

Legislative
Assembly
of Ontario



Assemblée
législative
de l'Ontario

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

No. 85B

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

N^o 85B

2nd Session
41st Parliament

Thursday
18 May 2017

2^e session
41^e législature

Jeudi
18 mai 2017

Speaker: Honourable Dave Levac
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Dave Levac
Greffier : Todd Decker

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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



ISSN 1180-2987

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 mai 2017

The House recessed from 1800 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Chris Ballard: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Monday, May 29, 2017, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline to file amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12:45 p.m. on Monday, May 29, 2017; and

That on Monday, May 29, 2017, at 3 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto, one 20-minute waiting period pursuant to standing order 129(a) being permitted; and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Tuesday, May 30, 2017; and

That, in the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

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

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

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Mr. Ballard has moved government motion number 32.

Minister of Housing.

Hon. Chris Ballard: I believe the minister responsible for anti-racism will be making further remarks later in the debate, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Further debate? I recognize the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you, Speaker, and good evening. Good evening to those who are watching from home.

I am disappointed. Unfortunately, I've had to say that quite a bit lately, because I am: that, once again, we're here subverting the democratic process, muzzling constructive debate and trampling on the voices of Ontarians by moving a time allocation motion.

My colleague from the north next door here gave folks a bit of a tutorial on what really time allocation is, so I'm not going to bother getting into that. I think he explained it very well. I was a bit hazed, slightly, until he did a really good explanation of it. So for anybody who didn't catch it, go back into Hansard and—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, run the replay, perhaps.

I'll say that it's not just the voices of elected representatives and therefore their communities that are being muzzled; it's also fundamentally blocking the vital work of the opposition in holding the government to account and suggesting changes and raising concerns. Some of my colleagues here, on all sides of the House, may remember me speaking at third reading of Bill 65 the other week. I took some time to remind and educate the government members present on the purpose of the opposition in our Westminster democracy that we enjoy here today. Obviously, my point did not come across, so I thought it was again appropriate to speak, in order to really make sure this hits home.

I had to appreciate a speech that I read from former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker. He gave an address at the Empire Club in 1949. I know that was a few years ago. He very clearly and eloquently laid out the deep responsibility left with the opposition in our Westminster parliamentary system.

His speech began by acknowledging the official designation “Her Majesty’s loyal opposition”—loyal, because our criticism is not all about making the government look bad. They do a good enough job of that themselves, Speaker. It’s all about ensuring that government is accountable. It’s about finding and expressing the other viewpoints. Most importantly, it’s about making sure that the voices of our communities, the opinions of the people that we are here to serve, are listened to.

As Diefenbaker said, “Parliament is a place where in full discussion freedom is preserved, where one side advances arguments and the other examines them and where decisions are arrived at after passing through the crucible of public discussion.”

Public discussion, Speaker, the kind of discussion that time allocation kills, the kind of discussion that is meant to be had exhaustively: That is what is expected of us. That is what we are here to do: Initiate ideas to help Ontarians debate them fully, and then move them ahead, advance them.

This bill is important, and it addresses a critical social issue in Canada. It’s shameful that the government wants to cut the debate on this subject, to disrespect Ontarians and democracy by ramming it through the Legislature, simply to fit their vacation schedule.

I happened to pull up a couple of quotes. I think it’s always important to look back. There was a quote I liked here by a former parliamentarian: “We’re talking about time allocation, and in this motion they will not allow committee hearings, they won’t allow third reading debate—crazy.

“That’s why this institution is in such disrepute, because we don’t want to talk about the important things.”

Speaker, I’m not going to ask you to guess who that was. It was the member for Windsor–St. Clair back in 2002, Dwight Duncan. Perhaps you may know him.

I’ve got another one here: “Each of the time allocation motions which close off or choke off debate in this House seems to be more drastic as it comes forward, seems to be more sinister as it relates to the privileges of members of this House and as it relates to healthy, democratic debate for the people of this province.”

Had this particular member been here, he likely would have recognized that very statement. That was made by the member for St. Catharines back in 1997, the Honourable Jim Bradley.

He goes on to say, “The minority in this House and perhaps on many occasions the majority of the people in this province, who on occasion disagree with this government, are having their rights run over by this government because it is efficient.”

He could literally be saying that right today in the House, in his seat. But he said it back in December 1997.

There was another good one that I saw earlier on. I felt it was just too good not to—well, here’s one. Another member, back in 2002, said, “I’m also saddened to stand up again and speak to another motion by this government to shut down debate.... They just ram this through like they’ve rammed everything else through.

“We know now why they like these closure motions. Because they don’t want the public to know what they’re doing.”

That was the member for Eglinton–Lawrence, Mr. Mike Colle, back in 2002. I don’t know what has changed since then.

There was a good one I saw here earlier. Oh, yes: “For a government that promised to be open”—I think

we heard a lot about open and transparent government in the most recent throne speech; at least, I did—“this closure action is the height of arrogance, the height of exactly everything you campaigned against and you said you were for.” I literally could have written that today. But I didn’t; that was from Dalton McGuinty, from Ottawa South, back in 2000.

It’s 6:55. I’m usually close to or home by now, in Kitchener, depending on how traffic goes, after a nice long day. Typically, my routine would be to—Rosy gets her jammies on and gets ready for bed at about 7 o’clock. She’s inching a bit closer to 7:30 these days. She’s going to be turning two in August.

They’re tuning in tonight, because I said, “Guys, the government is going to keep me late tonight, and I won’t be home.” So I know they’re watching. I want to say good night to Rosy. I’m sure she’s in her jammies.

Lincoln is three, turning four. He’s a big boy now. He has been attending YMCA through the day. He loves reading books. I wouldn’t want to read him a Diefenbaker speech, of course, tonight on closure motions, and I don’t think he wants to hear more quotes about closure from former parliamentarians, which we have all likely experienced at one time or another.

Murphy gets to stay up a bit later. He loves to read. He’s in JK right now. He brings a book home every day, and we read it together. Eliot is our dog, and he usually jumps up and checks things out too.

Rosy, Lincoln and Murphy: Perhaps I’ll see you later tonight. I love you. Hopefully, you’ll have a good night’s rest. I was going to read a bit of a story to you. I have a good Diefenbaker one, obviously, but I won’t do that. I’ll save Green Eggs and Ham for when I’m home tomorrow night. I’m only speaking for 20 minutes; I could do 40, though. Do you want me to do 40? I could read the story, but I’m not going to. I just want to say good night, guys. I’ll see you later on. I’ll see you in the morning, for sure.

Anyway, I want to get back to what we’re talking about here, and that is time allocation, of course. I might come back to the book if I have time for the story I would have read to the guys tonight: Green Eggs and Ham, one of my favourites. “I am Sam. Sam I am.” It’s probably a long-time favourite of yours.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Sam will be back later on tonight, too.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Michael Harris: Anyway, as I said before, moving time allocation on this bill is anti-democratic. It’s subverting the course of a reasonable, free society that acknowledges good government. Policy comes from speaking to an idea until every representative feels they have said all they want to say.

I go back to Diefenbaker. He talked about this. He said, “If Parliament is to be preserved as a living institution His Majesty’s”—Her Majesty’s, now—“Loyal Opposition must fearlessly perform its functions. When it properly discharges them the preservation of our freedom is assured. The reading of history proves that freedom always dies when criticism ends. It upholds and

maintains the rights of minorities against majorities. It must be vigilant against oppression and unjust invasions by the cabinet of the rights of the people. It should supervise all expenditures and prevent over-expenditure by exposing to the light of public opinion wasteful expenditures or worse. It finds fault; it suggests amendments; it asks questions and elicits information....”

