversations going on, but I know that the people watching at home, particularly those who are really interested in climate change and the environment, will pay attention to the salient fact, the critical fact. This deal means that in 2020 Ontario will exceed target emissions by more megatonnes than all the greenhouse gas reductions achieved in the electricity sector since 1990, even with all the coal plant closures. This is a problem. This is a problem, and we need to do something about it. We need to do something about it.

In May 2014, the amount of carbon dioxide in the air exceeded the symbolic milestone of 400 parts per million, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. This is a level that has not been seen in—get this—800,000 years. In 2012, the world emitted a record 34.5 billion metric tonnes of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels. Coal was the largest contributor to that, but of course there are others. So we've got a problem. We still have a problem. We still have a problem that needs immediate attention.

Let's talk about some of the aspects of that. There are small stories among big stories here. I mentioned the burying of nuclear waste. That is a story ongoing. That's something we could do something about. We could weigh in with an environmental assessment.

NoJetsTO—a big issue in my riding and a big issue among all the lakefront ridings and others—it should be a big issue for all of us—about putting jets at the Toronto airport. Again, the province owns the lakebed. That's part of it. The province could do an environmental assessment. We have called for that environmental assessment. So has NoJetsTO. The answer we get is that this is federal only. It's not federal only. We have a vested stake in this in Ontario. We should be doing all we can.

Listen, I don't know about anybody else in this Legislature, but we, among others, in the New Democratic Party do not trust Stephen Harper and his government where environmental issues are concerned. We cannot pass the buck and say, "Leave it to the feds," because we know the feds are doing nothing about it. In fact, they're moving backwards. They are moving backwards, and there's no question about that.

Meanwhile, this is going on literally in our own backyard, in our own province. These are issues that are happening here. These are issues we should be out in front of, we should be doing something about, we should be calling for an environmental assessment on. That's what we should do.

In my own riding, with the Union Pearson Express, believe me, our phones are ringing off the hook. It's now running every 15 minutes, 24/7, right through Liberty Village, right past the backyards of those who live in my riding, past parks, past schools. Not my riding alone—Laura Albanese in York South–Weston. There are a number of ridings that it's running through—Trinity–Spadina and others. It's going to be running on diesel. No jurisdiction in the world is investing in diesel trains except for Bangladesh and us. What are we doing? This is in our own backyard.

By the way, it's not a relief route for those who want to use it to get downtown. No. It's just airport and back, at exorbitant rates that very few can afford. That will be a white elephant, mark my words, and we will be paying for that as taxpayers: paying to pollute.

What can we do? These are local issues. These are provincial issues that we could do something about. It's extremely important.

Today I was happy to see that the member from Toronto–Danforth's anti-fracking bill passed, because,

like this bill—very much like this bill, in a sense—what he’s attempting to do is to prevent fracking from being part of the Ontario provincial scene. That’s a very good thing. The argument, “Well, it’s not happening yet,” to me, doesn’t hold water, literally water that will be polluted by fracking. It doesn’t work, because the reality is that it could happen here. As long as it could happen—and it shouldn’t happen—we can act to prevent it from happening. That’s what we’re tasked with as legislators. Again, I can’t emphasize how important this is.

From my teenage years to now, looking at the world, looking at Canada and looking at us, I can say that we have failed miserably. My generation, we—most of us boomers in this place—have failed miserably to protect the planet and to also protect future generations who want to live on this planet. We’ve failed. So it’s tasked to us that we start doing something, and “everything” is the answer to what we should be doing, as much as we can.

To get back, again: Is this bill good? Absolutely, it’s good. It points to something that has been done, something good that’s been done. We hoped it would have been done earlier. Originally it was supposed to be 2007, then 2011, but finally it is done. That’s a good thing. That’s a start. It’s a start.

One of the members in the Conservative Party talked about cap-and-trade. We are looking forward to hearing the details about said cap-and-trade, because honestly, to this day, I haven’t seen those details. Let’s see the details; let’s see the action. My goodness, that’s the call upon us from every environmentalist: Let’s see the action. Our children and their children and their children’s children will look back at this generation, at this Legislature, at the one in Ottawa and ones in jurisdictions around the world, and say, “What did you do?” Because if we don’t do it, it may be too late. As I say, if you want

a depressing evening, spend it with an environmentalist talking about the environment and climate change. That will really depress you.

Here’s the big picture, and here’s another fact that one should really take home: In 2010, global leaders attended the UN Cancun Climate Change Conference and agreed to limit global warming to two degrees. This commitment included a pledge to reduce carbon emissions below a specified target.