I’ve got to just go back to that amendment piece. We heard, at least through Bill 65, “Oh, all these amendments.” I heard varying accounts from the government—300, 200, 400; we actually only debated 40 on Bill 65. But then I was reading the other day, and I heard how the government themselves had tabled at least 200 amendments on Bill 89, on their own bill—200. I wanted to get that out there, because that just was one of those things that I was thinking about.

1900

“It asks questions and elicits information; it arouses, educates and molds public opinion by voice and vote. It must scrutinize every action by the government and in doing so prevents the shortcuts through democratic procedure that governments like to make.”

How is the opposition supposed to fulfill that duty to scrutinize the government and prevent the shortcuts through democratic procedure that Diefenbaker refers to, when government exercises this absolute power to end debate? This is exactly what he was speaking to: the government unilaterally deciding that the opinions of elected representatives, voicing the concerns of their communities, aren’t important; the government deciding that we’re a nuisance that needs to be put in a box, so they can get along with what they consider to be important. Well, guess what? That is not how our society chose to structure its government. They didn’t.

My colleague from Nipissing came in. I know he missed a couple of these quotes. I’ll share them with him later, perhaps. There’s a good one here from the former member for Kingston and the Islands. He said, “Of course the first thing that ought to be said is that this is once again a closure motion, another closure motion where the government is basically saying, ‘We don’t want any further debate. We do not want this bill to go to committee. We do not want to have any debate on third reading. We’re shutting her down.’” That was John Gerretsen, back in 2003.

Here is another one: “I usually start off my remarks by saying it’s a pleasure to speak to something on behalf of the people of Don Valley East, but it really isn’t. This is yet another closure motion, a gag order on the Legislature. How could it ever be?”—

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I’ve got a point of order from the member from Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I recognize that we have been here very long today, but I’m just going to ask the member if he could please bring his debate back to the actual discussion that we’re having today, versus reading quotes that really do not pertain to this bill. Thank you so much.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I just want to remind everybody that we are speaking to the time allocation motion. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga is talking about that piece.

I’m going to return to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: You know what, Speaker: I appreciate that clarification. I think that perhaps they had something else in front of them that they thought we were going to debate, but it actually isn’t. It’s the closure motion, right? So these time allocation quotes, I think, are absolutely relevant, 100%. That’s what we’re talking about. That’s what we’re debating tonight. I think it’s appropriate.

I’m going to try to pick up where I left off. He said, “This is yet another closure motion, a gag order on the Legislature. How could it ever be a pleasure to speak to that, when that’s the normal course of action and when this Legislature is shut down for the very purpose it was meant for, which was to discuss important matters?” That was the member for Don Valley West—

Interjection: You said, “East.”

Mr. Michael Harris: I know. I did. That was just Hansard. It’s the member for Don Valley West, but it said Don Valley East.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I’m not sure if the member is talking about me or the member from Don Valley West. I’m a little confused.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Can you please clarify?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes. The quote actually had here—and this is direct from Hansard. It said Don Valley East, but it was the member for Don Valley West, back in 2001. It was neither of you guys.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I wasn’t here in 2001.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): It’s not a point of order.

I’m going to return to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga, to get back to the debate.

Mr. Michael Harris: That would be David Caplan. He was the previous member for Don Valley West. He was a good guy.

Anyway, as I was saying, we need a strong and empowered opposition to preserve our freedoms and individual rights. We need a strong opposition to keep our province from slipping towards dictatorship—that’s what could happen. When the government strong-arms its bills through with time allocation, it’s silencing Ontarians, it’s silencing the opposition and it’s most certainly silencing democracy.

We’ve heard Liberals in this House say the same thing. Rick Bartolucci said back in 2002, “I stand to speak against any type of time allocation motion because

in this instance, as in other instances, it stifles debate in this House and doesn't enhance the"—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I heard a lot of shouting from the government side. The next time I get up, someone will be warned. Okay?

I'm going to return to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: That's good, Speaker. Thank you.

Where did I leave off here—"it stifles debate," of course, yes, "and doesn't enhance the democratic process. In fact, it does not allow the general public, the people in Ontario, to have a say in the important bills that this government should want to be taking out to committee and to have input etc." That was Rick Bartolucci back in 2002.

I know my current colleagues on the other side of the aisle truly feel this way too. If they believe in democracy and if they believe in the democratic process, then they fundamentally cannot support time allocation of this bill. We need accountability in government. We need transparency. How can we achieve these goals with time allocation that forcibly ends debate? This bill should proceed if and when every member who wants to speak to it has had that opportunity and has spoken until there is no one left to speak. Ramming this bill through with time allocation is an affront to democracy. It's insulting to every member here and to the people they serve.

Now, Speaker, I'm hopeful these quotes won't ever be able to be used again. I'm happy if they want to use them tonight. This is only fair for those impacted by the legislation and those who are relying on it to change their lives for the better. They deserve better than the shortcut to democracy. They deserve better than, of course, the absolute minimum. Ontarians are relying on us to do this right, to take the time and to consider legislation carefully.

The average Ontarian works hard and does not have the time to follow government as close as we do, perhaps at every step. Most days they don't really have time to follow government at all; they're busy. They're relying on us. They have elected us to do this for them, to represent them. It is our responsibility, our duty to assess, review and debate legislation. This process was not designed to be fast. It was deliberately designed to go at a nice, slow pace.

Let's stop disrespecting this process. Let's stop disrespecting the Legislature here and give this bill the time and care it deserves. Speaker, I know my colleague from Nipissing will want his opportunity to speak to you and to Ontarians on behalf of his community. Of course, I may have another opportunity to come back tonight, but it's getting to 7 o'clock right now, so Rosy is probably off to bed, and Lincoln and Murphy are tuned in. I just want to say goodnight to them again, and I'll see you in the morning. Thanks, Speaker.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm also glad to rise in this Legislature. It has been a little while since I have had the opportunity to stand and speak during night sittings. I remember the last time that I had that opportunity, it was on education issues, and it was an interesting conversation we had that night, and, clearly, we're having an interesting conversation this evening as well, as we are debating or discussing—or throwing random shots back and forth—time allocation, and the time allocation motion on Bill 114, the Anti-Racism Act.

So I'm glad to be able to stand and speak, because, you know, Madam Speaker, I haven't actually had the opportunity to speak to this bill yet—so here I am, and we're discussing a time allocation motion. But I'm going to go ahead and say that this is not a new thing, as we've been talking about. The member from Kitchener-Conestoga had many, many totally relevant quotes about time allocation, entirely in keeping with the debate. It's always interesting to go back through history and realize that this is not a new thing—to ram through debate so the government can get on to the next and hurry along.

1910

I did find it interesting, though. I know we don't have two minutes for questions and comments, but I'm going to take just a second to further what he was saying about the gag orders and the idea of closing discussion and shutting it down. I thought it was really interesting, though, that the government was interrupting the debate—the only debate that we get on this, really—to make sure that we stayed focused. I didn't know that they listened so well.

In my riding of Oshawa, it's interesting hearing from our constituents, but I don't know that in other ridings, in some of the government ridings—I wonder if they're listening, as well, in those ridings. But they're listening tonight, so that's good. That's a step in the right direction.

I had to explain to someone what night sittings were. I was trying to explain, because they said, "What do you mean, you're potentially sitting until midnight?"—not tonight, but the potential was there this week. I said, "This is kind of when the government makes it seem like we've been doing so much work and there's just so much to cram in right up until the end. It doesn't feel super-productive the rest of the time, maybe." But anyway, here we are.

Back to time allocation: This is an interesting place. We come here and we're supposed to be debating, hearing from folks across the province, across our ridings, on different issues. In my mind, it should be a fulsome conversation: During the debate, we bring voices into the Legislature, make sure that folks are represented and included in the conversation and that they're educated—if they're paying attention—and that we have time, while we're debating here, to be connected in our ridings and make sure that stakeholders and interested parties are aware, are weighing in.

When things go through so quickly, that just can't happen. For example, Madam Speaker, perhaps you've

heard of—or you might have blinked and missed it—the fair hydro plan, Bill 132. Today we had the vote on that. But I had been away for a day and a half with important events outside of this place, and I missed my window. I blinked and I missed my window to actually get on the record on that bill, which is disappointing. We've had lots of opportunity to talk about hydro and the realities for Ontarians, so I have always had that opportunity, but not on this particular bill, because it went by so quickly. That's disappointing to see time and time again.

We also see it in committee. The committee process—which, again, one would imagine is where we're doing the fine tuning of the legislation in this province—it's the time when we hear from folks outside of this bubble, outside of this proud establishment—folks in the real world. It's a chance to hear from experts or from concerned folks. They come to Queen's Park or they communicate with us—write letters and all that stuff. It should be a time to hear from them, but again, we are limiting that time with this time allocation motion and shrinking that window, shutting that window, so that people can't get in, so that people can't get their voices heard.

Case in point: What we're talking about today is a time allocation motion on the Anti-Racism Act. A recent bill that just went through the Legislature and passed was Bill 89. That was the Supporting Children, Youth and Families Act. I understand that there were a lot of amendments. There was a lot to that.

I met with a group in my riding. It was a group called the Durham Community Interest Group, and they met with me. They had ideas about this bill and on this topic, things that they not only wanted to see included but wanted to make sure we as legislators understood: ideas about accountability, the complaints process, the anti-oppression leads. They had concerns and questions about the overrepresentation of black children and youth in our children's aid societies, in our care services across the province. They had a lot of really meaningful and important—not just data, but important information to share.

We realized in this meeting that they had missed that window. They had missed the boat for getting in amendments, because they hadn't known the process. They will for next time, and we've connected with them and these are going to be conversations that we have in this Legislature, because certainly our anti-racism work is always going to be important and is always going to be something that we as a House work on. But this was a group where we had to say, "Sorry. There was a process that you were unaware of, and if you blinked, then you missed it." That's frustrating, to have to tell folks that in the community.

It was a group that I hadn't been connected with before, and now we are, and that's great. But how many others are out there that don't know our Queen's Park process, that don't know the process and therefore can't access it?

We should have signposts everywhere inviting Ontarians into the process, to invite their voices, invite

their expertise, invite their concerns. We shouldn't be so chicken to hear the negative, to hear the suggestions, to be challenged, because that's why we're here. We're here to get that feedback and either do something with it or give them a reasoned response as to why we can't. But, you know, to be so nervous to pick up the phone or allow someone into the process—I find that so odd.

This is the place where the voices of the province are supposed to filter in through us. We're not supposed to stop them. They're supposed to come in, and we're supposed to open the door and say, "Hey, Ontario, this is your House. This is your space. We want to use your voice. We want to make decisions with you involved in the process." And yet we time-allocate and we shut down and we limit and we ram through. It's not even just that we stifle debate. We say, "No, no debate for you." It really is too bad.

I'm glad, though, that we have this—well, had this, though I would have liked to have a little more time to spend and to bring in voices from my community. But I'm glad that we have had the conversation and are moving forward with the Anti-Racism Directorate. The NDP has certainly done a lot of work supporting this initiative. It will always be a need in our community as long as we have racism throughout our systems, throughout our province. We need to focus on that and we need to do something to address it, and not just something, but everything that we can to address it.

Madam Speaker, I will also take a moment to highlight that I had a really special opportunity today. There was a flag-raising outside, and it was global Africa Day—well, it wasn't. Excuse me. Global Africa Day is May 27, but we had the flag-raising today at Queen's Park, where we raised the African Union flag. It's been 54 years since the founding of the African Union. It was a warm, beautiful, sunny day. It was a great turnout and we had that opportunity to come together and raise the flag but also to highlight—not just highlight, but celebrate—Africa and her diaspora and the contributions that had been made across our communities.

There was dance, there was beautiful singing, and there was a real celebration because it was also one of the first flag-raising I've been to in a while where the sun was shining so beautifully. It was great, and it was a nice opportunity to remember the importance of the work that we do here, because many of the speakers talked about not just community issues but global community issues. As my colleague across the Legislature, the Minister of the Status of Women and minister responsible for early years and child care, had said, where we come from makes us who we are—which, of course, is true—but further to that, where our neighbours and our community members come from is what makes us who we can be, so coming together is such an important part.

1920

I'm glad to have had the opportunity to have been there on behalf of the NDP, as the citizenship and immigration critic, but also just to celebrate, because it was a great day.

I'm going to spend—oh, no, that's my time. I know that the member from Timmins–James Bay is super-excited—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You can have more.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Okay, I'll take some more time, but I know that he is superexcited to speak about time allocation. I don't know if he has had the opportunity to talk to us about time allocation motions—oh, wait, yes, maybe; on a regular basis, unfortunately.

Mr. Wayne Gates: How many years?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, I know.

As we move forward in the next year, Madam Speaker, I'm sure that we're going to be having this same conversation, which, again, is disappointing.

But I am going to take my time there. Unlike the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, I don't have good-night wishes for all of my children and my pets and my neighbours, and I don't have a Dr. Seuss book to read to anyone. So I'm going to have that be my time, and certainly save some time for the member from Timmins–James Bay. I'm superexcited to hear from him about time allocation, and from the government, because I would like to know from them why they feel the need to shut it down all the time, to stifle that debate, to bully things through rather than allow for that fulsome, necessary, important conversation.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, if the government doesn't want to speak about time allocation, I sure as heck will. Thank you very much for the opportunity to stand and rise in this Legislature. Sadly, for way, way too many times, I've had to stand here and talk about time allocation.

I stood here recently and talked about time allocation on the budget measures bill, and precisely every one of our reasons against it are exactly what happened. Here we were, rushed. At five minutes to 12, we had a vote. Sadly, the vote passed, sending it to committee, except by the time the Clerk's office could get the notice out—this government sent it to committee at 1 o'clock that very day, basically less than an hour after it passed here, so I'm not sure how anybody from my hometown of North Bay, in my riding of Nipissing, could make it here in that hour.

It's exactly what we said would happen. Not only did it get scrambled and forced into a committee barely an hour after—by the time the Clerk got the notice, it was only half an hour of notice, or 45 minutes at best, from the time people officially understood that the committee was meeting, where the room was and all of those good things, to the time the first deputant was expected to be there. We were expected to sit until 7 p.m. and that was it: one afternoon of committee hearings on the budget.