In November 2014, a UN report noted that Canada was one of only four countries, along with Australia, Mexico and the United States, that is not on track to meeting their emissions reductions. We should be ashamed, as Canadians, about this. Yet we see federally—just pick up one issue: the Keystone XL pipeline, which even President Obama vetoes, which is supported by both the Liberal and Conservative Parties. Shame—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: And Gary Doer.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: And Gary Doer—yes, sad; shameful, I say. Shameful, absolutely.

Just to sum up: A good thing? Yes. We’re going to vote for it; of course we will. Is there so much more to be done? Oh, my goodness, yes—locally, provincially and federally that we not only should do, but we have to do. As I said before, this is the most defining issue of our generation—climate change and the environment—and we will have to answer to future ones. I hope that answer is a good one.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, May 11, and, I’ll remind everyone once more, 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB) Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Oakville Welland	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB) Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Oxford	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Barrie	
	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	St. Paul's Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Oak Ridges–Markham Dufferin–Caledon	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB) MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Davenport	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Thornhill	
	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB) McDonell, Jim (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, Marie-France Lalonde
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Randy Hillier
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 7 May 2015 / Jeudi 7 mai 2015

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

2015 Ontario budget / Budget de l'Ontario de 2015

Mr. Gilles Bisson	4175
Ms. Soo Wong.....	4175
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	4175
Mr. Wayne Gates	4176
Mr. John Yakabuski	4176
Mr. Gilles Bisson	4177
Hon. Glen R. Murray	4180
Mr. Todd Smith.....	4181
Mme France Gélinas	4181
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	4181
Mr. Gilles Bisson	4182
Hon. Glen R. Murray	4182
Hon. Michael Chan	4183
Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde	4184
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	4185
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	4185
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	4185
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	4186
Hon. Glen R. Murray	4186
Debate deemed adjourned.....	4186

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	4186
Hon. Michael Chan	4187
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson.....	4187
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	4187
Mr. Victor Fedeli.....	4187
Hon. Jeff Leal.....	4187
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4187
Ms. Daiene Vernile	4187
Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	4187
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	4187
Mr. Arthur Potts	4187
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4187

Order of business

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4187
------------------------------------	------

Privatization of public assets

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....	4187
------------------------------------	------

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Winter highway maintenance

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4188
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	4189

Teachers' labour disputes

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4189
Hon. Liz Sandals	4190
Mr. Garfield Dunlop.....	4190

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath	4190
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4190

Privatization of public assets

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	4191
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4191

Privatization of public assets

Mr. John Yakabuski	4192
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4192

Privatization of public assets

Mr. Gilles Bisson	4193
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4193

Children's mental health services / Services de santé mentale pour enfants

Mr. Yvan Baker.....	4193
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	4194
Hon. Eric Hoskins	4194

Winter highway maintenance

Mr. Jim McDonell.....	4194
Hon. Steven Del Duca.....	4194
Mr. Ted Arnott	4195

Nuclear waste

Mr. Peter Tabuns.....	4195
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	4195

Apprenticeship training

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn.....	4195
Hon. Reza Moridi.....	4196

Justice of the peace

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	4196
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur	4196

Continued on inside back cover

Continued from back cover

Northern Ontario

Mme France G�elinas	4197
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4197

Forest industry

Mr. Granville Anderson	4197
Hon. Bill Mauro	4197

Highway safety

Mr. Jeff Yurek	4198
Hon. Steven Del Duca	4198

Children’s mental health services

Ms. Cindy Forster	4198
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	4198

Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Steve Clark	4199
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	4199
Mr. Jim Wilson	4199
Mr. Arthur Potts	4199

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PR SENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Hon. Tracy MacCharles	4199
Mr. Granville Anderson	4199
Ms. Jennifer K. French	4199
Hon. James J. Bradley	4200
Mr. Todd Smith	4200
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	4200

**MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS /
D CLARATIONS DES D PUT S**

Lyme disease	
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	4200
Correctional facility employees	
Ms. Jennifer K. French	4200
Mother’s Day	
Ms. Daiene Vernile	4200
Connor Ross	
Ms. Sylvia Jones	4201
Labour disputes	
Ms. Cindy Forster	4201
Community services	
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	4201
Concord Food Centre	
Mrs. Gila Martow	4201
Canada-Netherlands Friendship Day	
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	4202
BlackBerry	
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	4202

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
D P T DES PROJETS DE LOI**

**Protecting Victims of Occupational Disease Act,
2015, Bill 98, Ms. French / Loi de 2015 sur la
protection des victimes de maladies
professionnelles, projet de loi 98, Mme French**

First reading agreed to	4203
Ms. Jennifer K. French	4203

MOTIONS

Private members’ public business

Hon. James J. Bradley	4203
Motion agreed to	4203

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / D CLARATIONS
MINIST RIELLES ET R PONSES**