This is the budget, which the government alleged is balanced, when all of the experts have proved to us that it was falsely balanced with one-time funds—not normal but abnormal funding. The kind of funding that they used should have been put in the notes of a financial statement that called it anything but normal funding.

That budget is the one they wanted us to debate—they forced us to debate—at 1 o'clock until 7 p.m. Of course, because there was such short notice, we didn't even have enough deputants to get us barely past 5 o'clock, so we certainly didn't hear from far and wide.

What we heard were some very critical comments on the budget as well. It was interesting.

I've got to tell you that there was one very thoughtful presenter who talked to us about the WSIB. He was so thoughtful that I am taking his concerns to the Auditor General. There was some great value from most of the deputants—in fact, all of the deputants, but this particular deputant, all three parties agreed, was by far one of the best speakers we've ever had in there. It was just so alarming, the things he talked about. So he had a good opportunity there to bring it to us. Sadly, nobody else did. Nobody else knew of it.

At 7 p.m. that night, all of the amendments were to be in. But this is where the hypocrisy comes in, Speaker. You've got all of these ideas and concepts from people who are expected to present until 7 p.m., but right at that very moment as well is when the clause-by-clause amendments need to be delivered. How can you take something that somebody just spoke about, draft that into an amendment, get it into legislative affairs so that it can be put into the proper format and hand-deliver it across the street by 7 p.m. sharp? No amendments accepted after that; that's the hypocrisy.

This government did not want to hear from people on that budget because they time-allocated it, which is exactly what they're doing with bill after bill after bill after bill. Sadly, this is a true affront to the people of Ontario.

We heard, on the earlier time allocation motion on Bill 68—never mind their first one this year or their first one this month; this is not even their first one today. Bill 68 was time-allocated as well, and this one was interesting, Speaker. Again, not unlike this particular bill, Bill 68 was in the hopper for a year. For a full year it dragged on, and with the snap of a finger, it needed to be done in three days—top to bottom, end to end, back to back, everything. That's it.

So as the member from Oxford told us earlier in his discussion on what is so bad about these time allocation bills, the city of Mississauga couldn't get done in time to make a deputation. They missed out. If you've got, as I think the member from Oxford likely would have said, a municipality of Mississauga, a city of Mississauga, with hundreds and hundreds of staff, and they couldn't get put together to present in time because there's such short notice—everything is done in minutes here, not in thoughtful hours, days, weeks or months; it's minutes. If they couldn't get it done in time, you can imagine that people just throw their arms up with this government and say, "Why bother even trying?"

They're bullies. They will force their way through at everything they do. Quite frankly, I think the people of Ontario are quite sick and tired of it. At least that's what I hear when I'm on the road, and I'm on the road a lot. I travel Ontario a lot.

Earlier tonight, we heard from the member from Ottawa South, and it was a thoughtful presentation that he gave earlier. We were debating another issue a couple of hours ago. He said, “We have to hear the voices of the people from far away.” I thought, “Yes, you’re darn right we do—except for most of the people they really don’t want to hear from.” That’s what I find is so troubling about this government.

I’m going to read from the Financial Accountability Officer, who backs up what I’m going to say with his own quotes about this government and not allowing the people to be heard. I know that they like to say one thing, but whatever they say, you can almost unanimously understand that the opposite is what’s true. I just absolutely know that. Day after day, week after week, month after month, they say one thing when the opposite is true. That’s what this is all about.

Actually, I know they’re going to look forward to next week, when my new book, *Focus on Finance 4*, comes out. In fact, the entire opening chapter is all about the fact that what they have said—and I name them in the book and what the facts are. It’s really quite interesting, Speaker.

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“We have to hear the voices of the people far way,” said the member from Ottawa South, except for the people we don’t really want to hear from—which is most of the time. When we were going to this debate on the budget, it was time-allocated. Here we are, and it was time-allocated—probably one of the more in-depth debates we should be having.

I asked a question of the Premier yesterday. I said, “My question is for the Premier. Later this morning we’ll be voting on the government’s budget measures bill. This includes giving the availability to municipalities to implement a new hotel tax.” Again, Speaker, we’re talking about time allocation and we’re talking about the fact that they don’t want to hear from the people. Well, on this new tax, the Liberal MPP from Mississauga–Streetsville stated, “It is a bad idea, and I do not support it.” He went on to say, “To attempt to tax out-of-town residents is taxation without representation.” Even the Premier’s own members have serious objections to this bill.

So I asked the Premier: “Is that why debate was cut off? Is that what it is? Did the Premier not want the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and others to share their objections with the Legislature?”

So what do they do? Time-allocate it. It’s gone. We can’t talk about it anymore. Boom.

But that wasn’t the only bill. As the member from Oxford said only a few minutes later, “My question is back to the Premier. Premier, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville isn’t the only one of your members who disagrees with your policies. The Liberal member from Beaches–East York”—

Interjection: Potts.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes, you’re right. You can say his name. I won’t.

“The Liberal member from Beaches–East York said, ‘The rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto and other communities in Ontario because it didn’t allow the private sector to continue’”—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. I already warned the government side. The member from Beaches–East York is now warned.

I return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. It’s nice to have a little bit of free road in front of me now to mention this.

Let me repeat that. “The Liberal member from Beaches”—

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: I’m trying to recall: Was the member from Beaches–East York warned this morning?

Mr. Arthur Potts: No.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Sorry. I return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. “‘The rent controls that were brought in by the previous NDP government under Bob Rae decimated the affordable housing market in Toronto and other communities in Ontario because it didn’t allow the private sector to continue to build.’ He went on to say, ‘I would resist, tremendously, any amendment’”—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I hear there’s a point of order. The member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Yes, thank you, Speaker. I’d like to correct my record. When I said that those reforms were brought in by Bob Rae, I was mistaken. They were brought in by Mike Harris and the Harris government. Bob Rae simply—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): That’s not a point of order.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): No. That’s not a point of order. Sit down.

I return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I will continue: “‘I would resist, tremendously, any amendment to this legislation which would bring back rent control.’” That’s the member on what he said earlier.

The member from Oxford asked the Premier: Is that why “you cut off debate on Bill 124”—that’s what the member asked—“so that your members couldn’t raise these objections in the Legislature?” Is that what’s happening, Speaker? You have to ask yourself as well: Is that what’s happening in this Legislature? These muzzles, the stifling, the bullying, the shenanigans that go on: That’s what’s happening here.

It's interesting that now, when this does get rammed through, there's only going to be one hour of debate allotted at third reading. This is what this government is all about: They do not want to talk about any issues.

Because we can't take the word of anything the government has to say, we can certainly take the word of the Financial Accountability Officer—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, can you assist me on this one as well?

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): The member from Davenport is now warned.

All right, I return to the member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I know they find their bullying to be terribly humorous and something to make fun of. Making fun of the people of Ontario is something they've done a lot, Speaker. We understand this. We're fully aware of their actions.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We're fully aware, Speaker, that this is how they plan to govern. They've governed like that for the last 13 years: bully their way through, talk over somebody who brings facts to the floor. That's exactly what we're used to with this government. It has happened for years, and as long—well, actually, it will be one year and about 20 days before we can actually stop having to listen to that nonsense from them.