**Children’s Mental Health Week / Semaine de la
sant  mentale des enfants**

Hon. Tracy MacCharles	4203
-----------------------------	------

Asian Heritage Month

Hon. Michael Chan	4204
-------------------------	------

Children’s Mental Health Week

Mr. Jim McDonell	4204
------------------------	------

Asian Heritage Month

Mrs. Gila Martow	4205
------------------------	------

Children’s Mental Health Week

Ms. Cindy Forster	4205
-------------------------	------

Asian Heritage Month

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	4206
-------------------------------	------

Correction of record

Ms. Cindy Forster	4206
Mr. Jim McDonell	4206

PETITIONS / P TITIONS

Hydro rates

Ms. Sylvia Jones	4206
------------------------	------

Gasoline prices

Mme France G�elinas	4206
---------------------------	------

Water fluoridation

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	4207
----------------------------	------

Demonstration at Queen’s Park

Mrs. Gila Martow	4207
------------------------	------

First responders

Mr. Taras Natyshak	4207
--------------------------	------

GO Transit

Mr. Granville Anderson	4207
------------------------------	------

Ontario Retirement Pension Plan	
Mrs. Julia Munro	4208
Special-needs children	
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	4208
Student safety	
Mrs. Cristina Martins	4208
Health care funding	
Mr. Jim McDonell	4208
Hospital funding	
Mme France G�elinas	4209
French-language education	
Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn	4209

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INT ER ET PUBLIC
 EMANANT DES D EPUT ES**

Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, Bill 95, Ms. Armstrong / Loi de 2015 sur l'am�elioration des services de sant� mentale et de lutte contre les d�ependances en Ontario, projet de loi 95, Mme Armstrong	
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	4210
Mr. Han Dong	4211
Ms. Sylvia Jones	4212
Ms. Peggy Sattler	4213
Mrs. Kathryn McGarry	4213
Mrs. Gila Martow	4214
Mme France G�elinas	4215
Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris	4215
Ms. Cindy Forster	4216
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	4216
Safeguarding our Communities Act (Fentanyl Patch for Patch Return Policy), 2015, Bill 33, Mr. Fedeli / Loi de 2015 pour prot�ger nos collectivit�s (politique d'�change de timbres de fentanyl), projet de loi 33, M. Fedeli	
Mr. Victor Fedeli	4217
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky	4218
Hon. Dipika Damerla	4220
Ms. Laurie Scott	4220
Mme France G�elinas	4221
Ms. Harinder Malhi	4222
Mr. Jim McDonell	4222
Ms. Soo Wong	4223
Mr. Victor Fedeli	4224
Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Amendment Act (Anti-Fracking), 2015, Bill 82, Mr. Tabuns / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en p�trole, en gaz et en sel (anti-fracturation), projet de loi 82, M. Tabuns	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	4224

Ms. Eleanor McMahon	4226
Mr. Robert Bailey	4226
Mr. Percy Hatfield	4227
Mr. Bob Delaney	4228
Mr. John Yakabuski	4228
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	4229
Mr. Tim Hudak	4230
Mr. Rick Nicholls	4230
Hon. James J. Bradley	4230
Mr. Peter Tabuns	4231

Improving Mental Health and Addictions Services in Ontario Act, 2015, Bill 95, Ms. Armstrong / Loi de 2015 sur l'am�elioration des services de sant� mentale et de lutte contre les d�ependances en Ontario, projet de loi 95, Mme Armstrong	
Second reading agreed to	4231

Safeguarding our Communities Act (Fentanyl Patch for Patch Return Policy), 2015, Bill 33, Mr. Fedeli / Loi de 2015 pour prot�ger nos collectivit�s (politique d'�change de timbres de fentanyl), projet de loi 33, M. Fedeli	
Second reading agreed to	4232

Oil, Gas and Salt Resources Amendment Act (Anti-Fracking), 2015, Bill 82, Mr. Tabuns / Loi de 2015 modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en p�trole, en gaz et en sel (anti-fracturation), projet de loi 82, M. Tabuns	
Second reading agreed to	4232

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, 2015, Bill 9, Mr. Murray / Loi de 2015 sur l'abandon du charbon pour un air plus propre, projet de loi 9, M. Murray	
Ms. Eleanor McMahon	4232
Hon. Dipika Damerla	4233
Hon. James J. Bradley	4233
Mr. John Yakabuski	4235
Mr. Percy Hatfield	4235
Mr. Yvan Baker	4235
Mrs. Gila Martow	4236
Hon. James J. Bradley	4236
Mr. Ted Arnott	4236
Mr. Percy Hatfield	4240
M. Shafiq Qadri	4240
Mr. John Yakabuski	4240
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	4241
Mr. Ted Arnott	4241
Ms. Cheri DiNovo	4241
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	4244