So let's listen to the Financial Accountability Officer, Speaker. As opposed to working towards addressing the fiscal deficit that they've created, there's a very troubling pattern, a democratic deficit, that they are contributing to this evening. In the spring session alone, a number of events pointed to a pattern of stonewalling and censoring legislative officers from shining any light on the government's mismanagement, and I find that with these time allocations they've continued to bring—not one, not two, but by the dozens—that that's exactly what they're doing. They're trying to censor this Legislature from shining a light on their incompetence.

The Financial Accountability Officer took the unprecedented step of holding a press conference to issue a stinging indictment of the government's "broader pattern" of secrecy and refusal to provide legally required information. He even went so far as saying he believes the government's obstruction was the result of "political direction." I presume, Speaker, that the political direction is also here tonight, to make sure that they continue to mock the people of Ontario and their representatives.

As the Financial Accountability Officer rightly pointed out, the Financial Accountability Officer Act is very clear on the obligations of the government to give all requested information to the FAO necessary to carry out his mandate. The problem is the government is actively skirting their legal requirement by simply refusing to hand over necessary documents or by applying

cabinet confidence far too broadly. This is all within this broader pattern that the Financial Accountability Officer talked about: bringing time allocation motions so we can't talk about issues and stifling their own members to make sure they don't get to speak out loud about their personal feelings towards an issue. According to the Financial Accountability Officer, it's all by "political direction." That's his quote.

Here's another quote from the FAO: "It is highly disappointing that instead of looking to maximize the information that the government can provide to MPPs and through them all Ontarians, the government is focusing on how it can restrict disclosure of information. In doing so, they are impeding the ability of MPPs to perform their constitutional duties of holding the government to account."

Now, you can imagine the Financial Accountability Officer having to go to those extremes to remind the people of Ontario that this government has a broader pattern, a pattern of secrecy. Five OPP charges, and we'll see two of them—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You are, actually. We'll see two of these come to trial in September. Imagine that: a government under five OPP investigations.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: With all due respect, Madam Speaker, the member opposite is completely off when it comes to the time allocation motion that has been put forward. He's talking about something completely different.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I would remind the member to speak to the motion.

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Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. In speaking about a time allocation motion which stifles all of the parties from carrying on debate, that goes back directly to the Financial Accountability Officer's stinging indictment of the government's "broader pattern" of secrecy and refusal. He called it "political direction."

Again, Speaker, to the point of exactly what the Financial Accountability Officer was talking about, this time allocation motion, the one earlier tonight, the one last week, the one the week before—you can't even begin to tabulate them all, there are so many. They don't want to hear from the people. They don't want people to come to committee. They don't want thoughtful amendments put in. When they do, like the ones that we got from the member from Kitchener-Conestoga earlier, it wasn't their idea so they thwart it.

This is what their time allocation is all about. It's all about the broader pattern of secrecy and refusal.

Again, when I was interrupted—I'll finish that quote. The Financial Accountability Officer said, "It is highly disappointing that instead of looking to maximize the information that the government can provide to MPPs

and through them all Ontarians, the government is focusing on how it can restrict disclosure of information.”

He ends with, “In doing so, they are impeding the ability of MPPs to perform their constitutional duties of holding the government to account.”

That’s what our job is, in the opposition. Several of us are critics. Our role is to dig into these. But when you take these bills and continue to time-allocate them and not allow thoughtful debate and thoughtful discussion, that’s what the Financial Accountability Officer was talking about.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: It’s always an honour to stand up on behalf of our constituents. As I came back in this evening for night sittings, it felt like—there’s a famous quote; I forget who it is—Yogi Berra, I think—

Mr. Arthur Potts: “It’s déjà vu, all over again.”

Mr. John Vanthof: “It’s déjà vu, all over again”—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Order.

A certain member on the government side was already warned, the member from Beaches–East York. This is his second warning, and the—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. You are now named.

Mr. Potts was escorted from the chamber.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): I return to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. I was a little bit caught off guard by that. I apologize that I didn’t sit down quick enough. And, obviously, one of the members didn’t like my speech.

As I was saying, when I left at 6 o’clock, we were doing a time allocation motion, and I come back, and we’re doing another time allocation motion.

I’m going to venture there once again. If you will recall, before 6 o’clock, I compared time allocation to a shotgun wedding. Well, multiple shotgun weddings don’t make it any better, and that’s the issue. Quite frankly, it’s not about us debating. Time allocation is about allowing the people to have their say.

If you will recall, before 6 o’clock, I was talking about Merrill Bond. Merrill Bond is the reeve of Charlton and Dack who actually—what was the bill I was talking about?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Municipalities.

Mr. John Vanthof: The modernizing municipalities act. Merrill defied all odds and made it to committee, and brought up something that the government hadn’t thought about. That’s perfectly okay. We don’t expect a government to think of everything. That’s actually why you have first reading, second reading debate here. We’re supposed to bring up ideas, and then after second reading, you have committees where other people bring ideas. Merrill had a point of view that was supported widely across rural Ontario. I’m not going to get into the whole thing again, but he brought something forward that the

committee actually recognized and, to their credit and to all the parties’ credit, they all worked together to bring that issue forward and make things better for small communities throughout Ontario. That’s how it’s supposed to work. That’s why time allocation is the exact opposite of the way you should make government work.

On this bill, all we can do is bring our ideas together to make it better for all the peoples of Ontario. This isn’t a bill where you’re trying to ram one idea over another. This is certainly a bill where we’re all trying to work together. I fail to understand why the government even needs time allocation on this one.

I think the issue is they want to get their agenda through regardless of the consequences. And when you have a majority government, you have a right to govern. I don’t think we’re arguing that. You have a right to govern in a majority government. But I think it’s even more important in a majority government that you should listen to all views, because if you only listen to your own, in a diverse society like ours, a diverse province like ours, you leave a lot of people behind. That is the risk you’re running by shutting out whole regions of the province.

If you will recall—and I’m going to go back to Merrill Bond—Merrill Bond comes from Charlton and Dack. I know where Charlton and Dack is. It’s about half an hour farther north from where I live; it’s proudly in my riding. So Merrill travelled at least six or seven hours to get here. He came here specifically for that committee meeting.

Miss Monique Taylor: How long did he get to speak for?

Mr. John Vanthof: He got to speak for, I believe, five minutes. The only reason Merrill got here is that he kept an eagle’s eye, with a lot of people’s help—our office’s help as well. He kept an evil—an eagle’s eye—

Interjection: Evil eye.

Mr. John Vanthof: An evil eye? No, there are other people who have evil eyes. He kept an eagle eye on it, and he had the ability, because of his station in life, to get here on a day’s notice. So he made it. But there are all kinds of people who, through work, through child care, whatever their station in life, can’t hop in a car—because, if you will recall, Speaker, we no longer have a train.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: They took it away.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes. We used to have a train. The train went bye-bye with the Liberals.

The bus schedule doesn’t work, really, not for Merrill. So the only way he can get down here is 12 hours in a car. And they wonder why northerners feel alienated. You never have a meeting in northern Ontario, right?

For an act that discusses the whole province, you should have, in an ideal world, some committee meetings throughout the province. In the end, you would make better legislation. You know what, Speaker? If the government made better legislation, it would probably be more popular across the province.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: To the Minister of the Environment, what I would like is good legislation that repre-

sents the whole province. That's what I would like. That's why I ran, and that's why I got elected.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Again, I'm being heckled by the Minister of the Environment. If it takes defeating the Liberal government to get better legislation, then I'm all for it. I'm all for it. But my role as an opposition member is to represent my constituents and make sure that when the government doesn't represent my constituents—like when it does time allocation and doesn't give any time for my constituents to have any interaction with the government—it's my job to be able to stand up and criticize the government for that.

I'll give you another example. On the budget bill, and it was mentioned by the member from Nipissing but I'm going to mention it again, the budget bill was voted at 12 o'clock and the deputations started at 1. So unless you're Superman or Superwoman or Supergirl, or whatever "Super," there is no way that you can get here after the vote. There is no way, so you have excluded 99.9% of the people in this province, even someone who lives in the GTA. And I'm proud that the GTA is part of this province; I'm very proud of this area, but for the vast majority of the people who live here, they can't get here either, because you certainly can't get off work with an hour's notice.

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Mr. Gilles Bisson: You can't get here driving—gridlock.

Mr. John Vanthof: You can't get here.

So they exclude the vast majority of people on a major piece of legislation, and then the deputations are over at about 6, I believe, and then the amendments have to be in by 7.

For those people at home—if there's anybody at home not watching something more interesting—the amendments should flow from the people making deputations, because there are points of view that are very salient to what we're discussing, and the committee should have the time to look at those deputations, bring them back to their various caucuses and say, "You know what? This makes sense. This guy had some experience. This lady had tons of experience, and she picked out something that we didn't find." Then you make your amendments based on that. But it is physically impossible to do that in an hour. It's physically impossible.

For those of us who were here before 6 o'clock, my speech is déjà vu all over again too—a few parts are different. For the people who were with me on the finance committee, I'm going to mention once again—because he gave an excellent presentation—Steve Mantis. I believe he's with the injured workers. He was sitting there, and because we had a couple of cancellations, because people wanted to get there and couldn't, he asked if he could make a presentation.

Steve Mantis lost his arm 40 years ago in a job accident. He called himself a one-armed carpenter, and nobody wants to hire a one-armed carpenter, so he started his own contracting business. Steve Mantis has devoted

much of his life to representing injured workers. Steve Mantis was quite critical of the WSIB in some areas, and actually complimentary in others. He had a very balanced presentation.

Steve Mantis made his presentation at about 6, and all the parties—the governing party, the opposition and the NDP—complimented him on how effective, how heartfelt and how salient his contribution was. But do you know what, Speaker? It was 6 o'clock and we had to have amendments in by 7, so really, it didn't matter at all what Steve Mantis said, and that is a travesty.

That is why we continue to fight against time allocation. It's not for me personally. It's not because I need to—we all like to speak; that's why we run for election. And we all have a point of view, but our point of view comes from the people we represent. That's why we try to go home all the time; that's why we attend so many public events; that's why we hold meetings: because we try to get the pulse of what our people are feeling, so we can bring it here.

There are occasions when we have bills and committee hearings where we can actually let the people, who are very interested in these subjects, have the opportunity to come themselves, and time allocation strips those people of that. There's no need for it. There isn't.

Would it take longer to pass legislation? Probably. Would the government have to be more thoughtful in organizing their schedule? Probably. Would the government actually have to work with the opposition a bit more and say, "Okay, well, we want to talk to this. Would you let this go through easier?" Yes, they would have to work with the opposition more, but in the end, we would get much better legislation for the people of Ontario. That is what this House should be about, and that's why we will continue to fight against time allocation.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yet again, time allocation—God, I hate these debates; I really do. It seems that we're going in circles. It's like a dog chasing its own tail on the same argument.

Over and over again, we tell the government that there's another way of doing things. That other way of doing things actually can be quite helpful—not just to the public, not just to the opposition, but to the government as well—and that is to figure out a way of sitting down and negotiating with the House leaders from the two opposition parties on how we can move legislation through the House. Of course, the people who work in the House leader's office or the staffers will say, "We can't do that because you're going to hold everything up."

My God, there used to be a time in this Legislature when there was no time allocation, when there was absolutely no ability for a government to move a motion of time allocation in the way that we know today. The only thing a government could do was call an item up for debate, and if the Speaker felt there was enough time in

the debate—and the threshold was quite long; it was more than what it is today—the government could possibly ask to call the question. There was ample time to have a debate at second reading, and that forced the government to say, for example, “We have an agenda of 10 bills, and the House is sitting September to December. We’ve got 10 bills that we would like to pass in this session because they’re important to the public and important to the province of Ontario.” The government would sit down with the opposition and say, “Here are the 10 bills that we must pass within this particular session. Are we able to make some sort of accommodation to the opposition by way of public hearings on these bills, by way of more time in debate, or by way of trading other items such as private members’ bills or opposition day motions or whatever it might be—as a way of giving the opposition something it needs so that the government can get its agenda through the House?” And guess what? It worked. For over 100 years, this House, like other Houses of Parliament across the Commonwealth and any other places that use the British parliamentary system, operated that way. There was no time allocation.

The government actually got more legislation done by way of negotiation than they actually do now with time allocation. Now what ends up happening as a result of the government using time allocation is, there is no time in committee. We spend very little time with bills in committee. Most of our time is spent in the House, because you force the opposition to use the full six and a half hours afforded to us at second reading and the full six and a half hours afforded to us at third reading in order to make our point, because you don’t give us any time in committee to do what has to be done.

Committee is not a bad thing. Committee is a good thing. It’s where the public gets to interact with government and with the opposition to look at bills and to give bills some meaning and some correction where needed.

I just fail to understand why the government is so reluctant to at least try to do some negotiation.

I give you this session as a good example. If you look at what the government put on the agenda in this spring session, other than the budget, other than the hydro bill—I can’t speak for the Conservatives, but as New Democrats I don’t think we had a big problem with anything else of any significance. There were some changes to some stuff that we wanted, but my point is, on 80% of the government’s agenda we could have agreed to a faster passage at second reading in exchange for more time in committee for the bills that we cared about.

What was the one you were working on?

Miss Monique Taylor: Bill 89.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Bill 89 is a good example.

Those are bills that are meaningful to people. These are bills that make a real difference in people’s lives.

Members like my good colleague from Hamilton Mountain, Monique Taylor, and other members in this House, feel passionately about the issues covered under Bill 89.

Imagine if the government would have come in last spring and said, “We have these bills”—and I think there were about 10 or 12 of them, whatever it was—“and we would like to be able to pass those by the end of the spring session, June 1, third reading. What will it take to get us there?” We might have said, “A couple of weeks of hearings on Bill 89.” We might have said, “Why don’t we do a week, during constituency week, when we can travel the bill to parts of Ontario that don’t normally get access to the Legislature, in order to hear what the public has to say on the bills, and a few days in Toronto while the House is in session?” That wouldn’t have been a very big trade-off. I think that would help the government members and members of the opposition to better understand different parts of Ontario—what life is like in eastern Ontario or northern Ontario or southwestern Ontario, or the Far North, for that matter—and more importantly, to give the opportunity to the public to hear and have its say. Because this is not just the House of members; this is the House of the people. This is where the people are represented by their government and by their elected MPPs and opposition parties to do their bidding when it comes to what we deal with when it comes to public policy here at Queen’s Park.

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Instead, the government has fallen into the trap of using time allocation. I just think it’s a disservice to the ministers, who have very important bills that they want to pass through the House—some of which are contentious, I agree. Listen, I was a member of a government, and we had contentious bills. I get it. But most of a government’s agenda you can actually do by negotiation. You would have been left with two or three bills this spring where the opposition would have said, “We want some time in committee,” in exchange for allowing other bills that needed less time to go by a little bit quicker.

The second thing is, you have to give bills enough time between each process. I think both the finance critic for the Conservatives and for the NDP made the point on the budget bill. You can’t have a bill finish one day, and then an hour later, send the thing in to committee and expect the public to give you meaningful consultation. All that does is laugh at the process. It doesn’t allow for the process to actually work.

At the very least, in the budget bill, you could expect—of course, a government is not going to get a budget bill passed nod, nod, wink, wink, real quick. There would have been, probably, six or eight hours of debate at second reading—I’ve no doubt of that—even by way of an agreement outside of time allocation. And we would have asked for some time for hearings on that bill. How is that a bad thing? The government, if they’re very strong about their budget and they think it’s a good thing, should have no difficulty going across Ontario defending their policies in the budget and their expenditure decisions.

Every time these debates come up on time allocation—and unfortunately, it’s far too often—I always come back to the point that the government is really not

helping itself, and certainly not helping the public, when it comes to having a process that actually works for them and works for the public by using time allocation. Like I said, I'm one of few people left in the House who served in this Legislature when we didn't have time allocation. There are five of us. I can tell you, go talk to Jim Bradley; he's been here for 40 years. And Jim will tell you—the member from Niagara—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: St. Catharines. Sorry. Riding names are a problem with me. I barely can get through names. But my point is, the member, the dean of the House, was here at the time, and he could also attest that, in fact, you used to be able to get through most of your agenda by way of negotiation. Yes, at times, the government got caught up in something, but things would happen.

I remember, for example, when we, the NDP, were government, we introduced—I think it was our first budget. The Conservatives took real exception to the budget, and they used procedural tactics in order to hold the budget up. Mike Harris stood in the House and read lake after lake after river into the record under introduction of bills. They drafted a bunch of bills—a bill respecting Kamiskotia Lake, and that it be read for the first time, etc. etc. And it continued, because back then, there was no limit to how long you had to introduce bills. It was just understood that that would be an exception to the rule.

The point is, even with the opposition, in that case, trying to hold the government's budget up, eventually we got our budget. But what it meant was that the NDP had to negotiate with the opposition parties—at that point, the Liberals and the Conservatives—on public hearings on our bill.

I remember our budget bill. We wanted it in and out, and we wanted it in committee, with maybe a week's worth of travel in constituency time. We ended up doing four or five weeks of hearings on the budget bill. And you know what? Rightfully so. A government has to survive or die by the decisions that they make in this House when it comes to budgetary consideration or policy considerations, and a government should not be afraid of the public. If you're not afraid of the public, you go out and you put the bill out and you do the proper hearings.

The other thing is, we used to spend very little time at second reading in this House. People won't remember, but we spent more—I wouldn't say more time, but a fair amount of Committee of the Whole. If I ask members, if I did a pop quiz today and said, "What is Committee of the Whole?", most people wouldn't know what it is. Committee of the Whole is when the House reverts itself into a committee. Essentially, you move into the committee's Chair and we operate as a committee would. That's why they call it Committee of the Whole or Committee of the Whole House. We use those not for hearings; we use those for amendments. Most of the

amendments that we did to legislation were actually done in Committee of the Whole.

What would happen is—let's say it was an agricultural bill—the staff from the Ministry of Agriculture would be allowed, one or two of them, to come and sit in the front, on the floor on special benches, so they could be there to advise their minister, as the minister was going through the Committee of the Whole process in the amendments to their bill. The House spent more time actually fixing legislation and making sure that legislation worked than it does now.

Guess what? The legislation was of better quality, because there was scrutiny from the opposition and the public to the bills that the governments introduced. I had to live with that. The Liberals under Mr. Peterson had to live with that before me and so did the Liberals under Mr. Miller and Mr. Davis. They had to live under those rules, and guess what? Government operated, and the public was a lot happier with governments back then than they are with governments today, because the people really feel disconnected from this place because we've unplugged them from this place.

By short-shrifting the committee process and not allowing committees to travel in the way that we used to and allowing people to come and present to committee, we've disconnected the public. With a lot of bills, what we would do is—let's say the government had a controversial bill. Often it was understood that a bill would be introduced in the fall. In the intersession in the winter, it would go out on committee for hearings for two weeks or three weeks, whatever it was. On average, it was at least two to three weeks. The government would then come back to the bill during the spring session, and we would do amendments here in Committee of the Whole, or sometimes in the committee itself.

But what you had was a longer process by which the public and the Legislature was engaged in the process of scrutinizing the legislation that was drafted and introduced by the government—or if it was an opposition bill, by the opposition—and to qualify the bill and to make it better. I really don't understand why it is that the government feels that a process that engages the public and allows the public to have their say is such a bad thing.

I'll give you an example. The government currently has—I forget the bill number; the one for the changes to the hydro system, whatever the bill is. The government is out there touting that as their big hydro plan, that it's wonderful, that it's great, and that it's the best thing since marmalade and sliced bread. Well, fair enough: You're allowed to say that. All right. What would be wrong with the government travelling that bill? If the bill is as good as you say it is, you should be proud to take it to the different parts of Ontario and have the public come in and have some say about this bill.

Instead what we ended up with is the government initially time-allocated that bill for one day of hearings here at Queen's Park—one day. It would have been next week. New Democrats, under Andrea Horwath, came in and proposed that the House be extended by a week. I

notified the government House leader that morning and the opposition House leader of our intent to move such a unanimous consent motion, and what happened is that the government decided, “Oh, well, we’re going to outsmart the opposition,” so they proposed two more days of hearings next week.

Did the government lose anything by having two more days of hearings? Absolutely not. If anything, they gained, I think. But they would have been better off to allow that bill to do what we used to before and to travel it so that people are able to come in.

If people want to present, they need to contact the Clerk of the Committee. It would have to be done now in order to be put on the list to present either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

So, Madam Speaker, again, we will be voting against time allocation. I think it’s a bad idea.

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

Hon. Michael Coteau: Well, thank you very much—

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): No, no. I have not recognized you, Minister.

I recognize the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I apologize to my good friend the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: You made me look bad, Han.

Mr. Han Dong: I am so sorry; I didn’t intend to.

With us at the night sitting today are three very special constituents of mine: my wife, Sophia Qiao; my son, Matthew Dong; and my daughter, Emma Dong. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Michael Harris: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Point of order. I recognize the member from Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, a point of order, Speaker. I was maybe wanting to perhaps give some of the government members some time to go back to their offices and grab their ties before they finish the night routine.

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The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): That’s not a point of order. The member should know better.

Further debate?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It is a great pleasure to stand here today to talk about the time allocation motion. I’d like to thank the members opposite who spoke to this time allocation motion.

What has been forgotten here is that we’re debating a motion to move forward to vote on Bill 114. This is a bill that is so important to Ontarians. It’s a bill that means a lot to the majority of Ontarians out there because it speaks to anti-racism here in the province of Ontario.

I want to start by recognizing that we’re on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the New Credit and giving thanks to the indigenous culture here and the Métis and the Inuit culture and their presence here in the province of Ontario, because they’ve contributed so much to where we are. I just want to say thank you,

especially because of this bill, because it speaks to many of the values in relation to the indigenous culture here in the province of Ontario.

It was interesting listening to the members opposite talk about opening up democracy and letting people into the House, and that time allocation is stopping the conversation. I know that a few of the NDP actually showed up to our consultations, so I’m going to say thank you to them. None of the Conservatives showed up when we were talking to the people of Ontario for almost a year on this very issue. To make the assumption that the people of Ontario have not weighed in on this bill is unacceptable. We went across this province. We went to Windsor. We were in London. We were in Toronto a few times. We went out to Ottawa. We were in Thunder Bay. We went across the province and spoke to people about the content of this bill, about anti-racism.

It’s not a very complex bill. It’s nine pages. A lot of the content in here is some definitions—but the main content is probably about several pages. It speaks to some of the issues that Ontarians have faced, some of the ideas they have to build a better Ontario.

Here’s the interesting thing about the debate we’re having today. I’d like the members of the House to listen to this point because it’s so interesting.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): You know the rules. It’s never too early or too late to name somebody. I want good listening.

I return to the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Michael Coteau: I hope the members opposite and the official opposition listen to this as well.

I have to give a bit of credit where credit is due. The NDP did start the Anti-Racism Secretariat. Here we are debating time allocation for a bill that will create the Anti-Racism Directorate. We wouldn’t even be here if it wasn’t for the Conservatives, who destroyed it when they came into power back in the 1990s. So when they’re talking about not having enough time to talk about something that is so important—if it was so important to the Conservative Party here in Ontario, they wouldn’t have dismantled the Anti-Racism Secretariat. We wouldn’t even be here right now. We wouldn’t be here for night sittings if it wasn’t for the Progressive Conservatives.

So I don’t do this often, but I will thank the NDP for showing up. Thank you for showing up to some of those consultations when we had them.

For the Conservatives to stand up and say, “This is an important bill. We need more time to discuss issues”—at least show up to the consultation, because this has been seven months in the making.

I don’t know if members remember, but when we had the vote on this, a dozen Conservatives got up and ran out of the building. You remember that. The vote took place, and several of them just jumped up and got out of here as soon as possible. You can check Hansard and see who was here before and who was here after. I don’t need to name people.

The bottom line is that this is an important piece of legislation. Let's not hold it up any further, guys. The people of Ontario—4,000 of them came to our meetings across the province. We got thousands of deputations. We had people come into this building to make deputations. We had letters that were written. People spoke about this.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Talk about Kitchener. Wasn't that fabulous?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Kitchener was incredible. I was impressed with Kitchener. There were 200-plus people, and the mayor and the chief of police showed up.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Where were you, Mr. Harris?

Hon. Michael Coteau: It's not my job to talk about where members were, through the Chair, but it was such an incredible conversation.

That was very meaningful for me because of my little nephews. They came, they sat and they listened. I introduced them to the chief of police. I said to the chief, "These are my nephews. Keep your eyes on them. Make sure you look out for them and make sure they're good." He looked at them and he spoke to them, and it was really nice because we were there talking about anti-racism, we were talking about Islamophobia, anti-black racism, anti-Semitism, anti-indigenous racism. It was a meaningful and powerful conversation. What we were able to create from that conversation was this proposed piece of legislation. We just want it to go through.

There have to be a few opportunities to use time allocation once in a while. I think the members opposite would agree. I know the member from Scarborough-Rouge River would probably agree with me on that. When you've got an important piece of legislation, time allocation is good when you know it's right.

We had people come up to the committee room. They made deputations. They spoke about the importance of this piece of legislation. Here we are at 8:15 at night. The member from Trinity-Spadina's family came to visit him here tonight—

Mr. Han Dong: To visit us.

Hon. Michael Coteau: —to visit us. We had the Attorney General's family come and visit us. This is our visiting time.

I know the member from Kitchener talked about Murphy and Lindsay and—

Mr. Michael Harris: Rosy and Lincoln.

Hon. Michael Coteau: —Rosy and Lincoln and Murphy, a beautiful family. He spoke about wanting to be home to read *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. But at the end of the day, we, as responsible members here in the Legislature, have to come to the conclusion that at least once in a while, we can all agree that a piece of proposed legislation has the merit, has the buy-in from the community and makes complete sense. There are times when we can agree that an important piece of legislation needs to go through.

It's a very simple document. It's only seven or eight pages.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: It was nine earlier.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Nine with the definition, sir, but seven or eight with regard to main content.

This is the first time in the history of Ontario—and, I believe, the history of this country—that a piece of legislation dealing with anti-racism has been proposed. It establishes and maintains a framework to combat systemic racism here in the province of Ontario. It looks at many different forms of racism. Madam Speaker, even in this very city, 30% of our Jewish community are the recipients of hate crimes. That's unacceptable. That is unacceptable.

The fact is that if you're a black male in this province, a black male youth, the unemployment numbers are double. Madam Speaker, we've seen these terrible stories about what's happened in the Chinese community. We saw, I think it was last year, what happened downtown with a young Korean woman in a bank. We've heard the stories. We know what's happened when it comes to our Muslim community in Ontario. We know what happened in Quebec. These are real-life situations, and we need to make sure that we put in place the right type of plan—and we're the first province or jurisdiction to do this—that combats systemic racism.

Why are the opposition members holding this up? The interesting thing is in all the debate against time allocation, I don't think once they actually spoke to the piece of legislation that's in play there.

They dusted off that old speech that they have sitting in the backroom somewhere—it's the same old speech. They dusted it off, cleaned it off, and they said, "Well, Diefenbaker said, back in 1962"—

Interjections.

Hon. Michael Coteau: "Way back in 2002, when David Caplan was here as the member from Don Valley East"—wait a minute. They were talking about the Conservatives, if they were talking about 2002. That's another interesting fact.

But all jokes aside, this is an important piece of legislation. We need your help. Let's get it through. Let's vote for this legislation. Let's put Ontario in the right place, being at the forefront of anti-racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia—all the types of hatred that we as parliamentarians, as MPPs, fight against. Let's make sure we put in a plan to make sure we combat that type of systemic racism, so we can continue to build the type of Ontario that matters to each of us.

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

Mr. Ballard has moved government notice of motion number 32, relating to allocation of time on Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I recognize the member from Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Speaker, I believe I have a deferral slip for you.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Okay. “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 32 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, May 29, 2017.”

Vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Orders of the day? I recognize the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

Hon. Laura Albanese: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Ms. Soo Wong): Ms. Albanese has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I hear “carried.”

The House will be adjourned until Monday, May 29, at 10:30 a.m. Have a great week.

The House adjourned at 2022.

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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
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Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
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Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development / Ministre de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Formation professionnelle Minister Responsible for Digital Government / Ministre responsable de l'Action pour un gouvernement numérique
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires municipales
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Hon. / L'hon. Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McMahon, Hon. / L'hon. Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
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Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Robert Bailey, James J. Bradley
Joe Dickson, Sophie Kiwala
Harinder Malhi, Michael Mantha
Monte McNaughton, Laurie Scott
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bob Delaney, Vic Dhillon
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Randy Hillier, Monte Kwinter
Lisa MacLeod
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Ted McMeekin
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lou Rinaldi
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Grant Crack
Jennifer K. French, Jack MacLaren
Ted McMeekin, Lou Rinaldi
Mario Sergio, Soo Wong
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Lorne Coe, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Ted McMeekin
Lou Rinaldi, Jagmeet Singh
Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffier: Vacant